

DISTRESSING BUT MEANINGFUL:  
THE BUFFERING EFFECT OF ROLE MEANING ARCHETYPES

Benjamin A. Rogers

A dissertation submitted to the faculty at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy in the Department of Organizational Behavior in the Kenan-Flagler Business School.

Chapel Hill  
2023

Approved by:

Jessica Siegel Christian

Michael S. Christian

Blake E. Ashforth

Shimul Melwani

Övül Sezer

© 2023  
Benjamin A. Rogers  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

## **ABSTRACT**

Benjamin A. Rogers: Distressing but Meaningful: The Buffering Effect of Role Meaning Archetypes  
(Under the direction of Jessica Siegel Christian and Michael S. Christian)

In my dissertation, I develop and explore the buffering effect of role meaning archetypes - internal narratives of the meaning and significance of one's work role – when people encounter distressing events at work. Emotionally distressing experiences are an unfortunate part of organizational life and can challenge a worker's sense of meaning. Research focusing on how such events undercut a sense of meaningfulness in the moment suggests that workers require time or post-hoc sensemaking in order to potentially see them as worthwhile. Yet, anecdotal evidence suggests that distressing experiences at work can feel meaningful. I develop theory to explore this phenomenon, suggesting that distressing experiences are a central part of a workers' internal narrative about their work. I propose a theoretical model for how distressing experiences at work, when they correspond to a person's role meaning archetype, are perceived as meaningful in the moment. I detail the meaning justification process by which this occurs, specifically arguing for dual cognitive and affective mechanisms. Cognitively, I argue that archetypal distressing events should activate an individual's valued occupational identity which provides a sense of meaningful coherence to the experience. Affectively, people are likely to experience emotional ambivalence when distressing experiences correspond to role meaning archetypes, which should prompt them to consider the event more flexibly and deeply and how it might meaningfully connect to their values. I conclude by exploring how the buffering effect of

role meaning archetypes during distressing events might lead to higher levels of engagement at work. To test my model, I detail a pilot study and propose three empirical studies utilizing a variety of methodologies (survey, experimental, experience sampling) and samples (online, undergraduate, nurses).

To my mom, Polly, whose spirit runs through this dissertation and everything I do.  
To Courtney and Nora, for your support and for giving so much meaning to my life.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to first thank my advisors, Mike and Jess Christian, for their guidance, support, and for welcoming me, Courtney, and eventually Nora, into your family. In a career full of pressure and uncertainty, you both showed me how to approach my work with joy, curiosity, and care for others. I am forever grateful for the opportunities you have provided me, from encouraging me to lead projects in my first semester to supporting me as I led us down paths lined with growth mindsets and hero's journeys. More importantly, during a period of life featuring a global pandemic and the birth of my first child, I have never doubted for a second whether you were in my corner, personally or professionally. I think that is a rare gift that I cannot repay, but I can try to pay forward as I eventually work with students as faculty.

To the rest of my dissertation committee, thank you for helping to shape this work and for shaping me as a scholar. You have all pushed me to think big and shown me how to translate my ideas into work of which I can be proud. Shimul, thank you for always finding time in your busy schedule to meet with me, even if that is at a coffee shop during one of your children's music lessons. My daughter, Nora, also asked me to thank you for her crib that has served as a safe place of comfort and rest during the first 14 months of her life. Ovul, thank you for myriad of research opportunities you have offered to me and for always reminding me that our jobs can (and should) be both challenging and full of laughter. Blake, thank you for being my academic uncle and for your constant support throughout my graduate school program. I am so inspired by your research and humbled to try and build off of it as I continue my career.

To the past and present members of the Kenan-Flagler Organizational Behavior department, thank you for providing me a home and a place to grow for the last six years. I am very grateful to the faculty for training me in how to conduct research through classes, feedback on presentations, and countless conversations about ideas. Seeing the community support as I entered the job market was truly incredible and I would not have had the success I did without the time and insight you offered to me. Thank you as well to Sonya who has bailed me out of so many bureaucratic binds and always reminded me of the importance of family. To the students, thank you for the support, friendship, and laughs. Grad school is a real trip but it would have been so much more difficult without our community. A special thank you to my cohort-mate, Casher, for being on this journey with me. I could easily thank you for the one million methods-related questions you have answered for me, but I am most grateful for your friendship and for being the best uncle to my dog, Sadie. She's going to miss you in Boston, so make sure to visit.

I would also like to thank two amazing professors, Ethan Burris and Kristie Rogers, without whom I would not be entering this career. Ethan, on the hero's journey that is my academic career, our conversation during my undergraduate where you suggested I consider academia was truly the single moment of "shift" that led me to become a professor. Thank you for believing in me, for supporting me, and for telling me that I was going to be fine at literally every stage of this journey, from finishing my undergraduate thesis, to applying to PhD programs, to getting a job. Kristie, words cannot fully convey how grateful I am to you for everything. You have seen me grow from a teenaged punk to now getting my PhD. While I shudder at all the foibles you have witnessed from me over the years, I have always known I could go to you for any question or problem I had to get encouragement and the keen insight for

what I should do. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for supporting my career and paving the way. I am honored to be “Kristie Rogers’ brother-in-law” at AOM forever.

Thank you to my family for your love and support, and I would like to particularly acknowledge my dad. Dad, thank you for instilling in me a hunger for knowledge and the strong worth ethic to pursue it. Thanks for the stacks and stacks of books you would bring me from the library as a kid whenever I expressed an interest in a new topic. I hope you are proud to have a new doctor in the family.

Finally, my biggest thank you to Courtney, Nora, and our dog Sadie – the “North Carolina Rogers.” While my academic career is important to me, you three are what truly make my life meaningful and I love you all more than I can ever express.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES .....	xiii
LIST OF FIGURES .....	xv
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .....	1
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW .....	11
Distressing Work Events .....	11
The Impact of Distressing Work Events on Work Meaningfulness.....	13
Role Meaning Archetypes .....	16
CHAPTER 3: MODEL AND HYPOTHESES .....	21
The Buffering Role of Role Meaning Archetypes on Work Meaningfulness.....	21
The Mechanisms of the Meaning Justification Process .....	24
The Buffering Role of Role Meaning Archetypes on Work Engagement .....	28
CHAPTER 4: EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION .....	32
Pilot Study .....	33
Participants .....	34
Procedure .....	34
Measures .....	35
Measures to Rule Out Alternative Explanations .....	36
Results .....	36
Pilot Study Discussion.....	39
Study 1.....	40

Participants .....	40
Procedure .....	40
Measures .....	42
Analytical Strategy .....	45
Results .....	45
Study 1 Discussion .....	50
Study 2.....	50
Participants .....	51
Procedure .....	51
Measures .....	56
Analytical Strategy .....	58
Results .....	58
Study 2 Discussion .....	62
Study 3.....	63
Participants and Procedure .....	63
Role Meaning Archetype.....	65
Daily Measures .....	65
Analytical Strategy .....	68
Results .....	69
Study 3 Discussion .....	73
CHAPTER 5: GENERAL DISCUSSION .....	74
Theoretical Contributions.....	76
Limitations and Future Directions.....	79

Practical Implications .....	83
Conclusion.....	84
APPENDIX A: SURVEY FOR PILOT STUDY .....	118
Study Scales .....	118
Demographic Items .....	121
APPENDIX B: SURVEY FOR STUDY 1 .....	123
Study Scales .....	123
Demographic Items .....	128
APPENDIX C: SURVEY STUDY 2 – PRE-EXPERIMENT PILOT .....	130
Study Scales .....	130
Demographic Items .....	131
APPENDIX D: SURVEY STUDY 2 .....	132
Experimental Stimulus Materials .....	132
Study Scales .....	137
Demographic Items .....	140
APPENDIX E: SURVEY STUDY 3.....	142
Study Scales .....	142
Opt-In Study .....	142
Midshift Survey .....	144
End of Shift Survey .....	147
Supplemental Analyses .....	151
APPENDIX F: SUPPLEMENTAL STUDY ANALYSES .....	159
Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence Measure Validation Study .....	159

Participants and Procedure. ....	159
Results .....	160
Distressing Event Concept Validation Q-Sort .....	163
Supplemental Study Scales .....	166
Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence Measure Validation Scales .....	166
Q-Sort Instructions and Scales .....	169
Demographic Items.....	170
REFERENCES .....	172

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Distressing Work Events in the Organizational Literature .....	86
Table 2. Pilot Study: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Focal Variables .....	87
Table 3. Study 1: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Focal Variables.....	88
Table 4. Study 1: Means by Condition for All Dependent Variables .....	89
Table 5. Study 1: Path Analysis Results – Subjective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Berrios et al.) .....	90
Table 6. Study 1: Bootstrapped Indirect Effects of Event Type on Outcomes at High and Low Levels of Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence – Subjective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Berrios et al.) .....	91
Table 7. Study 1: Path Analysis Results – Objective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Hershfield et al.) .....	92
Table 8. Study 1: Bootstrapped Indirect Effects of Event Type on Outcomes at High and Low Levels of Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence – Subjective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Hershfield et al.) .....	93
Table 9. Study 1: Path Analysis Results – Objective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Thompson et al.) .....	94
Table 10. Study 1: Bootstrapped Indirect Effects of Event Type on Outcomes at High and Low Levels of Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence – Subjective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Thompson et al.) .....	95
Table 11. Study 1 Secondary Analysis: Path Analysis – Subjective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Berrios et al.) .....	96
Table 12. Study 1 Secondary Analysis: Bootstrapped Indirect Effects of Event Type on Outcomes at High and Low Levels of Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence – Subjective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Berrios et al.)...	97
Table 13. Study 1 Secondary Analysis: Path Analysis Results – Objective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Hershfield et al.).....	98
Table 14. Study 1 Secondary Analysis: Bootstrapped Indirect Effects of Event Type on Outcomes at High and Low Levels of Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence – Subjective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Hershfield et al.) .....	99
Table 15. Study 1 Secondary Analysis: Path Coefficients Moderation Results – Objective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Thompson et al.).....	100

Table 16. Study 1 Secondary Analysis: Bootstrapped Indirect Effects of Event Type on Outcomes at High and Low Levels of Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence – Subjective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Thompson et al.) .....	101
Table 17. Study 2 Pre-Experiment Pilot: Role Meaning Archetypes and Example Participant Responses .....	102
Table 18. Study 2: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Model Variables .....	103
Table 19. Study 2: Means by Condition for All Dependent Variables .....	104
Table 20. Study 2: Path Coefficients Moderation Results – Subjective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Berrios et al.) .....	105
Table 21. Study 2: Bootstrapped Indirect Effects of Event Type on Outcomes by Role Type Condition– Subjective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Berrios et al.) .....	106
Table 22. Study 2: Path Coefficients Moderation Results – Subjective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Hershfield et al.) .....	107
Table 23. Study 2: Bootstrapped Indirect Effects of Event Type on Outcomes by Role Type Condition– Subjective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Hershfield et al.) .....	108
Table 24. Study 2: Path Coefficients Moderation Results – Subjective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Thompson et al.) .....	109
Table 25. Study 2: Bootstrapped Indirect Effects of Event Type on Outcomes by Role Type Condition– Subjective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Thompson et al.) .....	110
Table 26. Study 3: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Study Variables .....	111
Table 27. Study 3: Results of Simultaneous Multilevel Path Analysis .....	112
Table 28. Study 3: Results of Indirect Effects from Multilevel Path Analysis .....	113

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Theoretical Model .....	114
Figure 2. Pilot Study: Histogram of Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence for Recalled Distressing Work Events .....	114
Figure 3. Pilot Study: Histogram of Work Meaningfulness Correspondence for Recalled Distressing Work Events .....	115
Figure 4. Study 1: Interaction between Event Type (Distressing vs. Neutral) and Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence on Work Meaningfulness.....	115
Figure 5. Study 1: Interaction between Event Type (Distressing vs. Emotionally Gratifying) and Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence on Work Meaningfulness.....	116
Figure 6. Study 1: Work Meaningfulness Histogram for Distressing Work Event Condition .....	116
Figure 7. Study 2: Name Tag Templates for Reinforcement of Role Meaning Archetype Manipulation .....	117
Figure 8. Study 2: Work Meaningfulness Ratings by Condition.....	117

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

*The changes that may befall a man are not infinitely variable; they are variations of certain typical occurrences which are limited in number. When therefore a distressing situation arises, the corresponding archetype will be constellated in the unconscious.* – Carl Jung (1912)

While workers might prefer otherwise, the experience of distress is often part of the fabric of organizational life. Distressing events at work lead to a host of detrimental outcomes for employees and organizations alike. In the face of *distressing work events*, work-related occurrences associated with negative emotions or strain (e.g., Kahn, 2019; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), employees are likely to experience a range of adverse psychological and physiological reactions (Bono et al., 2013; De Rond & Lok, 2016). In occupations featuring frequent distressing events, consistent exposure to distress reduces job satisfaction (Podsakoff et al., 2007), increases burnout (Maslach et al., 2001), and results in spillover costs to workers' personal lives, such as depression, sleep disorders, and alcohol abuse (Bacharach et al., 2008; Iacovides et al., 2003; Partinen et al., 1984). Thus, these distressing events can have negative implications for organizations, as they can spark a cascade of undesirable downstream consequences in their workforce, including withdrawal (Miner et al., 2005), turnover (Schabram & Maitlis, 2017), and counterproductive work behaviors (Wang et al., 2011).

Distressing experiences at work present a challenge for those seeking a sense of meaning from their work. While the negative emotional reaction that is inherent to distressing work events can arise for a multitude of reasons, common conceptualizations of distressing events often emphasize the role of dissonance or unexpectedness in linking these experiences to aversive psychological states and maladaptive reactions (Ohly & Schmitt, 2015; Park, 2010; Taylor,



1991). In these frameworks, experiences that are discrepant with goals or expectations challenge an individual's understanding of the world and threaten sensemaking processes that facilitate meaning making (Heine et al., 2006; Maitlis et al., 2013), leaving individuals in an unpleasant state of uncertainty from which they hope to escape. Unfortunately, these models point to a bleak picture for employees who, by virtue of their work, experience distressing events.

Yet, distressing events are a “part of the job” for many, and in certain occupations – such as emergency response, healthcare, and social work – workers *expect to deal with distressing experiences* as part of their roles (Kahn, 2019), which may shape how they make sense of distress at work. Critically, in contrast to some of the frameworks on goal-discrepant experiences, many of these workers point to such experiences as central to what makes their work meaningful and worthwhile (Bailey & Madden, 2016). End of life care for terminally ill patients can be taxing yet deeply fulfilling for healthcare providers (Ollove, 2018) and social workers live out their purpose in encounters with individuals in desperate and dire circumstances (Hardy, 2016). Scientists and creative workers report finding meaningfulness in pursuits fraught with setbacks, criticism, and rejection (Stulberg, 2021). These anecdotes imply that distressing events occur frequently in many occupations and that the events themselves could be sources of meaningfulness. Yet available research cannot fully account for how distressing events may be *experienced* as worthwhile.

Prior research has largely assumed that distress is at odds with one's goals or expectations and thus must be reconciled via dissonance reduction processes such as post-hoc sensemaking (e.g., Park, 2010; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004; Vohs et al., 2019; Vough & Caza, 2017). I argue that this perspective is incomplete – meaningfulness from distress can be about more than just dissonance reduction and rationalization – and that the meaning that employees

attach to their work roles encompasses not just positive, traditionally fulfilling events, but also difficult, emotionally straining, but nevertheless significant, experiences. In this way, I argue that distressing work events are not always inherently meaning-deficient experiences that require time and perspective to justify, but rather can be truly meaningful as they transpire. This may help to explain past results on distressing events that shows high variability in whether people are compelled to try and make meaning in the wake of distress, as well as their ability to do so successfully (Park, 2010).

I argue that the ability of distressing work events to be perceived as meaningful – that is, significant, valuable, or worthwhile (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003) – lies in their potential correspondence to an individual's *role meaning archetype*, which I define as an internal narrative of the meaning and significance of one's work role. These archetypes are socially constructed and validated, stemming from society and shaped through interactions with others, but they are invoked and interpreted idiosyncratically by the role occupant (e.g., De Rond, Lok & Marrison, 2022). The power of roles to shape how individuals experience their work is well established in the literature. Roles dictate how employees behave (Katz & Kahn, 1978), what emotions they express (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987), and with whom they interact (Stryker, 2007). More importantly, roles provide a cognitive schema that organizes role-relevant information and acts as a framework through which occupants interpret their experiences (Ashforth et al., 2000). Role meaning archetypes, therefore, represent the facet of role identity related to the significance and meaning typically associated with a given role.

Just as roles are a complex constellation of expectations (Katz & Kahn, 1978), so too is the meaning that individuals ascribe to their roles (Lysova et al., 2019) and, importantly, this meaning archetype may account for both joyful and distressing experiences. For example, a

nurse may see the central archetype of their role as “caregiver for the sick,” which might include curing a patient’s illness as well as easing discomfort at the end of a patient’s life. Similarly, a business consultant’s archetype might be that of “trusted advisor” which may encompass impressing the client with insight as well as delivering tough, but necessary, feedback on a problem area. Thus, by focusing primarily on how meaningfulness stems from positive experiences, prior research may only be capturing part of the meaningfulness story. I aim to show in this dissertation that correspondence between distressing events and meaning archetypes is possible, and it is through this correspondence that distressing workplace experiences can be meaningful.

Meaning archetypes are often drawn from culturally available narratives or popular discourses (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003), and they supply emotionally resonant interpretations from which individuals draw when making sense of their experiences at work. Stemming from broader societal understandings about the meaning associated with a given role, role meaning archetypes bring forth culturally legitimate narratives that are both easily recognizable to individuals (Rosen et al., 1991) and compelling (Bruner, 1990; Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010). Meaning archetypes, in this sense, act as a heuristic or automatic association for meaning. When a person experiences some sort of situational cue (e.g., Gollwitzer, 1999) that corresponds to the archetype, they have a ready-made understanding for how that event fits within the narrative they have about their work purpose. In this way, role meaning archetypes provide a coherent, emotionally resonant, and readily accessible justification for the meaning of one’s work in the midst of distress. Absent such a justification, the experience of distress at work can feel uncertain and aversive, detracting from a sense of meaning until the person can engage in additional sensemaking (Lepisto & Pratt, 2017).

While distress may often foster a narrow focus on the unpleasant nature of the event (Forgas, 1998), individuals can also embrace a holistic view of their experiences (Vallacher & Wegner, 1987, 1989). For example, recent research (Menges et al., 2017) illustrates that tedious work interpreted as providing for one's family can sustain an employees' effort and performance. I argue that role meaning archetypes – by providing a compelling and recognizable meaning heuristic in corresponding circumstances – can facilitate higher-order processing of distressing events such that the events may reinforce, rather than detract from, the meaningfulness individuals perceive in their jobs. Thus, I hypothesize that a role's meaning archetype can buffer the negative relationship between distressing work events and meaningfulness in the moment, such that events will more positively relate to meaningfulness when they correspond to a meaning archetype.

Finding meaningfulness amidst distress requires a compelling account for why the experience is worthy or valuable. In a recent review, Lepisto and Pratt (2017) describe this process as meaning “justification” whereby individuals justify why their experiences of uncertainty or ambiguity are worthwhile. However, as they note, this meaning justification process, is relatively poorly understood compared to the traditional perspective of meaningfulness via the direct fulfillment of needs and motivations (e.g., Hackman & Oldham, 1975). Towards this end, I seek to outline the process by which meaning justification occurs for distressing workplace events. Importantly, I detail how meaning justification can happen in the midst of distress, rather than requiring extensive and effortful post-hoc sensemaking as is typically the focus of meaning research (e.g., Park, 2010).

In line with prior frameworks that emphasize the complementary roles of cognition and affect in sensemaking (Schabram & Maitlis, 2017; Weick, 1993), I propose that the meaning

justification that occurs when distressing events correspond to role meaning archetypes operates via dual cognitive and affective mechanisms. First, when an individual perceives correspondence between a distressing work event and their role meaning archetype, they are more likely to experience an *activated occupational identity*, the awareness that they are embodying their occupational role according to the narrative they have for their work (e.g., Jennings et al., 2021; Lanaj et al., 2020). To the extent that an event readily fits within their pre-existing narrative, this should trigger in-the-moment sensemaking and the awareness of how – by facing such an event in the course of their work – the worker is embodying their occupation and experiencing an integration of role identity and the self in the moment (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016). By seeing themselves through the lens of their occupation, workers should be more easily able to tap into existing ideologies regarding the positive meaning of their work and its role in broader society (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999).

Beyond its cognitive impact, distress is also highly emotional. A robust literature has shown the clear links between distressing workplace events and negative emotions (e.g., Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). However, while the experience of negative emotions is core to distressing events, recent work has highlighted that the genuine feeling of authentic emotions connected to one's role (even negative ones) can result in positive feelings about the self (Hannah & Robertson, 2021). Thus, when a distressing event corresponds to an individual's archetype related to the meaning of their work, this should foster *emotional ambivalence*, the simultaneous experience of positive and negative emotions (Fong, 2006). Emotional ambivalence is often associated with flexible and complex thinking, opening individuals to diverse and deeper understandings of their experiences (Rothman & Melwani, 2017). In the context of distressing events, emotional ambivalence should thus help cue individuals to consider their experience

more deeply and connect how this event relates to their goals, values, and purpose. In sum, I hypothesize that an activated occupational identity and emotional ambivalence act as mechanisms of the meaning justification process, buffering the negative indirect relationships between a distressing event and work meaningfulness for events that correspond to an individual's role meaning archetype.

The reinforced sense of meaningfulness arising from archetypal distressing experiences is also likely to have important organizational benefits. Traditionally, work on distressing events has focused on how experiences that undercut employees' sense of meaningfulness frequently lead them to disengage from their work in various ways (De Rond & Lok, 2016; Park, 2010; Schabram & Maitlis, 2017). While meaningfulness has been relatively unexplored as a predictor in modern research (Ward & King, 2017), Hackman and Oldham (1975) first pointed to meaningfulness as a critical psychological state through which occupations motivate and sustain employee's energies. Given this work, I propose that a role meaning archetype's ability to provide a compelling narrative regarding the significance and worth of a distressing experience will facilitate *work engagement*, or the state of mind referring to the simultaneous investment of personal energies in the experience or performance of work (Christian et al., 2011). In context of experiences that otherwise might leave workers burned out or emotionally exhausted, a sense of meaningfulness should serve as a psychological resource to sustain energy investment, as well as a guidepost towards which workers can invest their energies.

My dissertation offers several contributions to the literature. First, I build upon prior research on work meaning to demonstrate that meaningfulness can be experienced not only in positive events (King et al., 2006; Ward & King, 2017) or from post-distress sensemaking (Nielsen & Colbert, 2021; Park, 2010; Vough & Caza, 2017), but also through the difficult,

poignant experiences that connect with employees' deeper sense of why they perform their roles day-to-day. This is not to understate the difficulties faced by individuals who encounter distress at work (e.g., De Rond & Lok, 2016; Schabram & Maitlis, 2017), but rather to disentangle the experience of meaningfulness and affect, an important step that has been called for by work meaning researchers (Heintzelman et al., 2014; Rosso et al., 2010). By doing so, my dissertation seeks to provide empirical evidence that meaningfulness can be found in distressing experiences and suggests one explanation – whether the experience corresponds to a role meaning archetype or not – behind the lack of a consistent relationship between distress and meaning making seen in prior work (Park, 2010). This work expands existing theoretical models of work meaningfulness (Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Rosso et al., 2010) to account for another route – archetypal distressing experiences – by which workers find their work meaningful.

Second, I draw upon the narrative identity and sensemaking literatures to build and test a theoretical model (see Figure 1) that elucidates the mechanism, role meaning archetypes, by which distressing events can foster meaningfulness. By laying out the psychological process through which occupational roles shape employees' understanding of the broad range of experiences they have at work, my dissertation contributes to nascent research on the contextual understanding of meaningfulness within organizations (De Rond & Lok, 2016; Nielsen & Colbert, 2021). There has been prior recognition of the potential influence of contextual accounts on sensemaking in the literature but work in this area has been primarily theoretical (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010; McAdams, 1996; Vough & Caza, 2017) or inductive (Barbulescu et al., 2012; Jiang, 2021; Mitra & Buzzanell, 2017; Schabram and Maitlis, 2017; Shepherd et al., 2021). Role meaning archetypes provide a testable mechanism by which social or organizational accounts of roles might facilitate perceptions that distressing experiences are meaningful.

While leaders are often seen as the primary source of sensegiving in uncertain experiences (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007; Randall et al., 2011), I aim to broaden our understanding of roles' power to provide meaning to employees during both positive and negative experiences, such that employees themselves can "take on" this process through focusing on the narratives they have for their work. My work thus expands on the "justification" perspective of work meaningfulness proposed by Lepisto and Pratt (2017) whereby individuals seek accounts to justify the worthiness of their work, positing that the roles individuals hold provide the framework through which a broad range of experiences can be deemed worthwhile. While this perspective has primarily focused on justification via post-hoc reflection and sensemaking, my work lays out the psychological processes by which meaning justification can happen "in the moment," for workers who see dealing with distress as part of their roles.

Finally, I add to the burgeoning scholarship on emotional ambivalence (Rothman & Melwani, 2017; Rothman et al., 2017) by showing how ambivalence experienced within the context of distressing events can be a route to deeper understanding and appreciation for one's work. My dissertation complements recent qualitative work on emotional comfort zones (Hannah & Robertson, 2021) which finds that the genuine experience of emotion can signal to workers that they remain connected to their work identities. While the experience of ambivalence can be uncomfortable (Ashforth et al., 2014), recent work highlights the beneficial outcomes that can arise from ambivalence, such as increased creativity (Fong, 2006), cognitive flexibility (Rothman & Melwani, 2017), and long-term health and well-being (Hershfield et al., 2013). Building on this work, I position emotional ambivalence as a key mechanism through which individuals experience distressing events as meaningful through deeply processing their complex emotional reaction. Theoretical work has suggested that the embrace of opposing orientations – what



Ashforth and colleagues (2014) refer to as “holism” – may be central to cultivating wisdom through our experiences. In this way, I argue that ambivalence experienced during distressing events may take on a positive “face” (Brickman et al., 1987; Rothman et al., 2017) and ultimately benefit the individual and their organization.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Distressing Work Events

Stretching from the earliest days of organizational research (e.g., Fish, 1917; Martin, 1917; Weber, 1905) until the modern era (see Bliese et al., 2017), scholars have sought to understand workers' experiences of distress in the course of their jobs. As can be expected given its long history, conceptualizations of negative events have varied over time from a general examination of any events that elicit negative affect (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996) to more narrowly-defined experiences like life-threatening, time-limited events (Bacharach & Bamberger, 2007) and relatively minor irritations or frustrations (Kanner et al., 1981). Many scholars have sought to categorize the diverse experiences of distress with taxonomies utilizing various external dimensions (e.g., Basch & Fischer, 2000; Grandey et al., 2002; Ohly & Schmitt, 2015), but foregrounded in this work has been the worker's internal perspective in assessing and responding to negative experiences (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996).

While the experience of distress is necessarily personal and subjective, certain lines of inquiry emphasize the organizational nature of such events, stemming from conditions such as an imbalance of demands and resources (Bloom & Farragher, 2013) or public stigma concerning the nature of a profession (Ashforth et al., 2007). By utilizing an organizational lens, research in this stream highlights two important ideas relevant to my dissertation: (1) many occupations regularly expose workers to experiences fraught with intense emotions (Kahn, 2019), and (2) while workers' individual reactions to the events may vary, it is frequently through the organizational context that workers make sense of unpleasant experiences they encounter in their

jobs (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999). Adopting this lens, I focus broadly on *distressing work events*, work-related associated with negative emotions or strain (e.g., Kahn, 2019; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) whether occurring directly to an employee or coming from interacting with others in distressful circumstances<sup>1</sup>. Importantly, while the precise source or nature of the distress may vary, distressing work events stem from the performance of one's work (e.g., Margolis & Molinsky, 2008) and generate some sort of negative emotional reaction in the moment or upon reflection. As shown in Table 1, the organizational literature continues to explore the effects of a broad range of distressing work events spanning both job task-related and interpersonal events, as well as events where the person experiencing the distress is the direct target of the distress (e.g., abusive supervision, task conflict) and those where they experience distress indirectly (e.g., emotional contagion, witnessing or interacting with others in distress).

It should come as no surprise that numerous theoretical perspectives reveal that distressing work events lead to a wide assortment of negative outcomes for workers. First, as summarized by affective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), distressing events lead to negative emotions. Within the affective events theory framework, negative affective reactions serve as the linchpin between undesirable workplace experiences and downstream negative impacts to attitudes, such as decreased commitment and lower job satisfaction (Fisher, 2002), and behaviors, such as reduced helping and heightened counterproductive work behavior (Ilies et al., 2006; Matta et al., 2014). A complementary perspective on distressing events comes from the stress and well-being literature (Taylor, 1991) and explores how certain experiences place

---

<sup>1</sup> Given the broad conceptualization of distressing events used in this dissertation, I collected evidence via a Q-sort exercise with online participants to confirm that this conceptualization captured the variety of events from the organizational literature that have been shown to invoke distress at work. Full details and results are presented in Appendix F but confirm that a range of distressing events that can happen at work (e.g., abusive supervision, sexual harassment by a coworker, failure, witnessing an upset coworker) were readily understood as types of distressing work events while other events that were distressing but not work-related (e.g., personal health issue, argument with a friend or spouse, sexual harassment by a stranger) did not fall under the same category.

heightened demands on workers that exceed available resources, leading to stress, emotional exhaustion, and harms to both mental and physical health (Bloom & Farragher, 2013; Bono et al., 2013; Tuechmann et al., 1999). Viewing distressing events from these theoretical perspectives, we see the robust psychological and physiological costs of distressing workplace experiences.

### **The Impact of Distressing Work Events on Work Meaningfulness**

Distressing events do not impact all workers in the same way (Ohly & Schmitt, 2015). Instead, how individuals cognitively make sense of distress profoundly matters for how they experience and respond to the event (e.g., Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Weick, 1993). Specifically, dissonance – the discrepancy between what we experience and how we understand the world - plays a central role in research on the ways in which distressing events impact work meaning (Festinger, 1957; Park, 2010). Experiences that are discrepant with expectations may be seen as incoherent with one’s worldview and introduce a sense of futility or absurdity that inhibits individuals from deriving positive meaning from the event (De Rond & Lok, 2016).

In the course of their work lives, individuals are likely to encounter a range of dissonance-inducing distress, whether it is an unexpected incident that appears at odds with our understanding of ourselves and environment (Pals, 2006; Weick, 1993) or a setback that is incongruent with important goals (Barbulescu et al., 2012; Vough & Caza, 2017). The former type of distressing event has largely been studied in the psychology literature, most notably in work on the meaning maintenance model (Heine et al., 2006). Within this paradigm, whenever an individual’s mental representation of the world is violated by a meaning threat - an unexpected or incoherent stimulus such as nonsensical word pairs or absurdist art – they often experience an aversive state of arousal (Randles et al., 2018) that cues them to attempt to restore

feelings of order (Proulx et al., 2010). While this need to restore coherence is not inherently dysfunctional (Proulx & Heine, 2009), much of this research has focused on less desirable ways in which individuals reaffirm meaning, such as intergroup discrimination (Hogg & Mullin, 1999), system justification (Jost et al., 2004), and political polarization (Randles et al., 2015). Work in the organizational literature supports this central finding as workers who are confronted with schema-inconsistent experiences frequently struggle to act rationally in the moment (Weick, 1993) and subsequently attempt to reestablish control in maladaptive ways, such as abusing alcohol (Bacharach et al., 2008).

Many organizational researchers focus on the dissonance that arises when workplace events are incongruent with goals. Events such as denied promotions, career disruptions, or unexpected obstacles can severely challenge an individual's identity and ongoing narrative about the legitimacy and purpose of their work (Barbulescu et al., 2012; Schabram & Maitlis, 2017; Vough & Caza, 2017). Particularly in occupations where a strong sense of meaningfulness is central to the work, impediments to goal-achievement can take on a heightened sense of emotionality with the discrepancy between what is wanted and what occurred becoming a moral burden (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009; Schabram & Maitlis, 2017). As might be expected, dissonance from goal-incongruency over time tends to be demotivational, resulting in negative attitudes towards work and withdrawal (Podsakoff et al., 2007). Thus, much of the recent organizational literature has explored how individuals can positively sensemake in light of negative emotions (Maitlis et al., 2013) and reconcile difficult life experiences with valued identities (Pals, 2006). While the usual outcomes of distressing work events are undoubtedly negative, research has shown that they can also be cues for individuals to engage in post-hoc sensemaking and narrative identity work (Park, 2010; Vohs et al., 2019), which can result in

powerful stories of posttraumatic growth and resilience that ultimately benefit the individual (Nielsen & Colbert, 2021; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004; Vough & Caza, 2017). This literature ultimately suggests that, in many cases, positive meaning resulting from distressing work is not so much a reflection of the inciting event, but of the ability of the worker after the fact to integrate the experience with their ongoing mental framework for who they are and why they work.

Yet, in spite of the predominant view in the literature that distressing work requires some form of sensemaking to become meaningful (e.g., Park, 2010), recent qualitative research has pointed to the possibility that distressing work events can actually be meaningful *in the moment*. Whether healthcare professionals pointing to the poignancy of end-of-life care (Bailey & Madden, 2016) or aid workers finding ways to sustain a sense of purpose during a refugee crisis (Jiang, 2021), there is a growing awareness that workers can – and do – see distressing experiences themselves as meaningful, and not just necessary unpleasantries on the path to eventual success or self-actualization. This insight is particularly important in modern organizational life where organizations constantly seek to maximize happiness and minimize unpleasantness (Held, 2002). If we fail to understand that distress, too, can be meaningful, organizations may attempt to distance workers from experiences that are core to why they see their work as worth doing.

My dissertation builds upon this growing chorus to argue that negative experiences themselves are sometimes a key component of workers' conceptualization of what makes their work meaningful. This contrasts with much of the theory and research on distressing events that emphasizes their discrepancy with what an individual expects or desires out of their work. Much as meaningful lives often involve difficulty and worry (Baumeister et al., 2013), many

meaningful jobs require that workers deal with situations fraught with pressure and emotionality (Kahn, 2019). Thus, it is important to consider whether the enduring sense of meaningfulness for workers in calling occupations (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009; Nielsen & Colbert, 2021) happens in spite of distressing experiences, or rather occurs because such experiences reaffirm what drew them to their roles in the first place.

### **Role Meaning Archetypes**

As one of the building blocks of social systems (Katz & Kahn, 1978), roles have received extensive attention in organizational research over the years (see Sluss et al., 2011). In their original conceptualization, roles are the set of behavioral expectations associated with each position in a structure of social relationships (Merton, 1957; Katz & Kahn, 1978). These expectations stretch beyond simply what tasks one performs to include display rules for the expression of emotion at work (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987), the social interactions one has (Stryker, 2007), and even how moral one must be (Liu et al., 2020). As the focal point through which an individual experiences work (e.g., Welbourne et al., 1998), roles are also profoundly important for shaping our perceptions of work meaningfulness.

In their recent review of the work meaningfulness literature, Lepisto and Pratt (2017) identify two overarching theoretical perspectives on work meaning that explain different mechanisms by which roles might provide meaningfulness. The traditional perspective in the work meaningfulness literature is that meaningfulness is derived from the satisfaction of psychological needs (Lepisto & Pratt, 2017). When individuals feel competent, authentic, and autonomous, they typically perceive that their jobs are meaningful (see Rosso et al., 2010 for a review). Within this perspective, roles are meaningful to the extent that they foster experiences that provide variety, ownership, impact on others, and other positive characteristics (Hackman &

Oldham, 1975). Thus, prior research on increasing work meaningfulness has predominantly focused on enriching people's roles through efforts like relational job design (Grant, 2007) or job crafting (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). From this perspective, distressing work events should lack meaningfulness as they are often devoid of the satisfaction of needs and desires that characterize meaningful role experiences.

Lepisto and Pratt (2017) also propose a compelling, if less-developed, "justification" perspective of work meaningfulness that specifically attends to how experiences of uncertainty and ambiguity – hallmarks of distressing work events – are made meaningful through sensemaking and post-hoc reflection. In contrast to the traditional perspective which proposes a relatively stable sense of meaningfulness stemming from more or less enriched work roles, research within the justification perspective maintains that meaningful work is highly subjective and a product of idiosyncratic sensemaking. When an experience can be justified as valuable or worthy in the worker's mind according to their values or worldview, they conceive of that work as meaningful (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003). As with the prior perspective, roles from the viewpoint of meaning justification research are critical to the experience of work meaningfulness. In enacting the behavioral expectations of a position, individuals internally make sense of their role and the associated meaning (e.g., goals, values, beliefs) and identity that come with it (Ashforth, 2001). By tying together internal meanings and external expectations, roles serve as a mental framework that structures all role-relevant information (Ashforth et al., 2000) and act as the filter through which workers interpret their role experiences (Stets & Burke, 2000; Tepper et al., 2001). It is through the justification perspective that it becomes clear how, in contrast to the traditional view, distressing work events could be meaningful: to the extent that the role



facilitates a compelling and immediate account of why an experience is worthwhile, that experience, whether enjoyable or not, should feel meaningful as it transpires.

As the product of a subjective sensemaking process, the meaning that individuals attach to their work roles varies. For example, one college professor may see their purpose as primarily furthering scientific knowledge while another professor may see it as mentoring students. Yet, scholars have often noted that workers' conceptualizations of what makes their work meaningful tends to be surprisingly similar across organizations and occupations (Barbulescu et al., 2012; Pratt & Ashforth, 2003). While some of this isomorphism is certainly explained by the common underlying tasks and responsibilities of a role (e.g., Ashforth et al., 2011), researchers also point to the notion of social construction and shared cultural narratives as a driving force behind the similarity. Specifically, as our understanding of the world is socially constructed, people draw from the same discursive elements (e.g., stories, films, symbols) used by others, their organization, or broader culture, in crafting their own narratives and identities, securing social validation when their constructed meanings align with these shared understandings (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010; Sonenshein et al., 2013). Through this process, certain narratives and meanings proliferate and gain resonance, coming to be seen as "canonical" or "archetypal" (Ashforth et al., 2011; Barbulescu et al., 2012).

In this dissertation, I focus on the specific type of internal narrative in organizations concerning the meaning or significance of one's work role, which I define as an individual's *role meaning archetype*. The word archetype harkens back to Carl Jung who argued for the existence of implicit mental models of certain character types and images shared across all humanity (Jung, 1961–1963/1983). While Jung's idea of a biological "collective unconscious" appears both theoretically and empirically untenable, modern social and organizational

psychology has framed archetypal theory from a cultural perspective, and, in doing so, has validated several of his central insights about the influence of shared schemas on people's responses to the world (Faber & Mayer, 2009; McAdams, 1993). In the organizational context, the calling and identity literatures illustrate that many workers construct and hold narratives in their minds about the meaning of their work roles which are shaped by culture and society (e.g., Berg et al., 2010; DiBenigno, 2022). These narratives serve as draws for people to pursue a career in the first place, as well as act as a schema through which people interpret the experiences they have once within a role. In this way, role meaning archetypes represent the more specific articulation of the broader sense of purpose that a worker may feel from their work roles (e.g., Ryff, 1989): a teacher may see their occupation as making a difference, but their role meaning archetype, shaped by societal notions about teaching, specifies that they do so by serving as a caring mentor to children. A worker may associate multiple archetypes with a given role (such as a college professor seeing their role as furthering science and mentoring students) that are made salient at different points due to context or preference (e.g., De Rond et al., 2022).

Most notably within the organizational literature is research that examines what happens when work experiences fundamentally misalign with an individual's meaning archetype. As memorably captured by Weick (1993), firefighters experienced a "cosmology episode", or a collapse of sensemaking, upon witnessing one of their leaders ordering the team to cease fighting a wildfire and instead light a fire in the only apparent escape route. In recent work, ethnographies show soldiers struggling to cope with experiences diametrically at odds with their perceptions of why they serve (De Rond & Lok, 2016). Common to these examples are the dire consequences – fear, irrationality, and trauma – that occur when experiences conflict with an individual's narrative about the meaning of their work roles.

However, just as workers have experiences that conflict with their meaning archetypes, so too do they have experiences that correspond to them: doctors heal their patients, teachers witness students master a new concept, and repair workers fix broken pieces of equipment for customers. Critically, while this archetype-correspondence may often result from positive events, it may also occur through difficult or challenging ones. Research on dirty work highlights how stigmatized or “tainted” occupations such as gravediggers or exotic dancers tap into occupational ideologies regarding the positive meaning of their work to reframe their roles and maintain self-esteem (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999). Similarly, seeing one’s work role as providing for family can provide meaningfulness and motivation to even tedious work tasks (Menges et al., 2017). Role meaning archetypes thus act as meaningful frameworks that can accommodate a range of experiences that workers encounter and provide an emotionally resonant interpretation of distressing experiences that might otherwise require post-hoc sensemaking and reconciliation with one’s identity.

## **CHAPTER 3: MODEL AND HYPOTHESES**

### **The Buffering Role of Role Meaning Archetypes on Work Meaningfulness**

Our archetypal sense of why we work should shape how we experience distressing events. Aligned with this notion, action identification theory suggests that people tend to adopt one of two lenses as they encounter the world: focusing either on the lower-level aspects of how a given experience feels or the higher-level perspective of what it means to them (Vallacher & Wegner, 1987). In this framework, roles and identities serve a central function by establishing what higher-order meaning there might be for a given experience (Vallacher & Wegner, 1989). For example, while an everyday person might simply enjoy the feeling of quenched thirst from drinking water, a professional athlete might see it as hydrating to perform at their peak.

While a person's identity can suggest a higher-order meaning for an experience, the nature of distressing events may instead push a person to focus on the unpleasant lower-level aspects. Distress tends to foster a bottom-up style of sensemaking where individuals narrowly fixate on the aversive stimulus (Forgas, 1998) and engage in a more systematic, prevention-focused, processing of information (Maitlis et al., 2013). This narrow information processing style in the face of uncertainty or dissonance inhibits broader sensemaking that is critical to maintain an individual's sense of coherence through distress (Weick, 1993). It is thus unsurprising that distressing experiences tend to push people to focus on lower-level unpleasantness at the expense of any positive consideration for why it might be happening (Vallacher & Wegner, 1987)

By focusing on the negative aspects of how distressing events feel, workers are less likely to find those experiences meaningful. From the meaning justification perspective (Lepisto & Pratt, 2017), work is meaningful when a person has a coherent account for what makes it worthwhile or valuable – whether to themselves or in some grander societal or existential sense. In this way, the question of how to justify the worth of one’s work involves an implicit weighing of costs and benefits: is whatever I am required to put into my work (physically, cognitively, emotionally) adequately “compensated” by some sort of personal or societal outcome that I value? Particularly in the case of distressing events, the psychological forces described above (e.g., a fixation on the aversive stimulus) can narrow our minds to the immediate experience of distress, rather than considering what broader positive meaning an unpleasant event might have for our work or lives. Thus, even workers in “calling” type occupations do not always find work meaningful, and can face emotional exhaustion or other aversive states (e.g., Bunderson & Thompson, 2009; Schabram et al., 2017).

Yet, people can and do find meaningfulness in distressing work events through their interpretation of what is happening (Vallacher & Wegner, 1987). For example, unpleasant jobs can become a means of family survival for primary household earners (Menges et al., 2017) and for veterinarians, managing the end of a pet’s life can represent a way to relieve suffering or to provide emotional solace to a pet owner (Hannah & Robertson, 2021). I argue that one primary factor that distinguishes meaningful experiences of distress from experiences that lack, or even threaten, meaningfulness, is whether that event corresponds to the person’s internal narrative regarding the significance of their work role: their role meaning archetype. Specifically, correspondence between an event and a person’s role meaning archetype can allow for in-the-moment sensemaking that might be otherwise inhibited by the distressing nature of the event.

Sensemaking occurs when there is an attribution of meaning made to some stimulus, such as a work experience, via either an emerging or existing cognitive framework (Starbuck & Milliken, 1988). Thus, while the term sensemaking might imply a wholesale new construction of meaning, prior research (e.g., leader sensegiving: Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007) – highlights how contextual factors can facilitate the attribution of meaning related to some event. Role meaning archetypes, as the cognitive schema related to the meaning and significance of a person's role, similarly offer narratives about experiences at work and how they relate to an individual's understanding regarding the purpose of their roles.

For a role meaning archetype to be salient during a distressing experience – and thus supply a compelling interpretation for it – the experience must be consistent with the narrative offered by a person's archetype. For example, giving a lengthy presentation during which audience members ask difficult questions is likely to provoke distress amongst most workers, but for scientists who see their role as seeking truth and spreading knowledge, such an event may be seen as inherent to this purpose. Experiences of uncertainty or ambiguity (as occurs with distressing work events) often threaten people's sense of meaning (Heine et al., 2006). Without an applicable and relevant framework to affirm a sense of coherence to their world, people must undertake an effortful process to find meaning (Randles et al., 2018), and may resort to affirming meaning in completely unrelated domains, such as moral beliefs or even grammatical patterns (Proulx & Heine, 2008/2009). In contrast, when a distressing work event corresponds to a framework represented by a role meaning archetype, people should be able to draw on that narrative quickly and intuitively as they interpret their experience.

Stemming largely from cultural narratives about the importance of certain roles and occupations<sup>2</sup>, archetypal distressing experiences become part of a coherent and psychologically compelling narrative for why the event is happening, *and why it is valuable*. People should be better able to intuitively draw a connection between their distressing experience and important personal or cultural values when they have an available account as to why that emotional or psychological strain is necessary. Emergency workers run towards a crisis not because it is easy, but because doing so allows them to exemplify the values that compelled them to take on that role. When a distressing work experience corresponds to a meaning archetype, it connects a worker's experience to an existing narrative that they recognize and that has already been deemed worthy or valuable (Rosen et al., 1991). Rather than having to interpret an event through the lens of distress, which is likely to decrease meaningfulness, role meaning archetypes make the high-level reason for the event salient, thus buffering or potentially even increasing meaningfulness. Based on these arguments I hypothesize the following:

*Hypothesis 1.* A worker's role meaning archetype buffers the negative relationship between a distressing workplace event and work meaningfulness, such that the event more positively relates to meaningfulness when the event corresponds to the archetype.

### **The Mechanisms of the Meaning Justification Process**

I argue that role meaning archetypes can help to justify the meaningfulness of distressing work events in the moment when those experiences correspond to a person's underlying narrative about what makes their work worthwhile. This psychological process, which Lepisto

---

<sup>2</sup> As illustrated by research on dirty work (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999) and callings (Berg et al., 2010), roles can differ in whether they are perceived to have positive meaning. While this presents somewhat of a boundary condition to my theorizing, work that highlights how non-intrinsically motivating work can be meaningful when seen as providing for one's family (Menges et al., 2017) suggests that most workers likely have some narrative as to why their job is meaningful, even if that meaning relates to a purpose outside of the work itself. On the other hand, for those who do not have an internal narrative related to the meaning of their roles, it is unlikely for them to find any positive meaning in the midst of distressing work events.

and Pratt (2017) call “meaning justification,” has been implicit to the work meaning literature since its inception, but still remains relatively underdeveloped. To this end, I seek to detail in this section a dual cognitive-affective meaning justification process by which distressing work events that correspond to a meaning archetype are perceived as meaningful in the midst of distress. While sensemaking is often thought of as a primarily cognitive process, my approach emphasizes the unique role that both cognition and affect play, in line with prior sensemaking frameworks related to challenging and distressing events (Schabram & Maitlis, 2017; Weick, 1993), and accounting for the emotions likely triggered by distressing work events.

### ***The Role of Activated Occupational Identity***

First, the correspondence between role meaning archetype and distressing event should trigger a worker’s awareness that – by experiencing this archetypal event at work – they are embodying their role according to the narrative they have for their work. This perception of an *activated occupational identity* (e.g., Jennings et al., 2021; Lanaj et al., 2020) represents a perceived integration of role identity and the self in the moment (e.g., Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016). Recent work has highlighted the dynamic nature of identity in the workplace, particularly how certain self concepts can fluctuate daily or be activated by situational cues (DeRue & Ashford, 2010; Lee Cunningham et al., in-press; Leigh & Melwani, 2019). Just as leaders come to perceive they are acting leaderlike when mentoring subordinates or developing future-oriented visions (Jennings et al., 2021), workers of any occupation should perceive their occupational identity to be more salient when in situations that align with what they see as the underlying purpose of their work. These situations are often emotionally gratifying – such as a doctor healing a patient – but they can also be emotionally straining or difficult – such as a funeral director consoling a grieving family member. In either example, the worker can see how their



actions are in concert with the mental image they have for their work, and thus their behavior in the context of the distressing event brings them closer to a valued occupational identity.

These perceptions of an activated occupational identity are likely to increase how meaningful a distressing work event feels in the moment. By seeing oneself through the lens of their occupation, workers should be more easily able to tap into the occupational ideologies associated with their role. An occupational ideology is the system of belief “that details the nature of the relationship between the occupation and its members with other types of work as well as with the larger society” (Dressel & Peterson, 1982, p. 401). These ideologies provide a coherent perspective that help workers to make sense of their experiences and why they matter (Beyer, 1981). Thus, through experiencing an activated occupational identity, workers can more readily see how even a distressing experience is worthwhile and connects to the world and their values. Further, occupational ideologies can also help to negate and reframe negative aspects of distressing experiences that might detract from feelings of meaningfulness (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999). In sum, archetypal distressing events at work are likely to call forth valued occupational identities which facilitate positive feelings of meaning, while refocusing workers away from the more negative aspects of the experience.

### ***The Role of Emotional Ambivalence***

Distressing work events will invoke negative affective reactions (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), by definition. Thus, a theory of archetypal distressing experiences must take affect into account. However, the affective experience in such circumstance is unlikely to be solely negative (e.g., Bonanno, 2005). Emotional reactions can differ based on a person’s appraisal of an event (Lazarus, 1966) and there is often a complex and context-dependent relationship between an initial emotional reaction and subsequent emotions in oneself or others (Ashkanasy et al., 2017).

I argue that distressing work events are likely to also inspire positive feelings through their correspondence with role meaning archetypes, leading to the simultaneous experience of positive and negative emotions that comprise emotional ambivalence (Fong, 2006). Drawing from recent work by Hannah & Robertson (2021) on emotional comfort zones – employee preferences related to both the content and intensity of emotions they experience at work – I posit that archetypal distressing events are likely to also evoke positive emotions, as the genuine experience of distress reminds workers of their authentic connection to their work. By being able to shoulder negative emotions in their roles, perhaps on behalf of someone else, workers are likely to feel positive feelings related to themselves and their work. The correspondence between distressing work events and role meaning archetype should thus result in both negative and positive emotions as workers encounter distress that is an integral part of the story they tell themselves about their role.

The emotional ambivalence resulting from an archetypal distressing event should contribute to work meaningfulness by engaging workers in more flexible and complex thinking about their experience. While negative emotions tend to narrow a person's focus and shift them towards a bottoms-up information processing style (Forgas, 1998), feelings of emotional ambivalence tend to broaden an individual's scope of perspective and motivate them to engage with understanding the different factors that contributed to their contrasting emotions (Rothman et al., 2017; Rothman & Melwani, 2017). This flexible and complex style of thinking is beneficial at work, leading to creativity and adaptability (Fong, 2006; Rothman & Melwani, 2017). In the context of distressing events, emotional ambivalence should similarly cue individuals to consider their experience more deeply and to make connections between the event and their goals, values, and purpose (e.g., Bonanno et al., 2004). By meaningfully engaging with

the simultaneous experience of contrasting emotions, people should be better positioned to embrace a holistic response – accepting the complex nature of their experience – which may be a central route to cultivating wisdom and meaningfulness (Ashforth et al., 2014). Based on these arguments I hypothesize:

*Hypothesis 2A.* A worker’s role meaning archetype buffers the negative indirect relationship between a distressing workplace event and work meaningfulness via an activated occupational identity, such that the indirect effect will be more positive when the event corresponds to the archetype.

*Hypothesis 2B.* A worker’s role meaning archetype buffers the negative indirect relationship between a distressing workplace event and work meaningfulness via emotional ambivalence, such that the indirect effect will be more positive when the event corresponds to the archetype

### **The Buffering Role of Role Meaning Archetypes on Work Engagement**

Finally, I propose that the buffering effect of role meaning archetypes on work meaningfulness will have positive downstream effects on employee work engagement. Meaningfulness is a critical psychological resource through which occupations motivate and sustain employee’s energies (Hackman and Oldham, 1975). Work engagement, or “the simultaneous investment of personal energies in the experience or performance of work” (Christian et al., 2011, p. 95), was originally conceptualized as arising under three conditions: workers must feel as if their contributions are significant or impactful, that engaging fully in their work does not put them at risk, and that they have sufficient resources to invest in their role (Kahn, 1990). Drawing from this conceptualization, I suggest that the meaningfulness derived from archetypal distressing events is likely to impact all three psychological conditions, helping to maintain or even increase work engagement in the wake of the distressing event.

Prior literature has generally focused on how distressing experiences inhibit work engagement by reducing or confusing a workers’ sense of meaningfulness (De Rond & Lok,

2016; Park, 2010; Schabram & Maitlis, 2017). First and most obviously, a lack of meaningfulness prevents workers from feeling like their work is significant and worthwhile. In qualitative work with soldiers at war, De Rond & Lok (2016) detail how the senselessness, futility, and surreality of wartime experiences can often lead to disengagement and self-distancing behaviors. A lack of meaningfulness is also likely to harm the other two psychological conditions that enable work engagement. First, an absence of meaningfulness signals an incoherent or even threatening work environment (Heine et al., 2006) where the investment of energy leads to uncertain outcomes. Additionally, feelings of meaninglessness are aversive and occupy working memory as people attempt to make sense of their experience (Randles et al., 2018), which is likely to decrease resources available to invest in subsequent work tasks.

When distressing work events correspond to a person's role meaning archetype, the resulting meaningfulness is likely to sustain or even boost engagement in subsequent work tasks. Prior research has shown how meaningfulness can increase work engagement by enabling workers to feel they are making a difference at work (May et al., 2004; Rich et al., 2010). In the case of archetypal distressing events, a sense of meaningfulness not only signals that a given experience was worthwhile, but it also suggests that the person's ongoing role is impactful as the event represents a key part of the worker's narrative for why they work. In this way, meaningfulness operates as a confirmation that the investment of their full self and personal energies at work, even during moments of distress, allows workers to achieve valuable work outcomes, which should motivate such engagement going forward.

Meaningfulness should also lead to work engagement by reducing uncertainty regarding the risk of further engagement, as well as serving as a psychological resource from which workers can draw. Recent work on meaning (Heintzelman & King, 2014) has highlighted that,

beyond its positive attitudinal and affective effect, meaning provides important information about the coherence of a stimuli or environment. In context of work distress events, a sense of meaningfulness should provide workers the assurance that their experience, while unpleasant, is expected as part of their role and not indicative of risk or a need to disengage. The mechanism of activated occupational identity as part of my theoretical model further underscores this point. By feeling as if one is embodying their occupational role during a distressing experience, people should feel less uncertain about whether they are acting appropriately and thus feel safer to continue engaging in work (Frazier et al., 2017).

Finally, rather than allowing distressing work events to drain psychological resources through stress and rumination (Wang et al., 2013), distressing events that are perceived as meaningful should sustain resources that can be directed towards other work tasks (Baumeister et al., 1998). The meaningfulness derived from emotional ambivalence is particularly likely to provide resources to foster work engagement, given prior work highlighting the motivational effect of dynamic affective states, particularly related to negative events (Bledow et al., 2011). In sum, the sense of positive meaning that can come from archetypal distressing work events can help sustain work engagement by reassuring workers they are making a positive impact, reducing uncertainty regarding the uncertainty associated with distress, and protecting valuable psychological resources needed to engage in work tasks. Based on these arguments I hypothesize the following:

*Hypothesis 3A.* A worker's role meaning archetype buffers the negative serially mediated relationship between a distressing workplace event and work engagement via an activated occupational identity and work meaningfulness, such that the indirect effect will be more positive when the event corresponds to the archetype

*Hypothesis 3B.* A worker's role meaning archetype buffers the negative serially mediated relationship between a distressing workplace event and work engagement via emotional

ambivalence and work meaningfulness, such that the indirect effect will be more positive when the event corresponds to the archetype

## CHAPTER 4: EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

In my dissertation, I have argued that distressing events that correspond to an individual's role meaning archetype can be experienced as meaningful in the moment. I outlined the underlying process by which this happens, highlighting activated occupational identity and emotional ambivalence as key underlying mechanisms linking archetypal distressing events to work meaningfulness. I also extended my model to highlight the practical benefit of archetypal distressing events via increased work engagement. Rather than undercutting one's willingness to invest themselves fully into their work in response to a distressing work event, I propose that archetypal distressing events can bolster work engagement via reaffirming the meaningfulness and worthiness of one's work.

I used a multi-study approach to assess my theoretical model. First, I present a pilot study to assess the validity of some of my theoretical assumptions, specifically that distressing work events vary in terms of their correspondence to role meaning archetypes and their meaningfulness. The pilot study also allowed me to explore the association between archetype correspondence and my focal model constructs, as well as test the correlations between role meaning archetype correspondence and some potential theoretical confounds (e.g., challenge and hindrance appraisals, surprise, frequency). While this pilot does not offer a formal test of my model, it presents supportive evidence for many of the hypothesized relationships in my model.

In Study 1, I conducted a survey using the critical incident technique with random assignment to experimental condition (Flanagan, 1954; Wellman et al., 2016). In this design, participants recalled and described in detail a specific event ranging in distress (distressing,

neutral, emotionally gratifying) before answering survey measures related to my model variables. This provided a first complete test of my predictions. While this study could not rule out post-hoc sensemaking of distressing experiences as a source of meaningfulness (which is handled in Studies 2 and 3), it offers a first test of my theoretical model in a sample of working adults reflecting on a range of real-world examples of distress.

In Study 2, I conducted a lab experiment using a sample of undergraduate business students. In this study, I experimentally manipulated both the distressing event and the role meaning archetype of participants, such that in one role, the event corresponded to the role meaning archetype, and in the other role, the event did not correspond. The experimental materials related to the role meaning archetype were created inductively from a two-part pre-experiment pilot study featuring real-life professionals in two different occupations. With this study, I was able to examine the immediate perceptions of meaningfulness following a distressing work event, as well as subsequent engagement after the event.

Finally, in Study 3, I used experience sampling methodology in a hospital setting. I surveyed a sample of hospital nurses twice a day about distress they encountered during their shifts, and their reactions to such experiences. Building on Study 2, this study enabled me to capture the day-to-day experience of nurses and to minimize retrospective sensemaking about the meaningfulness of distress that they encounter.

### **Pilot Study**

I collected a pilot study to empirically validate some theoretical assumptions underlying my model. I have argued that distressing events that workers experience on the job vary both in terms of whether or not they correspond to workers' role meaning archetypes, as well as whether they are perceived as meaningful in the moment. In this study, I used the critical incident



technique in which participants recall a specific type of event and describe it in detail, then fill out measures assessing their reactions to the event (Flanagan, 1954). This technique has been shown to be a valid and effective way to assess perceptions and emotional reactions to incidents, particularly for discrete, real events that may not happen regularly (Mitchell et al., 2015).

Additionally, I used the pilot study as a provisional test of the relationships between variables in my model, such as whether correspondence between a role meaning archetype and a distressing event is associated with higher work meaningfulness and work engagement.

## **Method**

### ***Participants***

I recruited 161 employed (full or part-time) adults from Amazon Mechanical Turk (Mturk). Ten participants were excluded from the analyses for either failing one or more attention checks or providing a response to the writing prompt that was irrelevant or did not follow instructions, resulting in a usable sample size of 151 participants ( $M_{age} = 39.93$ ,  $SD = 10.19$ ; 48.34% female).

### ***Procedure***

I first asked participants to describe a recent distressing work event that they encountered. In line with my conceptualization of distressing work events, I instructed participants that “We are interested in different types of work experiences. Specifically, we would like you to *recall a recent situation or event at work that was emotionally draining or painful,*” and asked that they take a moment to think about and picture the event before describing it in a few sentences as if they were recounting it as a story. Participants then completed scales related to focal study measures (e.g., activated occupational identity, emotional ambivalence, work meaningfulness,

work engagement) as well as some secondary measures (e.g., challenge and hindrance appraisal) and demographics.

### ***Measures***

Unless otherwise stated, participants responded to items on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*).

**Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence.** I operationalized the perceived correspondence of an event with an individual's role meaning archetype using three items. Participants read the stem "Many people view their jobs as fulfilling some purpose or significance, often informed by popular or culturally-shared narratives. Events you experience may align with those expectations or not. To what extent did this event you just described..." and responded to three items: "Align with your existing narrative about the purpose of your work?", "Conform with the story you tell about the significance of your work?", "Fit your narrative about what makes your work valuable and worthwhile?" ( $\alpha = .95$ ).

**Activated Occupational Identity.** I assessed the extent to which participants had an activated occupational identity during the experience using four items developed by Jennings and colleagues (2021). A sample item is "I saw myself as representing my occupation" ( $\alpha = .93$ )

**Emotional Ambivalence.** Following common practice in the literature (e.g., Fong, 2006), I measured the extent to which participants felt mixed or ambivalent emotions during the experience in two ways. First, as a subjective measure, participants completed four items by Berrios and colleagues (2015). A sample item is "I felt different emotions at the same time" ( $\alpha = .97$ ). Second, as an objective measure of emotional ambivalence, participants completed the ten-item PANAS-X (MacKinnon et al., 1999) about the extent to which they felt various positive emotions (five items; e.g., "inspired", "alert";  $\alpha = .76$ ) and negative emotions (five items; e.g.,

“afraid”, “upset”;  $\alpha = .87$ ). This was converted into a measure of emotional ambivalence using the procedure originated by Carstensen et al (2000) and detailed by Hershfield and colleagues (2008; 2010).

**Work Meaningfulness.** Participants rated how meaningful the event felt during the experience using three items from Spreitzer (1995). A sample item is “My job activities were personally meaningful to me.” ( $\alpha = .97$ )

**Work Engagement.** I asked participants to rate how engaged they felt in their jobs after the experience using six items from Rich and colleagues (2010). Sample items include, “I exerted a lot energy on my job,” “I was excited about my job,” and “I was absorbed by my job” ( $\alpha = .92$ ).

#### *Measures to Rule Out Alternative Explanations*

**Challenge and Hindrance Appraisals of Event.** Participants also rated the extent to which they appraised the experience as either a challenge or hindrance using single-items from Pearsall and colleagues (2009). For challenge appraisal, participants rated the extent to which “I really felt challenged by this experience.” For hindrance appraisal, participants rated the extent to which “Aspects of this experience hindered my ability to succeed.”

**Event Unexpectedness and Frequency.** I asked participants how unexpected the event was using a single item: “To what extent would you say the experience you described was unexpected or surprising?” Additionally, I asked how common the event was using a single-item: “How frequently does an event like this happen to people in your role?” (1 = *never*, 7 = *always*).

#### **Results**

Means, standard deviations, and correlations are summarized in Table 2.

First, I looked at the variation in both the role meaning archetype correspondence and work meaningfulness constructs. As all participants were describing distressing work events, sufficient dispersion on these constructs would provide support for my assumptions that such experiences vary in terms of both their archetype correspondence and experienced meaningfulness. As shown in Figures 2 and 3, the distressing work events that participants recalled varied significantly in terms of how much they corresponded to individual's role meaning archetype and how meaningful the event felt. While this study design does not allow for parsing participant's in-the-moment experience, it does provide support for my contention that distressing work events range in terms of their archetype correspondence and their meaningfulness to workers.

Results also provided provisional support for the hypothesized relationships in my model. Distressing workplace events that more strongly corresponded to role meaning archetypes significantly and positively associated with an activated occupational identity ( $r = .63, p < .001$ ), the objective operationalization of emotional ambivalence (Hershfield:  $r = .22, p = .006$ ), work meaningfulness ( $r = .59, p < .0001$ ), and work engagement ( $r = .41, p < .001$ ). The only nonsignificant correlation was between role meaning archetype correspondence and the subjective emotional ambivalence measure from Berrios and colleagues (2015), but the correlation was still positive and nearly significant at the  $p = .05$  level ( $r = .16, p = .050$ ).

Importantly, role meaning archetype correspondence also demonstrated relatively low or nonsignificant correlations with potential confounds. For challenge appraisals, archetype correspondence was significantly correlated ( $r = .16, p = .049$ ) which suggests some conceptual overlap, but is relatively low and indicative that archetype correspondence and challenge appraisals are distinct constructs. As expected, archetype correspondence was not significantly

correlated with hindrance appraisals ( $r = -.01, p = .907$ ). Additionally, archetype correspondence did not seem to reflect that the events were unexpected ( $r = .06, p = .473$ ) or infrequent ( $r = .11, p = .183$ )

There was also provisional support for the hypothesized relationships between the other focal variables in my model. Activated occupational identity was positively and significantly correlated with both work meaningfulness ( $r = .56, p < .001$ ) and work engagement ( $r = .40, p < .001$ ). Similarly, both operationalizations of emotional ambivalence were positively and significantly correlated with both work meaningfulness and work engagement ( $ps < .05$ ). As expected, work meaningfulness also strongly correlated with work engagement ( $r = .57, p < .001$ ).

#### ***Provisional Path Analysis.***

Finally, I used path analysis to assess whether there was provisional support for my theoretical model. As all participants described a distressing work event, I could not conduct a formal test of the model, as there was not a control group or variation in the independent variable (distressing work event). However, in line with prior work on perceived fit (e.g., Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005), I used the role meaning archetype correspondence variable in analysis as the empirical operationalization of the interaction between distressing work event and role meaning archetype in my model, as it represents the participants' assessment of the extent to which the event and role meaning archetype correspond to each other. In the path model, I used the objective operationalization of emotional ambivalence, allowed residuals between mediators to covary, and included direct paths between predictor, mediators, and dependent variables, creating a just-identified model.

Prior to conducting tests of my hypotheses, I conducted a confirmatory factor analysis for the proposed factor structure of my focal model variables, using the objective operationalization of emotional ambivalence and allowing covariance between items for each of the three facets of work engagement (e.g., the two absorption items) to account for the latent factors underlying work engagement. Results demonstrated good fit to the data for the five-factor solution ( $\chi^2[136] = 2869.09, p < .001$ ; CFI = .981, RMSEA = .056, SRMR = .046) (Hu and Bentler 1999), and each item loaded on its intended construct ( $p < .001$ ).

Moving to the provisional test of my hypotheses, results provided support for my predictions. Supporting Hypothesis 1, the extent to which a distressing work event corresponded to a participants' role meaning archetype predicted higher perceptions of work meaningfulness ( $b = .39, SE = .08, p < .001$ ). Following Edwards and Lambert (2007), results from 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals based on 5,000 bootstrapped samples provided support for Hypotheses 2 and 3, indicating that occupational identity activation and emotional ambivalence mediated the effect of archetype correspondence on work meaningfulness (activated occupational identity:  $effect = .16, SE = .07, 95\% CI_{BC} [.045, .304]$ ; emotional ambivalence:  $effect = .05, SE = .02, 95\% CI_{BC} [.014, .115]$ ), as well as the effect on work engagement (activated occupational identity:  $effect = .06, SE = .03, 95\% CI_{BC} [.018, .125]$ ; emotional ambivalence:  $effect = .02, SE = .01, 95\% CI_{BC} [.004, .047]$ )

### **Pilot Study Discussion.**

In sum, while not providing a formal test of my model, this pilot study affirmed two of my key assumptions: that distressing work events range in their correspondence to an individual's role meaning archetype as well as how meaningful they appear. It also provided initial support for the relationships I hypothesize in my model.

## Study 1

The purpose of Study 1 was to build on the promising findings from my pilot study and allow for a full test of my theoretical model and hypotheses. In this study, I followed the same overall design as the pilot study but included comparison conditions in which participants were assigned to recall and describe either an emotionally neutral control event or an emotionally gratifying event (to be used for secondary analyses). The inclusion of a control condition with random assignment enabled me to formally test my predictions. Additionally, the inclusion of an emotionally gratifying condition allowed me to compare how role meaning archetype correspondence might differentially impact the effect of alternatively-valenced events on work meaningfulness and work engagement.

### Method

#### *Participants*

I recruited 297 employed (full or part-time) adults from Amazon Mturk for this study. 13 participants were excluded who reported not having a role meaning archetype to allow for potential variance on the role meaning archetype correspondence moderator for all participants. Additionally, four participants were excluded for describing an event that did not align with their condition's instructions (either describing an event misaligned with the emotional content or describing a non-work-related event). This left a final sample of 280 participants ( $M_{age} = 45.48$  years,  $SD = 10.37$ ; 45.71% female).

#### *Procedure*

In Study 1, I used the critical incident technique combined with random assignment to experimental condition, as detailed by Wellman and colleagues (2016). In this design, I randomly assigned participants to recall and rate their reactions to one of three events: (1) a

distressing work event, (2) an emotionally neutral work event, or (3) an emotionally gratifying work event. To minimize common-method variance, the study was split into two surveys, taken one day apart. In the first survey, participants were asked a few questions about their job role and then documented their role meaning archetype by responding to the following open-ended question: “Many people view their job roles as fulfilling some meaning or significance (either to themselves or others), often informed by popular or culturally-shared narratives, which we refer to as a person’s role meaning archetype. As an example, a doctor might see their role meaning archetype as “caring for the sick” or a school bus driver might have “keeping children safe” as their archetype. In a few sentences, what is the mental image you have for what makes your work role valuable or worthwhile? What is it you do as part of your role that provides meaning?” If participants felt they had two archetypes, they were encouraged to document them both. Alternatively, if they felt their work did not provide any meaning, they were told to state so with a short explanation. Finally, participants rated the extent to which they personally endorsed the archetype they described.

In the second survey, participants were assigned to either the distressing work event, emotionally neutral work event, or emotionally gratifying work event condition and were instructed: “We are interested in different types of work experiences. Specifically, we would like you to recall a recent situation or event at work from the past month that was emotionally straining/emotionally neutral (provoking no emotions one way or another)/emotionally gratifying). Please limit your recollection to experiences you encountered as part of your role or in the nature of your work activities. Take a moment to really think about and picture the event, almost as if you are living it again right now. Below, please describe in 3-4 sentences as if you are telling a story to a friend or family member about what happened.” After describing their



assigned type of event, participants completed psychological measures and answered demographic questions.

### ***Measures***

**Manipulation Checks.** For manipulation checks, I asked participants “To what extent was the event you just described emotionally distressing?” and “To what extent was the event you just described emotionally gratifying?” These items were scored on a seven-point scale from 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *very much*.

**Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence.** The correspondence of the event to an individual’s role meaning archetype was measured using three items ( $\alpha = .97$ ) adapted from my pilot study<sup>3</sup>, scored on a seven-point scale from 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *very much*. The items were prefaced with the statement: “Many people view their job roles as fulfilling some meaning or significance (either to themselves or others), which we refer to as a person’s role meaning archetype. In yesterday’s survey, you documented the archetype you have for what makes your work role valuable or worthwhile, which is presented below. Reflecting on your role meaning archetype presented above, to what extent did the event you just described...” followed by the following three items: “Correspond to your mental image about the purpose of your work role as shown above?”, “Coincide with your existing narrative about the significance of your work role as shown above?”, and “Align with the story you tell about what makes your work role valuable and worthwhile as shown above?”

---

<sup>3</sup> As the measure of role meaning archetype correspondence was developed for this dissertation, I conducted a supplemental construct validation study that is presented in Appendix F. Results supported the validity of the measure as it demonstrated strong, positive relations with theoretically relevant orbital variables (challenge appraisal, identity fusion, integrated regulation), but was sufficiently distinct from these constructs as demonstrated by confirmatory factor analysis. Additionally, the measure showed weaker or nonsignificant relations with theoretically unrelated variables (hindrance appraisal, innovative behavior, reciprocal interdependence).

**Activated Occupational Identity.** I measured perceptions of activated occupational identity during the event using an adapted version of the four-item measure by Jennings and colleagues (2021) from my pilot study, scored on a seven-point scale from 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *very much* ( $\alpha = .94$ ). As my model is about self-perceptions of an activated occupational identity, I modified the fourth item “Other people saw me as representing my occupation” to be “I was aware that I was representing my occupation.”

**Emotional Ambivalence.** Following prior work on ambivalence (e.g., Fong, 2006), I measured the extent to which participants felt emotional ambivalence during the event using both a subjective and objective measure. As a subjective measure, participants completed the measure by Berrios and colleagues (2015) used in my pilot study ( $\alpha = .98$ ). As an objective measure, participants completed the twenty-item PANAS (MacKinnon et al., 1999) about the extent to which they felt various positive and negative emotions during the event ( $\alpha_{PA} = .94$ ;  $\alpha_{NA} = .94$ ). Both measures were scored on a seven-point scale from 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *very much*. The PANAS items were converted into two different operationalizations of emotional ambivalence, given that both are used in the literature. For the first operationalization, I used the same procedure as the pilot study that is described by Hershfield and colleagues (2008; 2010) to convert the PANAS items into a measure of emotional ambivalence. For the second operationalization, I followed the procedure outlined in Thompson et al (1995) based on the Similarity-Intensity Model (SIM) of Ambivalence. In the SIM measure of emotional ambivalence, ambivalence is operationalized with the following formula:  $(C + D)/2 - (D - C)$ , where D is the highest rated emotion of either PA or NA, and C is the lower rating. Higher scores on this rating reflected the co-occurrence of high levels of both emotions, whereas more negative scores reflect a high score on one rating and a low score on the other.

**Work Meaningfulness.** Work meaningfulness was measured using an adapted version of the three-item measure ( $\alpha = .98$ ) by Spreitzer (1995). Participants rated how meaningful their work felt during the event on a seven-point scale from 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *very much*. Items are “The work I was doing felt very important to me,” “My job activities at the time felt personally meaningful to me,” and “The work I was doing felt meaningful to me.”

**Work Engagement.** I measured how engaged participants felt after the event using an adapted version of the six-item measure ( $\alpha = .90$ ) by Rich and colleagues (2010), scored on a seven-point scale from 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *very much*. The items were prefaced with the question: “To what extent do each of the following describe how you felt after the experience you described (i.e., within a few hours)?” Sample items include, “I was exerting a lot energy on my job,” “I felt excited about my job,” and “I was absorbed by my job”

**Controls.** Given that this experiment utilizes random assignment, my focal analyses were performed without controls but I conducted secondary analyses including the controls to assess the robustness of my findings. First, I controlled for the extent to which participants personally endorsed their role meaning archetype. I asked participants to indicate how strongly they endorsed the archetype they described “To what extent do you personally endorse the archetype(s) you just described?” (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*).

Next, based on potential conceptual overlap between archetype correspondence and the appraisal of stressors as a challenge or hindrance (although my pilot study suggested this overlap was minimal), I used the same single-item measures of challenge and hindrance appraisals as the pilot, from work by Pearsall and colleagues (2009), scored on a seven-point scale from 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *very much*. For challenge appraisal, participants rated the extent to which “I really felt challenged by this experience.” For hindrance appraisal, participants rated the extent to which

“Aspects of this experience hindered my ability to succeed.” Additionally, based on prior research that experienced and novice employees respond differently to work stressors (Shirom et al., 2008), I also explored occupational tenure as a covariate.

### **Analytical Strategy**

For Hypothesis 1, I conducted OLS regression of work meaningfulness on the predictors of event type and role meaning archetype correspondence. My primary tests focused on comparing emotionally distressing events compared to emotionally neutral events as control. A comparison against the emotionally gratifying condition was done as secondary analysis. For Hypotheses 2A– 3B, I conducted path analysis, which allows for the simultaneous test of hypotheses, in two steps. First, I fit a model with the focal variables of my model. In the second step, I fit the same model with controls. Such an approach helps avoid issues with statistical control such as common method variance and validating that any relationships between focal variables are not artifacts of the control variables (Becker et al., 2016; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, and Podsakoff, 2003). I used 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals ( $CI_{BC}$ ) with 5,000 bootstrapped samples (Edwards & Lambert, 2007) and assessed moderated mediation by assessing if the indirect effect of interest is significant at high levels (+1 SD) of archetype correspondence but not at low (-1 SD), or vice versa (Preacher et al., 2006).

### **Results**

I present descriptive statistics and correlations in Table 3, as well as means for dependent variables by condition in Table 4.

#### ***Manipulation Checks***

As expected, participants in the distressing event condition rated the experience they described as significantly more distressing ( $M = 6.13, SD = 0.97$ ) than did participants in the

emotionally neutral event condition ( $M = 1.46, SD = 1.10, t(185) = 30.64, p < .001$ ) and participants in the emotionally gratifying event condition ( $M = 2.00, SD = 1.50, t(181) = 22.07, p < .001$ ). Additionally, as predicted for secondary analyses, participants in the emotionally gratifying event condition rated the experience they described as significantly more gratifying emotionally ( $M = 6.51, SD = 0.83$ ) than did participants in the distress event condition ( $M = 1.86, SD = 1.43, t(181) = 26.95, p < .001$ ) and participants in the emotionally neutral event condition ( $M = 2.18, SD = 1.66, t(188) = 22.61, p < .001$ ).

### ***Hypothesis 1***

To test my first hypothesis, I assessed whether event type (0 = *emotionally neutral work event*, 1 = *distressing work event*) and role meaning archetype correspondence had a significant interaction in predicting work meaningfulness. Counter to my prediction and as depicted in Figure 4, there was not a significant interaction between event type and role meaning archetype correspondence on work meaningfulness ( $b = -0.06, SE = .12, p = .638$ ). In terms of main effects, the effect of event type on meaningfulness was not significant ( $b = .744, SE = .62, p = .232$ ), but the effect of correspondence to role meaning archetype was significant ( $b = .52, SE = .09, p < .001$ ). Secondary analyses including control variables (challenge and hindrance stressors, endorsement of role meaning archetype, occupational tenure) did not qualitatively differ in their conclusions. Thus, while role meaning archetype correspondence did not appear to impact the relationship between event type and work meaningfulness, high correspondence between event and role meaning archetype led to higher perceived meaningfulness of the event to participants, whether the event was distressing or emotionally neutral.

### ***Hypotheses 2 and 3***

Prior to conducting tests of my remaining hypotheses, I conducted three confirmatory factor analyses for the proposed factor structure of my focal model variables, one for each operationalization of emotional ambivalence (e.g., Berrios et al., Thompson et al., Hershfield et al.), allowing covariance between the paired items for each of the three facets of work engagement (e.g., the two absorption items) to account for the latent subfactors underlying the construct. Results for all three iterations of the model demonstrated adequate fit to the data for the five-factor solutions (Berrios et al.:  $\chi^2[190] = 4971.39$ ,  $p < .001$ ; CFI = .967, RMSEA = .073, SRMR = .063; Hershfield et al.:  $\chi^2[136] = 3458.87$ ,  $p < .001$ ; CFI = .956, RMSEA = .086, SRMR = .057; Thompson et al.:  $\chi^2[136] = 3473.31$ ,  $p < .001$ ; CFI = .953, RMSEA = .089, SRMR = .057) (Hu and Bentler 1999), and each item loaded on its intended construct ( $p < .001$ ).

Beginning with Hypothesis 2, which predicted a conditional indirect effect of event type on work meaningfulness via an activated occupational identity (H2A) and emotional ambivalence (H2B), moderated by role meaning archetype correspondence, results did not support my predictions. As shown in Table 5 for the model featuring the Berrios et al. subjective measure of emotional ambivalence, there was not a significant interaction of event type and role meaning archetype correspondence on either activated occupational identity ( $b = -0.11$ ,  $SE = .10$ ,  $p = .273$ ) or emotional ambivalence ( $b = -.11$ ,  $SE = .12$ ,  $p = .371$ ). Conditional indirect effects of event type on work meaningfulness at high (+1 SD) and low (-1 SD) values of archetype correspondence presented in Table 6 similarly did not show any significant indirect effects at either level of the moderator as the 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals all included 0.<sup>4</sup> Corresponding results for the other operationalizations of emotional ambivalence presented in Tables 7-10 revealed the same pattern of results and lack of support for Hypothesis 2A and 2B.

---

<sup>4</sup> All tests of conditional indirect effects in this dissertation used this same analytical approach.

Secondary analyses including control variables did not differ in any substantive conclusions across all models.

Similarly, results testing Hypothesis 3, which predicted a conditional serial indirect effect of event type on work engagement via an activated occupational identity (H3A) and emotional ambivalence (H3B) and work meaningfulness, moderated by role meaning archetype correspondence, did not support predictions. As shown in Table 6, there were not any significant serially mediated effects on work engagement at high (+1 SD) or low (-1 SD) values of role meaning archetype correspondence. As with the tests for Hypothesis 2, results from tests of models using controls and alternate operationalizations of emotional ambivalence did not qualitatively differ in their conclusions.

#### ***Secondary Analyses: Comparing Distressing and Emotionally Gratifying Events***

I conducted an additional set of analyses comparing the distressing event condition to the emotionally gratifying event condition, rather than the emotionally neutral event condition. The goal was to assess how the experience of distressing events and role meaning archetype correspondence might differ from events that are typically experienced as meaningful in the moment, rather than emotionally neutral events which were used as a neutral comparison.

As depicted in Figure 5, results were similar to the focal analyses in showing a lack of a significant interaction between event type (0 = *emotionally gratifying*, 1 = *distressing*) and role meaning archetype correspondence on work meaningfulness ( $b = -0.08$ ,  $SE = .14$ ,  $p = .536$ ) and a lack of significant effect of event type ( $b = -.07$ ,  $SE = .78$ ,  $p = .928$ ). However, results again showed a significant positive effect of role meaning archetype correspondence on work meaningfulness ( $b = .55$ ,  $SE = .11$ ,  $p < .001$ ). To the extent that a distressing or emotionally

gratifying event corresponded to a participant's role meaning archetype, that event was perceived to be more meaningful.

I also examined conditional indirect effects of event type on work meaningfulness and work engagement via an activated occupational identity and emotional ambivalence. Results for the secondary path analyses are presented in Tables 11-16<sup>5</sup>. Results for the conditional indirect effects via emotional ambivalence did not meaningfully differ from the focal analyses as the interaction between role meaning archetype correspondence and event type was not significant for any of the three operationalizations of emotional ambivalence ( $ps > .491$ ) and the bias-corrected confidence intervals for all mediated and serially mediated indirect effects included 0 at both high (+1 SD) and low (-1 SD) values of role meaning archetype correspondence.

However, for the conditional indirect effects via activated occupational identity, there was a significant interaction between event type and role meaning archetype correspondence ( $b = -.31, SE = .11, p = .007$ ; *Note: this estimate did not vary based on emotional ambivalence operationalizations*). As shown in Tables 12, 14, and 16, the indirect effects on work meaningfulness and work engagement via an activated occupational identity for all three models were not significant at low levels (-1 SD) of role meaning archetype correspondence, but were significant and negative at high levels (+1 SD). This pattern suggests that, compared to emotionally gratifying events, distressing events that correspond to a participant's role meaning archetype actually can indirectly reduce meaningfulness and work engagement via their effect on participant's activated occupational identity. However, the lack of interaction of event type and archetype correspondence on work meaningfulness and work engagement generally suggests that

---

<sup>5</sup> Secondary analyses including control variables (challenge and hindrance stressors, endorsement of role meaning archetype, occupational tenure) either in isolation or combined did not qualitatively differ in their conclusions.



correspondence did not meaningfully change the overall relationship between event type and those outcomes.

### **Study 1 Discussion**

Study 1 provided limited support for my theoretical model as results did not demonstrate a significant interaction between event type and role meaning archetype correspondence on work meaningfulness or work engagement, although the direct effect of role meaning archetype correspondence did offer a form of “buffering” that is consistent with my theorizing. Across distressing, emotionally gratifying, and emotionally neutral events, correspondence of an event with a participant’s role meaning archetype predicted higher perceived meaningfulness, which then increased work engagement. One potential reason for the lack of support for my predictions in the study can be seen in the Figure 6, which shows that a large proportion of participants in the distressing event condition (45 out of 90) rated their experience as highly or extremely meaningful (i.e., a rating  $\geq 6$  on a 1 to 7 scale), despite efforts in the study design to have participants reflect on how they felt in the moment. While my theoretical model argues that distressing events can be experienced as meaningful in the moment, these results suggest a likely high amount of post-hoc sensemaking of the distressing event.

### **Study 2**

To address the limitations of the critical incident technique retrospective design as it relates to work meaningfulness, Study 2 brought participants into the lab environment to capture real-time experiences of distress and meaningfulness that may better capture this phenomenon and offer a more appropriate test of my predictions. In this study, undergraduate business students were trained and socialized into one of two occupational roles, a wellness support role or a technical support role. The wellness support role was designed to prominently feature a role

meaning archetype that would correspond to a distressing work event that the participants would encounter in the lab, and the technical support role had a role meaning archetype that did not correspond to the distressing lab event. By having participants encounter the same type of distressing work event that only differed in the correspondence to the meaning archetype of their respective roles, this study offered a strong causal test of my model. Based on Hypotheses 1-3, I expected that the distressing work event that corresponded to their role's meaning archetype for participants in the wellness support role (compared to the technical support role) would sustain or even increase perceptions of work meaningfulness and allow those participants to be more engaged in a post-event work task.

## **Method**

### ***Participants***

Participants were 389 business undergraduate students at a large Southeastern university who completed the study in exchange for course credit. I excluded 12 participants from analyses for failing both attention checks during the survey portion of the study, leaving a final sample of 377 participants ( $M_{age} = 20.30$  years,  $SD = 0.95$ ; 48.28% female).

### ***Procedure***

This experiment employed a 2 (role meaning archetype correspondence: corresponding wellness peer support role vs non-corresponding technical peer support role) x 2 (event type: distressing event vs control) between-subjects design.

**Pre-Experiment Pilot Studies.** To aid in the design of my experiment stimulus materials, I adapted the procedure used by Sluss and colleagues (2012) to inductively generate and subsequently validate contextually-accurate role meaning archetypes for the two roles (wellness and technical peer support) in my experiment. In the first step, I recruited a sample of

44 employed technical support (e.g., IT support staff) and wellness support (e.g., mental health, counseling) professionals (26 technical support participants, 18 wellness support participants) using a combination of personal networks, snowball sampling, and recruitment from the Prolific research platform (19 came from personal networks/snowball sampling, 25 came from Prolific who were compensated \$.75 for their participation). As in Study 1, I asked participants to define their role meaning archetype, that is, the “mental image (they) have for what makes (their) work valuable or worthwhile.” After excluding the responses of six technical support workers who reported not having an archetype, I reviewed participants’ responses and looked for common themes within each role to inductively generate the two archetypes. For the wellness support workers, the common role meaning archetype was *facilitating mental health, healing, and growth by listening and providing support*. In contrast, for the technical support workers, the common role meaning archetype was *supporting organizations and allowing others to strive towards valuable work goals by providing technical solutions*. Example responses for each role are included in Table 17.

The next step was to validate these role-meaning archetypes by assessing whether an independent sample of technical support and wellness support professionals agreed that the inductively generated archetype for their role aligned with their archetype they held personally and the archetype for the alternate role did not. I collected a larger follow-up sample of 100 technical and wellness support professionals (53 technical support participants, 47 wellness support participants) from Prolific ( $M_{age} = 36.79$  years,  $SD = 10.12$ ; 55% female). Participants were provided the two role meaning archetypes from the prior step in counterbalanced order and were asked, “To what extent does the following match what you see as the fundamental purpose of your work role that makes it valuable and worthwhile?” (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*). As

expected, wellness support participants more strongly felt that the wellness role meaning archetype aligned with their own narrative about their role ( $M = 6.23$ ,  $SD = .96$ ) than did technical support participants ( $M = 3.09$ ,  $SD = 1.64$ ;  $t(98) = 11.47$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Similarly, the technical support role meaning archetype more strongly aligned with the narratives of IT participants ( $M = 5.75$ ,  $SD = 1.12$ ) than for wellness participants ( $M = 4.21$ ,  $SD = 1.74$ ;  $t(98) = 5.31$ ,  $p < .001$ ). These results confirm the validity of the inductively generated role meaning archetypes for technical and wellness support roles that are used in the stimulus materials for Study 2 by showing that each archetype more strongly corresponds to the archetype of professionals in the applicable role, but correspond to a lesser extent for professionals in the alternate role.

**Lab Experiment.** The cover story for the experiment was that participants were helping to pilot and review the quality of training materials for a new peer-to-peer support program for students of the business school (“PEERSUPPORT”), which is similar to other programs at the university. As part of the pilot, students were informed they would be listening and responding to an actual voicemail from a student caller after the training. While it was important for ecological validity to establish this sense of realism, I took several steps to minimize any anxiety participants might feel associated with this task, including providing reassurance that participant responses would be reviewed by an administrator before being sent to a caller, all callers had been pre-screened for any urgent or high-risk issues, and that the participant was not expected to have any expertise or to dispense medical advice on mental health

Students were randomly assigned to either a technical peer support role (“TECH PEERSUPPORT”) or a wellness peer support role (“WELLNESS PEERSUPPORT”) and given a role overview. For the technical role, their job was to help students resolve, or find resources for,

issues they might face with common technologies used in the business school. They were specifically told that managing student wellness issues was not a focus of their technical support role. For the wellness role, their job was to help students foster and maintain wellness for common issues they might face as students, including directing them to appropriate resources. Participants received a brief training as to the expectations and procedure for their role, which was held consistent across conditions: (1) clarify the issue, (2) suggest a few approaches to resolve, (3) provide an FAQ document related to the issue if one is available, and (4) if the issue is not resolved, direct the student to the appropriate resource, either the school wellness staff or the IT help desk.

Participants then received the manipulation related to their role meaning archetype, which was based on the pre-experiment pilot studies. They were told that it was important that they know the importance of their assigned role. For the technical role, they were told:

“Kenan-Flagler Business School students rely on technology in order to complete assignments and communicate with prospective employers. As a TECH PEERSUPPORT worker, you provide crucial technical support for other students to work towards these goals. By helping fix their technical problems, you are providing important support that enables the students, and the business school organization more generally, to function. Without your work in this role, students may be inhibited in their ability to complete technical tasks that help them to succeed in the classroom or in their jobs.”

For the wellness role, participants were told:

“Kenan-Flagler Business School students face a lot of pressure academically, professionally, and socially. As a WELLNESS PEERSUPPORT, you facilitate student wellness, healing, and growth by listening and providing support. By allowing people to

feel heard and supported, you help alleviate psychological distress and help people to better understand themselves and others. Without your work in this role, students may be inhibited in their ability to find healing or support for challenges that they face.”

To reinforce the manipulation, participants were asked to describe the importance or meaningfulness associated with their peer support role. Additionally, participants were provided blank name tags at their desk in which they were asked to fill out their name and a summarized version of their archetype (technical role: ““My Work Matters Because I...support others’ work by fixing their technical problems”; wellness role: ““My Work Matters Because I...facilitate others’ wellness by listening and providing support” (see Figure 7). Participants wore the nametags throughout the remainder of the study as a visual reminder of their archetype.

After receiving their training and role meaning archetype manipulation, participants listened to a voicemail purportedly from a student caller, but was actually recorded by a professional voice actor. The voicemail was designed to be functionally applicable to either role (i.e., the caller’s issue was relevant to both a technical or wellness peer support worker), but it corresponded to the role meaning archetype of the wellness role and did not correspond to the archetype of the technical role. In the voicemail, the caller details their difficulty accessing some technical resources for a class project as well as how this issue fits within broader well-being issues they are experiencing (e.g., other competing priorities, limited time, stress). In this way, participants in either peer support role would see this call as applicable to their role, but that the central issue of the voicemail (the caller’s frustration and well-being issues stemming from this technical issue and other life circumstances) corresponded highly to the role meaning archetype of the wellness role (facilitating wellness by listening and providing support) but did not

correspond to the archetype of the technical role, which was strictly focused on resolving technical issues but not dealing with emotion and frustration from callers.

The voicemail also acted as a manipulation for distressing event. Participants were randomly assigned to hear one of two versions of the voicemail: a distressing version and a control version. In the distressing version, the caller's voice was highly emotional and their choice of words throughout emphasized the caller's frustration (e.g., "I am *really really* frustrated with this issue!" "This is coming at just the absolute worst time..." "I'm just really stuck mentally, tired and drained!") In contrast, the control version covered the same information but the caller expressed their issue in a calm, neutral tone and used phrases that were less emotionally fraught (e.g., "I am having some annoyances with this issue," "Things are a bit busy right now..." "I'm feeling a little stuck mentally.") After hearing the voicemail, participants were tasked with writing a 1-2 paragraph email response to the caller, after which they rated the experience of listening and responding to the event for all model variables except for work engagement. To measure post-event work engagement, participants were asked to document 3-4 bullet points related to internal next steps for the caller's issue, and then rated how engaged they were in this additional task before completing demographic questions. After the study was complete, participants were debriefed about the manipulation and purpose behind the study.

### ***Measures***

**Manipulation Checks.** For the distressing event manipulation check, I asked participants, "To what extent was the experience you had listening and responding to the student caller emotionally distressing?" For the manipulation check for role meaning archetype correspondence, I used the first item from the Study 1 role meaning archetype correspondence measure and asked participants, "To what extent did your experience today correspond with your

mental image about the purpose of the role?” Both items were scored on a seven-point scale from 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *very much*.

**Activated Occupational Identity.** I measured perceptions of activated occupational identity during the event using the same four-item measure as Study 1 ( $\alpha = .83$ ), adapted to be about the participant’s peer support role (e.g., “I noticed that I was displaying the characteristics of my peer support role.”)

**Emotional Ambivalence.** As with Study 1, I measured emotional ambivalence using both a four-item subjective measure by Berrios et al. (2015;  $\alpha = .95$ ) and two objective measure operationalizations. For the objective measure operationalizations, participants completed the ten-item PANAS-X (MacKinnon et al., 1999) about the extent to which they felt various positive and negative emotions while listening and responding to the student caller ( $\alpha_{PA} = .84$ ;  $\alpha_{NA} = .88$ ). These were converted into two different measures of emotional ambivalence using the procedures outlined in Hershfield et al (2008, 2010) and Thompson et al. (1995). respectively.

**Work Meaningfulness.** Work meaningfulness was measured using the same measure as Study 1 ( $\alpha = .95$ ), adapted to be about participants’ experience in the study (e.g., “Listening and responding to the student caller feels meaningful to me.”)

**Work Engagement.** I measured how engaged participants felt after the event using the same six-item measure from Study 1 ( $\alpha = .86$ ), adapted to be about participants’ experience crafting the follow-up items for the student caller (e.g., “I was absorbed by my work documenting the follow-up items.”)

**Controls.** As with Study 1, given that this experiment utilizes random assignment, my focal analyses were performed without controls but I conducted secondary analyses including the



controls to assess the robustness of my findings. I controlled for the appraisal of the event as a challenge or hindrance using the same single-item measures from Study 1.

### **Analytical Strategy**

For Hypothesis 1, I conducted a two-way ANOVA to examine the main effects and interaction effect of the event and role meaning archetype correspondence conditions. For Hypotheses 2 and 3, I conducted path analysis in two steps following Study 1 (first without controls, then with controls) and assessed moderated mediation by examining 95% bias corrected confidence intervals with 5,000 bootstrapped samples for the indirect effects of interests when the event corresponded to the role meaning archetype (wellness support role) and when it did not (technical support role).

### **Results**

I present descriptive statistics and correlations in Table 18, as well as means for dependent variables by condition in Table 19.

### ***Manipulation Checks***

As expected, an ANOVA on event distress showed that participants in the distressing events conditions perceived their experience as more distressing ( $M = 3.33, SD = 1.56$ ) than did participants in the control event conditions ( $M = 2.14, SD = 1.36$ ),  $F(1, 373) = 66.92, p < .001$ .<sup>6</sup> Similarly, results for the manipulation check related to archetype correspondence also followed expectations. Participants in the archetype-corresponding wellness role perceived their experience to more strongly correspond to their role meaning archetype ( $M = 4.80, SD = 1.18$ ) than did participants in the non-archetype corresponding technical role conditions ( $M = 4.18, SD = 1.38$ ),  $F(1, 373) = 21.63, p < .001$

---

<sup>6</sup> This effect was qualified by a significant interaction between event and role conditions,  $F(1, 373) = 8.63, p = .004$ . Post-hoc tests showed a significant effect of distressing event for both roles ( $ts > 3.98, ps < .001$ ).

### ***Hypothesis 1***

Supporting my first hypothesis, an ANOVA testing the effect of role meaning archetype correspondence and event type on work meaningfulness revealed a significant interaction  $F(1, 373) = 10.35, p = .001, \eta_p^2 = .027$ . There was also a significant effect of role meaning archetype correspondence  $F(1, 373) = 39.99, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .097$ , but no significant effect of event type  $F(1, 373) = 1.12, p = .291, \eta_p^2 = .003$ . As shown in Figure 8, participants in the archetype non-corresponding technical role perceived no difference in work meaningfulness between the distressing event ( $M = 3.75, SD = 1.63$ ) and the control event ( $M = 4.08, SD = 1.56$ ),  $t(188) = -1.44, p = .152$ ). In contrast, participants in the archetype corresponding wellness role found the distressing event as more meaningful ( $M = 5.23, SD = 4.55$ ) than the control event ( $M = 4.55, SD = 1.50$ ),  $t(185) = 3.21, p = .002$ . Results including the challenge and hindrance appraisals as controls were consistent with the above findings. Thus, we see that when there is correspondence between an event and a role meaning archetype, a distressing work experience can be perceived as even more meaningful than an emotionally neutral event. Absent the correspondence between event and archetype, participants were unable to find an experience of distress as more meaningful.

### ***Hypothesis 2***

As with Study 1, I conducted three confirmatory factor analyses for the proposed factor structure of my focal model variables, one for each operationalization of emotional ambivalence (e.g., Berrios et al., Thompson et al., Hershfield et al.), prior to conducting tests of Hypotheses 2 and 3. I allowed covariance between the paired items for each of the three facets of work engagement (e.g., the two absorption items) to account for the latent subfactors underlying the construct. Results for all three iterations of the model demonstrated good fit to the data for the

five-factor solutions (Berrios et al:  $\chi^2[136] = 4969.38$ ,  $p < .001$ ; CFI = .967, RMSEA = .062, SRMR = .052; Hershfield et al.:  $\chi^2[91] = 3289.22$ ,  $p < .001$ ; CFI = .969, RMSEA = .062, SRMR = .041; Thompson et al:  $\chi^2[91] = 3275.44$ ,  $p < .001$ ; CFI = .969, RMSEA = .061, SRMR = .040) (Hu and Bentler 1999), and each item loaded on its intended construct ( $p < .001$ ).

In contrast to the support for Hypothesis 1, results did not support Hypotheses 2A and 2B which predicted that the conditional effect of event type on work meaningfulness would be mediated by an activated occupational identity (H2A) and emotional ambivalence (H2B)<sup>7</sup>. As shown in Table 20 for the model featuring the Berrios et al. subjective measure of emotional ambivalence, there was not a significant interaction of event type and role meaning archetype correspondence on either activated occupational identity ( $b = -0.11$ ,  $SE = .21$ ,  $p = .616$ ) or emotional ambivalence ( $b = -.42$ ,  $SE = .31$ ,  $p = .183$ ). As shown in the table of conditional indirect effects, Table 21, for the path via activated occupational identity, there was not a significant indirect effect for either the archetype-corresponding wellness support role (*indirect effect* = .10,  $SE = .11$ , 95%  $CI_{BC}[-.107, .317]$ ) or the non-archetype corresponding technical support role (*indirect effect* = .02,  $SE = .12$ , 95%  $CI_{BC}[-.228, .259]$ ). For the path via emotional ambivalence, there was not a significant indirect effect for the archetype-corresponding wellness support role (*indirect effect* = .03,  $SE = .03$ , 95%  $CI_{BC}[-.004, .116]$ ), but there was a significant positive indirect effect for the non-archetype corresponding technical support role (*indirect effect* = .08,  $SE = .04$ , 95%  $CI_{BC} [.011, .183]$ ). While the serial indirect effects via emotional ambivalence for the roles differed in significance levels, the effects themselves were not significantly different from each other (*difference in indirect effects* = -.04,  $SE = .04$ , 95%  $CI_{BC}[-$

---

<sup>7</sup> Secondary analyses including control variables did not differ in any substantive conclusions for Hypotheses 2 and 3 across all models. Additionally, alternate models using the other operationalizations of emotional ambivalence presented in Tables 22-25 revealed the same general pattern of results.

.151,.009]), suggesting a lack of moderation by role meaning archetype correspondence.

However, the significant positive indirect effect for the technical support role – which was also nearly significant for the wellness support role – might be indicative that in support-type roles, distress can indirectly lead to work meaningfulness by heightening overall emotionality.

### ***Hypothesis 3***

Given the lack of significant interactions of event type and role meaning archetype correspondence on either activated occupational identity or emotional ambivalence, results provided limited support for Hypothesis 3 for the conditional serial indirect effect on work engagement. The pattern of conditional serial indirect effects followed the conditional indirect effects described for Hypothesis 2. For the path via activated occupational identity, there was not a significant indirect effect for either the archetype-corresponding wellness support role (*indirect effect* = .03, *SE* = .04, 95% *CI*<sub>BC</sub>[-.036,.114]) or the non-archetype corresponding technical support role (*indirect effect* = .01, *SE* = .04, 95% *CI*<sub>BC</sub>[-.080,.090]). For the path via emotional ambivalence, there was not a significant indirect effect for the archetype-corresponding wellness support role (*indirect effect* = .01, *SE* = .01, 95% *CI*<sub>BC</sub>[-.001,.040]), but there was a small significant positive indirect effect for the non-archetype corresponding technical support role (*indirect effect* = .03, *SE* = .01, 95% *CI*<sub>BC</sub> [.004,.063]).

While the tests of serial mediation via activated occupational identity and emotional ambivalence did not support my predictions, secondary analyses looking at the conditional indirect effect of event type on work engagement via work meaningfulness, moderated by role meaning archetype correspondence provided support for my overall theorizing. Specifically, for the archetype-corresponding wellness role, there was a significant indirect effect of distress on work engagement via work meaningfulness (*indirect effect* = .18, *SE* = .06, 95%

$CI_{BC}[-.067, .307]$ ). However, for the non-archetype corresponding technical support role, the indirect effect was significant and negative (*indirect effect* =  $-.14$ ,  $SE = .07$ ,  $95\% CI_{BC}[-.301, -.012]$ ). These effects were significantly different from each other (*difference in indirect effects* =  $.33$ ,  $SE = .10$ ,  $95\% CI_{BC} [.149, .535]$ )<sup>8</sup>. These results indicate that when a distressing event corresponds to a worker's role meaning archetype, that event can increase in-the-moment perceptions of meaningfulness and subsequently lead the worker to be more engaged. In contrast, when the distressing event does not correspond, the event can reduce how meaningful work feels in-the-moment and reduce work engagement.

## **Study 2 Discussion**

In contrast to Study 1, Study 2 provided support for several of my predictions. Using a carefully controlled lab design that experimentally manipulated both the distressing event and the participants' role meaning archetype, I showed that distressing events can lead to heightened perceptions of meaningfulness and post-event work engagement when the event corresponds to the narrative workers hold about the meaning of their work. When the event has little to do with the workers' role meaning archetype, distress at work can undercut perceptions of meaningfulness and harm work engagement. There was limited support for the predicted mediation through an activated occupational identity and emotional ambivalence, regardless of how emotional ambivalence was operationalized. This may be due to the artificial nature of the lab context in which participants are only temporarily assuming a given occupational identity and dealing with an event that, while more distressing than control, was limited in the extent to which it truly caused distress.

---

<sup>8</sup> Presented results are using the focal model with the Berrios et al., measure of emotional ambivalence, but results were substantively the same across all three operationalizations of emotional ambivalence.

### **Study 3**

The results of Study 2 supported the core tenets of my model related to the way in which role meaning archetype correspondence impacts the relationship between distressing work events, work meaningfulness, and work engagement. The final study of my dissertation sought to replicate these findings and find evidence for the predicted mechanisms of activated occupational identity and emotional ambivalence, using the real-world daily experiences of actual employees. To this end, I conducted an experience sampling methodology study with nurses in a hospital, which provided a highly ecologically valid context in which to study the relationship between distressing events and work meaningfulness. In this study, over two weeks, nurses completed two surveys a day for each shift they worked, reporting on the extent to which they encountered distress that shift, whether their shift experiences corresponded to their role meaning archetype (predefined by the nurse in their opt-in survey), and how meaningful they felt the experience was at that moment. This type of study design allowed me to capture the range of experiences that constitute a nurse's work week and importantly to capture nurses' proximate reactions to those experiences. As outlined in my model, I predicted that correspondence between an event and a nurse's role meaning archetype would buffer the negative relationship between distress, work meaningfulness, and work engagement.

#### **Method**

##### ***Participants and Procedure***

I recruited nurse participants from a large hospital system in the southeastern United States. Nurses were invited to participate via email with assistance from management and a nurse-oriented research council associated with the hospital. Interested nurses completed an opt-in survey consisting of a consent form and demographic variables. Eligibility for the study was

determined by whether the nurse worked at least three shifts during the two-week daily portion of the study, which began two weeks after the beginning of the recruitment period. A total of 78 nurses expressed interest in the study by completing the opt-in survey. Eight participants were removed from the sample, one for being ineligible due to working not enough shifts in the study period and seven withdrew in their first or second day of surveys, leaving 70 eligible participants. Consistent with best practices for the proper modeling of within-person variance (e.g., Gabriel et al., 2018; Singer & Willet, 2003), I retained participants who provided at least three complete days of surveys, leaving a final sample of 52 participants (74.3% retained), Participants in the final sample ( $M_{age} = 37.73$  years,  $SD = 12.48$ ; 92.31% female) provided 315 complete survey days out of 370 possible<sup>9</sup>, for a response rate of 85.1%. Participants had been employed as nurses for an average of 10.27 years ( $SD = 9.62$ ). Participants came from over 22 different nursing units (e.g., oncology, orthopedic/trauma, cardiothoracic intensive care, pediatric surgery) and a majority worked one of three types of shift schedules (58% worked a 9 or 12-hour day shift, 23% worked a 12-hour evening or night shift, and 19% rotated between shifts).

The daily portion of the study lasted two weeks. During this portion, I sent participants two surveys, a midshift survey and an end of shift survey, for each day they were scheduled to work during the period via a text message link. The midshift survey included measures related to distressing work experiences. The end of shift survey measured work engagement since the midshift survey. The timing of the two surveys varied based on which shift schedule the participant worked. For participants who worked the day shift (7am – 7pm), I sent the midshift survey at 12:00pm and the end of shift survey at 5:30pm. For participants who worked a modified day shift (approximately 8am – 5pm), I sent the midshift survey at 11:30am and the

---

<sup>9</sup> Due to the variable nature of shift work, the 370 potential survey day value is based on how many shifts the nurse participants indicated they worked during the study period. Nurses were only sent surveys on days they worked.

end of shift survey at 3:30pm. For participants who worked the night shift (7pm – 7am), I sent the midshift survey at 12:00am and the end of shift survey at 5:30am). For all surveys, nurses had two and a half hours to complete the survey, with a reminder automatically sent for those who had not completed it an hour before the survey closed. Participants were paid up to \$40, which was prorated based on percentage of complete survey days completed. As an additional incentive, participants who completed 2/3 of all daily surveys were entered into a drawing for one \$250 gift card.

### ***Role Meaning Archetype***

In a similar design to Study 1, participants documented their role meaning archetype in the opt-in survey, which was then displayed to them during the daily surveys when they assessed correspondence between their event and archetype. Participants were asked: “Many people view their job roles as fulfilling some meaning or significance (either to themselves or others), often informed by popular or culturally-shared narratives, which we refer to as a person’s role meaning archetype. As an example, a doctor might see their role meaning archetype as “caring for the sick” or a school bus driver might have “keeping children safe” as their archetype. In a few sentences, what is the mental image you have for what makes your work role valuable or worthwhile? What is it you do as part of your role that provides meaning? *Note: If you feel that you have two archetypes, feel free to document them both. Alternatively, if you feel your work does not provide any meaning to yourself or others, please write “N/A” with a short explanation as to why you feel this way.*”

### ***Daily Measures***

To limit cognitive burden on participants completing daily surveys, all daily measures used the same scale points (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*). Additionally, nurse management



requested that the daily surveys be kept as short as possible to minimize survey fatigue and any negative impact of twice daily surveys to the nurses' work. Thus, except for role meaning archetype correspondence and work meaningfulness, I shortened the scales used in the daily surveys following best practice recommendations (e.g., Beal, 2015; Gabriel et al., 2019; Matthews et al., 2022). Specifically, I first looked to whether there were any previously validated single or two-item measures for my model variables. When there was not an existing shortened scale, I looked to which items had the highest factor loadings and closest conceptual fit to the overall construct. I detail the measures below including the rationale by which I arrived at the shortened measure.

**Distressing Work Event.** In the midshift survey, I measured distressing events as the extent to which events occurring in the first half of a participant's shift were experienced as distressing. Specifically, participants were asked to rate this item, "So far today, my work has been distressing (e.g., generating some sort of negative emotional reaction)." This conceptualization is the most conceptually accurate practical representation of discrete events in a nursing context, given that distressing events are likely to co-occur and remain ongoing (e.g., multiple interactions with upset or sick patients) within a given timeframe. Nurses are assigned to a set of patients and cycle repeatedly through assisting them through various procedures. In this way, rather than experiencing discrete events, nurses more so have "performance episodes," where their days are experienced as a coherent series of temporally and thematically linked events divided by starts, stops, and pauses occurring during work (e.g., Beal et al., 2005; Beal & Weiss, 2018) with the natural division point between the work cycles occurring at the midpoint, where a break is often taken. Thus, I use the first half of the nurses' shift as a referent performance episode in which distressing events might have occurred. Operationalizing

distressing work events as a continuous measure enables me to account for the magnitude or levels of distress. However, for secondary analyses, I also asked participants if they experienced any specific events at work that were distressing (0 = *no*, 1 = *yes*). If participants indicated yes, they were asked to provide a brief qualitative description.

**Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence.** Using the three-item measure of role meaning archetype correspondence from Study 1, participants indicated the extent to which their work experience thus far corresponded to their role meaning archetype, which was presented to them from their opt-in survey ( $\alpha = .96$ )

**Activated Occupational Identity.** I measured perceptions of activated occupational identity in the midshift survey using two items from the adapted measure by Jennings and colleagues (2021) ( $\alpha = .96$ ). The two items that were chosen were “I notice that I have been displaying the characteristics of my role as a nurse,” and “I am aware that I have been representing my role as a nurse,” as they had the two highest factor loadings in the original validation work done by Lee Cunningham and colleagues (in press).

**Emotional Ambivalence.** I measure their current emotional ambivalence during the midshift survey using both a subjective and objective measure. For the subjective measure, I used the single-item measure by Fong (2006): “I am feeling a mixture of positive and negative emotions. For the objective measure, I collected a single item to represent each quadrant of the circumplex model of affect. For positive affect, one item represented the pleasant – high arousal quadrant “excited”, while the other represented the pleasant – low arousal quadrant (“content”). For negative affect, one item represented the unpleasant – high arousal quadrant (“angry”), while the other represented the unpleasant – low arousal quadrant (“bored”). I then used the two

alternate objective operationalizations of emotional ambivalence (Hershfield et al., 2008, 2010; Thompson et al., 1995) as detailed in the Study 1 methods.

**Work Meaningfulness.** In the midshift survey, participants rated how meaningful their work was so far that day using the three-item measure by Spreitzer (1995) that I have used in my prior studies ( $\alpha = .96$ ). A sample item is “My job activities feel personally meaningful to me.”

**Work Engagement.** In the end of shift survey, I measured post-event work engagement in using Rich and colleagues (2010) measure, selecting one item for each facet of engagement (i.e., physical, emotional, cognitive). Participants rated how engaged they had been since the midshift survey using the following three items ( $\alpha = .42$ ): “I am striving hard to complete my job,” “I am excited about my job,” and “I am absorbed by my job”

### **Controls**

In line with my prior studies, I collected three single-item controls to use in secondary analyses as a robustness check for my findings. In the midshift survey, participants rated to what extent they had appraised their work so far as a challenge (“I have really felt challenged by my work”) or a hindrance (“Aspects of my work have hindered my ability to succeed”).

Additionally, participants rated how unexpected or surprising their work had been so far.

### **Analytical Strategy**

As my data consists of daily observations nested within participants, I used multilevel path modeling in Mplus 8.8 (Múthen & Múthen, 1998-2017) to test my theoretical model. A null model confirmed that my outcome variables exhibited substantial within-person variance (activated occupational identity = 36.4%, subjective emotional ambivalence – Berrios et al. = 67.3%, objective emotional ambivalence – Hershfield et al. = 67.8%, objective emotional ambivalence – Thompson et al., = 65.1%, work meaningfulness = 37.6%, and work engagement

= 44.8%). All variables were modeled at Level 1 and I group-mean centered the predictors (distressing work experience and role meaning archetype correspondence) and control variables (challenge and hindrance appraisals, unexpectedness) to account for between-person differences (Enders & Tofighi, 2007; Hofmann et al., 2000). I modeled hypothesized paths with random slopes and all other paths with fixed slopes (e.g., Wang et al., 2011). For indirect effects, I used the procedure of Preacher, Zyphur, & Zhang (2010) and constructed bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals using Monte Carlo simulations with 20,000 iterations in R (Selig & Preacher, 2008). Moderation was assessed by analyzing the simple slopes of the indirect paths (Preacher et al., 2006) at high (+1 SD) and low (-1 SD) of role meaning archetype correspondence.

A multilevel confirmatory factor analysis of the multi-item measures in my model demonstrated that my proposed model fit the data well ( $\chi^2_{(38)} = 84.347, p < .001$ ; CFI = .955; RMSEA = .062; SRMR<sub>within</sub> = .052; SRMR<sub>between</sub> = .000). I also compared my model to an alternate model in which the work meaningfulness and work engagement items loaded onto one factor and all other items loaded into their respective factors. A Satorra-Bentler  $\chi^2$  difference test with the Maximum-Likelihood Restricted scaled correction factors (Satorra & Bentler, 2001) showed that the fit of this alternate model ( $\chi^2_{(36)} = 107.422, p < .001$ ; CFI = .935; RMSEA = .072; SRMR<sub>within</sub> = .061; SRMR<sub>between</sub> = .000) was significantly worse than my conceptual model ( $\Delta \chi^2 = 3, \Delta df = 16.24, p < .001$ ). Thus, I retained my proposed model.

## Results

Descriptive statistics are presented along with within- and between-person correlations for model variables in Table 26. Results from the focal model using the Fong (2006) measure of subjective emotional ambivalence are shown in Tables 27 and 28. Results from three sets of

alternate models are presented in Tables SA 1-8 in the Appendix E: (1) the focal model including control variables, (2) two alternate models using the objective operationalizations of emotional ambivalence (i.e., Hershfield et al., 2008/2010, Thompson et al., 1995), and (3) an alternate model using the binary predictor of distressing work event (0 = *no distressing event*, 1 = *distressing event*). Results from these alternate models did not qualitatively differ in their conclusions from the focal model.

### ***Hypothesis 1***

My first hypothesis proposed that correspondence between an event and a nurse's role meaning archetype would buffer the negative effect of distress on work meaningfulness. This hypothesis is contingent on a negative effect of distress on work meaningfulness. Although the bivariate within person relationship was significant in the expected direction ( $r = -.14$ ), the regression results showed that there was not a significant main effect of distressing work on work meaningfulness ( $\gamma = .01$ ,  $SE = .05$ ,  $p = .830$ ). Thus, results did not support Hypothesis 1. While there was a significant effect of role meaning archetype correspondence on in-the-moment work meaningfulness ( $\gamma = .35$ ,  $SE = .09$ ,  $p < .001$ ), there was no significant interaction of correspondence and distressing work on work meaningfulness ( $\gamma = .04$ ,  $SE = .05$ ,  $p = .358$ ). An examination of the simple slopes of the of the relationship between distressing work events and work meaningfulness at high (+1 SD) and low (-1 SD) levels of role meaning archetype correspondence (Preacher et al., 2006) confirmed the lack of effect of distressing work and a lack of interaction. At both high and low levels of correspondence, there was not a significant relationship between distressing work and work meaningfulness (High Correspondence:  $\gamma = .05$ ,  $SE = .07$ ,  $p = .452$ ; Low Correspondence:  $\gamma = -.03$ ,  $SE = .06$ ,  $p = .595$ ), although the effects were in the predicted directions as per my theory. These results mirror the results of the retrospective

Study 1 by showing a) a lack of effect of distressing work on in-the-moment work meaningfulness and b) the significant positive effect of role meaning archetype correspondence on immediate perceptions of meaningfulness. This suggests that it is not the distress of an event that harms work meaningfulness but whether the event corresponds to a worker's narrative about the meaning of the work that determines how meaningful an event feels.

### ***Hypothesis 2***

Hypothesis 2A and 2B predicted that the buffering effect of role meaning archetype correspondence on work meaningfulness would be mediated through an activated occupational identity (H2A) and emotional ambivalence (H2B). As with Hypothesis 1, there was limited support for my predictions. Beginning with Hypothesis 2A, results showed a significant effect of role meaning archetype correspondence on activated occupational identity ( $\gamma = .36$ ,  $SE = .08$ ,  $p < .001$ ), but did not show a significant effect of distressing work ( $\gamma = -.01$ ,  $SE = .03$ ,  $p = .651$ ), nor a significant interaction of correspondence and distressing work on activated occupational identity ( $\gamma = -.02$ ,  $SE = .01$ ,  $p = .127$ ). There was a significant effect of activated occupational identity on work meaningfulness ( $\gamma = .39$ ,  $SE = .10$ ,  $p < .001$ ), providing support for that relationship in my model. The indirect effect of distressing work event on work meaningfulness via an activated occupational identity was not significant at either level of the moderator role meaning archetype correspondence (High Correspondence:  $\gamma = -.013$ , 95% CI [-.052, .015]; Low Correspondence:  $\gamma = .003$ , 95% CI [-.020, .023]).

Moving next to Hypothesis 2B concerning emotional ambivalence, there was a significant effect of distressing work on feelings of ambivalence ( $\gamma = .63$ ,  $SE = .05$ ,  $p < .001$ ), but there was not an effect of role meaning archetype correspondence ( $\gamma = -.02$ ,  $SE = .08$ ,  $p = .843$ ), nor a significant interaction of correspondence and distressing work on emotional ambivalence ( $\gamma$

= -.02,  $SE = .01$ ,  $p = .127$ ). Additionally, there was not a significant effect of emotional ambivalence on work meaningfulness ( $\gamma = -.05$ ,  $SE = .05$ ,  $p = .362$ ). Conditional indirect effects of distressing work on work meaningfulness via emotional ambivalence were not significant at either level of the moderator (High Correspondence:  $\gamma = -.028$ , 95% CI [-.089, .033]; Low Correspondence:  $\gamma = -.031$ , 95% CI [-.097, .036]).

In sum, results did not support either Hypothesis 2A or 2B, although the significant effect of correspondence on activated identity and meaningfulness suggested that role meaning archetype correspondence may increase work meaningfulness via activating participants' occupational identity. The pattern of the effects appear to suggest that this effect is not contingent on distress and would occur whether an event is highly distressing or not. This builds on my inference from the results for Hypothesis 1 that there does not seem to be a clear impact of distressing work on work meaningfulness, but that correspondence between the event and a person's role meaning archetype seems more critical to activating their occupational identity, leading to heightened perceptions of meaningfulness.

### ***Hypothesis 3***

Finally, given the lack of support for Hypotheses 2A and 2B, results also did not support the serial mediation predicted in Hypotheses 3A and 3B concerning the downstream impact on work engagement. While there was a significant effect of work meaningfulness on work engagement ( $\gamma = .20$ ,  $SE = .05$ ,  $p < .001$ ), the conditional serial indirect effects were not significant at either level of the moderator via activated occupational identity (High Correspondence:  $\gamma = -.003$ , 95% CI [-.011, .003]; Low Correspondence:  $\gamma = .001$ , 95% CI [-.004, .005]), nor emotional ambivalence (High Correspondence:  $\gamma = -.005$ , 95% CI [-.021, .005]; Low Correspondence:  $\gamma = -.006$ , 95% CI [-.024, .006]).

Finally, in order to assess the practical significance of my model, I calculated the percentage of explained variance in the endogenous variables of my model, following the formula of Bryk and Raudenbush (1992). Results showed that my model explained 22.7% of the within-person variance in an activated occupational identity, 39.4% in emotional ambivalence, 35.3% in work meaningfulness, and 32.4% in work engagement.

### **Study 3 Discussion**

Overall, Study 3 failed to confirm most of my predictions as there was not a significant interaction of distressing work and role meaning archetype correspondence on work meaningfulness, nor the potential mechanisms of activated occupational identity or emotional ambivalence. Instead, results suggested that distress may not affect meaningfulness in a straightforward way. However, the results also suggested that role meaning archetype correspondence may have a significant effect on the meaningfulness of an experience. While the results did not align with my a priori hypotheses, the strong support for the positive effect of role meaning archetype correspondence on work meaningfulness does align with my theorizing. This effect occurred regardless of whether the experiences that nurses had at work were highly distressing or not. In this way, correspondence between role meaning archetypes and events, which can occur in distressing or non-distressing experiences, seems to be highly important for workers in assessing whether work feels meaningful in the moment. Finally, while it was not the focus of my theorizing, results did show a significant effect of work meaningfulness at midshift on work engagement at the end of shift, which was measured several hours later. This provides further evidence as to the positive effect that meaningful work can have on sustaining worker engagement over time.



## CHAPTER 5: GENERAL DISCUSSION

My dissertation extends research on how workers find experiences to be meaningful by exploring the psychological process by which distressing work events can be perceived as meaningful in the moment. Drawing on research on distressing work events (Kahn, 2019) and work meaningfulness (Lepisto & Pratt, 2017), I predicted and found some evidence across several studies that the correspondence between the events people experience at work and the narratives they hold as to the meaning and purpose of their work, their role meaning archetype, can help to make even distressing work events feel meaningful in the moment, which can help to sustain workers' engagement afterwards. The findings of my dissertation have both theoretical and practical implications that I hope serve as a foundation for future scholars and workers to consider the part that role meaning archetypes play in influencing reactions to experiences of distress at work.

Before discussing the implications of my findings in more detail, I want to summarize the empirical takeaways and their implications for my theoretical model. First, with the exception of Study 2, I did not see support of Hypothesis 1 which predicted an interaction between distressing work events and role meaning archetype correspondence as there was not a consistent negative effect of distressing events on work meaningfulness that I predicted based on prior work (e.g., Barbulescu et al., 2012; Schabram & Maitlis, 2017; Vough & Caza, 2017). Even when the interaction was supported in Study 2, the results from the non-archetype corresponding technical role did not show a significant difference between the perceived meaningfulness of the distressing experience and the neutral control experience. This suggests that the focal predictor

of in-the-moment perceptions of work meaningfulness may be the correspondence between event and role meaning archetype, rather than the distress of the event. Instead, the distress of the event may be better conceptualized as a moderator that enhances the relationship between archetype correspondence and meaningfulness as seen in Study 2.

I also found mixed support for the predicted moderated mediation via dual cognitive and affective mechanisms of activated occupational identity and emotional ambivalence that was predicted as part of Hypotheses 2A/2B and 3A/3B. As with Hypothesis 1, core to the lack of support for these hypotheses was the lack of a predicted interaction between distressing event and archetype correspondence on the two mechanisms. Another factor that contributed to the limited support for these predictions was the lack of relationship between emotional ambivalence and work meaningfulness. The empirical evidence from my studies instead suggests relatively separate cognitive and affective processes as people sensemake after a distressing event. For the cognitive path, the correspondence between archetype and event activated workers' occupational identities which enabled them to immediately perceive the experience as meaningful, and increased their engagement. For the affective path, the correspondence between archetype event did not lead to mixed emotions. Instead, the distress of the event led to emotional ambivalence, likely the result of overall heightened emotionality, but this ambivalence did not impact how meaningful the experience felt to workers. These combined results suggest that the affective experience of distress and the cognitive experience of work meaningfulness can exist simultaneously, but that they are largely separable psychological processes.

In sum, the empirical results helped to clarify and revise my theoretical model in two important ways. First, they provided strong support for the positive effect of the correspondence between event and role meaning archetype on meaningfulness in the moment for events ranging

from highly distressing to emotionally gratifying. This process appears to be largely cognitive with support for an activated occupational identity as a mechanism. Results also suggest that the ability of workers to perceive an experience as meaningful in the moment can help them to sustain engagement, even in the wake of distressing experiences. Second, the results suggest a less prominent role of distress in workers' ability to perceive a given experience as meaningful. However, the results of Study 2 indicate that distress can actually enhance immediate perceptions of meaningfulness when the event corresponds to a workers' archetype.

### **Theoretical Contributions**

Through developing a theoretical framework around the buffering effect of role meaning archetypes on work meaningfulness, my dissertation makes several contributions to theory. First, it provides a mechanism – correspondence to role meaning archetypes – that helps to resolve a persistent unanswered question in the literature: how can a work event be simultaneously distressing and meaningful? Drawing on action identification theory which suggests that roles can be an important factor in establishing a high-level interpretation of an event (Vallacher & Wegner, 1989), I posited and found that workers use the existing narratives they have about the central meaning of their work roles to inform their immediate reactions to distressing events and enable them to find positive meaning in those events when they correspond to their narratives. This is an important extension of existing research on how workers find positive meaning in their experiences which had largely focused on how meaningfulness arises from either positive events (King et al., 2006; Ward & King, 2017) or post-hoc sensemaking (Nielsen & Colbert, 2021; Park, 2010; Vough & Caza, 2017). This helps to reconcile this line of research with the anecdotal experiences from workers, particularly those in healthcare and first-responder occupations, who report finding a profound sense of meaning in performing emotionally straining work (Bailey &

Madden, 2016). Additionally, this dissertation contributes to research related to meaning justification (Lepisto & Pratt, 2017) by showing that, rather than need to engage in novel sensemaking after each event to justify an experience as valuable, workers can use the narratives they have already developed about their work “in the moment” to immediately make sense of new experiences they have.

Second, my dissertation contributes to work on narrative identity by laying out the psychological process through which the correspondence of workplace events and identity narratives influences attitudes and behaviors, specifically work meaningfulness and engagement. For both conceptual reasons, as well as practical ones (e.g., existing narratives are often most salient to people when they are challenged or threatened; Proulx & Heine, 2009; Randles et al., 2018), prior research has tended to focus on what happens when there is a misalignment between workers’ narratives and circumstances (e.g., DiBenigno, 2022; De Rond & Lok, 2016; Schabram & Maitlis, 2017). My dissertation suggests that the heightened emotionality that occurs as part of distressing events can similarly make workers’ narratives salient, but in a way that affirms (rather than undercuts) a sense of meaningfulness and work engagement. In this way, I argue for workers’ existing narratives as important contextual factors that can aid sensemaking in situations (i.e., distressing events) that would otherwise hinder positive perceptions of meaning. My theorizing and the quantitative findings of this dissertation complement previous work and help to provide a fuller picture of the effect of distressing experiences on work meaning.

Third, while extant theory emphasizes the distinction between positive affect and perceptions of meaningfulness (e.g., Ryan & Deci, 2001), it is often difficult empirically to disentangle the two experiences (Heintzelman et al., 2014; Rosso et al., 2010), given their strong positive association (King et al., 2006). My theoretical model and studies illustrate that the two

constructs are indeed distinct and that feelings of meaningfulness can arise from distressing experiences, and not just in spite of them. This provides a fresh understanding as to the way that workers can benefit from even distressing experiences. Additionally, while my predictions related to emotional ambivalence as a mediating mechanism saw mixed support, findings across my studies showed a tentative relationship between feelings of ambivalence and perceptions of meaningfulness. These findings extend work on the benefits of emotional ambivalence (Rothman & Melwani, 2017; Rothman et al., 2017) to also include increased work meaningfulness in some instances. In line with work on the influence of mixed emotions on cognitive flexibility, these findings suggest that emotional ambivalence may aid workers in considering experiences of distress more deeply and attending to how it might connect to important values they have related to the meaning of their work.

Finally, my work has important implications for research on work engagement, specifically by identifying how workers can sustain engagement in the face of experiences that prior work has indicated often cause workers to withdraw (De Rond & Lok, 2016; Park, 2010; Schabram & Maitlis, 2017). This dissertation shows that when a distressing event corresponds to a workers' role meaning archetype, workers are able to sustain a high level of engagement in the wake of distress. While the relationship between task significance and engagement is well-known to the literature (see Christian et al., 2011 for a review), this work adds important nuance that the motivational influence of meaningfulness on engagement does not only arise out of positive experiences, but that it can also stem from difficult experiences as well. This may help to explain how workers in social work and care-type occupations are able to continue working in positions that feature frequent experiences of distress. Engagement can be the result of negative experiences as long as they correspond to one's archetype.

## **Limitations and Future Directions**

As with any empirical research, this work is not without limitations. First, while I attempted to triangulate my findings by testing my model with several different studies employing a diverse set of methodologies, I acknowledge that each study has its own strengths and weaknesses. For example, Study 1 employed the retrospective critical incident technique which showed evidence of post-hoc rationalization in terms of how meaningful were the distressing events that participants described. Study 2 and Study 3 attempted to address this issue by capturing perceptions of meaningfulness immediately (or shortly) after experiences of distress. Study 2 offered a highly controlled environment in which I could manipulate my predictors and immediately assess perceived meaningfulness but may have had somewhat limited ecological validity. For example, while the distressing event condition was rated as more distressing than control, the average rating was relatively low (3.33 out of 7). Study 3, in contrast, used nurses' actual experiences in the course of their day-to-day jobs for high ecological validity but was somewhat low powered with 52 participants who submitted 3 or more complete survey days. With 315 daily observations, I likely achieved a sufficiently large Level 1 sample size at which my variables were modeled, particularly since experience sampling studies are often overpowered at this level (Gabriel et al., 2019). Nonetheless, a larger sample would have provided greater power and more confidence in the robustness of my findings. All studies also relied on self-report measures which, although well-suited to the theoretical context of emotions and sensemaking, could be complemented in future work by assessing spillover to behavioral outcomes related to work engagement.

Second, as I have noted previously, I did not find consistent empirical support for my predictions of an interaction between distressing work events and work meaningfulness, nor for

the mechanisms of activated occupational identity or emotional ambivalence. In terms of the lack of predicted interaction, this appears to largely be the result of a lack of negative main effect of distressing events on work meaningfulness. Instead, meaningfulness appeared to be driven primarily by the correspondence between role meaning archetype and event, rather than the emotional nature of the experience. While these results did not align with my predictions, they do suggest future research is needed on the relationship between the emotional valence of an experience and perceptions of meaningfulness. Prior work has suggested that emotionally positive experiences are implicitly linked to increases in feelings of meaningfulness (King et al., 2006), yet the results of Studies 1 and 3 showed that work experiences that were emotionally gratifying or were completely absent of distress also ranged highly in their perceived meaningfulness. In other words, participants who rated an event as not distressing (whether indicating a simple absence of distress as in Study 3 or a positive emotional experience in Study 1) seem to assign positive meaning or no meaning at all to the event with approximately equal probability. This phenomenon makes sense when considering mundane tasks such as cleaning a workstation or entering patient data, which might be completely absent distress but yet not contain any meaning. However, more research is needed on emotionally gratifying experiences that elicit positive emotions and yet are not perceived as very meaningful.

The pattern of results for the mechanisms of activated occupational identity or emotional ambivalence, while not supportive in terms of the predicted interaction, provide some interesting potential avenues for future research. Specifically, across my studies there was a consistent positive relationship between archetype correspondence, activated occupational identity, and work meaningfulness, as was predicted in my theorizing. In contrast, the relationship between archetype correspondence, emotional ambivalence, and work meaningfulness was inconsistent

across the studies. While existing frameworks highlight the complementary roles of cognition and affect in sensemaking during distressing experiences (Schabram & Maitlis, 2017; Weick, 1993), my results point to the primacy of cognition in determining how meaning and meaningfulness are ascribed and perceived in workers' minds. Based on my results, it appears that the emotional fluctuations during an experience have a relatively weak effect on the cognitive processes at play, namely the activation of an occupational identity and sensemaking. Stated another way, the cognitive process by which workers ascribe meaning to an experience in the moment appears surprisingly robust to the impact of affect. Alternatively, it could be the case that while emotional distress considered broadly does not impact sensemaking, a more nuanced exploration of the effect of emotions could uncover an effect. For example, the activation of the negative emotion might be an important factor to consider with high-activation negative emotions potentially more likely to inhibit perceptions of meaningfulness as I had predicted.

Third, my findings are unable to speak to the long-term effects of the correspondence between role meaning archetype and distressing work events. While the focus on the in-the-moment reactions was by design given my theoretical context, there are important open questions about whether the immediate feelings of in-the-moment meaningfulness following an archetypal distressing event are sufficient to sustain engagement over time. In particular, the occupations that inspired much of this work – nursing and care work – were shown in Study 3 to experience highly meaningful events regularly, which should theoretically allow them to maintain engagement and connection to their work. However, workers in these occupations are known to frequently experience high levels of burnout and compassion fatigue (Caldas et al., 2020; Tetrick & LaRocco, 1987). Future theorizing and empirical work should seek to reconcile the findings of this dissertation with the broader distress and meaning literatures, and in



particular, explore the conditions under which the buffering effect of role meaning archetypes on work meaningfulness and work engagement is likely to persist and when it might subside over time. While prior research has shown that workers are quite adept at post-hoc rationalizing the meaningfulness of distressing events with time (Nielsen & Colbert, 2021; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004; Vough & Caza, 2017), one potential explanation might be the cumulative effect of non-meaningful distressing events over time creates a counternarrative of *meaninglessness* that undercut overall perceptions of meaningfulness and reduces engagement.

Fourth, I limited my empirical work to situations in which workers had one role meaning archetype. However, people have a variety of roles and identities at work (Ashforth & Johnson, 2001) and recent work has pointed to the way in which different identities can be primed by societal events (Leigh & Melwani, 2019), self-reflection (Jennings et al., 2021), and the workplace itself (Ashforth et al., in press). These varying identities are likely to be associated with unique role meaning archetypes. For example, a college professor may have a research-focused role meaning archetype (pursuing truth and knowledge) as well as a teaching or mentor-focused archetype (aiding the development of young minds). Future research should account for the dynamic nature of multiple identities in the workplace in shaping the experience of correspondence (or non-correspondence) of events and role meaning archetypes.

Finally, my conceptualization of distressing work events was intentionally broad to allow for sufficient variance in the correspondence between event and role meaning archetypes. While I consistently found across my studies that the correspondence between role meaning archetype and distressing event increased perceived meaningfulness, my theory and empirics do not account for the important distinctions that belie different types of distressing events and how they impact people's cognitive and emotional reactions (e.g., Ashkanasy et al., 2017; Lazarus,

1966). I encourage future work on how the interaction between role meaning archetype and distressing work event might vary based on the nature of the emotional reaction, such as whether it is more difficult to find a high activation distressing event (e.g., provoking anger) as meaningful in the moment than a low activation distressing event (e.g., provoking sadness) when the event corresponds to a role meaning archetype.

### **Practical Implications**

The findings of my dissertation offer several important practical implications for both managers and employees alike. First, while the experience of meaningfulness is personal and subjective (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003), my work points to the importance for managers to be aware of the narratives that their employees have about the meaning of their work, as well as how those narratives actually fit with the day-to-day experiences the employees are having. Particularly in calling-type roles, employees often struggle to navigate distressing work experiences they encounter that challenge or contradict their underlying sense of meaning (De Rond & Lok, 2016; Schabram & Maitlis, 2017). By better understanding their employees' narratives about the meaning of their roles, managers can better intuit when a distressing work event is likely to be psychologically harmful and when it instead might be psychologically reaffirming. Additionally, managers may be able to use this knowledge to assess how the on-the-job experience for their employees is corresponding to the employees' role meaning archetypes. If there is a low degree of correspondence, managers might work to articulate a clearer, more accurate vision that helps to connect employees' work to the overall meaning their role provides (e.g., Carton, 2018) or help their employees to engage in job crafting to adjust the task, relational or cognitive aspects of their roles (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

Second, my findings also suggests that workers can benefit from articulating their role meaning archetype and considering the extent to which the events they experience in their roles correspond to the archetype. One potential tool to aid workers in identifying when they may be in an archetype-corresponding, and thus potentially meaningful, experience might be an awareness of emotional ambivalence. While my predictions related to emotional ambivalence received mixed support across my studies, there was a link between emotional ambivalence and perceived in-the-moment work meaningfulness in some studies. This suggest that workers may use the awareness that they are experiencing mixed emotions as a signal (e.g., Rothman & Melwani, 2017) that this difficult experience might also have a deeper, and potentially positive, psychological significance. Additionally, while my focus was on workers who have a clearly articulable role meaning archetype, it is not the case that all workers (even those in my samples) find their jobs themselves meaningful. This does not necessarily suggest that these workers cannot find positive meaning out of distressing experiences, but they may need to connect those experiences to narratives they have about work in their overall lives, such as providing for themselves or their families (e.g., Menges et al., 2017).

## **Conclusion**

In my dissertation, I have sought to advance knowledge related to the relationship between distressing work events and work meaningfulness, positing that empirical research has underappreciated the extent to which experiences of distress might sometimes be both difficult and fulfilling. To do so, I developed and tested a theoretical model that explained a psychological process centered around the influence of role meaning archetypes by which a distressing work event might be perceived as meaningful in the moment. I then extended my model to detail what downstream impact this process can have on work engagement. Through

this dissertation, I highlight the powerful influence that workers' narratives about the meaning of their roles, their *role meaning archetypes*, have in shaping whether a distressing experience leads workers to disengage from their work tasks or whether it instead reaffirms the sense of significance and worth they derive from their roles and leads them to invest even more of themselves in their work.

**Table 1.** Distressing Work Events in the Organizational Literature

Type of Distress	Relationship Between Event and Experiencer of Distress	
	<i>Direct</i>	<i>Indirect</i>
<b>Job Task-Related</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Task conflict (De Dreu &amp; Weingart, 2003)</li> <li>- Hassles/Red-tape (Kanner et al., 1981)</li> <li>- Failure / Goal impediments (Caldwell &amp; O'Reilly, 1982)</li> <li>- Overwork / Excessive demands (Roberts, 1994)</li> <li>- Injustice (Colquitt et al., 2001)</li> <li>- Physically intense work (Bacharach &amp; Bamberger, 2007)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Emotional Contagion (client/customer) (Barsade, 2002)</li> <li>- Emotionally intense work (Kahn, 2019; Jiang, 2021; Schabram &amp; Maitlis, 2017)</li> <li>- Necessary evils (Margolis &amp; Molinsky, 2008)</li> </ul>
<b>Relationship/ Interpersonal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Relationship conflict (De Dreu &amp; Weingart, 2003)</li> <li>- Abusive supervision (Tepper, 2000)</li> <li>- Mistreatment (Cortina &amp; Magley, 2003; Yue et al., 2017)</li> <li>- Unethical requests (Desai &amp; Kouchaki, 2017)</li> <li>- Physical/Sexual harassment (Schneider et al., 1997)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Emotional Contagion (coworker) (Barsade, 2002)</li> <li>- Mega-threats (Leigh &amp; Melwani, 2019)</li> <li>- Bystander experience of workplace harassment (Low et al., 2007)</li> </ul>

*Note.* Examples in table are not exhaustive of all types of distressing work events in the literature. Additionally, the distinction between the types of distress (i.e., job task-related vs, relationship/interpersonal, direct vs. indirect) is used in this table for illustrative purposes but is not a source of differentiation in the dissertation as they are predicted to have the same effects according to my theory. Papers in parentheses are representative samples of empirical work.

**Table 2.** Pilot Study: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Focal Variables

Variable	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Role meaning archetype correspondence	3.73	1.99	—									
2. Activated occupational identity	4.79	1.78	0.63**	—								
3. Emotional ambivalence (Berrios et al)	4.87	1.84	0.16	0.13	—							
4. Emotional ambivalence (Hershfield et al)	2.71	0.98	0.22**	0.29**	0.41**	—						
5. Work meaningfulness	4.96	2.00	0.59**	0.56**	0.22**	0.38**	—					
6. Work engagement	4.54	1.69	0.41**	0.40**	0.23**	0.41**	0.57**	—				
7. Challenge appraisal	5.47	1.61	0.16*	0.13	0.31**	0.25**	0.30**	0.17*	—			
8. Hindrance appraisal	4.09	2.13	-0.01	-0.11	0.23**	0.08	-0.02	-0.22**	0.40**	—		
9. Event unexpectedness	4.97	2.01	0.06	-0.04	0.21*	0.28**	0.21*	0.04	0.50**	0.25**	—	
10. Event frequency	3.48	1.59	0.11	0.19*	-0.05	-0.14	0.01	-0.04	-0.19*	0.18*	-0.53**	—

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

**Table 3.** Study 1: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Focal Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Event type (0 = <i>neutral</i> , 1 = <i>distressing</i> )	0.48	0.50	—											
2. Role meaning archetype correspondence	4.62	1.98	0.07	—										
3. Activated occupational identity	4.80	1.59	0.15*	0.54**	—									
4. Emotional ambivalence (Berrios et al)	3.45	2.26	0.66**	0.15*	0.17*	—								
5. Emotional ambivalence (Thompson et al)	0.84	1.55	0.51**	-0.04	0.00	0.41**	—							
6. Emotional ambivalence (Hershfield et al)	1.90	1.05	0.61**	0.09	0.15*	0.59**	0.91**	—						
7. Work meaningfulness	4.66	1.94	0.16*	0.51**	0.55**	0.23*	-0.06	0.14*	—					
8. Work engagement	4.44	1.55	-0.02	0.30**	0.42**	0.08	-0.11	0.06	0.62**	—				
9. Role meaning archetype endorsement	4.28	0.82	-0.13	0.04	0.14	-0.07	-0.07	-0.04	0.23*	0.28**	—			
10. Challenge appraisal	4.03	2.35	0.68**	0.28**	0.33**	0.69**	0.35**	0.55**	0.43**	0.21*	-0.07	—		
11. Hindrance appraisal	3.06	2.15	0.64**	0.03	0.02	0.61**	0.37**	0.49**	0.03	-0.08	-0.27**	0.66**	—	
12. Occupational Tenure (years)	8.17	7.54	0.06	-0.04	0.06	-0.04	-0.05	-0.01	0.12	0.09	0.22*	0.05	-0.01	—

Note: Correlations are from participants in the distressing event and emotionally neutral conditions. N = 187; \* $p < .05$  level. \*\* $p < .01$  level

**Table 4.** Study 1: Means by Condition for All Dependent Variables

Variable	Focal Analysis: Comparing Distressing and Emotionally Neutral Events			Secondary Analysis: Comparing Distressing and Emotionally Gratifying Events	
	Distressing Event	Emotionally Neutral Event	<i>t</i> <sup>a</sup>	Emotionally Gratifying Event	<i>t</i> <sup>b</sup>
Activated occupational identity	5.04 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.59)	4.57 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.57)	2.04 ( <i>p</i> = .043)	5.71 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.35)	-3.07 ( <i>p</i> = .002)
Emotional ambivalence (Berrios et al)	5.01 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.75)	2.01 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.66)	12.03 ( <i>p</i> < .001)	3.06 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.92)	7.16 ( <i>p</i> < .001)
Emotional ambivalence (Thompson et al)	1.66 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.60)	0.08 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.02)	8.07 ( <i>p</i> < .001)	-0.84 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.38)	11.31 ( <i>p</i> < .001)
Emotional ambivalence (Hershfield et al)	2.57 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.02)	1.28 ( <i>SD</i> = 0.62)	10.54 ( <i>p</i> < .001)	1.38 ( <i>SD</i> = 0.85)	8.56 ( <i>p</i> < .001)
Work meaningfulness	4.97 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.94)	4.36 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.90)	2.18 ( <i>p</i> = .031)	6.04 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.30)	-4.37 ( <i>p</i> < .001)
Work engagement	4.41 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.57)	4.48 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.54)	-0.32 ( <i>p</i> = .751)	5.86 ( <i>SD</i> = 0.98)	-7.54 ( <i>p</i> < .001)

<sup>a</sup> *df* = 185; 0 = neutral, 1 = distressing<sup>b</sup> *df* = 183; 0 = gratifying, 1 = distressing



**Table 5.** Study 1: Path Analysis Results – Subjective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Berrios et al.)

Independent Variable	Outcome Variable											
	Activated Occupational Identity			Emotional Ambivalence (Berrios et al)			Work Meaningfulness			Work Engagement		
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>z</i>
Event Type (0 = <i>neutral</i> , 1 = <i>distressing</i> )	0.85	.49	1.72	3.48	.62	5.56***	.00	.62	0.01	0.01	.48	0.03
Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence	0.48	.07	7.01***	0.17	.09	1.99*	.29	.09	3.28**	-0.01	.07	-0.19
Event Type x Archetype Correspondence	-0.11	.10	-1.10	-0.11	.12	-0.90	.00	.11	0.01	-0.10	.09	-1.18
Activated Occupational Identity							.45	.08	5.29***	0.15	.07	2.13*
Emotional Ambivalence (Berrios et al.)							.10	.07	1.56	0.02	.05	0.37
Work Meaningfulness										0.47	.05	8.30***

Note. N = 187; \*  $p < .05$  level, \*\*  $p < .01$  level, \*\*\*  $p < .001$  level.

**Table 6.** Study 1: Bootstrapped Indirect Effects of Event Type on Outcomes at High and Low Levels of Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence – Subjective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Berrios et al.)

Dependent Variable	High Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence (+1 SD)			Low Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence (-1 SD)		
	Effect	SE	Bias-Corrected Confidence Interval	Effect	SE	Bias-Corrected Confidence Interval
Work Meaningfulness – via Activated Occupational Identity ( <i>H2A</i> )	.06	.12	[-.164, .328]	.25	.16	[-.017, .641]
Work Meaningfulness – via Emotional Ambivalence ( <i>H2B</i> )	.28	.21	[-.087, .731]	.33	.23	[-.114, .795]
Work Engagement – via Activated Occupational Identity and Work Meaningfulness ( <i>H3A</i> )	.03	.06	[-.076, .163]	.12	.08	[-.004, .321]
Work Engagement – via Emotional Ambivalence and Work Meaningfulness ( <i>H3B</i> )	.13	.10	[-.036, .360]	.16	.11	[-.049, .385]

Note. Event Type (0 = neutral, 1 = distressing); Boot (N) = 5,000

**Table 7.** Study 1: Path Analysis Results – Objective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Hershfield et al.)

Independent Variable	Outcome Variable											
	Activated Occupational Identity			Emotional Ambivalence (Hershfield et al)			Work Meaningfulness			Work Engagement		
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>z</i>
Event Type (0 = <i>neutral</i> , 1 = <i>distressing</i> )	0.85	.49	1.72	1.68	.31	5.44***	.31	.62	0.50	-0.07	.48	-0.15
Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence	0.48	.07	7.01***	0.07	.04	1.60	.31	.09	3.43**	-0.02	.07	-0.23
Event Type x Archetype Correspondence	-0.11	.10	-1.10	-0.09	.06	-1.39	-.01	.11	-0.06	-0.10	.09	-1.12
Activated Occupational Identity							.45	.08	5.29***	0.15	.07	2.10*
Emotional Ambivalence (Hershfield et al.)							.03	.14	0.23	0.09	.10	0.87
Work Meaningfulness										0.47	.05	8.39***

Note. N = 187; \*  $p < .05$  level, \*\*  $p < .01$  level, \*\*\*  $p < .001$  level.

**Table 8.** Study 1: Bootstrapped Indirect Effects of Event Type on Outcomes at High and Low Levels of Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence – Subjective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Hershfield et al.)

Dependent Variable	High Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence (+1 SD)			Low Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence (-1 SD)		
	Effect	SE	Bias-Corrected Confidence Interval	Effect	SE	Bias-Corrected Confidence Interval
Work Meaningfulness – via Activated Occupational Identity ( <i>H2A</i> )	.06	.12	[-.165, .329]	.25	.16	[-.019, .641]
Work Meaningfulness – via Emotional Ambivalence ( <i>H2B</i> )	.03	.15	[-.258, .321]	.05	.19	[-.345, .400]
Work Engagement – via Activated Occupational Identity and Work Meaningfulness ( <i>H3A</i> )	.03	.06	[-.076, .164]	.12	.08	[-.004, .323]
Work Engagement – via Emotional Ambivalence and Work Meaningfulness ( <i>H3B</i> )	.02	.07	[-.120, .161]	.02	.09	[-.157, .198]

Note. Event Type (0 = neutral, 1 = distressing); Boot (N) = 5,000

**Table 9.** Study 1: Path Analysis Results – Objective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Thompson et al.)

Independent Variable	Outcome Variable											
	Activated Occupational Identity			Emotional Ambivalence (Thompson et al)			Work Meaningfulness			Work Engagement		
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>z</i>
Event Type (0 = <i>neutral</i> , 1 = <i>distressing</i> )	0.85	.49	1.72	1.62	.49	3.28**	.61	.59	1.04	0.10	.46	0.23
Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence	0.48	.07	7.01***	-0.06	.07	-0.88	.30	.09	3.42**	-0.01	.07	-0.16
Event Type x Archetype Correspondence	-0.11	.10	-1.10	-0.01	.10	-0.06	-.01	.11	-0.10	-0.11	.09	-1.21
Activated Occupational Identity							.44	.08	5.26***	0.15	.07	2.13*
Emotional Ambivalence (Thompson et al.)							-.15	.08	-1.78	-0.02	.07	-0.24
Work Meaningfulness										0.47	.06	8.29***

Note. N = 187; \*  $p < .05$  level, \*\*  $p < .01$  level, \*\*\*  $p < .001$  level.

**Table 10.** Study 1: Bootstrapped Indirect Effects of Event Type on Outcomes at High and Low Levels of Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence – Subjective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Thompson et al.)

Dependent Variable	High Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence (+1 SD)			Low Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence (-1 SD)		
	Effect	SE	Bias-Corrected Confidence Interval	Effect	SE	Bias-Corrected Confidence Interval
Work Meaningfulness – via Activated Occupational Identity ( <i>H2A</i> )	.06	.12	[-.162, .329]	.25	.16	[-.020, .630]
Work Meaningfulness – via Emotional Ambivalence ( <i>H2B</i> )	-.24	.15	[-.594, .019]	-.24	.16	[-.596, .024]
Work Engagement – via Activated Occupational Identity and Work Meaningfulness ( <i>H3A</i> )	.03	.06	[-.077, .160]	.12	.08	[-.004, .317]
Work Engagement – via Emotional Ambivalence and Work Meaningfulness ( <i>H3B</i> )	-.11	.07	[-.287, .006]	-.11	.07	[-.276, .010]

Note. Event Type (0 = neutral, 1 = distressing); Boot (N) = 5,000

**Table 11.** Study 1 Secondary Analysis: Path Analysis – Subjective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Berrios et al.)

Independent Variable	Outcome Variable											
	Activated Occupational Identity			Emotional Ambivalence (Berrios et al)			Work Meaningfulness			Work Engagement		
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>z</i>
Event Type (0 = gratifying, 1 = distressing)	1.54	.66	2.34*	1.69	.99	1.70	-.61	.75	-0.81	-1.20	.59	-2.04*
Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence	0.68	.10	7.17***	0.01	.14	0.04	.31	.12	2.61**	-0.15	.10	-1.58
Event Type x Archetype Correspondence	-0.31	.11	-2.70**	0.06	.17	0.32	.02	.13	0.18	0.05	.10	0.51
Activated Occupational Identity							.35	.08	4.19***	0.16	.07	2.35*
Emotional Ambivalence (Berrios et al.)							.00	.05	0.04	-0.05	.04	-1.14
Work Meaningfulness										0.43	.06	7.50***

Note. N = 183; \*  $p < .05$  level, \*\*  $p < .01$  level, \*\*\*  $p < .001$  level.

**Table 12.** Study 1 Secondary Analysis: Bootstrapped Indirect Effects of Event Type on Outcomes at High and Low Levels of Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence – Subjective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Berrios et al.)

Dependent Variable	High Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence (+1 SD)			Low Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence (-1 SD)		
	Effect	SE	Bias-Corrected Confidence Interval	Effect	SE	Bias-Corrected Confidence Interval
Work Meaningfulness – via Activated Occupational Identity ( <i>H2A</i> )	-.23	.13	[-.570, -.041]	.15	.14	[-.036, .547]
Work Meaningfulness – via Emotional Ambivalence ( <i>H2B</i> )	.00	.13	[-.264, .272]	.00	.12	[-.233, .246]
Work Engagement – via Activated Occupational Identity and Work Meaningfulness ( <i>H3A</i> )	-.10	.06	[-.267, -.019]	.07	.06	[-.016, .231]
Work Engagement – via Emotional Ambivalence and Work Meaningfulness ( <i>H3B</i> )	.00	.06	[-.124, .112]	.00	.05	[-.111, .098]

Note. Event Type (0 = gratifying, 1 = distressing); Boot (N) = 5,000



**Table 13.** Study 1 Secondary Analysis: Path Analysis Results – Objective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Hershfield et al.)

Independent Variable	Outcome Variable											
	Activated Occupational Identity			Emotional Ambivalence (Hershfield et al)			Work Meaningfulness			Work Engagement		
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>z</i>
Event Type (0 = <i>gratifying</i> , 1 = <i>distressing</i> )	1.54	.66	2.34*	1.17	.51	2.31*	-.56	.76	-0.74	-1.36	.59	-2.30*
Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence	0.68	.10	7.17***	-0.02	.07	-0.22	.31	.12	2.60**	-0.15	.10	-1.53
Event Type x Archetype Correspondence	-0.31	.11	-2.70**	-0.00	.09	-0.01	.02	.13	0.18	0.05	.10	0.46
Activated Occupational Identity							.35	.08	4.22***	0.15	.07	2.25*
Emotional Ambivalence (Hershfield et al.)							-.04	.11	-0.38	0.08	.08	0.93
Work Meaningfulness										0.43	.06	7.51***

Note. N = 183; \*  $p < .05$  level, \*\*  $p < .01$  level, \*\*\*  $p < .001$  level.

**Table 14.** Study 1 Secondary Analysis: Bootstrapped Indirect Effects of Event Type on Outcomes at High and Low Levels of Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence – Subjective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Hershfield et al.)

Dependent Variable	High Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence (+1 SD)			Low Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence (-1 SD)		
	Effect	SE	Bias-Corrected Confidence Interval	Effect	SE	Bias-Corrected Confidence Interval
Work Meaningfulness – via Activated Occupational Identity ( <i>H2A</i> )	-.22	.13	[-.569, -.040]	.15	.14	[-.034, .545]
Work Meaningfulness – via Emotional Ambivalence ( <i>H2B</i> )	-.05	.13	[-.346, .182]	-.05	.13	[-.342, .174]
Work Engagement – via Activated Occupational Identity and Work Meaningfulness ( <i>H3A</i> )	-.10	.06	[-.267, -.019]	.07	.06	[-.015, .234]
Work Engagement – via Emotional Ambivalence and Work Meaningfulness ( <i>H3B</i> )	-.02	.06	[-.163, .078]	-.02	.06	[-.155, .074]

Note. Event Type (0 = gratifying, 1 = distressing); Boot (N) = 5,000

**Table 15.** Study 1 Secondary Analysis: Path Coefficients Moderation Results – Objective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Thompson et al.)

Independent Variable	Outcome Variable											
	Activated Occupational Identity			Emotional Ambivalence (Thompson et al)			Work Meaningfulness			Work Engagement		
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>z</i>
Event Type (0 = <i>gratifying</i> , 1 = <i>distressing</i> )	1.54	.66	2.34*	1.86	.80	2.32*	-.43	.75	-0.57	-1.25	.59	-2.11*
Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence	0.68	.10	7.17***	-0.16	.12	-1.40	.30	.12	2.48**	-0.15	.10	-1.56
Event Type x Archetype Correspondence	-0.31	.11	-2.70**	0.10	.14	0.69	.03	.13	0.25	0.05	.10	0.48
Activated Occupational Identity							.35	.08	4.24***	0.15	.07	2.28*
Emotional Ambivalence (Thompson et al.)							-.10	.07	-1.43	-0.01	.05	-0.23
Work Meaningfulness										0.43	.06	7.40***

Note. N = 183; \*  $p < .05$  level, \*\*  $p < .01$  level, \*\*\*  $p < .001$  level.

**Table 16.** Study 1 Secondary Analysis: Bootstrapped Indirect Effects of Event Type on Outcomes at High and Low Levels of Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence – Subjective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Thompson et al.)

Dependent Variable	High Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence (+1 SD)			Low Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence (-1 SD)		
	Effect	SE	Bias-Corrected Confidence Interval	Effect	SE	Bias-Corrected Confidence Interval
Work Meaningfulness – via Activated Occupational Identity ( <i>H2A</i> )	-.22	.13	[-.570, -.042]	.15	.14	[-.034, .545]
Work Meaningfulness – via Emotional Ambivalence ( <i>H2B</i> )	-.25	.20	[-.721, .066]	-.21	.17	[-.633, .053]
Work Engagement – via Activated Occupational Identity and Work Meaningfulness ( <i>H3A</i> )	-.10	.06	[-.264, -.019]	.07	.06	[-.016, .229]
Work Engagement – via Emotional Ambivalence and Work Meaningfulness ( <i>H3B</i> )	-.11	.09	[-.326, .026]	-.09	.07	[-.275, .022]

*Note.* Event Type (0 = *gratifying*, 1 = *distressing*); Boot (N) = 5,000

**Table 17.** Study 2 Pre-Experiment Pilot: Role Meaning Archetypes and Example Participant Responses

	<b>Wellness Support Role</b>	<b>Technical Support Role</b>
<b>Archetype</b>	<b>Facilitating mental health, healing, and growth by listening and providing support</b>	<b>Supporting organizations and allowing others to strive towards valuable work goals by providing technical solutions</b>
<b>Example Participant Responses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Alleviating psychological suffering by listening deeply with kindness and skill.</i></li> <li>- <i>(Supporting) people to make the changes they want in their lives by offering opportunities for them to reconnect with their sense of capability and agency</i></li> <li>- <i>I find myself a little like Atlas the god that holds up the world...I am an advocate, a consultant, a liaison, and an empath that supports my school community.</i></li> <li>- <i>I enjoy supporting others in their journey, helping life become more tolerable and also meaningful.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>I often liken what I do that of a builder...I build software/websites, however (that have) the potential for making someone's lives easier...</i></li> <li>- <i>I help others to improve the quality of their work, product or service.</i></li> <li>- <i>There's some meaning in assisting colleagues with their issues using the system, as this enables the company to work more efficiently.</i></li> <li>- <i>You may call it "keeping business going" as I always need to keep all the information up to date or add new clients to our B2B portal.</i></li> </ul>

**Table 18.** Study 2: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Model Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Role type (0 = <i>technical</i> , 1 = <i>wellness</i> )	0.50	0.50	—									
2. Event type (0 = <i>control</i> , 1 = <i>distressing</i> )	0.51	0.50	0.02	—								
3. Activated occupational identity	5.54	1.03	0.11*	0.04	—							
4. Emotional ambivalence (Berrios et al)	2.89	1.55	-0.02	0.18***	-0.07	—						
5. Emotional ambivalence (Thompson et al)	1.88	0.94	0.13*	0.15**	-0.05	0.49***	—					
6. Emotional ambivalence (Hershfield et al)	0.94	1.35	0.12*	0.13*	-0.23***	0.44***	0.90***	—				
7. Work meaningfulness	4.41	1.61	0.31***	0.06	0.52***	0.05	0.20***	-0.05	—			
8. Work engagement	3.87	1.15	0.12*	0.06	0.38***	0.14**	0.22***	0.01	0.55***	—		
9. Challenge appraisal	3.35	1.56	-0.02	0.15**	0.17**	0.32***	0.33***	0.20***	0.35***	0.32***	—	
10. Hindrance appraisal	2.51	1.50	-0.06	0.02	-0.15**	0.34***	0.31***	0.31***	-0.04	-0.06	0.38***	—

N = 377; \* $p < .05$  level, \*\* $p < .01$  level, \*\*\* $p < .001$  level

**Table 19.** Study 2: Means by Condition for All Dependent Variables

Variable	Wellness Role (Archetype Corresponding Condition)		Technical Role (Archetype Non-Corresponding Condition)	
	Distressing Event Condition <sup>a</sup>	Control Condition <sup>b</sup>	Distressing Event Condition <sup>c</sup>	Control Condition <sup>d</sup>
Activated occupational identity	5.72 ( <i>SD</i> = 0.88)	5.58 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.06)	5.44 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.04)	5.42 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.14)
Emotional ambivalence (Berrios et al)	3.02 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.52)	2.68 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.46)	3.30 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.59)	2.54 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.54)
Emotional ambivalence (Hershfield et al)	2.12 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.05)	1.89 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.04)	1.92 ( <i>SD</i> = 0.80)	1.61 ( <i>SD</i> = 0.76)
Emotional ambivalence (Thompson et al)	1.20 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.52)	1.00 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.39)	1.02 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.17)	0.56 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.23)
Work meaningfulness	5.23 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.37)	4.55 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.50)	3.75 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.63)	4.08 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.56)
Work engagement	4.14 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.10)	3.87 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.23)	3.72 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.11)	3.74 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.12)

<sup>a</sup> *N* = 98; <sup>b</sup> *N* = 89; <sup>c</sup> *N* = 95; <sup>d</sup> *N* = 95

**Table 20.** Study 2: Path Coefficients Moderation Results – Subjective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Berrios et al.)

Independent Variable	Outcome Variable											
	Activated Occupational Identity			Emotional Ambivalence (Berrios et al)			Work Meaningfulness			Work Engagement		
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>z</i>
Role Type (0 = <i>technical</i> , 1 = <i>wellness</i> )	0.17	.15	1.10	0.14	.22	0.64	0.33	.19	1.75	-0.07	.14	-0.52
Event Type (0 = <i>neutral</i> , 1 = <i>distressing</i> )	0.03	.15	0.18	0.76	.22	3.43**	-0.43	.19	-2.27*	0.03	.14	0.19
Event Type x Role Type	0.11	.21	0.50	-0.42	.31	-1.33	0.97	.27	3.65***	-0.03	.20	-0.16
Activated Occupational Identity							0.77	.06	11.96***	0.16	.06	2.84**
Emotional Ambivalence (Berrios et al.)							0.10	.04	2.31*	0.09	.03	2.84**
Work Meaningfulness										0.34	.04	9.02***

Note. N = 377; \*  $p < .05$  level, \*\*  $p < .01$  level, \*\*\*  $p < .001$  level.



**Table 21.** Study 2: Bootstrapped Indirect Effects of Event Type on Outcomes by Role Type Condition– Subjective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Berrios et al.)

Dependent Variable	Wellness Role (Archetype Corresponding Condition)			Technical Role (Archetype Non-Corresponding Condition)		
	Effect	SE	Bias-Corrected Confidence Interval	Effect	SE	Bias-Corrected Confidence Interval
Work Meaningfulness – via Activated Occupational Identity ( <i>H2A</i> )	.10	.11	[-.107, .317]	.02	.12	[-.228, .259]
Work Meaningfulness – via Emotional Ambivalence ( <i>H2B</i> )	.03	.03	[-.004, .116]	.08	.04	[.011, .183]
Work Engagement – via Activated Occupational Identity and Work Meaningfulness ( <i>H3A</i> )	.03	.04	[-.036, .114]	.01	.04	[-.080, .090]
Work Engagement – via Emotional Ambivalence and Work Meaningfulness ( <i>H3B</i> )	.01	.01	[-.001, .040]	.03	.01	[.004, .063]

Note. Boot (N) = 5,000

**Table 22.** Study 2: Path Coefficients Moderation Results – Subjective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Hershfield et al.)

Independent Variable	Outcome Variable											
	Activated Occupational Identity			Emotional Ambivalence (Hershfield et al)			Work Meaningfulness			Work Engagement		
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>z</i>
Role Type (0 = <i>technical</i> , 1 = <i>wellness</i> )	0.17	.15	1.10	0.28	.14	2.08*	0.25	.19	1.32	-0.10	.14	-0.73
Event Type (0 = <i>neutral</i> , 1 = <i>distressing</i> )	0.03	.15	0.18	0.31	.13	2.31*	-0.46	.18	-2.52*	0.04	.14	0.26
Event Type x Role Type	0.11	.21	0.50	-0.08	.19	-0.42	0.95	.26	3.68***	-0.04	.20	-0.20
Activated Occupational Identity							0.78	.06	12.44***	0.17	.06	3.07**
Emotional Ambivalence (Hershfield et al.)							0.35	.07	4.92***	0.17	.05	3.17**
Work Meaningfulness										0.32	.04	8.37***

Note. N = 377; \*  $p < .05$  level, \*\*  $p < .01$  level, \*\*\*  $p < .001$  level.

**Table 23.** Study 2: Bootstrapped Indirect Effects of Event Type on Outcomes by Role Type Condition– Subjective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Hershfield et al.)

Dependent Variable	Wellness Role (Archetype Corresponding Condition)			Technical Role (Archetype Non-Corresponding Condition)		
	Effect	SE	Bias-Corrected Confidence Interval	Effect	SE	Bias-Corrected Confidence Interval
Work Meaningfulness – via Activated Occupational Identity ( <i>H2A</i> )	.10	.11	[-.109, .321]	.02	.13	[-.232, .266]
Work Meaningfulness – via Emotional Ambivalence ( <i>H2B</i> )	.08	.06	[-.017, .204]	.11	.04	[.030, .206]
Work Engagement – via Activated Occupational Identity and Work Meaningfulness ( <i>H3A</i> )	.03	.04	[-.034, .110]	.01	.04	[-.076, .087]
Work Engagement – via Emotional Ambivalence and Work Meaningfulness ( <i>H3B</i> )	.03	.02	[-.004, .070]	.03	.01	[.010, .070]

Note. Boot (N) = 5,000

**Table 24.** Study 2: Path Coefficients Moderation Results – Subjective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Thompson et al.)

Independent Variable	Outcome Variable											
	Activated Occupational Identity			Emotional Ambivalence (Thompson et al)			Work Meaningfulness			Work Engagement		
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>z</i>
Role Type (0 = <i>technical</i> , 1 = <i>wellness</i> )	0.17	.15	1.10	0.44	.20	2.23*	0.32	.19	1.68	-0.09	.14	-0.63
Event Type (0 = <i>neutral</i> , 1 = <i>distressing</i> )	0.03	.15	0.18	0.46	.19	2.39*	-0.38	.19	-2.00*	0.07	.14	0.52
Event Type x Role Type	0.11	.21	0.50	-0.26	.27	-0.94	0.94	.27	3.52***	-0.06	.20	-0.33
Activated Occupational Identity							0.78	.07	11.62***	0.16	.06	2.77**
Emotional Ambivalence (Thompson et al.)							0.05	.05	0.99	0.06	.04	1.51
Work Meaningfulness										0.35	.04	9.26***

Note. N = 377; \*  $p < .05$  level, \*\*  $p < .01$  level, \*\*\*  $p < .001$  level.

**Table 25.** Study 2: Bootstrapped Indirect Effects of Event Type on Outcomes by Role Type Condition– Subjective Measure of Emotional Ambivalence (Thompson et al.)

Dependent Variable	Wellness Role (Archetype Corresponding Condition)			Technical Role (Archetype Non-Corresponding Condition)		
	Effect	SE	Bias-Corrected Confidence Interval	Effect	SE	Bias-Corrected Confidence Interval
Work Meaningfulness – via Activated Occupational Identity ( <i>H2A</i> )	.10	.11	[-.107, .320]	.02	.12	[-.229, .263]
Work Meaningfulness – via Emotional Ambivalence ( <i>H2B</i> )	.01	.02	[-.008, .076]	.02	.03	[-.015, .090]
Work Engagement – via Activated Occupational Identity and Work Meaningfulness ( <i>H3A</i> )	.04	.04	[-.038, .118]	.01	.04	[-.082, .093]
Work Engagement – via Emotional Ambivalence and Work Meaningfulness ( <i>H3B</i> )	.00	.01	[-.003, .028]	.01	.01	[-.005, .032]

Note. Boot (N) = 5,000

**Table 26.** Study 3: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Study Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Distressing Work Event (MS)	2.69	1.80	—	-0.08	-0.14	0.86**	-0.07	0.29*	0.57**	0.85**	0.74**
2. Archetype Correspondence (MS)	4.88	1.69	-0.18*	—	0.68**	-0.08	0.87**	0.55**	0.29	-0.14	-0.14
3. Activated Occupational Identity (MS)	5.18	1.75	-0.09	0.40**	—	-0.13	0.69**	0.43*	0.23	-0.14	0.01
4. Emotional Ambivalence (Fong) (MS)	3.48	1.96	0.63**	-0.12	-0.01	—	-0.20	0.25	0.45	0.84**	0.78**
5. Work Meaningfulness (MS)	4.71	1.78	-0.14*	0.51**	0.44**	-0.12	—	0.58**	0.25	-0.17	-0.14
6. Work Engagement (ES)	3.87	1.27	0.01	0.11	0.14*	0.07	0.20**	—	0.49*	0.23	0.17
7. Challenge Appraisal (MS)	3.19	1.83	0.54**	-0.01	0.01	0.44**	0.09	-0.04	—	0.62**	0.37
8. Hindrance Appraisal (MS)	2.40	1.73	0.55**	-0.22**	-0.14*	0.47**	-0.20**	-0.09	0.50**	—	0.74**
9. Event Unexpectedness (MS)	2.29	1.65	0.53**	-0.10	-0.04	0.28**	-0.02	0.00	0.45**	0.31**	—

*Note.* MS = Midshift, ES = End of Shift. Within-person correlations are shown below the diagonal ( $N = 315$ ) and between-person correlations are shown above the diagonal ( $N = 52$ ). Means and standard deviations are based on between-person scores.

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

**Table 27.** Study 3: Results of Simultaneous Multilevel Path Analysis

Variables	Dependent Variables							
	Activated Occupational Identity		Emotional Ambivalence (Fong)		Work Meaningfulness		Work Engagement	
	$\gamma$	SE	$\gamma$	SE	$\gamma$	SE	$\gamma$	SE
Intercept	5.30**	.20	3.52**	.18	2.87**	.56	2.99**	.33
<i>Predictors</i>								
Distressing Work Event	-0.01	.03	0.63**	.05	0.01	.05	-0.02	.03
Archetype Correspondence	0.36**	.08	-0.02	.08	0.35**	.09	-0.02	.05
Distressing Work Event X Archetype Correspondence	-0.02	.01	-0.03	.05	0.04	.05	-0.02	.03
Activated Occupational Identity	---	---	---	---	0.39**	.10	0.03	.05
Emotional Ambivalence (Fong)	---	---	---	---	-0.05	.05	0.06*	.03
Work Meaningfulness	---	---	---	---	---	---	0.20**	.05

Note. Level-1  $N = 315$ . Level-2  $N = 52$ . Full results from multilevel path analyses are provided with unstandardized coefficients. Level-1 predictors were group mean centered. Results including controls are presented in Table SA 1.

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

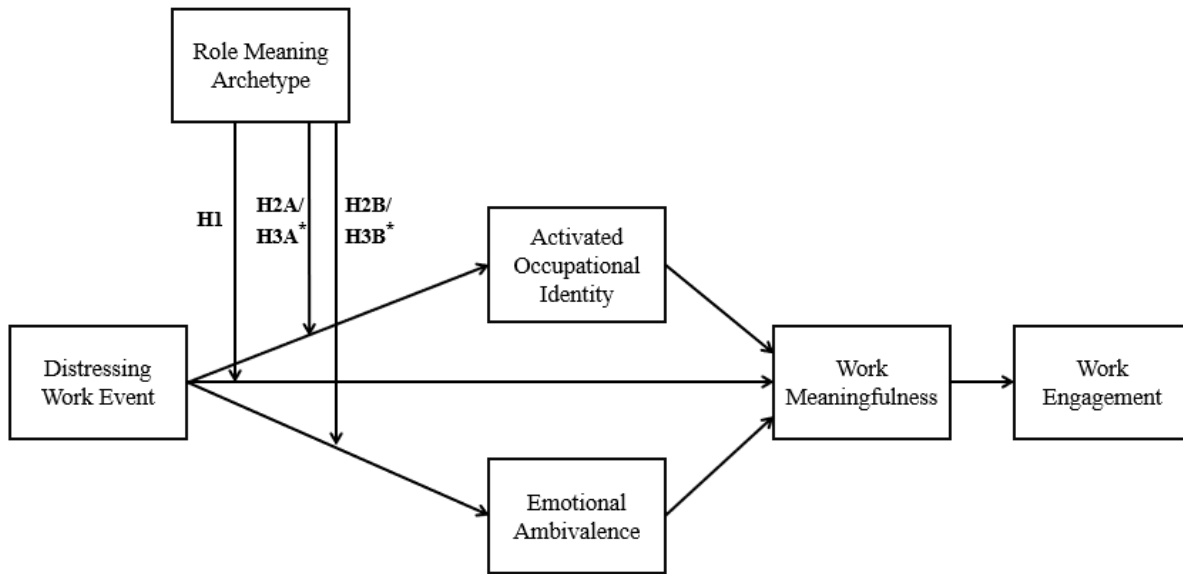
**Table 28.** Study 3: Results of Indirect Effects from Multilevel Path Analysis

Indirect Effect	Role Meaning	Estimate	95% CI
	Archetype Correspondence		
<b>Hypothesis 2A:</b> Distressing Work Event → Work Meaningfulness (via activated occupational identity)	High	-.013	[-.052, .015]
	Low	.003	[-.020, .023]
<b>Hypothesis 2B:</b> Distressing Work Event → Work Meaningfulness (via emotional ambivalence)	High	-.028	[-.089, .033]
	Low	-.031	[-.097, .036]
<b>Hypothesis 3A:</b> Distressing Work Event → Work Engagement (via activated occupational identity and work meaningfulness)	High	-.003	[-.011, .003]
	Low	.001	[-.004, .005]
<b>Hypothesis 3B:</b> Distressing Work Event → Work Engagement (via emotional ambivalence and work meaningfulness)	High	-.005	[-.021, .005]
	Low	-.006	[-.024, .006]

*Note:* Model is for Fong (2006) operationalization of emotional ambivalence. Bias-corrected indirect effect and conditional indirect effects confidence intervals are based on 20,000 Monte Carlo bootstrap samples. CI = Confidence interval. All indirect effects were calculated simultaneously, accounting for direct effects; \*  $p < .05$

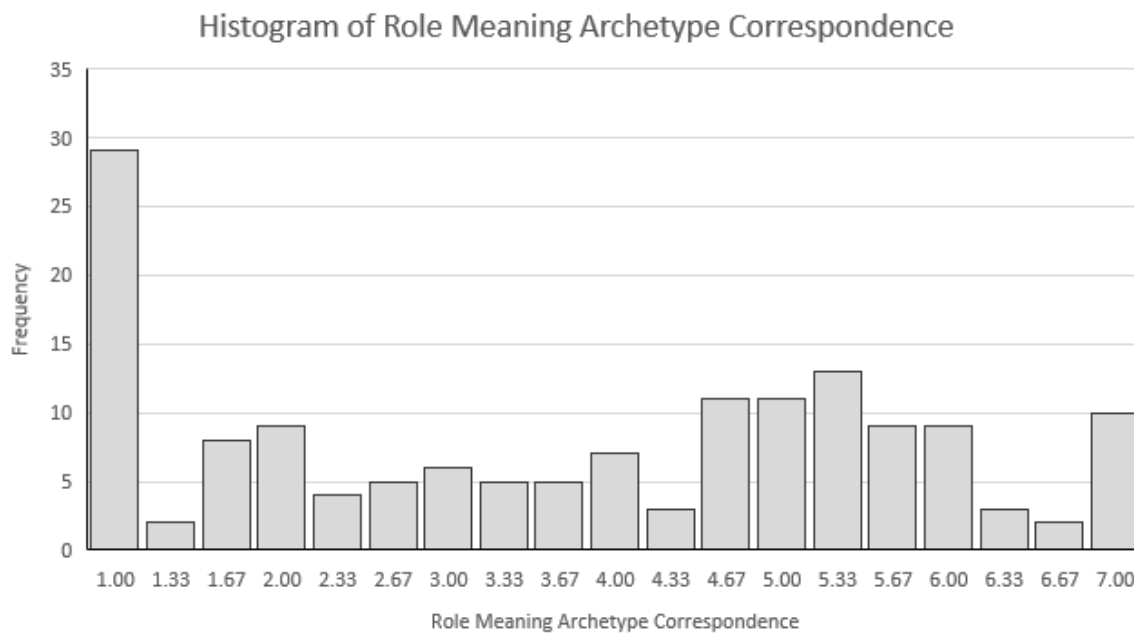


**Figure 1. Theoretical Model**

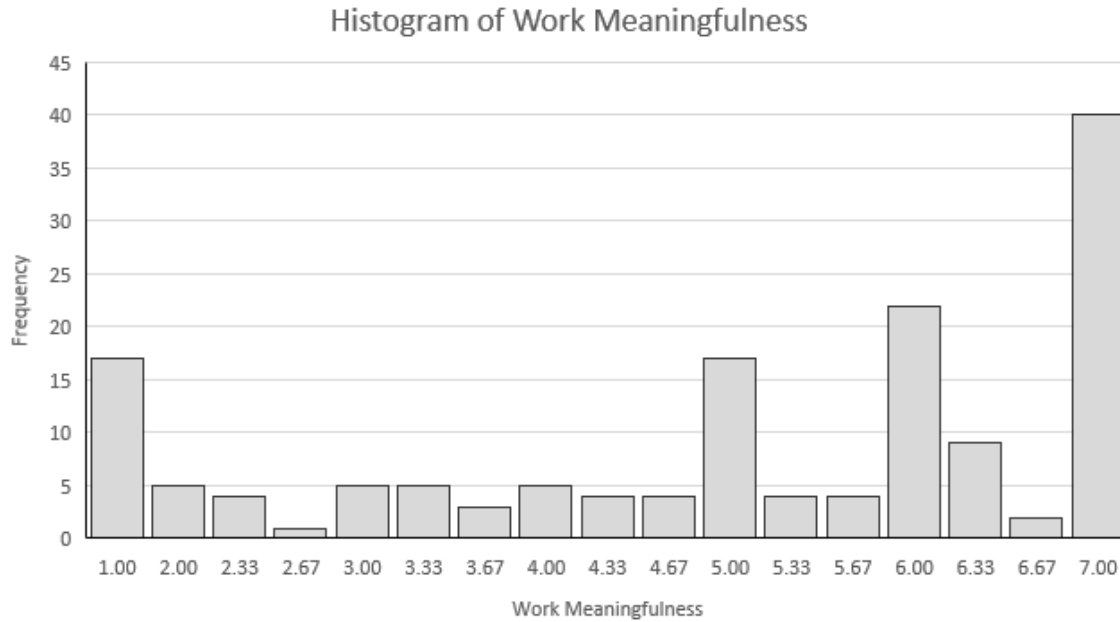


*Note.* \*Hypotheses 2A/3A represent role meaning archetypes' moderation of the effect of distressing work events, via activated occupational identity, on work meaningfulness (2A) and work engagement (3A). Hypotheses 2B/3B represent the same predicted mediated moderation via emotional ambivalence.

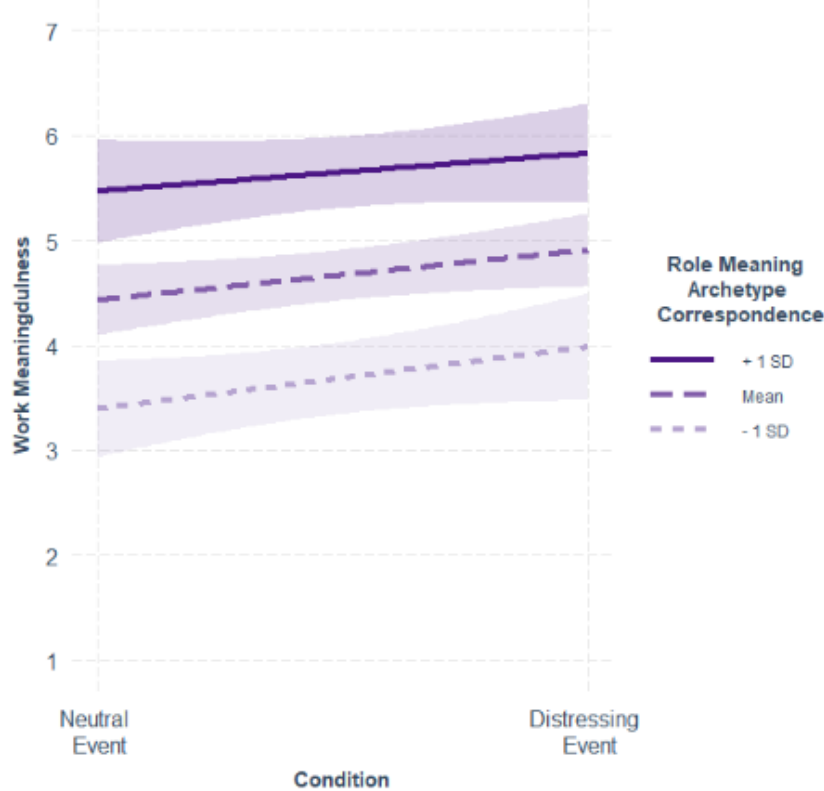
**Figure 2. Pilot Study: Histogram of Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence for Recalled Distressing Work Events**



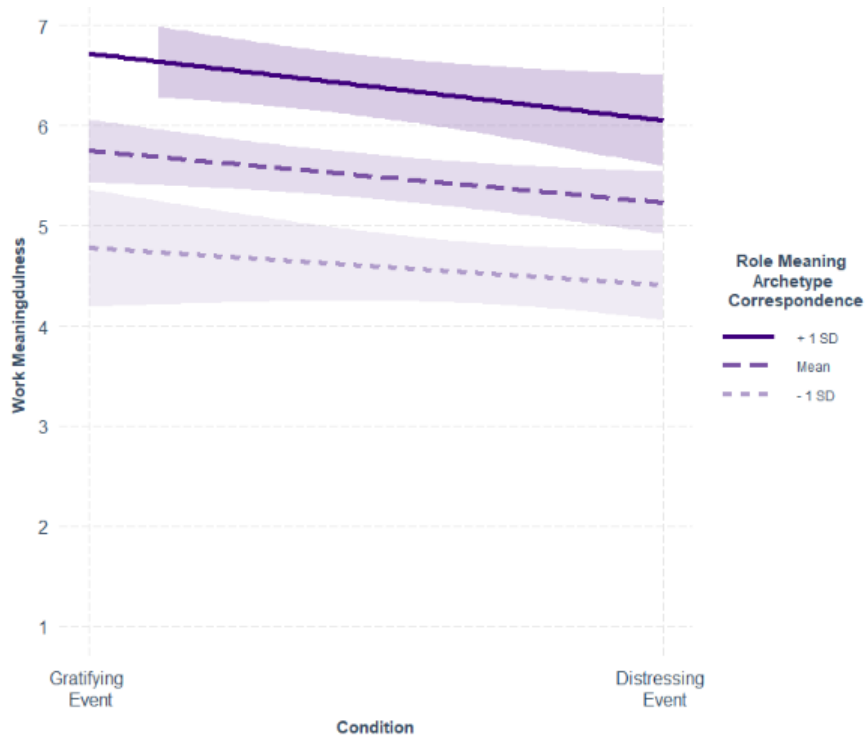
**Figure 3.** Pilot Study: Histogram of Work Meaningfulness Correspondence for Recalled Distressing Work Events



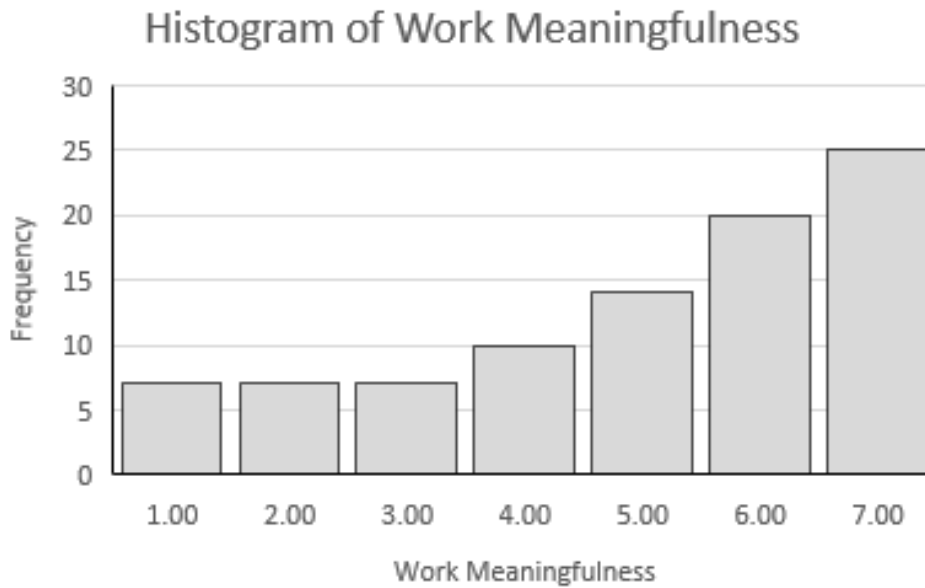
**Figure 4.** Study 1: Interaction between Event Type (Distressing vs. Neutral) and Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence on Work Meaningfulness



**Figure 5.** Study 1: Interaction between Event Type (Distressing vs. Emotionally Gratifying) and Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence on Work Meaningfulness

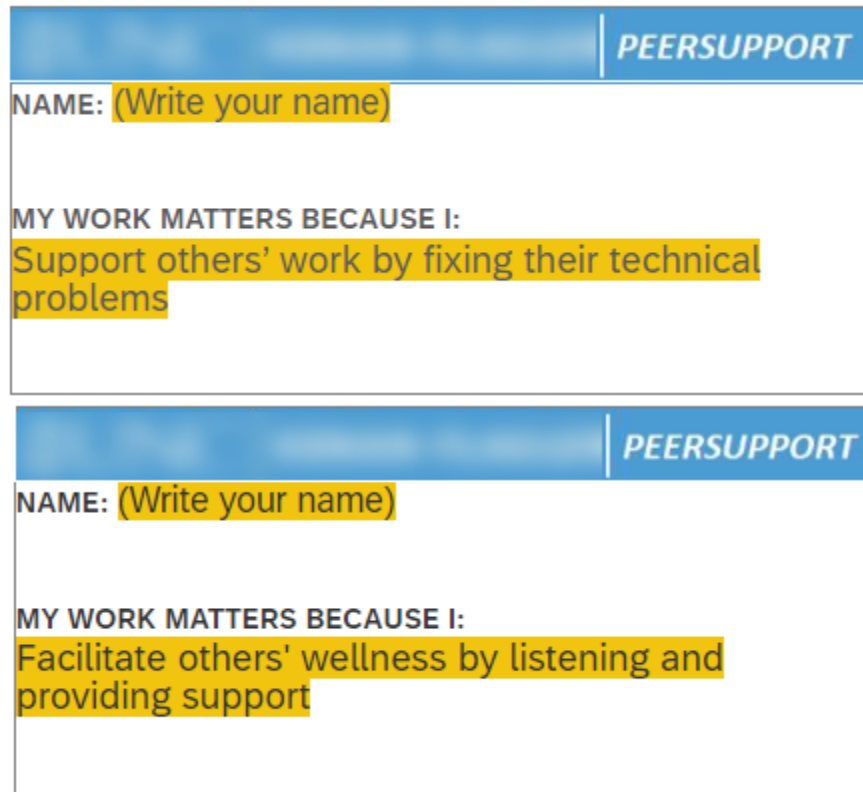


**Figure 6.** Study 1: Work Meaningfulness Histogram for Distressing Work Event Condition

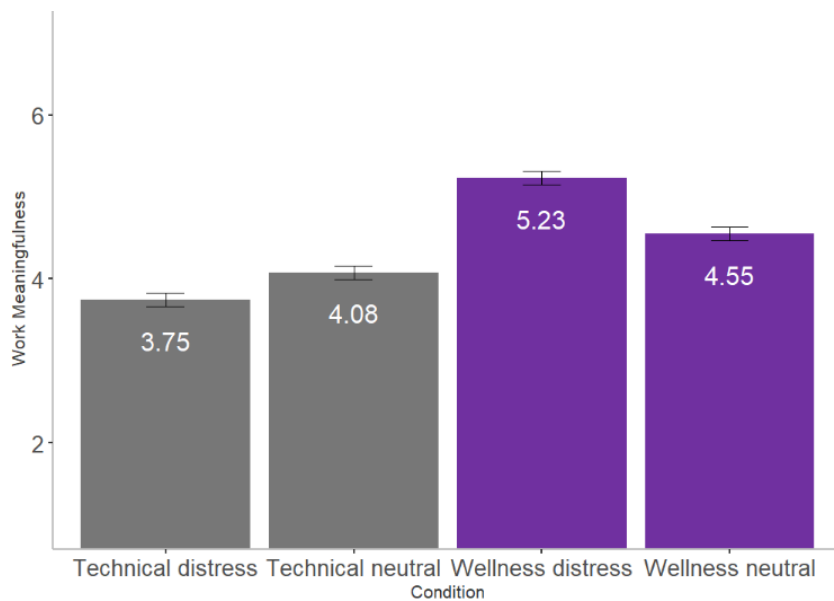


*Note.* Values were rounded to nearest whole number.

**Figure 7.** Study 2: Name Tag Templates for Reinforcement of Role Meaning Archetype Manipulation



**Figure 8.** Study 2: Work Meaningfulness Ratings by Condition



*Note:* Error bars indicate standard error of the mean.

## APPENDIX A: SURVEY FOR PILOT STUDY

### Study Scales

#### *Role meaning archetype correspondence.*

Many people view their jobs as fulfilling some purpose or significance, often informed by popular or culturally-shared narratives. Events you experience may align with those expectations or not. To what extent did this event you just described....

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

1. Align with your existing narrative about the purpose of your work?
2. Conform with the story you tell about the significance of your work?
3. Fit your narrative about what makes your work valuable and worthwhile?

#### *Activated occupational identity.*

To what extent do each of the following describe how you felt **during the experience you described?**

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3		4	5	6	7

1. I displayed the characteristics of my occupation
2. I saw myself as representing my occupation
3. Acting in accordance with my occupation was very important to me
4. Other people saw me as representing my occupation

*Emotional ambivalence – Berrios et al (2015) measure*

To what extent do each of the following describe how you felt **during the experience you described**?

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---

1. I felt contrasting emotions
2. I felt a mixture of emotions
3. I felt different emotions at the same time
4. I felt a combination of different emotions at the same time

*Emotional ambivalence – Fong (2006) item*

To what extent do each of the following describe how you felt **during the experience you described**?

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---

1. I felt a mix of positive and negative emotions

*Emotional ambivalence – PANAS-X*

This scale consists of a number of words and phrases that describe different feelings and emotions. Please read each item carefully and then indicate the extent to which each of the following describes how **you felt during the experience you described**.

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---

1. Inspired
2. Alert
3. Excited
4. Enthusiastic
5. Determined
6. Afraid
7. Upset
8. Nervous
9. Scared
10. Distressed

***Work meaningfulness***

To what extent do each of the following describe how you felt **during the experience you described?**

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---

1. The work I did was very important to me.
2. My job activities were personally meaningful to me.
3. The work I did was meaningful to me.

***Work Engagement.***

To what extent do each of the following describe how you felt **after the experience you described?**

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---

1. I exerted a lot of energy on my job.
2. I strived hard to complete my job.

3. I felt positive about my job.
4. I was excited about my job.
5. I was focused on my job.
6. I was absorbed by my job.

***Challenge and hindrance appraisals of event***

To what extent do each of the following describe how you felt **during the experience you described?**

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---

1. I really felt challenged by the experience
2. Aspects of the experience hindered my ability to succeed.

***Event unexpectedness and frequency.***

To what extent was the experience you described unexpected or surprising?

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---

How frequently does an event like this happen to people in your role?

Never							Always
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---

**Demographic Items**

What is your gender?



1. Male
2. Female
3. Non-binary/ third gender
4. I prefer to self-identify\_\_\_\_\_
5. I prefer to not say

What is your age?

18...100+

What is your ethnicity?

1. Hispanic or Latino
2. Not Hispanic or Latino

What is your race?

1. American Indian or Alaskan Native
2. Asian
3. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
4. Black or African American
5. White or Caucasian
6. Other \_\_\_\_\_

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

1. Less than High School
2. High School / GED
3. Some College
4. Bachelor's Degree
5. Master's Degree
6. Professional Degree (PhD, JD, MD)

## APPENDIX B: SURVEY FOR STUDY 1

### Study Scales

#### TIME 1

##### *Job*

What is your current job title?

##### *Job Responsibilities*

What are your primary job responsibilities?

##### *Tenure*

How long (in years) have you worked in your current occupation?

##### *Role Meaning Archetype*

Many people view their job roles as fulfilling some meaning or significance (either to themselves or others), often informed by popular or culturally-shared narratives, which we refer to as a person's *role meaning archetype*. As an example, a doctor might see their role meaning archetype as "caring for the sick" or a school bus driver might have "keeping children safe" as their archetype.

In a few sentences, **what is the mental image you have for what makes your work role valuable or worthwhile? What is it you do as part of your role that provides meaning?**

##### *Archetype Endorsement*

To what extent do you personally endorse the archetype(s) you just described?

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

---

#### TIME 2

##### *Distressing Event Description*

We are interested in **emotionally straining** experiences at work.

We would like you to recall a recent situation or event at work that was **emotionally straining**. Please limit your recollection to experiences you encountered as part of your role or in your work activities. Take a moment to really think about and picture the event, almost as if you are living it again right now. Below, please describe the experience in 3-4 sentences as if you are telling a story to a friend or family member about what happened.

*Note: if you do not wish to describe such an experience, you can opt out of the study by returning the submission at this time.*

### ***Neutral Event Description***

We are interested in **emotionally neutral** experiences at work **(in other words, experiences at work that provoke no emotions one way or another.)**

We would like you to recall a recent situation or event at work that was **emotionally neutral**. Please limit your recollection to experiences you encountered as part of your role or in your work activities. Take a moment to really think about and picture the event, almost as if you are living it again right now. Below, please describe the experience in 3-4 sentences as if you are telling a story to a friend or family member about what happened.

*Note: if you do not wish to describe such an experience, you can opt out of the study by returning the submission at this time.*

### ***Emotionally Gratifying Event Description***

We are interested in **emotionally gratifying** experiences at work.

We would like you to recall a recent situation or event at work that was **emotionally gratifying**. Please limit your recollection to experiences you encountered as part of your role or in your work activities. Take a moment to really think about and picture the event, almost as if you are living it again right now. Below, please describe the experience in 3-4 sentences as if you are telling a story to a friend or family member about what happened.

*Note: if you do not wish to describe such an experience, you can opt out of the study by returning the submission at this time.*

### ***Manipulation Checks***

To what extent was the event you just described emotionally distressing?

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

---

To what extent was the event you just described emotionally gratifying?

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---

### ***Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence***

Many people view their job roles as fulfilling some meaning or significance (either to themselves or others), which we refer to as a person's **role meaning archetype**.

In yesterday's survey, you documented the archetype you have for what makes your work role valuable or worthwhile, which is presented below.

**YOUR ROLE MEANING ARCHETYPE:** (presented here)

**Reflecting on your role meaning archetype presented above,** to what extent did the event you just described...

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---

1. Correspond to your mental image about the purpose of your work role?
2. Coincide with your existing narrative about the significance of your work role?
3. Align with the story you tell about what makes your work role valuable and worthwhile?

### ***Activated Occupational Identity***

Think back and visualize the workplace event you just described. To what extent do each of the following describe how you felt **during the experience you described?**

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---

1. I noticed that I was displaying the characteristics of my occupation.
2. I was aware that I was representing my occupation.
3. I perceived myself to be acting in accordance with my occupational identity.
4. I thought of myself as embodying my occupational role.

***Emotional Ambivalence – Berrios et al (2015)***

Think back and visualize the workplace event you just described. To what extent do each of the following describe how you felt **during the experience you described?**

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

---

1. I felt contrasting emotions
2. I felt a mixture of emotions
3. I felt different emotions at the same time
4. I felt a combination of different emotions at the same time

***Emotional Ambivalence – PANAS-X***

Think back and visualize the workplace event you just described. To what extent do each of the following describe how you felt **during the experience you described?**

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

---

1. Inspired
2. Strong
3. Interested
4. Proud
5. Active
6. Alert
7. Excited
8. Enthusiastic
9. Determined
10. Attentive
11. Afraid
12. Upset
13. Nervous
14. Scared
15. Distressed
16. Guilty
17. Hostile
18. Irritable
19. Ashamed
20. Jittery

***Work Meaningfulness***

Think back and visualize the workplace event you just described. To what extent do each of the following describe how you felt **during the experience you described?**

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

---

1. The work I was doing felt very important to me
2. My job activities at the time felt personally meaningful to me
3. The work I was doing felt meaningful to me

***Work Engagement***

To what extent do each of the following describe how you felt **immediately after the experience you described (i.e., within a few hours)?**

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---

1. I was exerting a lot energy on my job
2. I was striving hard to complete my job.
3. I felt positive about my job.
4. I felt excited about my job.
5. I was focused on my job.
6. I was absorbed by my job.

***Challenge and Hindrance Appraisals of Event***

Think back and visualize the workplace event you just described. To what extent do each of the following describe how you felt **during the experience you described?**

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---

1. I really felt challenged by the experience
2. Aspects of the experience hindered my ability to succeed.

**Demographic Items**

What is your gender?

6. Male
7. Female
8. Non-binary/ third gender
9. I prefer to self-identify\_\_\_\_\_
10. I prefer to not say

What is your age?

18...100+

What is your ethnicity?

3. Hispanic or Latino
4. Not Hispanic or Latino

What is your race?

7. American Indian or Alaskan Native
8. Asian
9. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
10. Black or African American
11. White or Caucasian
12. Other \_\_\_\_\_

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

7. Less than High School
8. High School / GED
9. Some College
10. Bachelor's Degree
11. Master's Degree
12. Professional Degree (PhD, JD, MD)



## APPENDIX C: SURVEY STUDY 2 – PRE-EXPERIMENT PILOT

### Study Scales

#### *Part A: Role Meaning Archetype Definition*

Many people view their job roles as fulfilling some meaning or significance (either to themselves or others), often informed by popular or culturally-shared narratives, which we refer to as a person’s *role meaning archetype*. As an example, a doctor might see their role meaning archetype as “caring for the sick” or a school bus driver might have “keeping children safe” as their archetype.

In a few sentences, **what is the mental image you have for what makes your work role valuable or worthwhile? What is it you do as part of your role that provides meaning?**

*Note: If you feel that you have two archetypes, feel free to document them both. Alternatively, if you feel your work does not provide any meaning to yourself or others, please write “N/A” with a short explanation as to why you feel this way.*

#### *Part B: Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence*

To what extent does the following match what you see as the fundamental purpose of your work role that makes it valuable and worthwhile?

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

---

- 1) Mental Health Support Archetype: Facilitating mental health, healing, and growth by listening and providing support
- 2) Technical Support Archetype: Supporting organizations and allowing others to strive towards valuable work goals by providing technical solutions

## Demographic Items

What is your gender?

- 11. Male
- 12. Female
- 13. Non-binary/ third gender
- 14. I prefer to self-identify\_\_\_\_\_
- 15. I prefer to not say

What is your age?

18...100+

What is your ethnicity?

- 5. Hispanic or Latino
- 6. Not Hispanic or Latino

What is your race?

- 13. American Indian or Alaskan Native
- 14. Asian
- 15. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- 16. Black or African American
- 17. White or Caucasian
- 18. Other \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX D: SURVEY STUDY 2

### Experimental Stimulus Materials



Hello, we are doing research to review the quality of training materials for a new peer-to-peer program at <university> and the experience of students who may participate as peer supports in the program.

You may have heard of other peer-to-peer programs at <university?>, such as <name of program>. <The business school> is planning to deploy a more targeted peer-to-peer program, <business school> **PEERSUPPORT**, for the needs of business school students and is beginning to pilot the program.

<The business school> has partnered with the Behavioral Lab to assess how effectively student workers can provide assistance to their peers after being trained with these materials. The goal of the materials is to be concise but sufficiently comprehensive for students to feel comfortable to support their peers.

In today's study, **you will receive a brief training about the peer support role, listen to a student voicemail and craft an email response to the student caller.** All email responses will be reviewed by one of the program administrators and will only be shared with the caller if it meets an internal quality check.

### ROLE TRAINING

#### *Technical Peer Support*



#### **ROLE OVERVIEW**

Given the importance of technology to much of the coursework of Kenan-Flagler students, the **TECH PEERSUPPORT** role will focus on helping students resolve issues they might face with common technologies, such as Word, Excel, and Outlook.

As a peer support, you do not need complex technical knowledge, but instead you will use your familiarity with common issues that students face such that you can either walk them through how to resolve the issue or point them to the appropriate resource (whether an FAQ document or reaching out to the KF IT Help desk).

*Note: **The IT role is a technical role only.** Student wellness is not the focus of your role but instead should be handled by UBP Wellness.*

#### **ROLE INSTRUCTIONS (1 of 2)**

While **TECH PEERSUPPORT** workers will eventually be provided FAQ documents and resource guides, the primary guidance for this role is that you

should share the knowledge and approaches to fixing technical issues that you have gained in your own life. This experience, combined with the resources you will be provided, will make you an effective problem solver to aid student callers to resolve their technical problems.

### **ROLE INSTRUCTIONS (2 of 2)**

In order to help student callers to fix their technical problems, you will follow these steps:

1. **Clarify the technical issue** that the student is having (e.g., what technology, what is the desired functionality)
  - *Example Issues:* Setting up Outlook on mobile device, resolving formula or formatting issues in Excel
2. Based on past experiences you have had or that you think may solve the problem, **suggest a few technical approaches** to the caller.
3. If you have been provided an **FAQ document** by the PEERSUPPORT program for the specific technical issue, refer to the steps outlined there.
4. If the above steps have not resolved the issue, provide the student with the website and email for the **Kenan-Flagler IT Help Desk and encourage them to reach out.**

### ***Wellness Peer Support***



### **ROLE OVERVIEW**

Given the importance of wellness to Kenan-Flagler students, the **WELLNESS PEERSUPPORT** role will focus on helping students foster and maintain wellness as they face common issues as a student.

As a peer support, your role is not to dispense medical advice on mental health (as a reminder all the calls are prescreened for anything high-risk or emergency), but to serve as a sounding board and empathetic third-party as students call with common issues they face, and to help point them to the appropriate resource (such as wellness events or websites for Kenan-Flagler UBP or UNC wellness specialists).

### **ROLE INSTRUCTIONS (1 of 2)**

While **WELLNESS PEERSUPPORT** workers will eventually be provided FAQ documents and resource guides, the primary guidance for this role is that you should serve as a sounding board to student callers and share the knowledge and approaches to navigating school and personal issues that you have gained in your own life. This experience, combined with the resources you will be provided, will make you a facilitator of wellness and provider of support to aid student callers to manage their personal challenges.

### **ROLE INSTRUCTIONS (2 of 2)**

In order to help student callers with their personal challenges, you will follow these steps:

1. **Clarify the wellness issue** that the student is having (e.g., what issue, what are they hoping to achieve) and make them feel understood and supported.
  - o *Example Issues:* managing pressure, venting about school or interpersonal issues, difficulties engaging in wellness practices like exercise or socializing
2. Based on past experiences you have had or that you think may relate to the problem, **suggest a few approaches** to the caller.
3. If you have been provided an **FAQ document** by the PEERSUPPORT program for a specific issue, refer to the steps outlined there.
4. If the above steps have not resolved the issue, provide the student with the website and email for **UBP Wellness** and **encourage them to reach out.**

## **ROLE MEANING ARCHETYPE MANIPULATION**

### *Technical Peer Support*



#### **WHY THIS ROLE IS MEANINGFUL**

Finally, it is important that you understand the importance and value of the work that you will be doing as a **TECH PEERSUPPORT** worker. Kenan-Flagler Business School students rely on technology in order to complete assignments and communicate with prospective employers.

As a **TECH PEERSUPPORT** worker, you provide crucial technical support for other students to work towards these goals. By helping fix their technical problems, you are providing important support that enables the students, and the business school organization more generally, to function. Without your work in this role, students may be inhibited in their ability to complete technical tasks that help them to succeed in the classroom or in their jobs.

### *Wellness Peer Support*



#### **WHY THIS ROLE IS MEANINGFUL**

Finally, it is important that you understand the importance and value of the work that you will be doing as a **WELLNESS PEERSUPPORT**. Kenan-Flagler Business School students face a lot of pressure academically, professionally, and socially.

As a **WELLNESS PEERSUPPORT**, you facilitate student wellness, healing, and growth by listening and providing support. By allowing people to feel heard and supported, you help alleviate psychological distress and help people to better

understand themselves and others. Without your work in this role, students may be inhibited in their ability to find healing or support for challenges that they face.

### **ROLE MEANING ARCHETYPE MANIPULATION REINFORCEMENT**

Based on the training you just received, please state in your own words what are some of the responsibilities of your *PEERSUPPORT* role? In other words, what type of issues or problems might a person in this role help resolve?

How would you describe the importance or meaningfulness associated with the *PEERSUPPORT* role? What is valuable or significant about the things one does as part of this role?

Research shows that putting on components of a “work uniform” is helpful for workers to more easily transition into a work role. To better help our peer support workers take on their role, you will be quickly filling out a nametag to wear during the duration of this study.

On your desk is a pen and a blank nametag. Please fill it out according to the image below and stick it to your shirt.

#### ***Technical Peer Support***

<b>PEERSUPPORT</b>	
<b>NAME:</b> (Write your name)	
<b>MY WORK MATTERS BECAUSE I:</b> Support others' work by fixing their technical problems	

#### ***Wellness Peer Support***

<b>PEERSUPPORT</b>	
<b>NAME:</b> (Write your name)	
<b>MY WORK MATTERS BECAUSE I:</b> Facilitate others' wellness by listening and providing support	

### **VOICEMAIL**

As mentioned in the introduction to the study, you will now listen to a voicemail from a student caller and then create an email response following the guidelines from your training. The voicemails are from a limited pilot collected over the last several weeks amongst students in the Public Policy degree program. A few details about the voicemail you will hear:

- Program administrators have reviewed the voicemails to ensure no identifiable information is included in any of the voicemails you may hear.
- Students seeking peer support have completed an intake form such that any issue they are calling with is not urgent or high-risk.
- Your email response will be reviewed for quality and only if it meets internal standards might it be shared back to the student caller. Otherwise, program administrators will respond to the voicemails at the end of the week.

**When you are ready, hit the continue arrow and the survey will randomly select a student voicemail from the pilot group.**

***Distressed Voicemail:***

*“Hi. I am really really frustrated with this issue I am having trying to do some research for a class paper. This is coming at just the absolute worst time - I have others exams and papers and I’m still trying to recruit for an internship – and I simply don’t have time to figure this out on my own. Y’all probably won’t be able to help me and calling this peer support line probably won’t do any good. UGH. Well anyway, I’m trying to find financial details about a few organizations for a paper and I don’t know if I’m using the wrong search terms, going to the wrong sites, or what. WHO KNOWS but this is taking me FOREVER and I need help or advice. I’m just really stuck mentally, tired, and drained!”*

***Control Voicemail:***

*“Hi. I am having some annoyances with this issue I am having trying to do some research for a class paper. Things are a bit busy right now with other exams, papers, still recruiting for an internship and I’m feeling a slight time crunch. I’m somewhat feeling I don’t have enough time to figure this out on my own with everything going on. I’m not sure if you are able to help me. I’ve been trying to find financial details about a few organizations for a paper and may not be using the right search terms or sites, who knows. I’m feeling a little stuck mentally and could use some help or advice.”*

**Study Scales**  
***Validation Check***

To what extent was the caller's issue relevant to your peer role?

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---

***Manipulation Check- Archetype Correspondence***

Today you were trained and acting in the role of a (role type) peer support. To what extent did your experience today correspond with your mental image about the purpose of the role?

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---

***Manipulation Check- Emotional Distressing Event***

To what extent was the experience you had listening and responding to the student caller emotionally distressing?

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---

***Activated Occupational Identity***

In your work listening and responding to the student caller, to what extent do each of the following describe how you feel?

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---

1. I noticed that I was displaying the characteristics of my peer support role
2. I was aware that I was representing my peer support role.



3. I perceived myself to be acting in accordance with the identity associated with my peer support role.
4. I thought of myself as embodying my peer support role

***Emotional Ambivalence – Berrios et al (2015)***

In your work listening and responding to the student caller, to what extent do each of the following describe how you felt?

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---

1. I felt contrasting emotions
2. I felt a mixture of emotions
3. I felt different emotions at the same time
4. I felt a combination of different emotions at the same time

***Emotional Ambivalence – PANAS-X***

This scale consists of a number of words and phrases that describe different feelings and emotions. Please read each item carefully and then indicate the extent to which each of the following describes **how you are felt while listening and responding to the student caller.**

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---

1. Inspired
2. Alert
3. Excited
4. Enthusiastic
5. Determined
6. Afraid
7. Upset
8. Nervous
9. Scared
10. Distressed

***Work Meaningfulness***

To what extent do each of the following describe how you felt **while listening and responding to the student caller?**

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---

1. The work I did listening and responding to the student caller feels very important to me
2. My work listening and responding to the student caller feel personally meaningful to me
3. Listening and responding to the student caller feels meaningful to me.

***Work Engagement***

We are also curious about how you felt just now crafting the follow-up items for the student caller. During this task, to what extent did you feel the following?

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---

1. I exerted a lot energy on documenting the follow-up items
2. I was striving hard in my work documenting the follow-up items

3. I felt positive about my work documenting the follow-up items
4. I was excited about my work documenting the follow-up items.
5. I was focused on my work documenting the follow-up items
6. I was absorbed by my work documenting the follow-up items

***Challenge and Hindrance Appraisals of Event***

To what extent do each of the following describe how you felt **listening and responding to the student caller?**

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

---

1. I really felt challenged by the experience
2. Aspects of the experience hindered my ability to succeed.

**Demographic Items**

What is your gender?

1. Male
2. Female
3. Non-binary/ third gender
4. I prefer to self-identify \_\_\_\_\_
5. I prefer to not say

What is your age?

18...100+

What is your ethnicity?

1. Hispanic or Latino
2. Not Hispanic or Latino

What is your race?

1. American Indian or Alaskan Native
2. Asian
3. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
4. Black or African American
5. White or Caucasian
6. Other \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX E: SURVEY STUDY 3

### Study Scales

#### Opt-In Study

##### *Role Meaning Archetype Definition*

Many people view their job roles as fulfilling some meaning or significance (either to themselves or others), often informed by popular or culturally-shared narratives, which we refer to as a person's *role meaning archetype*. As an example, a doctor might see their role meaning archetype as "caring for the sick" or a school bus driver might have "keeping children safe" as their archetype.

In a sentence, **what is the mental image you have for what makes your work role valuable or worthwhile? What is it you do as part of your role that provides meaning?**

*Note: If you feel that you have two archetypes, feel free to document them both.*

*Alternatively, if you feel your work does not provide any meaning to yourself or others, please write "N/A" with a short explanation as to why you feel this way.*

##### *Demographic Items*

- Which unit are you in the hospital?
- How long (in years) have you worked as a nurse?
- What shift do you typically work
  - o Day
  - o Night
  - o Rotating
  - o Other (please describe

What is your gender?

1. Male
2. Female
3. Non-binary/ third gender
4. I prefer to self-identify \_\_\_\_\_
5. I prefer to not say

What is your age?

18...100+

What is your ethnicity?

1. Hispanic or Latino
2. Not Hispanic or Latino

What is your race?

1. American Indian or Alaskan Native
2. Asian
3. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
4. Black or African American
5. White or Caucasian
6. Other \_\_\_\_\_

What is your marital status?

1. Married
2. Widowed
3. Divorced
4. Separated
5. In a relationship but never married

6. Single, not in a relationship

Do you have children? (yes/no)

(If so) How many children do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

## Midshift Survey

### *Distressing Work Experience*

#### **So far today, my work has been...**

Distressing (e.g., generating some sort of negative emotional reaction)

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

---

### *Distressing Work Event (Specific)*

Have any specific events at work today been distressing? (1 = yes, 0 = no)

(if so) In just a few words, can you describe the most distressing event you encountered?

### *Unexpected Work Experience*

#### **So far today, my work has been...**

Unexpected or surprising

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

---

### *Challenge/Hindrance Appraisal*

#### **So far today...**

I have really felt challenged by my work

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---

**So far today...**

Aspects of my work have hindered my ability to succeed

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---

***Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence***

In the opt-in survey, you defined your “role meaning archetype” (i.e., the mental image/narrative you have for what makes your work role worthwhile) as: (participant’s archetype from opt-in survey)

**Reflecting on my role meaning archetype,** my work so far today has...

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---

1. Corresponded to my mental image about the purpose of my work role?
2. Coincided with my existing narrative about the significance of my work role?
3. Aligned with the story I tell about what makes my work role valuable and worthwhile?

***Activated Occupational Identity***

**So far today...**

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---



1. I notice that I have been displaying the characteristics of my role as a nurse.
2. I am aware that I have been representing my role as a nurse

***Emotional Ambivalence***

**So far today...**

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---

1. I am feeling a mixture of positive and negative emotions

***PA/NA***

**So far today...**

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---

1. I am feeling excited
2. I am feeling content
3. I am feeling angry
4. I am feeling bored

***Work Meaningfulness***

**So far today...**

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---

1. The work I am doing feels very important to me.
2. My job activities feel personally meaningful to me.
3. The work I am doing feels meaningful to me.

***Work Engagement***

**So far today, I am...**

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---

1. Striving hard to complete my job.
2. Excited about my job.
3. Absorbed by my job.

**End of Shift Survey**

***Distressing Work Experience***

**Since the last survey, my work has been...**

Distressing (e.g., generating some sort of negative emotional reaction)

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---

***Distressing Work Event (Specific)***

Have any specific events at work been distressing? Since the last survey? (1 = yes, 0 = no)

(if so) In just a few words, can you describe the most distressing event you encountered since the last survey?

*Unexpected Work Experience*

**Since the last survey, my work has been...**

Unexpected or surprising

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---

*Challenge/Hindrane Appraisal*

**Since the last survey...**

I have really felt challenged by my work

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---

**Since the last survey...**

Aspects of my work have hindered my ability to succeed

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---

*Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence*

In the opt-in survey, you defined your “role meaning archetype” (i.e., the mental image/narrative you have for what makes your work role worthwhile) as: (participant’s archetype from opt-in survey)

**Reflecting on my role meaning archetype,** my work since the last survey has...

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---

1. Corresponded to my mental image about the purpose of my work role?
2. Coincided with my existing narrative about the significance of my work role?
3. Aligned with the story I tell about what makes my work role valuable and worthwhile?

***Activated Occupational Identity***

**Since the last survey...**

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

---

1. I notice that I have been displaying the characteristics of my role as a nurse.
2. I am aware that I have been representing my role as a nurse

***Emotional Ambivalence***

**Since the last survey...**

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

---

1. I am feeling a mixture of positive and negative emotions

***PA/NA***

**Since the last survey...**

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

---

1. I am feeling excited
2. I am feeling content
3. I am feeling angry
4. I am feeling bored

***Work Meaningfulness***

**Since the last survey...**

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---

1. The work I am doing feels very important to me.
2. My job activities feel personally meaningful to me.
3. The work I am doing feels meaningful to me.

***Work Engagement***

**Since the last survey, I am...**

Not at all							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

---

1. Striving hard to complete my job.
2. Excited about my job.
3. Absorbed by my job.

## Supplemental Analyses

**Table SA 1.** Study 3: Focal Model Results of Simultaneous Multilevel Path Analysis with Control Variables

Variables	Dependent Variables							
	Activated Occupational Identity		Emotional Ambivalence (Fong)		Work Meaningfulness		Work Engagement	
	$\gamma$	SE	$\gamma$	SE	$\gamma$	SE	$\gamma$	SE
Intercept	5.30**	.19	3.52**	.18	2.98**	.54	2.93**	.32
<i>Predictors</i>								
Distressing Work Event	-0.01	.04	0.53**	.08	-0.03	.05	0.02	.04
Archetype Correspondence	0.35**	.07	-0.00	.08	0.32**	.08	-0.02	.05
Distressing Work Event X Archetype Correspondence	-0.02	.01	-0.03	.04	0.05	.04	-0.02	.03
Activated Occupational Identity	---	---	---	---	0.38**	.10	0.02	.05
Emotional Ambivalence (Fong)	---	---	---	---	-0.05	.05	0.08*	.03
Work Meaningfulness	---	---	---	---	---	---	0.21**	.05
<i>Controls</i>								
Challenge Appraisal	0.04	.06	0.13	.08	0.16	.05	-0.08	.05
Hindrance Appraisal	-0.06	.07	0.19	.06	-0.11	.05	-0.05	.06
Event Unexpectedness	-0.00	.05	-0.10	.07	0.03	.05	0.01	.05

*Note.* Level-1  $N = 315$ . Level-2  $N = 52$ . Full results from multilevel path analyses are provided with unstandardized coefficients. Level-1 predictors were group mean centered. \*  $p < .05$  level. \*\*  $p < .01$  level.

**Table SA 2.** Study 3: Results of Indirect Effects from Multilevel Path Analysis Including Control Variables

Indirect Effect	Role Meaning	Estimate	95% CI
	Archetype Correspondence		
<b>Hypothesis 2A:</b> Distressing Work Event → Work Meaningfulness (via activated occupational identity)	High	-.009	[-.051, .018]
	Low	.005	[-.029, .030]
<b>Hypothesis 2B:</b> Distressing Work Event → Work Meaningfulness (via emotional ambivalence)	High	-.025	[-.076, .021]
	Low	-.028	[-.089, .023]
<b>Hypothesis 3A:</b> Distressing Work Event → Work Engagement (via activated occupational identity and work meaningfulness)	High	-.002	[-.012, .004]
	Low	.001	[-.006, .007]
<b>Hypothesis 3B:</b> Distressing Work Event → Work Engagement (via emotional ambivalence and work meaningfulness)	High	-.005	[-.020, .003]
	Low	-.006	[-.023, .004]

*Note:* Model is same as focal model but includes controls for challenge and hindrance appraisals, as well as event unexpectedness. Bias-corrected indirect effect and conditional indirect effects confidence intervals are based on 20,000 Monte Carlo bootstrap samples. CI = Confidence interval. All indirect effects were calculated simultaneously, accounting for direct effects; \*  $p < .05$

**Table SA 3.** Study 3: Results of Simultaneous Multilevel Path Analysis for Alternate Operationalization of Emotional Ambivalence (Hershfield)

Variables	Dependent Variables							
	Activated Occupational Identity		Emotional Ambivalence (Hershfield)		Work Meaningfulness		Work Engagement	
	$\gamma$	SE	$\gamma$	SE	$\gamma$	SE	$\gamma$	SE
Intercept	5.30**	.20	1.82**	.08	3.11**	.56	2.96**	.33
<i>Predictors</i>								
Distressing Work Event	-0.01	.03	-0.02	.03	-0.02	.04	0.02	.03
Archetype Correspondence	0.36**	.08	-0.02	.05	0.35**	.08	-0.03	.05
Distressing Work Event X Archetype Correspondence	-0.02	.02	0.06*	.02	0.06	.05	-0.03	.03
Activated Occupational Identity	---	---	---	---	0.37**	.10	0.04	.05
Emotional Ambivalence (Hershfield)	---	---	---	---	-0.16	.10	0.10	.08
Work Meaningfulness	---	---	---	---	---	---	0.20**	.05

*Note.* Level-1  $N = 315$ . Level-2  $N = 52$ . Full results from multilevel path analyses are provided with unstandardized coefficients. Level-1 predictors were group mean centered.

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



**Table SA 4.** Study 3: Results of Indirect Effects from Multilevel Path Analysis for Alternate Operationalization of Emotional Ambivalence (Hershfield)

Indirect Effect	Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence	Estimate	95% CI
<b>Hypothesis 2A:</b> Distressing Work Event → Work Meaningfulness (via activated occupational identity)	High	-.012	[-.051, .014]
	Low	.002	[-.019, .023]
<b>Hypothesis 2B:</b> Distressing Work Event → Work Meaningfulness (via emotional ambivalence)	High	-.006	[-.034, .005]
	Low	.012	[-.001, .038]
<b>Hypothesis 3A:</b> Distressing Work Event → Work Engagement (via activated occupational identity and work meaningfulness)	High	-.002	[-.011, .003]
	Low	.000	[-.003, .005]
<b>Hypothesis 3B:</b> Distressing Work Event → Work Engagement (via emotional ambivalence and work meaningfulness)	High	-.001	[-.008, .001]
	Low	.002	[-.000, .009]

*Note:* Model is for Hershfield et al (2008/2010) operationalization of emotional ambivalence. Bias-corrected indirect effect and conditional indirect effects confidence intervals are based on 20,000 Monte Carlo bootstrap samples. CI = Confidence interval. All indirect effects were calculated simultaneously, accounting for direct effects; \*  $p < .05$

**Table SA 5.** Study 3: Results of Simultaneous Multilevel Path Analysis for Alternate Operationalization of Emotional Ambivalence (Thompson)

Variables	Dependent Variables							
	Activated Occupational Identity		Emotional Ambivalence (Thompson)		Work Meaningfulness		Work Engagement	
	$\gamma$	SE	$\gamma$	SE	$\gamma$	SE	$\gamma$	SE
Intercept	5.30**	.20	0.67**	.14	3.05**	.55	2.96**	.33
<i>Predictors</i>								
Distressing Work Event	-0.01	.03	-0.17	.10	-0.02	.04	0.02	.03
Archetype Correspondence	0.36**	.08	0.02	.05	0.32**	.09	-0.02	.05
Distressing Work Event X Archetype Correspondence	-0.02	.03	0.15	.14	0.07	.05	-0.03	.03
Activated Occupational Identity	---	---	---	---	0.34**	.09	0.04	.05
Emotional Ambivalence (Thompson)	---	---	---	---	-0.15*	.07	0.05	.05
Work Meaningfulness	---	---	---	---	---	---	0.20**	.06

*Note.* Level-1  $N = 315$ . Level-2  $N = 52$ . Full results from multilevel path analyses are provided with unstandardized coefficients. Level-1 predictors were group mean centered.

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

**Table SA 6.** Study 3: Results of Indirect Effects from Multilevel Path Analysis for Alternate Operationalization of Emotional Ambivalence (Thompson)

Indirect Effect	Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence	Estimate	95% CI
<b>Hypothesis 2A:</b> Distressing Work Event → Work Meaningfulness (via activated occupational identity)	High	-.011	[-.054, .021]
	Low	.001	[-.024, .032]
<b>Hypothesis 2B:</b> Distressing Work Event → Work Meaningfulness (via emotional ambivalence)	High	-.024	[-.122, .012]
	Low	.019	[-.013, .102]
<b>Hypothesis 3A:</b> Distressing Work Event → Work Engagement (via activated occupational identity and work meaningfulness)	High	-.002	[-.012, .004]
	Low	.000	[-.005, .007]
<b>Hypothesis 3B:</b> Distressing Work Event → Work Engagement (via emotional ambivalence and work meaningfulness)	High	-.005	[-.029, .002]
	Low	.004	[-.002, .026]

*Note:* Model is for Thompson et al (1995) operationalization of emotional ambivalence. Bias-corrected indirect effect and conditional indirect effects confidence intervals are based on 20,000 Monte Carlo bootstrap samples. CI = Confidence interval. All indirect effects were calculated simultaneously, accounting for direct effects; \*  $p < .05$

**Table SA 7.** Study 3: Results of Simultaneous Multilevel Path Analysis for Binary Distressing Event Predictor

Variables	Dependent Variables							
	Activated Occupational Identity		Emotional Ambivalence (Fong)		Work Meaningfulness		Work Engagement	
	$\gamma$	SE	$\gamma$	SE	$\gamma$	SE	$\gamma$	SE
Intercept	5.30**	.20	3.54**	.18	2.84**	.60	3.03**	.32
<i>Predictors</i>								
Distressing Work Event	0.01	.14	1.86**	.24	-0.06	.19	-0.24	.08
Archetype Correspondence	0.36**	.08	-0.23*	.10	0.34**	.09	-0.01	.05
Distressing Work Event X Archetype Correspondence	-0.25	.25	0.45	.43	0.19	.21	0.03	.14
Activated Occupational Identity	---	---	---	---	0.40**	.10	0.03	.05
Emotional Ambivalence (Fong)	---	---	---	---	-0.05	.05	0.07*	.01
Work Meaningfulness	---	---	---	---	---	---	0.19**	.05

*Note.* Level-1  $N = 315$ . Level-2  $N = 52$ . Full results from multilevel path analyses are provided with unstandardized coefficients. Level-1 predictors were group mean centered.

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

**Table SA 8.** Study 3: Results of Indirect Effects from Multilevel Path Analysis for Binary Distressing Event Predictor

Indirect Effect	Role Meaning	Estimate	95% CI
	Archetype Correspondence		
<b>Hypothesis 2A:</b> Distressing Work Event → Work Meaningfulness (via activated occupational identity)	High	-.096	[-.332, .076]
	Low	.101	[-.141, .386]
<b>Hypothesis 2B:</b> Distressing Work Event → Work Meaningfulness (via emotional ambivalence)	High	-.118	[-.359, .057]
	Low	-.073	[-.241, .026]
<b>Hypothesis 3A:</b> Distressing Work Event → Work Engagement (via activated occupational identity and work meaningfulness)	High	-.018	[-.068, .013]
	Low	.019	[-.035, .071]
<b>Hypothesis 3B:</b> Distressing Work Event → Work Engagement (via emotional ambivalence and work meaningfulness)	High	-.022	[-.075, .008]
	Low	-.014	[-.053, .003]

*Note:* Model is for Fong (2006) operationalization of emotional ambivalence. Bias-corrected indirect effect and conditional indirect effects confidence intervals are based on 20,000 Monte Carlo bootstrap samples. CI = Confidence interval. All indirect effects were calculated simultaneously, accounting for direct effects; \*  $p < .05$

## APPENDIX F: SUPPLEMENTAL STUDY ANALYSES

### Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence Measure Validation Study

To validate my measure of role meaning archetype correspondence, I conducted a study to assess whether the measure demonstrated convergent validity with theoretically relevant orbiting constructs (e.g., Colquitt et al., 2019) as well as divergent validity from constructs that should be unrelated, or more weakly associated, with role meaning archetype correspondence.

#### Participants and Procedure.

I recruited 129 employed (full or part-time) adults on Amazon Mturk to complete a study about a workplace experience. Responses from 22 participants were excluded due to failing both attention checks or providing an open-ended response that was plagiarized or incoherent, leaving a sample of 107 participants ( $M_{\text{age}} = 40.60$  years,  $SD_{\text{age}} = 10.68$ , 34.58% female, 71.03% Caucasian).

Participants began by defining their role meaning archetype and then reflected on a recent experience of distress at work, following the procedure in Study 1. Next, participants then completed several psychological measures, beginning with role meaning archetype correspondence ( $\alpha = .96$ ) followed by the convergent validity measures (challenge appraisal: LePine et al., 2016, three items,  $\alpha = .90$ ; identity fusion: Gómez et al., 2011, seven items,  $\alpha = .94$ ; integrated regulation: Tremblay et al., 2009, three items,  $\alpha = .94$ ) and finishing with the divergent validity measures (hindrance appraisal: LePine et al., 2016, three items,  $\alpha = .93$ ; innovative behavior: Scott & Bruce, 1994, six items,  $\alpha = .91$ ; reciprocal interdependence: Pearce & Gregersen, 1991, five items,  $\alpha = .92$ ). Finally, participants completed an unrelated Q-sort activity to validate the conceptualization of distressing events in this dissertation (see the next subsection of the Supplemental Analyses) and responded to demographic questions.

## Results

Descriptive statistics and correlations for study variables are presented in Table SA 9.

As expected, the measure of role meaning archetype correspondence demonstrated convergent validity with theoretically orbiting constructs as results showed significant and positive correlations between role meaning archetype correspondence and challenge appraisal ( $r = .41, p < .001$ ), identity fusion ( $r = .42, p < .001$ ) and integrated regulation ( $r = .47, p < .001$ ). While the correlations were supportive convergent validity, results also suggested sufficient discriminant validity between role meaning archetype correspondence and these constructs. Confirmatory factor analysis of a model in which all items from the above four scales were loaded onto their intended constructs showed good fit to the data ( $\chi^2[120] = 1845.39, p < .001$ ; CFI = .959, RMSEA = .082, SRMR = .043) (Hu and Bentler 1999) and showed significantly better fit ( $\chi^2_{diff} = 715.38, p < .001$ ), compared to a model in which all items were loaded onto a single factor ( $\chi^2[120] = 1845.39, p < .001$ ; CFI = .548, RMSEA = .265, SRMR = .134).

Similarly, correlations between role meaning archetype correspondence and theoretically unrelated constructs showed evidence of discriminant validity. Role meaning archetype correspondence was not significantly related to hindrance appraisal ( $r = -.16, p = .101$ ). Correlations with innovative behavior and reciprocal interdependence were significant and positive, but were weaker than the correlations of role meaning archetype correspondence with convergent validity items (innovative behavior:  $r = .29, p = .003$ ; reciprocal interdependence:  $r = .22, p = .023$ ). As the latter two correlations were somewhat higher than anticipated, I conducted a second confirmatory factor analysis of model in which all items from the collected scales (convergent and divergent validity measures) were loaded onto their intended constructs. This model showed adequate fit to the data ( $\chi^2[435] = 3439.19, p < .001$ ; CFI = .928, RMSEA = .073,

SRMR = .055) (Hu and Bentler 1999) and showed significantly better fit ( $\chi^2_{diff} = 1566.4, p < .001$ ), compared to a model in which all items were loaded onto a single factor ( $\chi^2[435] = 3439.19, p < .001$ ; CFI = .413, RMSEA = .202, SRMR = .147). The combined correlation and confirmatory factor analysis results, the role meaning archetype correspondence appears sufficiently distinct from constructs with which it should not strongly relate.

Overall, the results from this validation study provide supportive evidence as to the validity of the role meaning archetype correspondence measure as it demonstrated strong, positive relations with theoretically relevant orbital variables and weaker relations with theoretically unrelated variables.



**Table SA 9.** Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence Measure Validation Study: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence	4.01	1.16	–						
2. Challenge Appraisal	3.27	1.15	0.41**	–					
3. Identity Fusion	3.29	1.07	0.42**	0.59**	–				
4. Integrated Regulation	3.12	1.34	0.47**	0.57**	0.55**	–			
5. Hindrance Appraisal	2.57	1.22	-0.16	-0.26*	-0.10	-0.05	–		
6. Innovative Behavior	3.17	1.09	0.29*	0.54**	0.58**	0.46**	0.06	–	
7. Reciprocal Interdependence	4.03	0.88	0.22*	0.32*	0.29*	0.29*	-0.17	0.41**	–

Note.  $N = 107$ ; \*  $p < .05$  level, \*\*  $p < .001$  level

## **Distressing Event Concept Validation Q-Sort**

Given the broad conceptualization of distressing events in my model, I sought evidence via a Q-sort exercise that my conceptualization captured the variety of events from the organizational literature that have been shown to invoke distress in the workplace. Participants from the Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence Measure Validation Study in the prior Supplemental Analysis subsection (see pages 155-158) were presented with the definition of distressing events (“work-related occurrences that generate negative emotional reactions or strain for you”) and an explanation of the important components of the concept (e.g., work-related, generates a negative emotional reaction/strain, the negative emotional reaction can happen from something that happens directly to the individual or from witnessing something happen to another person). They were then asked to rate 16 different events in counterbalanced order, eleven of which were conceptualized as a form of distressing work event and five that were not (e.g., unrelated to or not happening at work), for how well they matched the concept of distressing work event (1 = *Event is a Very Inaccurate Match to the concept*, 5 = *Event is a Very Accurate Match to the concept*). Examples of events that conceptualized as a form of distressing work event included a supervisor yelling at an employee (abusive supervision), an argument with a coworker over a task (task conflict) or political difference (relationship conflict), or witnessing a coworker crying and upset. Examples of events that were unrelated to the concept were a family member or friend passing away, sexual harassment from a stranger on the street, or reading news about unethical behavior at a company in a remote country. Evidence in support of the validity of my conceptualization of distressing work events would be that events that fulfilled the three components of the concept would be rated as highly accurate matches to the concept, while those that lack some or all of the components would be rated as highly inaccurate.

Supporting my predictions, Table SA 10 shows that the eleven events that were selected as likely matches to the concept were rated as very accurate matches by participants ( $M = 4.26$ ,  $SD = .55$ ; range: 3.84 – 4.59), while the five that were selected as poor matches were rated as inaccurate matches to the concept ( $M = 2.07$ ,  $SD = 1.02$ ; range: 1.64 – 2.59). One-way t-tests confirmed that both mean ratings were significantly different than the midpoint of the scale (3, representing neither an inaccurate nor accurate match), with the distressing work events being rated as significantly more accurate of a match (*mean difference* = 1.26,  $p < .001$ ) and non-work distressing events being rates as significantly less accurate (*mean difference* = -0.93,  $p < .001$ ). Additionally, this pattern and significance of results held for each individual event, such that each distressing work event was rated as significantly more accurate of a match than the midpoint of the scale and each non-work distressing even was rated as significantly less accurate of a match. Overall, the results from the Q-sort exercise confirm that the conceptualization of distressing work events as work-related occurrences that generate negative emotional reactions or strain encompasses the range of events that provoke distress at work as studied in the organizational literature and is readily understood by the average worker.

**TABLE SA 10.** Q-Sort Ratings of Match between Distressing Work Event Concept and Different Types of Work and Non-Work Events

Variable	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	Difference from Midpoint ( $\beta$ = Neither Inaccurate nor Accurate Match)	<i>p</i>
<b>All Distressing Work Events</b>	4.26	0.55	1.26	< .001
Your supervisor yells at you.	4.54	0.80	1.54	< .001
You argue with a coworker about how a task should be done.	4.20	0.71	1.20	< .001
You have a fight with a coworker over political differences.	3.91	0.93	0.91	< .001
Your boss chooses to reward a coworker for work that you did.	4.25	0.80	1.25	< .001
A client or coworker is rude to you.	4.21	0.75	1.21	< .001
You witness a coworker, with whom you are friends, crying and upset	3.84	0.97	0.84	< .001
A big project you are in charge of at work fails.	4.59	0.80	1.59	< .001
You have to work long hours for many months at a time.	4.30	0.82	1.30	< .001
You are unable to have time off approved because of a bureaucratic issue.	4.08	0.93	1.08	< .001
Your boss asks you to lie to cover up a mistake.	4.47	0.84	1.47	< .001
A coworker makes unwanted sexual advances towards you.	4.46	0.99	1.46	< .001
<b>All Non-Work Distressing Events</b>	2.07	1.02	-0.93	< .001
A family member or friend away from work passes away.	2.51	1.58	-0.49	.002
You have an argument with your partner, spouse, or a close friend about a personal matter.	1.80	1.25	-1.20	< .001
A random person on the street makes an unwanted sexual advance towards you.	1.64	1.22	-1.36	< .001
You have a serious personal health problem.	2.59	1.49	-0.41	.005
You read in the news about unethical behavior at a foreign company in a remote country.	1.79	1.24	-1.21	< .001

*Note.*  $N = 107$

## Supplemental Study Scales

### Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence Measure Validation Scales

#### *Role Meaning Archetype Definition*

Many people view their job roles as fulfilling some meaning or significance (either to themselves or others), often informed by popular or culturally-shared narratives, which we refer to as a person's *role meaning archetype*. As an example, a doctor might see their role meaning archetype as "caring for the sick" or a school bus driver might have "keeping children safe" as their archetype.

In a few sentences, what is the mental image you have for what makes your work role valuable or worthwhile? What is it you do as part of your role that provides meaning?

*Note: If you feel that you have two archetypes, feel free to document them both. Alternatively, if you feel your work does not provide any meaning to yourself or others, please write "N/A" with a short explanation as to why you feel this way.*

#### *Distressing Event Prompt*

We are interested in emotionally straining experiences at work.

We would like you to recall a recent situation or event at work that was emotionally straining. Please limit your recollection to experiences you encountered as part of your role or in your work activities. Take a moment to really think about and picture the event, almost as if you are living it again right now.

In less than a sentence, what happened?

#### *Role Meaning Archetype Correspondence*

Reflecting on your *role meaning archetype* presented above, to what extent did the event you just described...

Not at all					Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	

---

1. Correspond to your mental image about the purpose of your work role?
2. Coincide with your existing narrative about the significance of your work role?
3. Align with the story you tell about what makes your work role valuable and worthwhile?

#### *Challenge Appraisal*

Thinking about the event you just recalled, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following items?

Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

---

1. This event helped to improve my personal growth and well-being
2. This event challenged me to achieve personal goals and accomplishment
3. This event promoted my personal accomplishment

***Integrated Regulation***

Thinking about the event you just recalled, to what extent did the event...

Not at all				Very Much
1	2	3	4	5

---

1. Reflect a fundamental part of who you are?
2. Feel like part of the way in which you have chosen to live your life?
3. Represent a key part of your life?

***Identity Fusion (W/Occupation)***

Thinking about the event you just recalled, to what extent did you feel during the event...

Not at all				Very Much
1	2	3	4	5

---

1. I am one with my occupation.
2. I feel immersed in my occupation.
3. I have a deep emotional bond with my occupation.
4. My occupation is me.
5. I'll do for my occupation more than any of the other members of my occupation would do.
6. I am strong because of my occupation.
7. I make my team occupation strong.

### ***Hindrance Appraisal***

Thinking about the event you just recalled, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following items?

Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Neither Agree Nor Disagree 3	Somewhat Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
---------------------------	---------------------------	---------------------------------------	------------------------	------------------------

---

1. This event thwarted my personal growth and well-being
2. This event constrained my achievement of personal goals and development
3. This event hindered my personal accomplishment

### ***Innovative Behavior***

Thinking about the event you just recalled, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following items?

Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Neither Agree Nor Disagree 3	Somewhat Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
---------------------------	---------------------------	---------------------------------------	------------------------	------------------------

---

1. I searched out new technologies, processes, techniques, and/or product ideas.
2. I generated creative ideas.
3. I promoted and championed ideas to others.
4. I investigated and secured funds needed to implement new ideas.
5. I developed adequate plans and schedules for the implementation of new ideas.
6. I was innovative.

### ***Reciprocal Interdependence***

Thinking about the event you just recalled, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following items?

Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Neither Agree Nor Disagree 3	Somewhat Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
---------------------------	---------------------------	---------------------------------------	------------------------	------------------------

---

1. I had to work closely with others in doing my work
2. I had to coordinate my efforts with others
3. My own performance was dependent on receiving accurate information from others
4. The way I performed my job had a significant impact on others
5. I was required to consult with others

## Q-Sort Instructions and Scales

The goal of this section is to validate the types of events that accurately match up to the following concept:

**Distressing Work Events: work-related occurrences that generate negative emotional reactions or strain for you.**

**This concept has three important components:**

- 1) The event is work-related
- 2) The event generates some sort of negative emotional reaction or strain
- 3) The emotional reaction or strain happens *to you* (e.g., it is not necessarily that something happens to you directly, as you could witness something unfortunate happen to a coworker which causes you distress. However, whatever happens should be relevant to your work/workplace and cause a negative emotional reaction from you in some way)

On the next pages you will see several sections. In each section you will see the same definition—Distressing Work Event—followed by several survey different events. For each item, *you will rate the degree to which it matches the definition provided.*

Please note that the items vary in how well they represent the concept of distressing events. Some will accurately represent the concept and others will inaccurately represent the concept. Those inaccurate items may measure something similar to a distressing work event, but missing some (or all) aspects of the concept, or differ in an important way.

**Distressing Work Events: work-related occurrences that generate negative emotional reactions or strain for you.**

**This concept has three important components:**

- 1) The event is work-related
- 2) The event generates some sort of negative emotional reaction or strain
- 3) The emotional reaction or strain happens *to you* (e.g., it is not necessarily that something happens to you directly, as you could witness something unfortunate happen to a coworker which causes you distress. However, whatever happens should be relevant to your work/workplace and cause a negative emotional reaction from you in some way)

*Remember: Your goal is to assess the degree to which each event matches to the definition of "Distressing Work Event" provided above.*

<b>1</b> Event is a <b>VERY</b> <b>INNACURATE</b> <b>MATCH</b>	<b>2</b> Event is a <b>SOMEWHAT</b> <b>INNACURATE</b> <b>MATCH</b>	<b>3</b> Event is <b>NEITHER AN</b> <b>INNACURATE</b>	<b>4</b> Event is a <b>SOMEWHAT</b> <b>ACCURATE</b> <b>MATCH</b>	<b>5</b> Event is a <b>VERY</b> <b>ACCURATE</b> <b>MATCH</b>
--	--	--	--	--



to the concept of <b>Distressing Work Event</b>	to the concept of <b>Distressing Work Event</b>	<b>NOR ACCURATE MATCH</b> to the concept of <b>Distressing Work Event</b>	to the concept of <b>Distressing Work Event</b>	to the concept of <b>Distressing Work Event</b>
--	--	---	--	--

***Events that Fit***

- Your supervisor yells at you
- You argue with a coworker about how a task should be done
- You have a fight with a coworker over political differences
- Your boss chooses to reward a coworker for work that you did
- A client or coworker is rude to you
- You witness a coworker crying and upset
- A big project you are in charge of at work fails
- You have to work long hours for many months at a time
- You are unable to have time off approved because of a bureaucratic issue
- Your boss asks you to lie to cover up a mistake
- A coworker makes unwanted sexual advances towards you

***Events that Do Not Fit***

- A family member or friend away from work passes away
- You have an argument with your partner, spouse, or a close friend about a personal matter
- A random person on the street makes an unwanted sexual advance towards you
- You have a serious personal health problem
- You read in the news about unethical behavior at a company in a remote country

**Demographic Items**

What is your gender?

1. Male
2. Female
3. Non-binary/ third gender
4. I prefer to self-identify\_\_\_\_\_
5. I prefer to not say

What is your age?

18...100+

What is your ethnicity?

1. Hispanic or Latino
2. Not Hispanic or Latino

What is your race?

1. American Indian or Alaskan Native
2. Asian
3. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
4. Black or African American
5. White or Caucasian
6. Other \_\_\_\_\_

## REFERENCES

- Ashforth, B. E. (2001). *Role transitions in organizational life: An identity-based perspective*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Ashforth, B. E., Caza, B. B., & Meister, A. (in press). My place: How workers become identified with their workplaces and why it matters. *Academy of Management Review*.
- Ashforth, B. E., & Humphrey, R. H. (1993). Emotional Labor in Service Roles: The Influence of Identity. *Academy of Management Review*, 18(1), 88. <https://doi.org/10.2307/258824>
- Ashforth, B. E., & Johnson, S. A. 2001. Which hat to wear? The relative salience of multiple identities in organizational contexts. In M. A. Hogg & D. J. Terry (Eds.), *Social Identity Processes in Organizational Contexts*: 3148. Philadelphia: Psychology Press.
- Ashforth, B. E., & Kreiner, G. E. (1999). “How Can You Do It?”: Dirty Work and the Challenge of Constructing a Positive Identity. *Academy of Management Review*, 24(3), 413–434. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1999.2202129>
- Ashforth, B. E., Kreiner, G. E., Clark, M. A., & Fugate, M. (2007). Normalizing Dirty Work: Managerial Tactics For Countering Occupational Taint. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(1), 149–174. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2007.24162092>
- Ashforth, B. E., Rogers, K. M., & Corley, K. G. (2011). Identity in Organizations: Exploring Cross-Level Dynamics. *Organization Science*, 22(5), 1144–1156. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1100.0591>
- Ashforth, B. E., Rogers, K. M., Pratt, M. G., & Pradies, C. (2014). Ambivalence in Organizations: A Multilevel Approach. *Organization Science*, 25(5), 1453–1478. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2014.0909>
- Ashforth, B. E., & Schinoff, B. S. (2016). Identity Under Construction: How Individuals Come to Define Themselves in Organizations. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 3(1), 111–137. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-041015-062322>
- Ashforth, B. E., Kreiner, G. E., & Fugate, M. (2000). All in a Day’s Work: Boundaries and Micro Role Transitions. *The Academy of Management Review*, 25(3), 472. <https://doi.org/10.2307/259305>
- Ashkanasy, N. M., Humphrey, R. H., & Huy, Q. N. (2017). Integrating Emotions and Affect in Theories of Management. *Academy of Management Review*, 42(2), 175–189. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2016.0474>
- Bacharach, S. B., & Bamberger, P. A. (2007). 9/11 and New York City Firefighters’ Post Hoc Unit Support and Control Climates: A Context Theory of the Consequences of Involvement in Traumatic Work-Related Events. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(4), 849–868. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2007.26279180>

- Bacharach, S. B., Bamberger, P. A., & Doveh, E. (2008). Firefighters, critical incidents, and drinking to cope: The adequacy of unit-level performance resources as a source of vulnerability and protection. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 93*(1), 155–169. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.93.1.155>
- Bailey, C., & Madden, A. (2016). What Makes work meaningful - Or meaningless. *MIT Sloan Management Review, 57*(4), 53–61.
- Barbulescu, R., Tosti-Kharas, J., & Ibarra, H. (2012). *Finding the plot: How virtuous self-narratives legitimize career downfalls.*
- Barsade, S. G. (2002). The ripple effect: Emotional contagion and its influence on group behavior. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 47*(4), 644-675.
- Basch, J., & Fisher, C. (1998). *Affective Events-Emotions Matrix: A classification of work events and associated emotions.* June, 3–22.
- Baumeister, R. F., Bratslavsky, E., Muraven, M., & Tice, D. M. (1998). Ego depletion: Is the active self a limited resource? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 74*(5), 1252–1265. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.74.5.1252>
- Baumeister, R. F., Vohs, K. D., Aaker, J. L., & Garbinsky, E. N. (2013). Some key differences between a happy life and a meaningful life. *Journal of Positive Psychology, 8*(6), 505–516. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2013.830764>
- Beal, D. J. (2015). ESM 2.0: State of the art and future potential of experience sampling methods in organizational research. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 2*, 383-407. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-032414-111335>
- Becker, T. E., Atinc, G., Breugh, J. A., Carlson, K. D., Edwards, J. R., & Spector, P. E. (2016). Statistical control in correlational studies: 10 essential recommendations for organizational researchers. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 37*(2), 157–167. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2053>
- Beehr, T. A., Bowling, N. A., & Bennett, M. M. (2010). Occupational stress and failures of social support: When helping hurts. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 15*(1), 45–59. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018234>
- Berg, J. M., Grant, A. M., & Johnson, V. (2010). When Callings Are Calling: Crafting Work and Leisure in Pursuit of Unanswered Occupational Callings. *Organization Science, 21*(5), 973–994. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1090.0497>
- Berrios, R., Totterdell, P., & Kellett, S. (2015). Investigating goal conflict as a source of mixed emotions. *Cognition and Emotion, 29*(4), 755–763. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02699931.2014.939948>

- Beyer, J. M. (1981). Ideologies, values, and decision making in organizations. In *Handbook of organizational design* (2nd ed., pp. 166–202).
- Bledow, R., Schmitt, A., Frese, M., & Kühnel, J. (2011). The affective shift model of work engagement. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 96*(6), 1246–1257. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0024532>
- Bliese, P. D., Edwards, J. R., & Sonnentag, S. (2017). Stress and well-being at work: A century of empirical trends reflecting theoretical and societal influences. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 102*(3), 389–402. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000109>
- Bloom, S. L., & Farragher, B. (2013). Restoring Sanctuary. In *Etica e Politica* (Vol. 15, Issue 1). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199796366.001.0001>
- Bonanno, G. A., Papa, A., Lalande, K., Westphal, M., & Coifman, K. (2004). The importance of being flexible: The ability to both enhance and suppress emotional expression predicts long-term adjustment. *Psychological Science, 15*(7), 482–487.
- Bonanno, G. A. (2005). Resilience in the face of potential trauma. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 14*(3), 135–138.
- Bono, J. E., Glomb, T. M., Shen, W., Kim, E., & Koch, A. J. (2013). Building Positive Resources: Effects of Positive Events and Positive Reflection on Work Stress and Health. *Academy of Management Journal, 56*(6), 1601–1627. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2011.0272>
- Brickman, P. (1987). *Commitment, conflict, and caring*. Prentice-Hall.
- Bruner, J. (1990). *Acts of meaning*. Harvard University Press. <https://doi.org/10.5860/CHOICE.28-6498>
- Bryk, A. S., & Raudenbush, S. W. (1992). *Hierarchical Linear Models: Applications and Data Analysis Methods*. Sage Publications.
- Bunderson, J. S., & Thompson, J. A. (2009). The Call of the Wild: Zookeepers, Callings, and the Double-edged Sword of Deeply Meaningful Work. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 54*(1), 32–57. <https://doi.org/10.2189/asqu.2009.54.1.32>
- Caldas, M. P., Ostermeier, K., & Cooper, D. (2021). When helping hurts: COVID-19 critical incident involvement and resource depletion in health care workers. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 106*(1), 29.
- Caldwell, D. F., & O'Reilly III, C. A. (1982). Responses to failure: The effects of choice and responsibility on impression management. *Academy of Management Journal, 25*(1), 121–136.

- Carstensen, L. L., Pasupathi, M., Mayr, U., & Nesselroade, J. R. (2000). Emotional experience in everyday life across the adult life span. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 79(4), 644–655. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.79.4.644>
- Carton, A. M. (2018). “I’m not mopping the floors, I’m putting a man on the moon”: How NASA leaders enhanced the meaningfulness of work by changing the meaning of work. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 63(2), 323-369.
- Christian, M.S., Garza, A.S., & Slaughter, J.E. (2011). Work engagement: a quantitative review and test of its relations with task and contextual performance. *Personnel Psychology*, 64(1), 89–136. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.2010.01203.x>
- Colquitt, J. A. (2001). On the dimensionality of organizational justice: a construct validation of a measure. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(3), 386.
- Cortina, L. M., & Magley, V. J. (2003). Raising voice, risking retaliation: Events following interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 8(4), 247.
- De Dreu, C. K., & Weingart, L. R. (2003). Task versus relationship conflict, team performance, and team member satisfaction: a meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88(4), 741.
- De Rond, M., & Lok, J. (2016). Some Things Can Never Be Unseen: The Role of Context in Psychological Injury at War. *Academy of Management Journal*, 59(6), 1965–1993. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2015.0681>
- De Rond, M., Lok, J., & Marrison, A. (2022). To catch a predator: The lived experience of extreme practices. *Academy of Management Journal*, 65(3), 870-902.
- DeRue, D. S., & Ashford, S. J. (2010). Who will lead and who will follow? A social process of leadership identity construction in organizations. *Academy of Management Review*, 35(4), 627-647.
- Desai, S. D., & Kouchaki, M. (2017). Moral symbols: A necklace of garlic against unethical requests. *Academy of Management Journal*, 60(1), 7-28.
- DiBenigno, J. (2022). How idealized professional identities can persist through client interactions. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 67(3), 865-912.
- Dressel, P. L., & Petersen, D. M. (1982). Becoming a Male Stripper. *Work and Occupations*, 9(3), 387–406. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0730888482009003007>
- Edwards, J. R., & Lambert, L. S. (2007). Methods for integrating moderation and mediation: A general analytical framework using moderated path analysis. *Psychological Methods*, 12(1), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1082-989X.12.1.1>

- Enders, C. K., & Tofighi, D. (2007). Centering predictor variables in cross-sectional multilevel models: A new look at an old issue. *Psychological Methods, 12*(2), 121–138. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1082-989X.12.2.121>
- Faber, M. A., & Mayer, J. D. (2009). Resonance to archetypes in media: There's some accounting for taste. *Journal of Research in Personality, 43*(3), 307–322. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2008.11.003>
- Festinger, L. (1957). *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*. Stanford University Press. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/9781912282432>
- Fish, E. H. (1917). Human engineering. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 1*(2), 161–174. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0072801>
- Fisher, C. D. (2002). Antecedents and consequences of real-time affective reactions at work. *Motivation and Emotion, 26*(1), 3–30. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1015190007468>
- Flanagan, J. C. (1954). The critical incident technique. *Psychological Bulletin, 51*(4), 327–358. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0061470>
- Fong, C. T. (2006). The Effects of Emotional Ambivalence on Creativity. *Academy of Management Journal, 49*(5), 1016–1030. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2006.22798182>
- Forgas, J. P. (1998). On feeling good and getting your way: Mood effects on negotiator cognition and bargaining strategies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 74*(3), 565–577. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.74.3.565>
- Frazier, M. L., Fainshmidt, S., Klinger, R. L., Pezeshkan, A., & Vacheva, V. (2017). Psychological Safety: A Meta-Analytic Review and Extension. *Personnel Psychology, 70*(1), 113–165. <https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12183>
- Gabriel, A. S., Koopman, J., Rosen, C. C., & Johnson, R. E. (2018). Helping others or helping oneself? An episodic examination of the behavioral consequences of helping at work. *Personnel Psychology, 71*, 85-107.
- Gabriel, A. S., Podsakoff, N. P., Beal, D. J., Scott, B. A., Sonnentag, S., Trougakos, J. P., & Butts, M. M. (2019). Experience Sampling Methods: A Discussion of Critical Trends and Considerations for Scholarly Advancement. *Organizational Research Methods, 22*(4), 969–1006. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428118802626>
- Grandey, A. A., Tam, A. P., & Brauburger, A. L. (2002). Affective states and traits in the workplace: Diary and survey data from young workers. *Motivation and Emotion, 26*(1), 31–55. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1015142124306>
- Grant, A. M. (2007). Relational Job Design and the Motivation to Make a Prosocial Difference. *Academy of Management Review, 32*(2), 393–417. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2007.24351328>

- Gómez, A., Brooks, M. L., Buhrmester, M. D., Vázquez, A., Jetten, J., & Swann Jr, W. B. (2011). On the nature of identity fusion: insights into the construct and a new measure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 100*(5), 918 - 933.
- Hackman, J. R., & Oldham, G. R. (1975). Development of the Job Diagnostic Survey. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 60*(2), 159–170. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0076546>
- Hannah, D. R., & Robertson, K. (2021). “It’s not all Puppies and Sunshine”: Veterinary Workers’ Emotional Comfort Zones and Companion Animal Euthanasia. *Academy of Management Discoveries, 7*(1), 130–154. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amd.2018.0037>
- Hardy, R. (2016, March 14). Why I became a social worker. *The Guardian* (2).
- Heine, S. J., Proulx, T., & Vohs, K. D. (2006). The Meaning Maintenance Model: On the Coherence of Social Motivations. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 10*(2), 88–110. [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327957pspr1002\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327957pspr1002_1)
- Heintzelman, S. J., & King, L. A. (2014). (The Feeling of) Meaning-as-Information. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 18*(2), 153–167. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868313518487>
- Held, B. S. (2002). The tyranny of the positive attitude in America: Observation and speculation. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 58*(9), 965–991. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.10093>
- Hershfield, H., Galinsky, A. D., Kray, L. J., & King, B. G. (2010). Company, Country, Connections. *Psychological Science, 21*(10), 1479–1486. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797610382123>
- Hershfield, H., Mikels, J. A., Sullivan, S. J., & Carstensen, L. L. (2008). Poignancy: Mixed emotional experience in the face of meaningful endings. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 94*(1), 158–167. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.94.1.158>
- Hershfield, H. E., Scheibe, S., Sims, T. L., & Carstensen, L. L. (2013). When Feeling Bad Can Be Good. *Social Psychological and Personality Science, 4*(1), 54–61. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550612444616>
- Hofmann, D. A., Griffin, M. A., & Gavin, M. B. (2000). The application of hierarchical linear modeling to organizational research. In K. S. Klein & S. W. J. Kozlowski (Eds.), *Multilevel Theory, Research, and Methods in Organizations: Foundations, Extensions, and New Directions* (pp. 467–511). Jossey-Bass.
- Hogg, M. A., & Mullin, B.-A. (1999). Joining groups to reduce uncertainty: Subjective uncertainty reduction and group identification. *Social Identity and Social Cognition, c*, 249–279. <http://psycnet.apa.org/psycinfo/1999-02213-010>
- Hu, L. & Bentler, P.M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal, 6*(1), 1–55.



- Iacovides, A., Fountoulakis, K. N., Kaprinis, S., & Kaprinis, G. (2003). The relationship between job stress, burnout and clinical depression. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 75(3), 209–221. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0165-0327\(02\)00101-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0165-0327(02)00101-5)
- Ibarra, H., & Barbulescu, R. (2010). Identity as narrative: Prevalence, effectiveness, and consequences of narrative identity work in Macro work role transitions. *Academy of Management Review*, 35(1), 135–154. <https://doi.org/10.5465/AMR.2010.45577925>
- Ilies, R., Scott, B. A., & Judge, T. A. (2006). The interactive effects of personal traits and experienced states on intraindividual patterns of citizenship behavior. *Academy of Management Journal*, 49(3), 561–575. <https://doi.org/10.5465/AMJ.2006.21794672>
- Jennings, R. E., Lanaj, K., Koopman, J., & McNamara, G. (2021). Reflecting on one’s best possible self as a leader: Implications for professional employees at work. *Personnel Psychology, March*, 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12447>
- Jiang, W. Y. (2021). Sustaining Meaningful Work in a Crisis: Adopting and Conveying a Situational Purpose. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 66(3), 806–853. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0001839221994049>
- Johnson, R. E., Lanaj, K., & Barnes, C. M. (2014). The good and bad of being fair: Effects of procedural and interpersonal justice behaviors on regulatory resources. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 99(4), 635–650. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0035647>
- Jost, J. T., Banaji, M. R., & Nosek, B. A. (2004). A decade of system justification theory: Accumulated evidence of conscious and unconscious bolstering of the status quo. *Political Psychology*, 25(6), 881–919. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9221.2004.00402.x>
- Jung, C. G., Read, H., Fordham, M., & Adler, G. (1953). The collected works of C. G. Jung: Symbols of Transformation. In *Bollingen series* (Vol. 5, Issue 20).
- Kahn, W. A. (1990). Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement and Disengagement at Work. *Academy of Management Journal*, 33(4), 692–724. <https://doi.org/10.5465/256287>
- Kahn, W. A. (2019). Dynamics and implications of distress organizing. *Academy of Management Journal*, 62(5), 1471–1497. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2016.0319>
- Kanner, A. D., Coyne, J. C., Schaefer, C., & Lazarus, R. S. (1981). Comparison of two modes of stress measurement: Daily hassles and uplifts versus major life events. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 4(1), 1–39. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00844845>
- Katz, D., & Kahn, R. L. (1978). *The social psychology of organizations* (2nd ed.). Wiley.
- King, L. A., Hicks, J. A., Krull, J. L., & Del Gaiso, A. K. (2006). Positive affect and the experience of meaning in life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90(1), 179–196. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.90.1.179>

- Kristof, A. L. (1996). Person-organization fit: An integrative review of its conceptualizations, measurement, and implications. *Personnel Psychology*, *49*(1), 1-49.
- Kristof-Brown, A. L., Zimmerman, R. D., & Johnson, E. C. (2005). Consequences of individual's fit at work: A meta-analysis of person–job, person–organization, person–group, and person–supervisor fit. *Personnel Psychology*, *58*(2), 281-342.
- Lanaj, K., Gabriel, A. S., & Chawla, N. (2020). The self-sacrificial nature of leader identity: Understanding the costs and benefits at work and home. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *106*(3), 345–363. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000505>
- Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal, and coping*. Springer Publishing Company.
- Lee Cunningham, J., Sondag, L., & Ashford, S. J. (in press). Do I dare? The psychodynamics of anticipated image risk, leader identity endorsement, and leader emergence. *Academy of Management Journal*, (ja).
- Leigh, A., & Melwani, S. (2019). # BlackEmployeesMatter: Mega-threats, identity fusion, and enacting positive deviance in organizations. *Academy of Management Review*, *44*(3), 564-591.
- LePine, M. A., Zhang, Y., Crawford, E. R., & Rich, B. L. (2016). Turning their pain to gain: Charismatic leader influence on follower stress appraisal and job performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, *59*(3), 1036-1059.
- Lepisto, D. A., & Pratt, M. G. (2017). Meaningful work as realization and justification: Toward a dual conceptualization. *Organizational Psychology Review*, *7*(2), 99–121. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2041386616630039>
- Liu, X., Liao, H., Derfler-Rozin, R., Zheng, X., Wee, E. X. M., & Qiu, F. (2020). In line and out of the box: How ethical leaders help offset the negative effect of morality on creativity. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *105*(12), 1447–1465. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000489>
- Low, K. D., Radhakrishnan, P., Schneider, K. T., & Rounds, J. (2007). The experiences of bystanders of workplace ethnic harassment. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *37*(10), 2261-2297.
- Lysova, E. I., Allan, B. A., Dik, B. J., Duffy, R. D., & Steger, M. F. (2019). Fostering meaningful work in organizations: A multi-level review and integration. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *110*, 374–389. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2018.07.004>
- Mackinnon, A., Jorm, A. F., Christensen, H., Korten, A. E., Jacomb, P. A., & Rodgers, B. (1999). A short form of the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule: Evaluation of factorial validity and invariance across demographic variables in a community sample. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *27*(3), 405–416. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869\(98\)00251-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869(98)00251-7)

- Maitlis, S., & Lawrence, T. B. (2007). Triggers and enablers of sensegiving in organizations. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(1), 57–84. <https://doi.org/10.5465/AMJ.2007.24160971>
- Maitlis, S., Vogus, T. J., & Lawrence, T. B. (2013). Sensemaking and emotion in organizations. *Organizational Psychology Review*, 3(3), 222–247. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2041386613489062>
- Margolis, J. D., & Molinsky, A. (2008). Navigating the bind of necessary evils: Psychological engagement and the production of interpersonally sensitive behavior. *Academy of Management Journal*, 51(5), 847–872. <https://doi.org/10.5465/AMJ.2008.34789639>
- Martin, L. J. (1917). Mental hygiene and the importance of investigating it. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 1(1), 67–70. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0071333>
- Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W. B., & Leiter, M. P. (2001). Job Burnout. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52(1), 397–422. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.397>
- Matthews, R. A., Pineault, L., & Hong, Y. H. (2022). Normalizing the use of single-item measures: Validation of the single-item compendium for organizational psychology. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 37(4), 639–673.
- Matta, F. K., Erol-Korkmaz, H. T., Johnson, R. E., & Biçaksiz, P. (2014). Significant work events and counterproductive work behavior: The role of fairness, emotions, and emotion regulation. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 35(7), 920–944. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.1934>
- May, D. R., Gilson, R. L., & Harter, L. M. (2004). The psychological conditions of meaningfulness, safety and availability and the engagement of the human spirit at work. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 77(1), 11–37. <https://doi.org/10.1348/096317904322915892>
- McAdams, D. P. (1996). Personality, Modernity, and the Storied Self: A Contemporary Framework for Studying Persons. *Psychological Inquiry*, 7(4), 295–321. [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327965pli0704\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327965pli0704_1)
- McAdams, D. P. (1993). *The stories we live by: Personal myths and the making of the self*. Guilford Press.
- Menges, J. I., Tussing, D. V., Wihler, A., & Grant, A. M. (2017). When job performance is all relative: How family motivation energizes effort and compensates for intrinsic motivation. *Academy of Management Journal*, 60(2), 695–719. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2014.0898>
- Merton, R. K. (1957). The Role-Set: Problems in Sociological Theory. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 8(2), 106–120.

- Miner, A. G., Glomb, T. M., & Hulin, C. (2005). Experience sampling mood and its correlates at work. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *78*(2), 171–193.  
<https://doi.org/10.1348/096317905X40105>
- Mitchell, M. S., Vogel, R. M., & Folger, R. (2015). Third parties' reactions to the abusive supervision of coworkers. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *100*(4), 1040–1055.  
<https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000002>
- Mitra, R., & Buzzanell, P. M. (2017). Communicative tensions of meaningful work: The case of sustainability practitioners. *Human Relations*, *70*(5), 594–616.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726716663288>
- Muthén, L.K. and Muthén, B.O. (1998-2017). *Mplus user's guide*. (8th ed.). Muthén and Muthén.
- Nielsen, J. D., & Colbert, A. E. (2021). It's Not Always Sunny in Relationally Rich Jobs: The Influence of Negative Beneficiary Contact. *Academy of Management Journal*.  
<https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2019.1288>
- Ohly, S., & Schmitt, A. (2015). What Makes Us Enthusiastic, Angry, Feeling at Rest or Worried? Development and Validation of an Affective Work Events Taxonomy Using Concept Mapping Methodology. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, *30*(1), 15–35.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-013-9328-3>
- Ollove, M. (2018, September 9). Hospice workers find peace in helping patients find comfort at the end of life. *Washington Post*.
- Pals, J. L. (2006). Narrative identity processing of difficult life experiences: Pathways of personality development and positive self-transformation in adulthood. *Journal of Personality*, *74*(4), 1079–1110. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.2006.00403.x>
- Park, C. L. (2010). Making Sense of the Meaning Literature: An Integrative Review of Meaning Making and Its Effects on Adjustment to Stressful Life Events. *Psychological Bulletin*, *136*(2), 257–301. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018301>
- Partinen, M., Eskelinen, L., & Tuomi, K. (1984). Complaints of insomnia in different occupations. *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment & Health*, *10*(6), 467–469.  
<https://doi.org/10.5271/sjweh.2297>
- Pearce, J. L., & Gregersen, H. B. (1991). Task interdependence and extrarole behavior: A test of the mediating effects of felt responsibility. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *76*(6), 838.
- Pearsall, M. J., Ellis, A. P. J., & Stein, J. H. (2009). Coping with challenge and hindrance stressors in teams: Behavioral, cognitive, and affective outcomes. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *109*(1), 18–28.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2009.02.002>

- Podsakoff, N. P., Lepine, J. A., & Lepine, M. A. (2007). Differential challenge stressor-hindrance stressor relationships with job attitudes, turnover intentions, turnover, and withdrawal behavior: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 92*(2), 438–454. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.92.2.438>
- Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J.-Y., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 88*(5), 879–903. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.88.5.879>
- Pratt, M. G., & Ashforth, B. E. (2003). Fostering Meaningfulness in Working and at Work. In K. S. Cameron, J. E. Dutton, & R. E. Quinn (Eds.), *Positive organizational scholarship: Foundations of a new discipline* (pp. 309-327). San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.
- Preacher, K. J., Curran, P. J., & Bauer, D. J. (2006). Computational tools for probing interactions in multiple linear regression, multilevel modeling, and latent curve analysis. *Journal of Educational and Behavioral Statistics, 31*(4), 437–448. <https://doi.org/10.3102/10769986031004437>
- Preacher, K. J., Zyphur, M. J., & Zhang, Z. (2010). A general multilevel SEM framework for assessing multilevel mediation. *Psychological Methods, 15*(3), 209–233. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0020141>
- Proulx, T., & Heine, S. J. (2009). Connections From Kafka. *Psychological Science, 20*(9), 1125–1131. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2009.02414.x>
- Proulx, T., & Heine, S. J. (2008). The Case of the Transmogrifying Experimenter. *Psychological Science, 19*(12), 1294–1300. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2008.02238.x>
- Proulx, T., Heine, S. J., & Vohs, K. D. (2010). When is the unfamiliar the uncanny? Meaning affirmation after exposure to absurdist literature, humor, and art. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 36*(6), 817–829. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167210369896>
- Rafaeli, A., & Sutton, R. I. (1987). Expression of Emotion as Part of the Work Role. *Academy of Management Review, 12*(1), 23–37. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1987.4306444>
- Randall, K. R., Resick, C. J., & DeChurch, L. A. (2011). Building team adaptive capacity: The roles of sensegiving and team composition. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 96*(3), 525–540. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0022622>
- Randles, D., Benjamin, R., Martens, J. P., & Heine, S. J. (2018). Searching for answers in an uncertain world: Meaning threats lead to increased working memory capacity. *PLoS ONE, 13*(10), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0204640>
- Randles, D., Inzlicht, M., Proulx, T., Tullett, A. M., & Heine, S. J. (2015). Is dissonance reduction a special case of fluid compensation? Evidence that dissonant cognitions cause compensatory affirmation and abstraction. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 108*(5), 697–710. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0038933>

- Rich, B. L., Lepine, J. A., & Crawford, E. R. (2010). Job engagement: Antecedents and effects on job performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, *53*(3), 617–635. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2010.51468988>
- Rosen, D. H., Smith, S. M., Huston, H. L., & Gonzalez, G. (1991). Empirical Study of Associations Between Symbols and Their Meanings: Evidence of Collective Unconscious (Archetypal) Memory. *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, *36*(2), 211–228. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1465-5922.1991.00211.x>
- Rosso, B. D., Dekas, K. H., & Wrzesniewski, A. (2010). On the meaning of work: A theoretical integration and review. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, *30*(C), 91–127. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.riob.2010.09.001>
- Rothman, N. B., & Melwani, S. (2017). Feeling mixed, ambivalent, and in flux: The social functions of emotional complexity for leaders. *Academy of Management Review*, *42*(2), 259–282.
- Rothman, N. B., Pratt, M. G., Rees, L., & Vogus, T. J. (2017). Understanding the dual nature of ambivalence: Why and when ambivalence leads to good and bad outcomes. *Academy of Management Annals*, *11*(1), 33–72. <https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2014.0066>
- Russell, J. A. (1980). A circumplex model of affect. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *39*(6), 1161–1178. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0077714>
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2001). To be happy or to be self-fulfilled: A review of research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. In Fiske, S. (Ed.). *Annual Review of Psychology*. *52*, 141–166. Palo Alto, CA.
- Satorra, A., & Bentler, P. M. (2001). A scaled difference chi-square test statistic for moment structure analysis. *Psychometrika*, *66*(4), 507–514. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02296192>
- Schabram, K., & Maitlis, S. (2017). Negotiating the Challenges of a Calling: Emotion and Enacted Sensemaking in Animal Shelter Work. *Academy of Management Journal*, *60*(2), 584–609. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2013.0665>
- Schneider, K. T., Swan, S., & Fitzgerald, L. F. (1997). Job-related and psychological effects of sexual harassment in the workplace: Empirical evidence from two organizations. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *82*(3), 401–415. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.82.3.401>
- Scott, S. G., & Bruce, R. A. (1994). Determinants of innovative behavior: A path model of individual innovation in the workplace. *Academy of Management Journal*, *37*(3), 580–607
- Selig, J. P., & Preacher, K. J. (2008). *Monte Carlo method for assessing mediation: An interactive tool for creating confidence intervals for indirect effects*. <http://quantpsy.org/>
- Shepherd, D. A., Maitlis, S., Parida, V., Wincent, J., & Lawrence, T. B. (2021). Intersectionality in Intractable Dirty Work: How Mumbai Ragpickers Make Meaning of Their Work and Lives. *Academy of Management Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2019.0125>

- Shirom, A., Shechter Gilboa, S., Fried, Y., & Cooper, C. L. (2008). Gender, age and tenure as moderators of work-related stressors' relationships with job performance: A meta-analysis. *Human Relations*, *61*(10), 1371–1398. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726708095708>
- Singer, J. D., & Willett, J. B. (2003). *Applied longitudinal data analysis: Modeling change and event occurrence*. Oxford University Press
- Sluss, D. M., Ployhart, R. E., Cobb, M. G., & Ashforth, B. E. (2012). Generalizing Newcomers' Relational and Organizational Identifications: Processes and Prototypicality. *Academy of Management Journal*, *55*(4), 949–975. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2010.0420>
- Sluss, D. M., van Dick, R., & Thompson, B. (2011). Role theory in organizations: A relational perspective. In S. Zedeck (Ed.), *APA handbook of industrial and organizational psychology, Vol 1: Building and developing the organization* (pp. 505–534). American Psychological Association.
- Sonenshein, S., Dutton, J. E., Grant, A. M., Spreitzer, G. M., & Sutcliffe, K. M. (2013). Growing at work: Employees' interpretations of progressive self-change in organizations. *Organization Science*, *24*(2), 552–570. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1120.0749>
- Spreitzer, G. M. (1995). Psychological empowerment in the workplace: Dimensions, measurement and validation. *Academy of Management Journal*, *38*(5), 1442–1465. <https://doi.org/10.2307/256865>
- Starbuck, W. H., & Milliken, F. J. (1988). *Executives' Perceptual Filters: What They Notice and How They Make Sense* (pp. 35–65).
- Stets, J. E., & Burke, P. J. (2000). Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *63*(3), 224. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2695870>
- Stryker, S. (2007). Identity theory and personality theory: Mutual relevance. *Journal of Personality*, *75*(6), 1083–1102. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.2007.00468.x>
- Stulberg, B. (2021, September 8). The Secret to Success? Mastering the Art of Patience. *Time*, 7–9.
- Taylor, S. E. (1991). Asymmetrical effects of positive and negative events: The mobilization^minimization hypothesis. *Psychological Bulletin*, *110*(1), 67–85. <https://doi.org/10.1037//0033-2909.110.1.67>
- Tedeschi, R. G., & Calhoun, L. G. (2004). Posttraumatic Growth: Conceptual Foundations and Empirical Evidence. *Psychological Inquiry*, *15*(1), 1–18. [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327965pli1501\\_01](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327965pli1501_01)
- Tepper, B. J. (2000). Consequences of Abusive Supervision. *Academy of Management Journal*, *43*(2), 178–190. <https://doi.org/10.5465/1556375>

- Tepper, B. J., Lockhart, D., & Hoobler, J. (2001). Justice, citizenship, and role definition effects. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 86*(4), 789–796. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.86.4.789>
- Tetrick, L. E., & LaRocco, J. M. (1987). Understanding, prediction, and control as moderators of the relationships between perceived stress, satisfaction, and psychological well-being. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 72*(4), 538.
- Teuchmann, K., Totterdell, P., & Parker, S. K. (1999). Rushed, unhappy, and drained: an experience sampling study of relations between time pressure, perceived control, mood, and emotional exhaustion in a group of accountants. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 4*(1), 37–54. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1076-8998.4.1.37>
- Thompson, M. M., Zanna, M. P., & Griffin, D. W. (1995). Let's not be indifferent about (attitudinal) ambivalence. In R. E. Petty & J. A. Krosnick (Eds.), *Attitude strength: Antecedents and consequences* (4th ed., pp. 361–386).
- Tremblay, M. A., Blanchard, C. M., Taylor, S., Pelletier, L. G., & Villeneuve, M. (2009). Work extrinsic and intrinsic motivation scale: Its value for organizational psychology research. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science, 41*, 213–226.
- Twenge, J. M., Campbell, S. M., Hoffman, B. J., & Lance, C. E. (2010). Generational Differences in Work Values: Leisure and Extrinsic Values Increasing, Social and Intrinsic Values Decreasing. *Journal of Management, 36*(5), 1117–1142. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206309352246>
- Vallacher, R. R., & Wegner, D. M. (1989). Levels of Personal Agency: Individual Variation in Action Identification. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 57*(4), 660–671. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.57.4.660>
- Vallacher, R. R., & Wegner, D. M. (1987). Action Identification and Human Behavior. *Psychological Review, 94*(1), 3–15.
- Vohs, K. D., Aaker, J. L., & Catapano, R. (2019). It's not going to be that fun: negative experiences can add meaning to life. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 26*, 11–14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2018.04.014>
- Vough, H. C., & Caza, B. B. (2017). Where do i go from here? Sensemaking and the construction of growth-based stories in the wake of denied promotions. *Academy of Management Review, 42*(1), 103–128. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2013.0177>
- Wang, M., Liao, H., Zhan, Y., & Shi, J. (2011). Daily Customer Mistreatment and Employee Sabotage Against Customers: Examining Emotion and Resource Perspectives. *Academy of Management Journal, 54*(2), 312–334. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2011.60263093>
- Wang, M., Liu, S., Liao, H., Gong, Y., Kammeyer-Mueller, J., & Shi, J. (2013). Can't get it out of my mind: Employee rumination after customer mistreatment and negative mood in the



- next morning. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 98(6), 989–1004.  
<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0033656>
- Ward, S. J., & King, L. A. (2017). Work and the good life: How work contributes to meaning in life. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 37, 59–82.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.riob.2017.10.001>
- Weber, M. (1905). *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Wegner, D. M., Vallacher, R. R., Kiersted, G. W., & Dizadji, D. (1986). Action Identification in the Emergence of Social Behavior. *Social Cognition*, 4(1), 18–38.  
<https://doi.org/10.1521/soco.1986.4.1.18>
- Wegner, D. M., Vallacher, R. R., Mancomber, G., Wood, R., & Arps, K. (1984). The emergence of action. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 46(2), 269–279.  
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.46.2.269>
- Weick, K. E. (1993). The Collapse of Sensemaking in Organizations: The Mann Gulch Disaster. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 38(4), 628. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2393339>
- Weiss, H. M., & Cropanzano, R. (1996). Affective Events Theory: a Theoretical, Causes and Consequences of Affective Experience at Work. In *Research in Organizational Behavior* (Vol. 18).
- Welbourne, T. M., Johnson, D. E., & Erez, A. (1998). The Role-Based Performance Scale: Validity Analysis of a Theory-Based Measure. *Academy of Management Journal*, 41(5), 540–555. <https://doi.org/10.5465/256941>
- Wellman, N., Mayer, D. M., Ong, M., & DeRue, D. S. (2016). When are do-gooders treated badly? Legitimate power, role expectations, and reactions to moral objection in organizations. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 101(6), 793–814.  
<https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000094>
- Wrzesniewski, A., & Dutton, J. E. (2001). Crafting a Job: Revisioning Employees as Active Crafters of Their Work. *Academy of Management Review*, 26(2), 179–201.  
<https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2001.4378011>
- Yue, Y., Wang, K. L., & Groth, M. (2017). Feeling bad and doing good: The effect of customer mistreatment on service employee's daily display of helping behaviors. *Personnel Psychology*, 70(4), 769–808.