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Development and Validation of
the Political Skill Inventory[†]

Gerald R. Ferris*
Department of Management, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306-1110

Darren C. Treadway
School of Business Administration, University of Mississippi, University, MS 38677-1848

Robert W. Kolodinsky
Department of Management, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA 22807-0205

Wayne A. Hochwarter
College of Business, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306-1110

Charles J. Kacmar
Department of Information Systems, Statistics, and Management Science, College of Business, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0226

Ceasar Douglas
College of Business, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306-1110

Dwight D. Frink
School of Business Administration, University of Mississippi, University, MS 38677-1848

The present research was developed to examine the conceptualization and measurement of the political skill construct and to provide validation evidence for the Political Skill Inventory (PSI). The results of three investigations, involving seven samples, are reported that demonstrate consistency of the factor structure across studies, construct validity, and criterion-related validity of the PSI. As hypothesized, political skill was positively related to self-monitoring, political savvy, and emotional intelligence; negatively related to trait anxiety; and not correlated with general mental ability. Also, the PSI predicted performance ratings of managers in two samples. Implications of these findings and directions for future research are provided.

Keywords: *political skill; savvy; social effectiveness; scale development and validation*

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For years, scholars and practitioners alike have acknowledged the existence and importance of politics in organizations. Indeed, theory, research, and practice all have considered the types of strategies and tactics people employ in efforts to behave politically. What we know less about are the characteristics that enable one to exercise influence in ways that lead to success. Some have referred to such qualities as interpersonal style, "savvy," "street smarts," and "political skill." However, to date, there has been little effort to move beyond conceptualization to instrument development. Ferris et al. (1999) provided an initial effort when they reported on the development of a concise, unidimensional measure of political skill. Their work helped establish some support for the construct, but it called for more comprehensive attempts to fully explore the content domain of political skill and consider its potential multidimensional implications.

The purpose of the present research is to report the results of three studies designed to develop a multidimensional Political Skill Inventory (PSI), with item content that more broadly and representatively samples from the full domain of the construct. Furthermore, this research offers a more fully developed conceptualization regarding the dimensions underlying this construct, confirmatory validation of this factorial structure, and evidence of convergent, discriminant, and criterion-related validity.

Theoretical Development

Political Skill in Organizations

Overview. A perspective shared by many academicians is that organizations are inherently political arenas (Mintzberg, 1985). In this regard, it is assumed that although performance, effectiveness, and career success are determined in part by intelligence and hard work, other factors such as social astuteness, positioning, and savvy also play important roles (e.g., Luthans, Hodgetts, & Rosenkrantz, 1988; Mintzberg, 1983). As one of the first to use the term *political skill* in the scholarly literature, Pfeffer (1981) argued for a political perspective on organizations. He suggested that political skill is needed to be successful, and he called for research that would develop a more informed understanding of the construct. Mintzberg (1983) suggested that political skill referred to the exercise of influence through persuasion, manipulation, and negotiation.

Although considerable research has examined organizational politics, a serious omission has been the failure to evaluate the political skill of the influencer, leaving us ill-informed about why influence efforts are (or are not) successful. Indeed, theory and research largely have assumed that the mere demonstration of an influence attempt is synonymous with its effectiveness. However, it is not enough to study the particular influence tactics or political behaviors that reflect the *what* of influence. We also need to critically examine the political skill of the influencer in order to understand the *how* of influence, which addresses the selection of the most situationally appropriate influence tactics and their successful execution (Ferris, Hochwarter, Douglas, Blass, Kolodinsky, & Treadway, 2002). In response to this gap, Ferris et al. (1999) made an initial effort to measure political skill by developing a concise, six-item, unidimensional scale, with acceptable psychometric properties, for purposes of preliminary construct exploration.

Definition and specification of the construct domain. In an effort to capture the essential nature of the construct as Ferris et al. (1999), Mintzberg (1983), and others discussed, we define political skill as "the ability to effectively understand others at work, and to use such knowledge to influence others to act in ways that enhance one's personal and/or organizational objectives" (Ahearn, Ferris, Hochwarter, Douglas, & Ammeter, 2004: 311). As such, politically skilled individuals combine social astuteness with the capacity to adjust their behavior to different and changing situational demands in a

manner that appears to be sincere, inspires support and trust, and effectively influences and controls the responses of others.

Politically skilled individuals convey a sense of personal security and calm self-confidence that attracts others and gives them a feeling of comfort. This self-confidence never goes too far so as to be perceived as arrogance but is always properly measured to be a positive attribute. Therefore, although self-confident, those high in political skill are not self-absorbed (although they are self-aware) because their focus is outward toward others, not inward and self-centered. This allows politically skilled individuals to maintain proper balance and perspective, and also, along with their tendency to be conscientious, to ensure that they keep a healthy gauge on their accountability to both others and themselves.

We suggest that people high in political skill not only know precisely what to do in different social situations at work but how to do it in a manner that disguises any ulterior, self-serving motives and appears to be sincere. Furthermore, as we discuss later in this article, we see political skill as independent from general mental ability and related to personality traits and other interpersonally oriented constructs such as self-monitoring and emotional intelligence, but not too highly or to the degree indicating construct redundancy. In terms of its derivation, we borrow from others who have suggested the usefulness of taking an integrative dispositional-situational approach to personality (e.g., Murtha, Kanfer, & Ackerman, 1996) and social effectiveness (e.g., Buck, 1991). Specifically, we believe there are aspects of political skill that are dispositional, but we see other aspects that can be developed or shaped through a combination of formal and informal developmental experiences (e.g., Ferris, Anthony, Kolodinsky, Gilmore, & Harvey, 2002).

Content Validity and Dimensionality of Political Skill

Need and rationale. Careful examination of the organizational politics literature, with particular reference to that segment relating to political skill (i.e., even if not explicitly referred to by that term), indicates several important aspects that should be included in any representative measure of the political skill construct. These aspects or dimensions are social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability, and apparent sincerity. Certainly, the ability to read and understand people, and being able to act on that knowledge in influential ways (i.e., consistent with our definition of political skill) represent two important dimensions of the construct reflecting social astuteness and interpersonal influence (e.g., Mintzberg, 1983; Pfeffer, 1981; Snyder, 1987). In addition, there are other aspects of political skill that are very important, according to power and politics scholars, and therefore need to be represented in a content-valid representation of the political skill construct.

Connections, friendships, network building, alliances, and coalition building are critical for individuals to navigate the politics of organizations and thus represent an important aspect of political skill (e.g., Bacharach & Lawler, 1998; Pfeffer, 1981, 1992). Bacharach and Lawler concluded, "To pursue political action, it is inevitable that actors in the organization align themselves with others" (1998: 85). Furthermore, Pfeffer argued, "Having connections, having allies, is important for developing and exercising influence" (1992: 175). In addition, Luthans et al. defined networking as "a system of interconnected or cooperating individuals. It is closely associated with the dynamics of power and the use of social and political skills" (1988: 119-120). Furthermore, these activities associated with networking were, by far, the most dominant activities exhibited by successful managers.

A final aspect of political skill represented in the organizational politics literature is genuineness or sincerity, and this reflects the true execution component of political skill. It is not just what behaviors individuals exhibit but, more so, that they demonstrate influence attempts in ways that are intended to appear to be sincere and genuine, devoid of ulterior motive, and that inspire trust and confidence. Jones (1990) appealed for research examining the way influence attempts were executed, focusing on the interpersonal style component that he argued gave the appearance of sincerity.

The forgoing discussion reflects the four critical dimensions of political skill that should be included in any representative, content-valid measure of the political skill construct. The Ferris et al. (1999) six-item, unidimensional scale attempted to address the understanding or social astuteness dimension, as well as the interpersonal influence component (i.e., even though these two dimensions did not separate into distinguishable factors). However, the Ferris et al. scale is deficient by neglecting to address the networking ability and apparent sincerity dimensions.

Therefore, we suggest the need for a multidimensional, content-valid measure of political skill that identifies and assesses the four key dimensions reflected in the organizational politics literature. Each dimension is described in detail below.

Social astuteness. Individuals possessing political skill are astute observers of others and are keenly attuned to diverse social situations. They comprehend social interactions and accurately interpret their behavior, as well as that of others, in social settings. They have strong powers of discernment and high self-awareness. Pfeffer referred to this characteristic as "sensitivity to others," and he argued, "Somewhat ironically, it is this capacity to identify with others that is actually critical in obtaining things for oneself" (1992: 173). Socially astute individuals often are seen as ingenious, even clever, in dealing with others. As such, this dimension of political skill would be expected to relate most strongly (of all the dimensions) to supervisor evaluations of an employee's job performance because of the employee's social astuteness at presenting his or her work behavior in the best possible light. In summary, people high in social astuteness have an accurate understanding of social situations as well as the interpersonal interactions that take place in these settings.

Interpersonal influence. Politically skilled individuals have a subtle and convincing personal style that exerts a powerful influence on those around them. Individuals high on interpersonal influence nonetheless are capable of appropriately adapting and calibrating their behavior to each situation in order to elicit particular responses from others. Indeed, aspects of the interpersonal influence dimension capture what Pfeffer (1992) referred to as "flexibility," which involves adapting one's behavior situationally to different targets of influence in different contextual conditions in order to achieve one's goals.

Networking ability. Individuals with strong political skill are adept at developing and using diverse networks of people. People in these networks tend to hold assets seen as valuable and necessary for successful personal and organizational functioning. By the sheer force of their typically subtle style, politically skilled individuals easily develop friendships and build strong, beneficial alliances and coalitions. Furthermore, because social networks are deliberately constructed structures, individuals high in networking ability ensure they are well positioned in order to both create and take advantage of opportunities (Pfeffer, 1992). Masters of the quid pro quo, they are often highly skilled negotiators and deal makers, and adept at conflict management.

Apparent sincerity. Politically skilled individuals appear to others as possessing high levels of integrity, authenticity, sincerity, and genuineness. They are, or appear to be, honest, open, and forthright. This dimension of political skill strikes at the very heart of whether influence attempts will be successful because it focuses on the perceived intentions (i.e., as assessed by the target of influence) of the behavior exhibited (i.e., by the actor). Indeed, perceived intentions or motives are important and have been argued to alter the interpretation and labeling of behavior. As noted by Jones (1990), influence attempts will be successful only when actors are perceived as possessing no ulterior motives. Because their actions are not interpreted as manipulative or coercive, individuals high in apparent sincerity inspire trust and confidence in and from those around them.

Convergent and Discriminant Validity

Convergent and discriminant validity, respectively, reflect the extent to which a measure relates to similar constructs and does not relate to constructs from which it should differ. In this section, hypotheses are formulated concerning the constructs to which political skill (i.e., total score and separate dimensions) should and should not be related.

Personality and social effectiveness constructs. We conceptualize the political skill construct as overlapping somewhat with selected personality traits and with other related constructs that purport to measure social effectiveness (Ferris, Perrewé, & Douglas, 2002). However, we also believe that political skill reflects its distinctiveness as a construct that is sufficiently different from others. Therefore, we expect that political skill would be related positively and perhaps even significantly with constructs such as self-monitoring and conscientiousness. However, these relationships should not be so great in magnitude as to indicate construct redundancy.

Other social effectiveness constructs, which have been characterized in ways that suggest considerable overlap with political skill, are political savvy and emotional intelligence. Political savvy suggests adeptness at the nuances of politics in organizations and, as such, should be related positively, and perhaps significantly, to the composite measure of political skill. Work by Chao, O'Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein, and Gardner (1994) indicated that political savvy might be driven by a knowledge or understanding component but could include an implicit capacity to act on that knowledge, although that aspect is not made clear in its derivation.

Emotional intelligence has received considerable attention in the popular, business, and research press in the past 8 years, primarily as a function of Goleman's (1995, 1998) best-selling books. Such discussions of emotional intelligence are broad and could be construed as being redundant with political skill. However, more careful reading of the scientific research indicates that emotional intelligence focuses predominantly on the emotion-based aspects of interpersonal effectiveness, influence, and control. Conversely, we see political skill as incorporating knowledge and skill that go beyond emotions. Therefore, particularly because of Goleman's broad characterization of emotional intelligence (i.e., which has led some to suggest that Goleman regards emotional intelligence as including everything except general mental ability or intelligence; Hedlund & Sternberg, 2000) and the foregoing discussion of personality and social effectiveness constructs, we hypothesize the following:

> *Hypothesis 1:* The political skill total score will correlate significantly and positively with self-monitoring, conscientiousness, political savvy, and emotional intelligence.

Of the four political skill dimensions, social astuteness should be most strongly related to self-monitoring, conscientiousness, and political savvy. The social astuteness dimension best captures the essence of the self-monitoring construct, as explained by Snyder (1987). Furthermore, the attention to detail, and, as Pfeffer stated, the "almost clinical interest in the observation of behavior" (1992: 173), relates this dimension of political skill most strongly with conscientiousness.

Notions of "savvy" in general, and "political savvy" in particular, make reference to a degree of understanding that is closely related to the social astuteness dimension. Chao et al. (1994) identified a dimension of organizational socialization they called "politics." Closer inspection of the item content of this dimension reveals that it is actually measuring political savvy or understanding. Items such as "I have learned how things 'really work' on the inside of this organization," "I know who the most influential people are in my organization," and "I have a good understanding of the motives behind the actions of other people in the organization" highlight the importance of the savvy or understanding aspect of politics, thus suggesting its relationship to the social astuteness PSI dimension. Therefore, we formulate the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Social astuteness will demonstrate the strongest positive correlations with self-monitoring, conscientiousness, and political savvy of any of the PSI dimensions.

Influence tactics. In addition, we believe that political skill reflects the capacity to effectively exercise influence over others at work. Therefore, political skill should be related to particular types of influence tactics, as Kipnis, Schmidt, and Wilkinson (1980) discussed, such as upward appeal and coalition, but less so to assertiveness. Kipnis et al. discussed the upward appeal tactic as involving obtaining the support of individuals higher up in the organizational hierarchy. Coalition tactics refer to mounting coworker or subordinate support to reinforce a position taken or resources requested, counting on a strength-in-numbers approach. Finally, assertiveness involves demanding, ordering, setting deadlines and checking up on others in order to exercise influence. Indeed, we suggest that when those high in political skill engage in influence tactics, they do so in an effective way. However, those high in political skill might simply decide to avoid some influence tactics in favor of others.

Hypothesis 3: The political skill total score will correlate significantly and positively with upward appeal and coalition influence tactics, but nonsignificantly with assertiveness.

Concerning the dimensions of political skill, we argue that a significant positive relationship between the coalition influence tactic and the networking ability dimension of political skill will surface. We make a similar argument for the upward appeals influence tactic because networks and connections are necessary to the facilitation of upward appeal because such linkages allow one to operate from a position of greater strength (i.e., through such connections and social capital). Similarly, networking ability should be most strongly related to the use of assertiveness as an influence tactic. The use of assertiveness, as a way to influence others, can be intricate, and its effects sometimes can be positive and sometimes negative. We suggest that individuals who possess a high degree of networking ability will be well positioned (e.g., by virtue of the connections, alliances, and social capital they control) to employ assertiveness as a successful influence tactic.

Hypothesis 4: Networking ability will demonstrate the strongest positive correlation with the upward appeal, coalitions, and assertiveness tactics of any of the PSI dimensions.

Trait anxiety. Furthermore, we suggest that political skill demonstrates an inverse relationship with trait anxiety, which reflects "relatively stable individual differences in anxiety-proneness, that is, to differences between people in the tendency to perceive stressful situations as dangerous or threatening and respond to such situations with elevations in the intensity of their state anxiety (S-Anxiety) reactions" (Spielberger, Gorsuch, Lushene, Vagg, & Jacobs, 1983: 4). We believe political skill generates an increased sense of self-confidence and personal security because such individuals should experience a greater degree of control over activities that transpire in social interactions at work.

Indeed, Perrewé, Ferris, Frink, and Anthony (2000) argued that such greater self-confidence and control should lead individuals high in political skill to experience significantly less stress or anxiety at work. Furthermore, Perrewé, Zellars, Ferris, Rossi, Kacmar, and Ralston (2004) recently reported results supportive of this notion, demonstrating that political skill neutralized the dysfunctional effects of role conflict on strain for four of five behavioral and physiological strain measures (i.e., even producing a reduction in systolic blood pressure). Consequently, political skill may serve as an antidote, of sorts, to the negative consequences of stress.

Hypothesis 5: The political skill total score will demonstrate a significant negative correlation with trait anxiety.

Concerning the dimensions of political skill, it appears that interpersonal influence should exhibit the strongest negative relationship with trait anxiety. The heightened sense of personal security and self-confidence are likely associated with perceiving greater control over one's work environment, which includes the people with whom one interacts. Such feelings are likely reflective of the perceptions of greater interpersonal control they derive from past experiential success at exercising interpersonal influence. Therefore, we argue that feelings of control and personal security that result from being high on the interpersonal influence dimension of political skill would provide a comfort level that would result in reduced anxiety, thus exhibiting the strongest negative relationship of any of the other dimensions.

Hypothesis 6: Interpersonal influence will demonstrate the strongest negative correlation with trait anxiety of any of the PSI dimensions.

General mental ability. The principal argument for the discriminant validity of political skill relates to the expected relationship with general mental ability (GMA). Typically, scholars bear the burden of demonstrating empirically that their interpersonally oriented constructs are not simply a small part of, and thus not distinguishable from, GMA. Supporters of the "GMA-dominant" position (e.g., Gottfredson, 1997) would argue that political skill (and other measures of social effectiveness) could be effectively subsumed under GMA, thus implying that political skill would reflect a large correlation with GMA. However, we see political skill as independent of GMA, and Ferris et al. (1999) reported a nonsignificant relationship between their six-item measure of political skill and GMA (i.e., $r = -.08$, n.s.), thus demonstrating support for its discriminant validity.

Hypothesis 7: The political skill total score, and each of the PSI dimensions, will demonstrate zero correlations with GMA.

Criterion-Related Validity

Although there has been limited previous work concerning the criterion-related validity, we propose that political skill will demonstrate significant predictive ability, particularly for work performance criteria that are subjectively assessed by others (e.g., supervisors, peers, etc.). Ahearn et al. (2004) found leader political skill to be a significant predictor of team performance. Furthermore, Higgins (2000) reported that political skill was related significantly to recruitment interviewer ratings and evaluations of job applicants. These two studies used the Ferris et al. (1999) measure of political skill.

Hypothesis 8: The political skill total score will demonstrate significant positive prediction of work performance ratings.

Finally, regarding criterion-related validity, social astuteness would be expected to relate most strongly to supervisor evaluations of job performance because of the employee's adeptness at presenting his or her work behavior in the best possible light. Socially astute individuals use their ability to read situations and people and use their flexibility as input to the design of tailored attempts to influence others.

Hypothesis 9: Social astuteness will demonstrate the strongest positive prediction of job performance ratings of any of the PSI dimensions.

Plan of Research and Sequence of Studies

As an expansion of Ferris et al.'s (1999) earlier work, this research involves three studies and seven samples that are designed to examine, as comprehensively as possible, the psychometric properties of the PSI. Study 1 focuses on creating the PSI, assessing its dimensionality, and providing initial evidence of convergent and discriminant validity. Study 2 attempts to confirm the factor structure and construct dimensionality (Sample 1) and to provide additional evidence of convergent and discriminant validity, including additional measures of political savvy, emotional intelligence, and GMA (Samples 2 and 3). Finally, Study 3 attempts to demonstrate the criterion-related validity of the PSI by assessing its capacity to predict subordinate evaluations of leadership effectiveness (Sample 1) and supervisor ratings of subordinate performance (Sample 2).

Study 1: PSI Development and Initial Validation

Sample

Two samples were obtained in an effort to further explore the political skill construct. First, a sample of 226 undergraduate students at a large southern university completed surveys during class time. All students present in class that day participated in the data collection. The average age of the respondents in this sample was 22.61 ($\sigma = 6.39$), 50% of the sample was female, and the majority were part-time workers. For the second sample, the Human Resources department at a large university in the southeastern United States generated a list of 220 employees classified as either "managerial or administrative."

Surveys were distributed and subsequently returned to the researchers via interoffice mail. A total of 124 employees completed surveys for a response rate of 56%. The average age of the respondents in the second sample was 39.54 ($\sigma = 9.74$), nearly 70% were female, and the average organizational tenure was 9.47 years ($\sigma = 7.07$). In scale development particularly, larger samples are necessary to help ensure a greater degree of stability of the obtained results, so we combined the two data sets ($N = 350$).

Measures

Political skill item pool. A total of 40 items were generated to representatively assess the political skill construct and specifically to reflect the four dimensions believed to comprise political skill, thus maximizing content validity. In so doing, we built on, and expanded, the earlier work on the measurement of political skill by Ferris et al. (1999). We included the original six items developed by Ferris et al. in the total item pool and conducted a systematic review of the literature on organizational politics, with particular reference to skills in using politics effectively. In so doing, the authors wrote items to representatively reflect the key areas identified to best characterize the political skill construct and, as such, employed a "logical partitioning" approach to deductive scale development discussed by Hinkin (1995). Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each statement about themselves at work, using a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) Likert-type scale. A copy of the 40 items generated from the above process is included in the appendix.

Self-monitoring. Self-monitoring reflects the extent to which individuals monitor and control the images they project in social situations, and it was measured with the 18-item instrument presented in Snyder (1987). The coefficient alpha for this scale was .75.

Personality. Conscientiousness was examined using items from McCrae and Costa (1987). Conscientiousness suggests the tendency to be organized, disciplined, and dependable. The coefficient alpha for the 14-item Conscientiousness Scale was .87.

Influence tactics. The Kipnis et al. (1980) measure of influence tactics was used to assess the frequency with which individuals employed upward influence tactics. Specifically, the scale contained upward appeal (one-item measure), coalition (three items, $\alpha = .63$), and assertiveness (six items, $\alpha = .79$) tactics.

Trait anxiety. Trait anxiety identifies tendencies for individuals to naturally be anxiety prone and perceive stressful situations as threatening, and it was measured with the 20-item Spielberger et al. (1983) State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (Form Y-2). The coefficient alpha for this scale was .88.

Social desirability. Social desirability was measured using the 10-item scale developed by Strahan and Gerbasi (1972). This measure had a coefficient alpha of .71.

Results

Item analyses. Because our interest was in scale development, we retained only those items that provided the best representation of the political skill construct, while measuring this construct in the most parsimonious way. Thus, we undertook several phases of scale construction. First, we conducted item analyses, retaining those with the highest item-to-total correlations (i.e., item-to-total correlations of .40 or greater; Nunnally, 1978). This resulted in the elimination of 5 items (i.e., Items 1, 11, 27, 28, and 40 in the appendix). Next, we examined correlations of political skill items with the total score on the Social Desirability Scale and deleted items with statistically significant correlations at $p < .05$. This resulted in the elimination of an additional 10 items (i.e., Items 6, 12, 14, 15, 17, 22, 33, 34, 35, and 36 in the appendix).

Finally, to examine the extent to which there might be remaining items that demonstrated problematic high cross loadings on factors that precluded clear interpretation, we conducted a preliminary principal components analysis with oblique rotation. The pattern of factor loadings showed that 7 items (i.e., Items 2, 4, 7, 10, 18, 19, and 20 in the appendix) loaded on two or more factors greater than .35, with the highest loading not being on the intended factor. Therefore, these 7 items were eliminated, resulting in this three-step item-reduction procedure yielding a set of 18 items that met the criteria for item retention and would be subjected to principal axis factoring to assess the factor structure of the PSI.

The item-to-total correlations for these 18 items ranged from .42 to .71. Moreover, the total score for the 18 items did not correlate significantly with the Social Desirability Scale total score ($r = .02$, n.s.). Also, the correlations and mean differences of political skill with gender and age were examined, and no systematic relationships were detected. The internal consistency reliability estimate for the resulting 18-item scale total score was .90 (the 18 items making up this scale are asterisked in the appendix). Also, the original 6 items comprising the Ferris et al. (1999) Political Skill Scale were included in this 40-item pool used to generate the final 18-item PSI. Of those 6 items, 3 items were retained as part of the final 18-item inventory (the Ferris et al. 6 items are noted in the appendix).

Dimensionality of political skill. To determine the factor structure of the 18-item PSI, and following the item-reduction procedures specified above, we performed factor analysis on the 18 items, using the principal axis method and oblique, direct oblimin factor rotation. It has been noted that oblique factor rotation generally is more desirable than orthogonal rotation (e.g., Hair, Anderson, & Tatham, 1987) at

this early stage of scale development because of the fewer constraints it imposes. Furthermore, oblique factor rotation is most appropriate when the a priori theory indicates that obtained factors or dimensions are likely correlated. A four-factor solution emerged that satisfied the Kaiser-Guttman criterion of retaining only those factors with eigenvalues exceeding 1.0. Fabrigar, Wegener, MacCallum, and Strahan (1999) recommended using relevant theory and multiple methods in factor retention decisions in order to balance the need for parsimony with that of plausibility.

As shown in Table 1, eigenvalues ranged from 1.19 to 6.98, with 63% of the total variance explained. The factor explaining most of the variance was networking ability (six items, indicated by italics in the table), with 39% of the variance explained. Factor 2, apparent sincerity (three items, italicized) explained 10% of the variance, social astuteness (five items, italicized) accounted for 7%, and interpersonal influence (four items, italicized) explained 6.6% of the total variance.

Reliability and factor correlations. As noted in Table 1, internal consistency indices revealed reliability estimates ranging from .78 (interpersonal influence) to .87 (networking ability) for dimensions contained within the modified 18-item scale. These values are above the .70 level recommended by Nunnally (1978). The lower diagonal of Table 2 reports the intercorrelations of the political skill dimensions, which range in magnitude from .36 to .57, reflecting only modest relationships.

Fit statistics and alternative models. Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to test the hypothesis that four dimensions comprised the political skill construct. Several recommended measures of overall goodness of fit were used, including the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Normed Fit Index (NFI), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) (Tucker & Lewis, 1973) or Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI), the Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), the Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), and the ratio of chi-square relative to the degrees of freedom (χ^2/df) (e.g., Hu & Bentler, 1999; La Du & Tanaka, 1989; Wheaton, Muthen, Alwin, & Summers, 1977).

Values of .90 or higher are desired and presumed to result in an acceptable model fit to the data for the CFI, NFI, NNFI, and GFI (e.g., Hatcher, 1994; Medsker, Williams, & Holohan, 1994; Mulaik, James, Van Alstine, Bennet, Lind, & Stillwell, 1989), whereas a value higher than .80 is recommended for the AGFI (Gefen, Straub, & Boudreau, 2000). The appropriate level for the RMSEA was established at "a cutoff value close to .06" (Hu & Bentler, 1999: 27), and for the SRMR, "a cutoff value close to .08" (Hu & Bentler, 1999: 27). Values of less than 5 for the χ^2/df ratio indicate acceptable model fit (Wheaton et al., 1977).

The four-factor proposed model was tested for fit and compared to the fit indices for one-, two-, and three-factor models (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). The results from structural equation modeling analyses (LISREL 8; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993) are presented in Table 3 and reveal that the four-factor solution was superior to the other three models. Specifically, the one-factor model results indicated an unacceptable fit, whereas the four-factor solution results were at (or just below) acceptable levels, indicating a better fit relative to the one-factor solution. Based on these findings, and the chi-square difference test between the one- and four-factor models (χ^2 difference = 454.64, $df = 6$), the unidimensional solution was rejected in favor of the multidimensional model.

Both two-factor and three-factor models were also tested and compared with the four-factor target model. The most plausible two-factor model was tested that had the social astuteness and networking ability items comprising one factor and the interpersonal influence and apparent sincerity items making up a second factor. The two-factor model indicated an unacceptable fit and, along with the significant chi-square difference test (χ^2 difference = 256.92, $df = 5$), indicates that the four-factor model is superior to the two-factor model. In addition, two other two-factor models were run, and in both cases the fit statistics were unacceptable, and the chi-square difference tests demonstrated the superiority of the four-factor model.

Table 1
Factor Analysis and Item Analysis Results (Study 1)

Item	Factor 1 Networking Ability	Factor 2 Apparent Sincerity	Factor 3 Social Astuteness	Factor 4 Interpersonal Influence	Item-Total r	Social Desirability r
1. I spend a lot of time and effort at work networking with others.	.79	.01	.08	.03	.59	.08
2. At work, I know a lot of important people and am well connected.	.78	.01	.08	.04	.71	.08
3. I am good at using my connections and networks to make things happen at work.	.73	.01	.13	.06	.63	.04
4. I have developed a large network of colleagues and associates at work who I can call on for support when I really need to get things done.	.67	.26	.03	.07	.58	-.02
5. I spend a lot of time at work developing connections with others.	.60	.07	.01	.13	.53	.01
6. I am good at building relationships with influential people at work.	.47	.16	.25	.17	.60	.05
7. It is important that people believe I am sincere in what I say and do.	.12	.72	.03	.14	.51	-.03
8. When communicating with others, I try to be genuine in what I say and do.	.03	.70	.09	.01	.42	-.08
9. I try to show a genuine interest in other people.	.02	.58	.12	.24	.53	.01
10. I always seem to instinctively know the right thing to say or do to influence others.	.16	.21	.66	.14	.59	.01
11. I have good intuition or savvy about how to present myself to others.	.15	.03	.64	.13	.68	-.06
12. I am particularly good at sensing the motivations and hidden agendas of others.	.04	.17	.63	.16	.45	.03
13. I pay close attention to people's facial expressions.	.09	.15	.45	.20	.49	.03
14. I understand people very well.	.07	.11	.40	.18	.53	.04
15. It is easy for me to develop good rapport with most people.	.08	.09	.11	.72	.55	-.06
16. I am able to make most people feel comfortable and at ease around me.	.02	.01	.07	.72	.55	-.01
17. I am able to communicate easily and effectively with others.	.08	.04	.11	.56	.57	.00
18. I am good at getting people to like me.	.07	.11	.11	.46	.53	.04
Eigenvalue	6.98	1.86	1.29	1.19		
Percentage of variance explained	39.00	10.35	7.17	6.63		
Cumulative percentage of variance explained	39.00	49.14	56.31	62.94		
Coefficient alpha reliability estimates	.87	.81	.79	.78		

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Table 2
Correlations of Political Skill Dimensions

Dimension	M^a	SD^a	α^a	M^b	SD^b	α^b	Networking Ability	Apparent Sincerity	Social Astuteness	Interpersonal Influence
Networking ability	4.90	1.04	.87	3.51	.66	.82	—	.28	.56	.49
Apparent sincerity	5.92	0.84	.81	4.05	.56	.73	.36	—	.47	.57
Social astuteness	5.18	0.91	.79	3.72	.58	.79	.57	.45	—	.69
Interpersonal influence	5.60	0.87	.78	4.01	.54	.77	.53	.50	.56	—

Note: Coefficients below the diagonal reflect the factor correlations for Study 1 ($N = 350$), and those above the diagonal reflect the factor correlations for Study 2 ($N = 93$). All correlations in the table are significant $p < .001$.
a. Indicates Study 1 results.
b. Indicates Study 2 results.

Table 3
Structural Equation Modeling Statistics for One-, Two-, Three-, and Four-Factor Models in Studies 1 and 2

Fit Indices	Study 1 Models				Study 2 Models			
	4-Factor	3-Factor	2-Factor	1-Factor	4-Factor	3-Factor	2-Factor	1-Factor
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	.92	.87	.86	.80	.94	.91	.91	.91
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	.88	.84	.82	.77	.87	.84	.85	.84
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI) (or Tucker-Lewis Index)	.90	.85	.83	.77	.92	.88	.89	.88
Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI)	.91	.87	.84	.80	.89	.87	.88	.87
Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit-Index (AGFI)	.87	.82	.79	.74	.84	.81	.82	.81
Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)	.07	.09	.10	.12	.06	.08	.07	.08
Standardized root mean square residual (SRMR)	.05	.08	.07	.08	.06	.07	.07	.07
Ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom (χ^2/df)	2.61	3.67	4.50	5.98	1.75	2.11	2.00	2.08

The most plausible three-factor model also was tested where the three factors reflected the networking ability, social astuteness, and interpersonal influence dimensions, with the three items from the apparent sincerity dimension spread across these three factors. The fit statistics for the three-factor model, and the significant chi-square difference test (χ^2 difference = 142.80, df = 3), indicate that the four-factor model also provides a better fit than the three-factor model. An additional three-factor model was run, and it too was found to be inferior to the four-factor model according to the fit statistics and chi-square difference test.

Convergent and discriminant validity. As argued, we expect political skill to be positively correlated with self-monitoring and conscientiousness (Hypothesis 1). Also, we need to demonstrate that political skill is not simply synonymous with influence tactics of upward appeal and coalitions, and that it is not related to assertiveness (Hypothesis 3). Finally, we believe that political skill should be inversely related to trait anxiety such that politically skilled individuals are apt to experience less strain (Hypothesis 5).

The correlations of the PSI composite measure, the four dimensions of political skill, and the other scales are presented in Table 4. Preliminary results provide evidence for the convergent and discriminant validity of the political skill construct. As expected, the overall political skill construct was significantly and positively related to self-monitoring ($r = .39$, $p < .001$) and conscientiousness ($r = .31$, $p < .001$), thus supporting Hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 2 proposed that the social astuteness dimension of political skill would demonstrate the strongest relationship with both self-monitoring and conscientiousness. For self-monitoring ($r = .37$, $p < .001$) and conscientiousness ($r = .27$, $p < .001$), social astuteness did exhibit the highest correlations of the four dimensions. However, the differences between the correlations for these two constructs with the other three PSI dimensions were not statistically significant when conducting significance tests for the differences between dependent correlation coefficients (e.g., Cohen & Cohen, 1983; because these are directional hypotheses, the statistical tests for differences use one-tailed significance tests, with $N - 3$ degrees of freedom). Thus, Hypothesis 2 failed to receive full support.

Results also showed evidence that political skill is not redundant with influence tactics. Indeed, none of the correlations between political skill and the individual influence tactics approached a level to suggest multicollinearity ($r > .80$, Lewis-Beck, 1980). Specifically, political skill was related to the upward appeal ($r = .25$, $p < .001$) and coalition ($r = .21$, $p < .001$) influence tactics. Furthermore, it was suggested that political skill, being more indirect, would not likely be correlated with assertiveness. Indeed, the correlation of political skill with assertiveness was not significant ($r = .09$, n.s.). These results for the relationships with influence tactics provide support for Hypothesis 3.

Because the nature of networking involves involvement with others and being able to mobilize coalitions for influence, networking ability was hypothesized to demonstrate the strongest positive relationship with the upward appeal and the coalition influence tactics, and that was found to be the case ($r = .30$, $p < .001$; $r = .31$, $p < .001$, respectively). Significance tests for the difference between correlations reported that the networking ability–upward appeal correlation was significantly larger than the correlations of any of the other PSI dimensions with upward appeal (i.e., $t = 1.89$, $p < .05$ for social astuteness; $t = 5.29$, $p < .001$ for interpersonal influence; and $t = 2.92$, $p < .01$ for apparent sincerity).

Finally, it was hypothesized that the networking ability dimension would provide the positioning to allow one to effectively use assertiveness. Indeed, networking ability demonstrated a significant positive relationship with assertiveness ($r = .18$, $p < .001$), which was found to be significantly greater than the correlations of any of the other PSI dimensions with assertiveness (i.e., $t = 1.43$, $p < .10$ for social astuteness; $t = 4.98$, $p < .001$ for interpersonal influence; and $t = 3.88$, $p < .001$ for apparent sincerity). These results lend support for Hypothesis 4.

Political skill exhibited a significant negative correlation with trait anxiety ($r = .31$, $p < .001$), providing support for Hypothesis 5. It was hypothesized that feelings of control and personal security,

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics, Correlations of Political Skill With Other Measures, and Competitive Prediction of Other Measures From Political Skill Dimensions and Ferris et al. (1999) Measure (Study 1)

Measure	M	SD	α	Political Skill Total	Social Astuteness	Interpersonal Influence	Networking Ability	Apparent Sincerity	Ferris et al., 6-item Measure
Self-monitoring	1.46	0.21	.75	.39***	.37*** (.21**)	.30*** (.12)	.37*** (.23***)	.11 (−.13*)	.30*** (.01)
Conscientiousness	3.68	0.63	.87	.31***	.27*** (.09)	.25*** (.02)	.24*** (.08)	.24*** (.10)	.27*** (.12)
Upward appeal	2.66	1.11	—	.25***	.21*** (.14)	.04 (−.23*)	.30*** (.33***)	.13* (.08)	.10 (−.03)
Coalition	2.55	0.83	.63	.21***	.14** (.02)	.04 (−.18*)	.31*** (.40***)	.03 (−.05)	.12* (.02)
Assertiveness	2.33	0.78	.79	.09	.11* (.15*)	−.07 (−.20*)	.18*** (.26***)	−.05 (−.07)	−.01 (−.07)
Trait anxiety	1.99	0.46	.88	−.31***	−.28*** (−.11)	.37*** (−.28***)	.20*** (.04)	−.15** (.08)	−.34*** (−.10)
M				5.29	5.14	5.60	4.90	5.94	5.48
SD				0.74	0.89	0.84	1.02	0.84	0.73
α				.90	.79	.78	.87	.81	.73

Note: Due to missing values, the sample size ranges from 326 to 350. The six-item Ferris et al. (1999) Political Skill Scale correlated $r = .78***$ with the Political Skill Inventory (PSI) total score, $r = .66***$ with the social astuteness dimension, $r = .81***$ with the interpersonal influence dimension, $r = .54***$ with the networking ability dimension, and $r = .52***$ with the apparent sincerity dimension. The values in parentheses are the standardized regression coefficients for the prediction of each of the constructs in the left column from the four political skill dimensions and the Ferris et al. (1999) six-item scale. No reliability coefficient is reported for upward appeal because it is a one-item measure.
*p .05
**p .01
***p .001

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which result from scoring high on the interpersonal influence dimension of political skill, would be associated with reduced anxiety, thus exhibiting the strongest negative relationship of any of the political skill dimensions. Results supported this proposal, showing that interpersonal influence reflected the highest correlation with trait anxiety of any of the four dimensions ($r = .37$, $p < .001$). Furthermore, when conducting significance tests between correlations of interpersonal influence and trait anxiety with each other PSI dimension and trait anxiety, all correlations were significantly smaller in magnitude (i.e., $t = 1.93$, $p < .05$ for social astuteness; $t = 3.50$, $p < .001$ for network building; and $t = 4.40$, $p < .001$ for apparent sincerity). This lends strong support to Hypothesis 6.

Measurement and Predictive Properties of
18-Item PSI Versus Ferris et al. (1999) Measure

In the development of a new scale, it is important to establish that the new measure demonstrates psychometric properties that reflect improvements over previous measures. Table 4 reports the means, standard deviations, reliability estimates, and correlations of the new 18-item PSI in comparison to the original Ferris et al. (1999) 6-item Political Skill Scale and demonstrates how both measures relate to other constructs. The relationships of the 6-item scale and the 18-item measure with self-monitoring, conscientiousness, and trait anxiety are quite similar. However, the 6-item measure shows very little relationship with the influence tactics.

To assess the predictive effectiveness of the PSI dimensions compared to the Ferris et al. (1999) 6-item measure, regression equations were computed with the four political skill dimensions and the 6-item scale entered simultaneously as competitive predictors, and the constructs presented in the left column of Table 4 as outcomes. The beta coefficients for each of the predictors and their significance levels appear in parentheses in Table 4. For the prediction of conscientiousness, none of the regression coefficients for the five predictors achieved significance. For the remaining outcomes, between one and three of the PSI dimensions demonstrated significant prediction. However, the interesting finding seen in Table 4 is that the Ferris et al. measure was not a significant predictor in any of the six regression equations. Overall, the new PSI demonstrates an improvement over the initial Ferris et al. scale.

Study 2: Factor Structure
Confirmation and Construct Validity

This study had two major purposes. The first was to ensure that the factor structure derived in Study 1 was not an artifact of the survey design, data collection method, or sample obtained for analysis. Therefore, we attempted to replicate the factor structure from Study 1 using a broader range of respondents, settings, and survey methods in Sample 1. Specifically, the sample used students to distribute surveys containing the 18-item PSI to full-time employees.

The second purpose of Study 2 was to both replicate and expand on the convergent and discriminant validity evidence reported in Study 1, in two different samples (i.e., Samples 2 and 3). In Sample 2, data were collected on the 18-item PSI, the same personality and social influence constructs gathered in Study 1, and a political-savvy construct (Chao et al., 1994) in an effort to both replicate results from the first study and to extend construct validity evidence. Finally, Sample 3 examined the relationships of political skill with GMA and emotional intelligence.

Sample 1: Participants and Procedures

Students at a large university in the southeastern United States each were given three surveys and asked to find three full-time employees, working a minimum of 5 years, who would complete the sur-

veys. Occupations in the sample included patrol officer, human resource manager, chief executive officer, and accountant. The student received course credit for securing appropriate completion of the surveys.

The sample consisted of 85 male employees (44%) and 108 female employees (56%), and the average age was approximately 42 years ($M = 42.24$, $\sigma = 10.75$). Respondents had an average of almost 20 years of full-time work ($M = 19.55$, $\sigma = 10.52$), had worked in their current position for roughly 7 years ($M = 7.22$, $\sigma = 8.82$), and had been with their current organization for almost 9 years ($M = 8.86$, $\sigma = 8.95$). Participants reported supervising an average of roughly 15 employees ($M = 14.94$, $\sigma = 50.87$, range 0-524). Finally, 72 respondents (37%) reported professional staff as their position followed by 47 (24%) reporting middle management, 42 (22%) reporting nonmanagement, 18 (9%) reporting upper management, and 12 (6%) reporting other.

Sample 1: Results

The four-factor solution met most of the standards to demonstrate adequate fit of the model, whereas the one-factor solution had less acceptable fit, as seen in Table 3. A chi-square difference test of the two models showed that they were not redundant (χ^2 difference = 44.39, $df = 6$). Because the four-factor solution provided better data fit indices and is more theoretically sound, we concluded it was the best representation of the constructs underlying dimensionality.

Both two-factor and three-factor models also were tested and compared with the four-factor target model. The two-factor model with the social astuteness and networking ability items comprising one factor and the interpersonal influence and apparent sincerity items making up a second factor showed lower-than-recommended fit statistics and, along with the significant chi-square difference test (χ^2 difference = 37.78, $df = 5$), indicates that the four-factor model is superior to the two-factor model.

The same three-factor model as tested in Study 1 was examined here as well, where networking ability, social astuteness, and interpersonal influence reflected the three dimensions, with the three items from the apparent sincerity dimension spread similarly across these three factors. The fit statistics for the three-factor model and the significant chi-square difference test (χ^2 difference = 46.09, $df = 3$) indicates that the four-factor model also provides a better fit than the three-factor model.

Each of the four political skill dimensions demonstrated adequate reliability estimates. Specifically, the social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability, and apparent sincerity dimensions achieved reliability coefficients of .79, .77, .83, and .73, respectively. All items demonstrated acceptable standardized factor loadings with their hypothesized underlying construct, and the four dimensions exhibited correlations with one another, ranging from .28 to .69, as noted above the diagonal in Table 2.

Sample 2: Sample and Procedure

A total of 148 full-time workers in law firms in a large southeastern city were contacted to complete an online survey that provided data to test political skills convergent and discriminant validity. Ninety-three (93) employees in 49 different legal entities voluntarily completed surveys online by accessing the researchers Web site, reflecting a 63% response rate. Respondents occupied a wide variety of positions, including legal administrators, paralegals, legal assistants, secretaries, attorneys, and office managers. The average age of the respondents in this sample was 41.0 years ($\sigma = 10.05$), 84% of the sample was female, 58% had at least a 4-year college degree, and the majority was Caucasian (94%). The average tenure was 7.2 years ($\sigma = 6.46$) with the organization, and 44% supervised at least one other employee as part of their job responsibilities.

Sample 2: Measures

Political skill. The 18-item PSI developed in Study 1 was used to measure political skill and its dimensions. For this study, the 7-point response format was used. The coefficient alpha internal consistency reliability estimate for the overall scale was .89, and the reliabilities for the political skill dimensions were as follows: networking ability (.87), interpersonal influence (.87), social astuteness (.80), and apparent sincerity (.58).

Self-monitoring. Self-monitoring was measured with the 18-item instrument presented in Snyder (1987). The coefficient alpha reliability for this scale was .76.

Conscientiousness. Conscientiousness was examined using items from McCrae and Costa (1987). The coefficient alpha reliability estimate for the 14-item conscientiousness scale was .82.

Influence tactics. Kipnis et al.s (1980) measure was used to assess the frequency with which individuals employed upward influence tactics. Each of the influence tactics scales had four items and included upward appeal ($\alpha = .82$), coalition ($\alpha = .80$), and assertiveness ($\alpha = .77$).

Trait anxiety. Trait anxiety was measured with the 20-item Spielberger et al. (1983) State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (Form Y-2). The coefficient alpha reliability for this scale was .87.

Political savvy. A six-item scale developed by Chao et al. (1994) was used, which assessed understanding or savvy about politics in the organization. The coefficient alpha reliability estimate for this scale was .85.

Sample 2: Convergent and Discriminant Validity Results

Table 5 shows the descriptive statistics for the variables used in the current study and the correlations of political skill (and its dimensions) with each of the other scales. Among all the variables, only the apparent sincerity political skill dimension ($\alpha = .58$) had an inferior internal consistency reliability estimate.

We expected political skill to be positively correlated with self-monitoring and with conscientiousness. The overall PSI was found to positively correlate with self-monitoring ($r = .33, p < .01$). Interestingly, although positive, the correlation of the PSI with conscientiousness was not significant in this study. Furthermore, political skill should be positively correlated with the Chao et al. (1994) measure, which assesses political savvy. As shown in Table 5, the overall PSI was found to positively correlate with political savvy ($r = .47, p < .001$), thus providing partial support for Hypothesis 1.

Social astuteness demonstrated the highest correlation with self-monitoring ($r = .32, p < .001$), but this correlation was not significantly different from the network buildingself-monitoring relationship (i.e., $t = .22$, n.s.). Social astuteness also was hypothesized to demonstrate the highest correlation with conscientiousness of any of the PSI dimensions, and tests for the difference of correlations verify this, thus providing support for Hypothesis 2 (i.e., $t = 2.03, p < .05$ for interpersonal influence; $t = 3.38$, $p < .001$ for network building; and $t = 1.55, p < .10$ for apparent sincerity).

Hypothesis 2 also proposed that social astuteness would demonstrate the strongest relationship with political savvy of any of the four political skill dimensions, and the results appear to support this ($r = .60, p < .001$). Furthermore, the results of the correlation difference tests demonstrate that the social astutenesspolitical savvy correlation is significantly larger than the correlation of political savvy with any other PSI dimension (i.e., $t = 7.83, p < .001$ for interpersonal influence; $t = 2.76, p < .01$ for network building; and $t = 5.76, p < .001$ for apparent sincerity).

Table 5
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of Political Skill With Other Measures (Study 2, Sample 2) (N = 93)

Measures	M	SD	α	Political Skill Total	Social Astuteness	Interpersonal Influence	Networking Ability	Apparent Sincerity
Self-monitoring	1.42	0.20	.76	.33**	.32**	.21*	.30**	.13
Conscientiousness	5.75	0.91	.82	.17	.31**	.15	.00	.15
Upward appeal	1.42	0.58	.82	.17	.10	.00	.26*	.03
Coalition	1.92	0.75	.80	.28**	.23*	.12	.30**	.10
Assertiveness	1.52	0.70	.77	.16	.16	-.04	.22*	.01
Trait anxiety	1.69	0.35	.87	-.27**	-.25**	-.42**	-.11	-.19†
Political savvy	5.49	1.09	.85	.47**	.60***	.14	.38**	.11
M				5.52	5.29	5.87	5.00	6.49
SD				0.71	0.90	0.82	1.13	0.46
α				.89	.80	.82	.87	.58

†$p < .10$
*$p < .05$
**$p < .01$
***$p < .001$

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Political skill should be related to various influence tactics, including upward appeal and coalition tactics, but not to assertiveness, as was found in Study 1. Results provided evidence that political skill is not redundant with influence tactics. Specifically, the PSI positively correlated with the coalition tactic ($r = .28$, $p < .01$), and it did not correlate with assertiveness ($r = .16$, n.s.), both findings supportive of Hypothesis 3. However, the PSI exhibited a positive, but not a significant, correlation with the upward appeal tactic, which fails to support part of Hypothesis 3.

The networking ability dimension was positively related to the upward appeal influence tactic ($r = .26$, $p < .05$), the coalition tactic ($r = .30$, $p < .01$), and the assertiveness tactic ($r = .22$, $p < .05$). However, examination of the correlation difference tests indicate mixed results and therefore only partial support for Hypothesis 4. The network buildingupward appeal correlation was significantly greater than for any of the other PSI dimensions (i.e., $t = 1.68$, $p < .05$ for social astuteness; $t = 2.56$, $p < .01$ for interpersonal influence; and $t = 1.88$, $p < .05$ for apparent sincerity). For the coalition influence tactic, the network building correlation was not significantly different from the social astuteness correlation with the coalition tactic (i.e., $t = .74$, n.s.), and the networking-assertiveness correlation was not significantly different from the social astutenessassertiveness relationship (i.e., $t = .62$, n.s.).

In addition, political skill should be negatively related to trait anxiety such that politically skilled individuals are apt to experience less anxiety or tension. Results show that the PSI indeed was inversely related to trait anxiety ($r = .27$, $p < .01$), as found in Study 1, and supportive of Hypothesis 5. Also replicating results from Study 1, interpersonal influence showed the strongest relationship with trait anxiety ($r = .42$, $p < .01$), and correlations of trait anxiety with all other PSI dimensions were found to be significantly smaller in magnitude, thus supporting Hypothesis 6 (i.e., $t = 2.26$, $p < .01$ for social astuteness; $t = 3.22$, $p < .001$ for network building; and $t = 2.59$, $p < .01$ for apparent sincerity).

Sample 3: Participants and Procedure

A sample of 184 undergraduate students in two required undergraduate business classes at a midsize southeastern university completed surveys during class time. All students present in class on that day participated in the research. The average age of the respondents in this sample was 21.8 ($\sigma = 2.74$), 49% of the sample were female, and 86% were Caucasian.

Sample 3: Measures

Political skill. Political skill ($M = 5.68$, $\sigma = .61$, $\alpha = .87$), again, was measured with the 18-item PSI. The descriptive statistics for the four dimensions of political skill are as follows: social astuteness, $M = 5.77$, $\sigma = .69$, $\alpha = .71$; interpersonal influence, $M = 5.51$, $\sigma = .77$, $\alpha = .73$; networking ability, $M = 5.82$, $\sigma = .68$, $\alpha = .76$; and apparent sincerity, $M = 5.52$, $\sigma = .95$, $\alpha = .66$.

General mental ability. GMA was measured using the Wonderlic Personnel Test Form A (Wonderlic Personnel Test, 1992). The mean score was 25.76 ($\sigma = 5.2$).

Emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence was measured using the Emotional Competence InventoryUniversity Edition (ECI-U; Goleman & Boyatzis, 2001). Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2000) described this scale as a mixed-model scale in that it goes beyond the emotions and emotion-thought interactions and incorporates other characteristics such as consciousness states, abilities, and motivations ($M = 3.84$, $\sigma = .48$, $\alpha = .96$).

Sample 3: Results

With all the attention the emotional intelligence construct has received in recent years, it was important to demonstrate that it was not highly correlated with political skill. We would expect a significant correlation between political skill and emotional intelligence, but we would not expect the magnitude of the correlation to be so high as to indicate construct redundancy. The correlation between these two constructs was .53, providing support for Hypothesis 1. Furthermore, the correlations of the four dimensions of political skill with emotional intelligence ranged from .38 to .43.

Based on these results, two observations deserve mention. First, we would conclude that this level of relationship is only moderate in magnitude. Second, in light of the extensiveness regarding how Goleman and his colleagues have conceptualized the content domain of emotional intelligence (i.e., as reflected in the measure used in this study), it could be construed as surprising that the correlation with political skill was not even higher. Some have suggested that Goleman views emotional intelligence as everything except GMA (e.g., Hedlund & Sternberg, 2000), suggesting a measure that would overlap substantially with a number of social effectiveness constructs.

It is critical to demonstrate that political skill is uncorrelated with, and therefore not simply subsumed by, GMA. The correlations of the PSI total score, and the four dimensions, with GMA all were found to be zero. This supports the emerging theory on political skill, as well as the evidence provided by Ferris et al. (1999) on the initial six-item measure, which was found to reflect a zero correlation with GMA (i.e., also using the Wonderlic Personnel Test to assess intelligence). Also, these results provide support for Hypothesis 7.

Study 3: Criterion-Related Validity Evidence

The establishment of sound evidence of construct validity is an essential first step in the development of any new measure, before such measures can be used in substantive research (e.g., Schwab, 1980). However, criterion-related validity ultimately is critical to the determination of any new construct's role in the predictability of important organizational phenomena.

To examine the criterion-related validity of political skill and provide tests of Hypotheses 8 and 9, samples were gathered from two organizations, involving different occupational groups, to assess the extent to which political skill predicted job performance and effectiveness ratings. In both samples, employees completed questionnaire measures, including political skill, and job performance or effectiveness ratings were filled out by other sources (i.e., either the subordinates or the supervisors of those employees).

Sample 1: Sample and Procedures

This sample was collected from school administrators in a public school district located in the midwestern United States. The survey was distributed to 35 administrators through interdepartmental mail, 26 surveys were returned for a 74% response rate, and participation was voluntary. The respondents were all Caucasian, and predominantly male (62%), with most holding a masters or higher degree (73.1%). The average respondent was 48 years old with an average of 7.1 years of organizational tenure.

Sample 1: Measures

Political skill was measured using the 18-item PSI as discussed earlier. Respondents were asked to rate their agreement with the questions on a scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Three

items were used to measure leader effectiveness, gathered from responses by the subordinates or direct reports of each school administrator: (a) Our manager is effective in representing the work unit to upper management, (b) Our manager is effective in meeting the job-related needs of work unit members, and (c) Our manager is effective in meeting the needs of the organization. The coefficient alpha for this three-item scale was .85 ($M = 5.60$, $\sigma = .73$).

Sample 1: Results

Regression analyses were used to assess the ability of political skill to explain variance in ratings of leader effectiveness. In the first regression analysis, the PSI total score was found to account for a significant portion of the variance in leader effectiveness ratings ($R^2 = .16$, $F(1, 24) = 4.64$, $p < .05$), supporting Hypothesis 8. In the second regression analysis, the four PSI dimensions (i.e., social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability, and apparent sincerity) were used to predict ratings of leader effectiveness. As proposed in Hypothesis 9, social astuteness was expected to demonstrate the strongest relationship with supervisor ratings of employee job performance. Indeed, social astuteness was found to be the only significant predictor of effectiveness ratings ($\beta = .11$, $p < .05$), thus providing support for Hypothesis 9. However, the regression equation was not significant, $F(4, 21) = 1.88$, n.s., likely due to the small sample size.

Although these results are suggestive of political skills criterion-related validity, they are limited by the size of the sample and the lack of control variables. Therefore, a more refined test of the criterion-related validity of political skill was conducted, which included a larger sample and additional variables to serve as controls, in an effort to replicate the results reported here.

Sample 2: Sample and Procedures

Surveys were mailed to 474 branch managers of a national financial services firm. An endorsement letter from the vice president of Human Resources accompanied the survey. The survey packet also contained an approach letter from the research team, explaining the purpose of the survey and ensuring that their participation was both voluntary and confidential. Of the 474 surveys distributed, 148 total responses were obtained (i.e., 31.2% response rate). The respondents were predominantly female (80.7%) and Caucasian (64.8%), with representative African American (22.8%) and Hispanic (7.8%) respondents. The average respondent was 37 years old ($\sigma = 9.83$) and had an average of 2.53 ($\sigma = 1.81$) years of organizational tenure and 1.41 years ($\sigma = 1.54$) of tenure with their current supervisor.

Sample 2: Measures

The 18-item PSI was used to measure political skill. Respondents were asked to rate their agreement with the questions on a scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The scale demonstrated acceptable reliability ($\alpha = .86$, $M = 3.89$, $\sigma = .38$). To measure employee performance, the most recent annual internal performance ratings were obtained from the Human Resources department of the firm. Employees were rated by their immediate supervisor in 28 categories ranging from budgeted revenue growth to interpersonal relationships. The rating form used a 5-point behavioral anchored response format. Performance ratings were calculated by summing the scores in each category ($M = 81.39$, $\sigma = 14.21$).

Of the 148 responses obtained from the original survey, performance scores were available for 108 of the employees, reducing the usable response rate to 22.9%. To isolate the effects of political skill on performance ratings, the current study controlled for the effects of age, tenure with supervisor, organi-

zation tenure, self-monitoring ($\alpha = .78$, $M = 3.61$, $\sigma = .34$), and the influence tactics of exchange ($\alpha = .54$, $M = 1.79$, $\sigma = .70$), coalition building ($\alpha = .71$, $M = 2.30$, $\sigma = .71$), upward appeals ($\alpha = .70$, $M = 1.79$, $\sigma = .84$), and assertiveness ($\alpha = .66$, $M = 1.67$, $\sigma = .69$).

Sample 2: Results

On the first step of the hierarchical regression analysis, the control variables of age, supervisor tenure, organization tenure, self-monitoring, exchange tactics, upward appeal, and coalition tactics accounted for a significant proportion of variability in performance, $R^2 = .18$, $F(7, 100) = 3.08$, $p < .01$. Within this block of variables, only organization tenure demonstrated a significant relationship with performance ratings ($\beta = .31$, $p < .01$). The addition of the PSI total score in the second block of variables contributed significant incremental variance beyond the control variables, $\Delta R^2 = .04$, $F(1, 99) = 5.17$, $p < .05$. As predicted, employee political skill was positively related to supervisor-rated job performance ($\beta = .22$, $p < .05$), which provides additional support for Hypothesis 8.

To assess how each of the dimensions of the PSI contributed as predictors, a hierarchical regression analysis was conducted entering the four political skill dimensions, after the control variables, in the prediction of job performance ratings. Again, we would expect social astuteness to be the strongest predictor of job performance ratings. Entering the four PSI dimensions on the next step resulted in a 7% increment in the proportion of criterion variance explained, $F(4, 96) = 2.19$, $p < .10$, with only the social astuteness dimension reaching significance ($\beta = .26$, $p < .05$). These results replicate the criterion-related validity of social astuteness in the prediction of job performance found in the previous study, support Hypothesis 9, and are consistent with the derivation and discussion of this dimension of political skill presented.

Discussion

The 18-item PSI was developed in this research and found to reflect adequate psychometric properties as indicated by the confirming evidence across three studies and seven different samples.

Evidence for factor structure. An underlying four-factor dimensionality of the PSI was established in Study 1 and confirmed in Study 2, with acceptable fit statistics. The correlations among the political skill dimensions were modest in magnitude, as expected, and recent research has supported such results.

Evidence for convergent and discriminant validity. Part of Study 1, and two of the samples in Study 2, focused on convergent and discriminant validity and supported three fundamental conceptual issues regarding political skill. That is, first, that political skill is positively correlated with personality and other interpersonally oriented constructs like self-monitoring, political savvy, and emotional intelligence, but not so highly as to indicate construct redundancy. Second, that political skill is significantly and negatively related to trait anxiety, thus supporting arguments by Perrewé et al. (2000). Third, that political skill is not correlated with GMA.

The apparent sincerity dimension of political skill did not distinguish itself as providing differential prediction. The problem with this PSI dimension might be at least partially due to measurement method. That is, the extent to which one is successful at appearing sincere is a function of others perceptions. Yet, the self-report measurement used in this research for political skill asked individuals to report how much they intended to be sincere, which might have little to do with what others think of their sincerity. This underscores the importance of using other sources for the measurement of ones

political skill rather than simply relying exclusively on self-reports. Furthermore, the reliability estimate of .58 for apparent sincerity in Sample 2 of Study 2 is lower than considered acceptable (Nunnally, 1978) and places a lower bound on the possible validity coefficients that could be observed.

Evidence for criterion-related validity. Study 3 reported evidence of criterion-related validity and demonstrated that political skill significantly predicted job performance and effectiveness ratings in two samples made up of distinct occupational groups. The PSI was a significant predictor of subordinate evaluation of leader effectiveness for a group of public school administrators, even though the sample was very small (i.e., $N = 26$), and social astuteness was the strongest PSI dimension predicting effectiveness. These results were replicated in the second sample with supervisor ratings of job performance as the criterion.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

As with any empirical study, there are limitations regarding this research that should be mentioned. Because of the largely single-source, self-report data collection, it is possible that common method variance could explain some of the observed relationships of political skill with other constructs. Therefore, in an attempt to empirically assess the potential problematic nature of common method variance in this research, Harman one-factor tests were conducted in both Study 1 and Study 2 (i.e., including the four political skill dimensions, self-monitoring, conscientiousness, the three influence tactics, and trait anxiety).

The basic notion is that if method variance is a serious problem, either one general factor will account for most of the variance or a single factor will be found from the factor analysis (e.g., Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). In both studies, a single factor did not emerge from the factor analysis, nor did a general factor account for the majority of variance (i.e., in Study 1, Factors 1 and 2 accounted for 28% and 27% of the variance, respectively; in Study 2, Factor 1 and Factor 2 explained 28% and 21% of the variance, respectively). Therefore, common method variance does not appear to be a serious problem in this research.

Further evidence that common method variance is not problematic in this research comes from an examination of the correlations among the political skill dimensions (see Table 2) and the correlations of political skill (i.e., total score and the four dimensions) with other constructs (see Tables 4 and 5). Common method variance tends to produce a general spurious inflation of all the correlations among variables measured with single-source data collection, resulting in an overestimation of the true relationships. Clearly, this is not the case in examination of Tables 2, 4, and 5, which reflect reasonable and expected variability concerning the magnitude of the relationships.

The two dimensions of political skill that appear to support the clearest differential prediction are social astuteness and networking ability. First, social astuteness was proposed to be the only political skill dimension to be predictive of job performance. Also, networking ability reflected a reasonably clean differential relationship with the upward appeal, coalition, and assertiveness influence tactics in Study 1, but with mixed findings in Study 2.

We envision two main roles for political skill in predicting job performance and other work outcomes. First, the PSI should be a main effect predictor, similar to results reported by Higgins (2000) and Ahearn et al. (2004) using the earlier six-item measure. Indeed, an important area for future work concerns the nature of leader political skill and how leader political skill operates to inspire trust and confidence in followers, as suggested theoretically.

Second, we see political skill as a potentially important moderator that should facilitate the effectiveness of influence tactics on performance. Indeed, recent meta-analyses of the influence tacticswork outcomes relationships have reported the existence of moderators (Gordon, 1996; Higgins, Judge, & Ferris, 2003). Furthermore, we would expect to see political skill act as a moderator of

the stress-strain relationship, serving as an antidote of sorts, as argued by Perrewé et al. (2000) and reported by Perrewé et al. (2004), using the six-item Ferris et al. (1999) scale.

Ferris, Perrewé, et al. (2002) discussed the proliferation of social constructs (e.g., social skill, political skill, social intelligence, etc.) and the need to precisely delineate their individual uniqueness. They argued that many of these constructs share in common a cognitive understanding or perceptiveness component in addition to a behavioral action component used to act on the former knowledge and, therefore, are all reflective of a higher-order construct we might refer to as social effectiveness. The concept of charisma also would be part of this category, and it would be interesting to examine the extent to which charisma is simply captured in political skill. Clearly, there is a need to examine the relationships among some of these social effectiveness constructs.

Finally, additional work in this area also should consider collecting political skill data from sources other than the job incumbent, as noted above in discussing some of the problems with the apparent sincerity dimension. Self-report measurement of interpersonally oriented constructs, like political skill, can be useful and enlightening (e.g., Riggio & Riggio, 2001). However, if we were able to demonstrate some consistent level of employee political skill agreement across sources (e.g., superiors, peers, and subordinates), we would have greater confidence in the measures ability to tap meaningful elements of interpersonal effectiveness.

APPENDIX
Political Skill Item Pool

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

> 1 = *strongly disagree*
> 2 = *disagree*
> 3 = *slightly disagree*
> 4 = *neutral*
> 5 = *slightly agree*
> 6 = *agree*
> 7 = *strongly agree*

1. _____ I find it easy to envision myself in the position of others.[†]
2. _____ In social situations, it is clear to me just what to say and do.
3. _____ I spend a lot of time and effort at work networking with others. (NA)[*]
4. _____ I am good at getting others to work well together.
5. _____ I am able to make most people feel comfortable and at ease around me. (II)[†*]
6. _____ I am good at making myself visible with influential people in my organization.
7. _____ I am able to adjust my behavior and become the type of person dictated by any situation.
8. _____ I am able to communicate easily and effectively with others. (II)[*]
9. _____ It is easy for me to develop good rapport with most people. (II)[†*]
10. _____ I am good at reading social situations, and determining the most appropriate behavior to demonstrate the proper impression.
11. _____ I am very conscious of how I am perceived by others.
12. _____ I have always prided myself in having good savvy, street smarts, or political skill at work.
13. _____ I understand people very well. (SA)[†*]
14. _____ I am the one who can get people to work well together.
15. _____ I try to make people feel important by what I say and do.
16. _____ I am good at building relationships with influential people at work. (NA)[*]
17. _____ I am good at getting others to respond positively to me.[†]
18. _____ I usually try to find common ground with others.[†]
19. _____ I think a lot about how, as well as what, I say when presenting an idea to others.
20. _____ I size up situations before deciding how to present an idea to others.

21. _____ I am particularly good at sensing the motivations and hidden agendas of others. (SA)*
22. _____ I am good at reading others' body language.
23. _____ When communicating with others, I try to be genuine in what I say and do. (AS)*
24. _____ I have developed a large network of colleagues and associates at work whom I can call on for support when I really need to get things done. (NA)
25. _____ At work, I know a lot of important people and am well connected. (NA)*
26. _____ I spend a lot of time at work developing connections with others. (NA)*
27. _____ I try to get others to talk about themselves.
28. _____ I listen carefully and attentively when people talk to me.
29. _____ I am good at getting people to like me. (II)*
30. _____ It is important that people believe I am sincere in what I say and do. (AS)*
31. _____ I try to show a genuine interest in other people. (AS)*
32. _____ I am good at using my connections and network to make things happen at work. (NA)*
33. _____ I try to see others' points of view.
34. _____ I try to find solutions to problems that incorporate others' views and opinions.
35. _____ I am good at coordinating the efforts and talents of team members to bring about effective team outcomes.
36. _____ I am conscious of getting myself in the best position to take advantage of opportunities.
37. _____ I have good intuition or savvy about how to present myself to others. (SA)*
38. _____ I always seem to instinctively know the right things to say or do to influence others. (SA)*
39. _____ I pay close attention to people's facial expressions. (SA)*
40. _____ Sometimes I feel like an actor because I have to play different roles with different people.

Note: The asterisked items indicate retained items in the final 18-item scale. Items marked with † indicate the original six items developed by Ferris et al. (1999). NA = networking ability; II = interpersonal influence; SA = social astuteness; AS = apparent sincerity.

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Biographical Notes

Gerald R. Ferris is the Francis Eppes Professor of Management and a professor of psychology at Florida State University. He received a Ph.D. in business administration from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Darren C. Treadway is an assistant professor of management at the University of Mississippi. He received a Ph.D. in management from Florida State University.

Robert W. Kolodinsky is an assistant professor of management at James Madison University. He received a Ph.D. in management from Florida State University.

Wayne A. Hochwarter is an associate professor of management at Florida State University. He received a Ph.D. in management from Florida State Univerrsity.

Charles J. Kacmar is an associate professor of management information systems at the University of Alabama. He received a Ph.D. in computer science from Texas A&M University.

Ceasar Douglas is an assistant professor of management at Florida State University. He received a Ph.D. in business administration from the University of Mississippi.

Dwight D. Frink is an associate professor of management and the PMB and William King Self Chair at the University of Mississippi. He received a Ph.D. in human resources management from the Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.