Political Skill in the Workplace: Unveiling its Impact on Stress through Emotional Reactivity and Resilience

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Abstract
Political skill is a set of social effectiveness efficiencies helping individuals navigate the work environment's complexities more effectively. Despite a large amount of empirical research on the importance of political skill as a coping style, the theoretical mechanism for political skill's coping effect has not been thoroughly examined. Thus, this cross-sectional study aims to evaluate empirically the role of emotional reactivity as an underlying mechanism explaining how employees with political skill cope with workplace stress. Additionally, this research examines the buffering effects of resilience on the relationship between political skill and stress and the association between emotional reactivity and stress. Data were obtained from 167 employees in various sectors in Klang Valley to support the hypotheses. The findings contribute to a better understanding of the function of political skill in stress management.
Keywords: Political Skill, Emotional Reactivity, Stress, And Resilience.

Introduction
Improving employee health and well-being in work organisations has become a focus of research in recent years. More precisely, healthy organisations have become a global priority for researchers and practitioners (Gori et al. 2021; Qing et al. 2020; Di Fabio, 2017). However, this primary proposition presents difficulties, particularly in the current global economic landscape, shifting from developed to emerging economies. Employees are forced to work long hours, do tasks more skilfully, work harder, and be more adaptable in this expanding economy, all of which contribute to employee stress. Employees grow uneasy under stressful and demanding conditions, resulting in unpleasant job experiences (Rocha et al. 2020; Alves et al., 2019; Christian et al., 2011). Stress has been linked to burnout (Jia et al. 2021), poor

performance (Muchiri et al. 2022), absenteeism (Mario et al. 2022), withdrawal (Hou et al. 2022), intention to leave (Memon et al. 2022), and low job engagement (Wang et al. 2020).

Some employees may thrive in a challenging profession; others may suffer from this type of devotion. Likewise, each individual perceives a stressful event differently (Lee et al., 2022; Ferris et al., 2011; Parrish Meadows et al., 2011; Perrewe et al., 2005). It is because of individual variances, most notably concerning the ability. Political skills is an individual characteristic that has been shown to influence strain reactions and mitigate the detrimental impacts of a stressor. However, Ferris et al. (2011) argued that the current status of theory in this area has been underdeveloped. To date, only a few studies have examined the possible mediators of the relationship between political and stress. Zellars et al. (2008) and Zinko (2013) have explored the mediating effect of perceived control and reputation on political skill and stress. However, the role of emotional reactivity as an underlying mechanism in the relationship between political skill and stress is understudied. De Clercq, Azeem, and Haq (2022) provide interesting finding on this foregoing discussion in which they found that politically inept employees perceived that they are suffering from emotional exhaustion. This finding indirectly reflects that political skill may influence employee emotional reactivity. Therefore, this study aims to establish a framework for the relationship between political skills and stress, denoting more precisely the intermediate linkages via which political skill's effects operate. More specifically, this research examines how political skills affect individual emotion. Then, the focus is on how resilience affects the link between political skills and stress.

This study makes several contributions. First, it examines how political skills influences intrapsychic effects, changing how individuals perceive stress. Although political skills has been related to evaluated variables (e.g., job performance ratings) and self-evaluated variables, the work on the effects of political skill on self is minimal. Second, it underpins the argument for the relationship between political skills, resilience, and stress based on the conservation of resource theory (Hobfoll, 1988), contributing to a better understanding of how the theory can be applied within this research domain. The process contributes to the theory by demonstrating the possibility of political skills to assist employees in navigating potentially challenging situations. Third, this study provides compelling evidence for the critical role of political skill in stress reduction.

Following this introduction, this paper introduces the theoretical background and the development of the hypotheses. The methodology section of this paper explains the sample and data collection, measures, sample descriptive, and data analysis. The results section presents descriptive results and inferential results. Next, discussion section. The paper concludes with managerial implication, limitation and future recommendation, and conclusion.

Theoretical Background
Conservation of Resource Theory
The relationship between political skill and stress can be explained through the lens of Conservation of Resources theory, which posits that individuals strive to acquire, maintain, and protect resources to navigate stress effectively (Hobfoll, 1989). Stress occurs when individuals perceive an actual or potential loss of resources or believe their resources are

insufficient to cope with stressors. In organizational contexts, these resources include social support, knowledge, skills, power, networks, and trust. Political skill, as a personal and social resource, equips individuals with the ability to navigate interpersonal interactions, influence outcomes, and mitigate the effects of stressors. Moreover, in this study conservation of resources theory suggests that emotional reactivity plays a crucial mediating role in this relationship, as politically skilled individuals are more adept at regulating their emotional responses, reducing the impact of stressors. High emotional reactivity, if unregulated, can amplify stress, but political skill helps in managing emotional responses effectively, thereby conserving resources.

Conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989) also explains the role of resilience in moderating the relationship between political skill and stress by enhancing an individual's capacity to recover and adapt in the face of adversity. Resilience supported by political skills is better positioned for individuals to maintain their resources and cope with workplace demands, reducing the likelihood of stress. Thus, the interplay between political skill, emotional reactivity, and resilience highlights a resource-oriented mechanism through which individuals can navigate and mitigate stress in organizational settings.

Hypotheses Development
Political Skill
Political skills is a set of critical personal competencies. The term of political skill was first introduced by Pfeffer (1981). Pfeffer argued that political skill is needed to succeed in ambiguous and often turbulent organisational environments. Later, Mintzberg (1983) suggested that organisations could be characterised as political arenas, and then acquisition or development of political skills was essential for success and survival. Mintzberg referred to political skill as the exercise of influence through persuasion, manipulation, and negotiation. Building on this early work by Pfeffer (1981) and Mintzberg (1983), who coined the term political skill, Ferris et al. (2007) proposed a conceptualisation of political skills. They defined it as the ability to effectively understand others at work and use such knowledge to influence others to act in ways that enhance one's personal and/or organisational objectives.

Ferris et al. (2007) argued that the political skills construct comprises four critical underlying dimensions: social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability, and apparent sincerity. Social astuteness is the ability to accurately understand social interactions, interpret one's behaviour and that of others, and be keenly attuned to diverse social situations. Interpersonal influence incorporates a flexible, adaptive nature allowing people to adjust and calibrate their behaviour to different and changing situations, tending to elicit the targeted and desired behavioural responses from others. Networking ability refers to individuals' ability to identify and develop diverse networks, contacts, and alliances of people. Politically skilled individuals develop friendships easily and effectively build strong and beneficial social ties. Interpersonal ability refers to influencing others' behaviours to obtain desired outcomes. Apparent sincerity is the ability to portray oneself to others as sincere, genuine, authentic, and integrity (Ferris et al., 2005).

Political Skill and Stress
Political skills is an individual's ability to understand others and use such knowledge to influence others to get desired outcomes (Perrewe´ et al., 2004). This ability provided an

employee with competencies to control stressful events in organisations. Politically skilled individuals understand people along with a basic belief that they can control the processes and outcomes of interactions with others (Perrewé et al., 2000). Because of their social astuteness and ability in interpersonal influence, politically skilled individuals are more likely to regulate interpersonal interactions effectively. Therefore, when faced with workplace stressors, politically skilled individuals will perceive high levels of control and, as a result, experience less strain than those unskilled (Perrewé et al., 2005).

Stress is defined as a state occurring when people perceive that demands exceed their coping abilities (Adler et al., 1994). Employees appraise stressors differentially based on their ability to manage them. Owing to their ability in networking and influencing, politically skilled employees tend to acquire the extensive support needed to reduce job demands. Thus, political skill may affect not only the degree to which these stressors are perceived as threats but also the level of the possessors' perceived and actual coping ability (Harvey et al., 2007). Moreover, stressors result in strain only when the exposed person perceives both threat and lack of coping resources. Political skill, a type of personal resource, may counteract the threats of social stressors. Thus, politically skilled employees perceive relatively lower threat levels and higher coping resources when exposed to stressors. Therefore, politically skilled individuals are less likely to be affected by stressors.

Political skill enhances perceived control over events making interactions more predictable, thus reducing the pressure caused by the uncertainty. When perceived organisational politic is high, individuals may not be assured that hard work will lead to desired outcomes (i.e., expectancy), good performance will be recognised (i.e., instrumentality), or rewards will be desirable (i.e., valance) (Brouer et al., 2011). Politically skilled individuals can understand what performance is necessary for this situation, whether performance will be recognised, and ways to obtain desirable rewards. Such understanding helps to clarify expectancy, instrumentality, and valence.

Politically skilled individuals are socially perceptive and competent in adjusting their behaviour to situational needs (Ferris et al., 2005). Due to their networking ability, politically skilled employees view interpersonal interactions as an opportunity rather than as threats, facilitating the establishment of friendship, connection, and alliance, ensuring favourable identity in their network (Perrewe et al., 2000). Politically skilled individuals are not only successful at regulating interpersonal interactions but also know exactly how to exert such influences in a manner facilitating interpersonal relationships characterised by confidence, trust, and sincerity (Ferris et al., 2002). Politically skilled individuals may enjoy network centrality, enabling them to gain access to important information. Ferris et al. (1999) argued that politically skilled individuals enjoy a sense of personal security and self-confidence from previous experience in and efficacy within their work environments and the individuals with whom they interact. Such personal security and self-confidence may contribute to politically skilled individuals experiencing lower levels of burnout.

Hypothesis 1: Political skill has a negative relationship with stress.

Political Skill and Emotional Reaction
The Conservation of Resources Theory emphasizes the importance of personal resources in mitigating stress and fostering adaptive responses (Hobfoll, 2002). Political skill, as a

psychological and social resource, enhances employees' ability to manage emotions, particularly in stressful situations, by creating perceptions of control and competence. Political skill enables individuals to effectively manage interpersonal interactions and navigate workplace dynamics (Perrewe´ et al., 2004). This competency equips employees with a sense of control over social and organizational stressors, allowing them to influence outcomes in their favor (Perrewé et al., 2000). Emotional reaction refers to the rapid responses triggered by meaningful stimuli, encompassing both positive and negative emotional experiences (Fredrickson, 2004). Individuals that poses political skill are more adept at managing their emotional responses due to their social astuteness and interpersonal influence. They are better positioned to leverage positive emotions, such as optimism or confidence, in challenging situations, thereby maintaining psychological equilibrium.

Momm, Blickle, and Liu (2010) found that individuals that possess political skill demonstrated significant improvement in recognizing emotional cues after brief training, highlighting their social perceptiveness and adaptability in managing emotional interactions while not initially superior in emotion recognition. This is showing that individuals with political skill are more likely to be able to manage their emotional reactivity because their skills enable them to stabilize their emotions in most situations into opportunities for personal or professional growth. By doing so, they conserve their emotional resources and maintain emotional stability, aligning with the Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 2002).
Hypothesis 2: Political skill has a positive relationship with emotional reactivity.

Emotional Reaction and Stress
Emotional reactivity, defined as an individual's tendency to respond emotionally to meaningful stimuli (Bylmas et al., 2008), plays a critical role in shaping stress experiences. Drawing on Conservation of Resources theory, emotions represent a key psychological resource that individuals use to navigate and cope with stressors (Hobfoll, 1989). Positive emotional reactivity, characterized by pleasant tonality and adaptive intensity (Lang, 1995), broadens thought-action repertoires and fosters cognitive flexibility, enabling individuals to develop durable coping mechanisms and regulate their stress responses effectively (Fredrickson, 2001; Tugade & Fredrickson, 2007). Conversely, deficits in positive emotional reactivity can deplete psychological resources, leading to increased vulnerability to stress (Brown & Barlow, 2009).

Stawski et al. (2008) found that individuals' emotional responses to daily stressors significantly contribute to the overall experience of stress. Findings show that individuals who experience better emotional reactivity are equipped to maintain psychological equilibrium, perceive stressors as less threatening, and recover from challenges more efficiently. Therefore, emotional reactivity, particularly the presence of positive more likely can reduce stress. This aligns with Conservation of resources theory, which emphasizes the importance of resource acquisition and preservation in reducing stress and maintaining well-being.
Hypothesis 3: Emotional reactivity has a negative relationship with stress.

Emotional Reactivity as a Mediator
It seems plausible that some individuals, more than others, may intuitively understand and use the benefits of positive emotions to their advantage. Emotions have been defined as quick-moving reactions occurring when an individual process a meaningful stimulus (e.g., a

threatening object). Positive or negative emotions are best conceptualised as multi-component response tendencies that unfold over relatively short timespans (Fredrickson, 2004). Emotion is also characterised by its tonality (pleasant/unpleasant) and intensity (the arousal) (Lang, 1995). Every person reacts emotionally differently to one another, influenced by effortful processes enabling persons to modulate their emotional reactivity (Nigg, 2006; Claes et al., 2009).

Positive emotion is important to human well-being (Fredrickson, 1998) and helps to broaden ones thought and behaviour tendencies (Fredrickson, 2001; 2004). The positive emotion helps form a flexible and adaptive pattern of thought and behaviour while coping with stress or any constraint. Cognitive flexibility will promote durable emotional regulation and increase psychological resilience (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2007). Hence, positive emotion promotes personal well-being and improves one's quality of life (Cohn et al., 2009). A decrease or deficit in positive emotion is associated with an increased risk of depression and anxiety (Brown & Barlow, 2009; Gruber et al., 2013).

Given the important role of emotion to oneself, the mediation role of emotional reactivity on the relationship between political skill and stress has not yet been tested. Positive emotions have received little focus and were under-reviewed compared to negative emotions (Burgdorf & Panksepp, 2006; Carl et al., 2013). Therefore, the AET (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) is used to explain the mediation role of emotion in this study. Due to their capacity to better manage their work environment, politically skilled employees should experience positive emotional reactivity. Consequently, it influences employees perceived stress, especially when employees experience positive emotions.

Hypothesis 4: Emotional reactivity mediates the relationship between political skill and stress.

Resilience as a Moderator
The proposed framework graphically illustrates political skill demonstrating the main effects on stress. It should deepen our insight into why political skill always influences the way employees to perceive stress. However, it needs to be recognised that political skill is also likely to influence stress outcomes through interaction with other individual differences. Other individual differences may attenuate or strengthen the influence of political skill on stress through a moderation effect (Hochwarter et al., 2007). For example, it may be expected that resilience will interact with political skill to influence the rate at which individuals perceive stress.

Resilience refers to the "ability to adjust to adversity" and is related to numerous factors, such as emotional insight, life and spiritual balance, reflexivity, being able to resort to a supportive professional network, and being able to remain optimistic and alert to the positive elements of even complicated and challenging situations (Jackson et al., 2007). Resilient individuals are said to 'bounce back' from stressful experiences quickly and efficiently, just as resilient metals bend but do not break (Lazarus, 1993; Carver, 1998). When encountering hindrances or stressful situations, highly resilient employees overcome the crises by exhibiting strategic behaviours (Avey et al., 2010). Facing adversities, optimistic and resilient employees can resist the negative effects of setbacks because of their ability to build positive expectancy. Resilience has been linked to many positive outcomes, including improved mental and physical health, increased longevity and decreased incidences of heart disease

(Connor, 2003, 2006; Lazarus, 1993; Tugade, Fredrickson, & Barrett, 2004), and improved overall employee well-being (Avey et al., 2010).

Block and Kremen (1996) suggested that adapting effectively in dynamic situations requires ego-resilience. It is characterised by a tolerance for ambiguity, a capacity to regulate impulse, the capability to redefine situations in one's mind psychologically, and the ability to use cognitive problem solving to adapt one's behaviour according to what the situation demands. Based on the conservation of resource theory (Hobfoll, 1988), resilience shall facilitate political skill in combatting stress at work. Based on this assumption, it is expected that politically skilled employees will better cope with stress compared to those who are not resilient. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 5: Resilience moderates the relationship between political skill and stress.
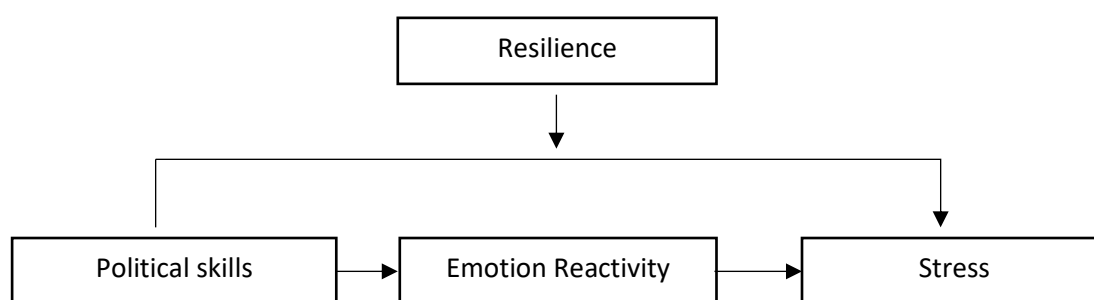

Figure 1: Hypothesised model

Method

Data were collected among employees from various background using survey questionnaires attached with a cover letter and distributed in various sectors in Klang Valley. This study employed purposive sampling approaches to select the respondents with working experience. We selected respondents with minimum six-month work tenure at one organization. We managed to get 175 with completed questionaire, eight cases were removed because of the presence of outliers. The total usable number of responses for the final data analysis was 167.

Measures

Political skill was measured with the eighteen-item Political Skill Inventory (PSI) developed by Ferris et al. (2005). The Political Skill Inventory includes the four dimensions of network ability, apparent sincerity, social astuteness, and interpersonal influence. 'I spend a lot of time and effort at work networking with others', 'I try to show a genuine interest in other people', 'I am particularly good at sensing the motivations and hidden agendas of others', and 'I am able to communicate easily and effectively with others' are sample items measuring network ability, apparent sincerity, social astuteness, and interpersonal influence, respectively. Respondents were asked to rate their political skill using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The internal reliability consistency for this measure was 0.941.

Stress was measured using five items developed by Griffin et al. (2010). A sample item is "A Lot of the time my job makes me very frustrated or angry". Respondents were asked to

rate their stress using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The internal reliability consistency for this measure was 0.847.

Emotional reactivity was measured using the fifteen-item Perth Emotional Reactivity Scale (PERS) developed by Becerra & Campitelli (2013). Respondents were asked to rate their emotional reactivity using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A sample item is "I tend to get happy very easily". The internal reliability consistency for this measure was 0.835.

Resilience was measured using six items developed by Smith et al. (2008). A sample item is "I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times". Respondents were asked to rate their resilience using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The internal reliability consistency for this measure was 0.74.

Procedure
This study employed Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS 4 (Ringle, Wende, & Becker, 2015) to analyse the 167 usable data. This statistical technique was used because this study aims to identify the predictive effects of political skill, emotional reactivity, resilience on stress and identify the magnitude of the variance explained in stress by this set of predictors. An assessment for the path model followed the two-stage procedure as suggested by Hair, Hult, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2017). First, the measurement model was assessed. In this study, all variables were modelled reflectively. Therefore, only reflective measurement model assessment was used. Once the reliability and validity of the model had been established, the structural model was evaluated. In addition, this study also tested the mediation path between emotional reactivity and stress.

Results
Descriptive Analysis
The majority of the respondents were female (71.3%), Malay (75.4%), aged between 25 and 30 years old (35.9%), and had a Master degree (57.5%). A large number of respondents worked in the education and manufacturing (36.5%) sectors in Malaysia. Most respondents had less than one year of working experience (29.9%).

Measurement Model Analysis
The first stage of PLS-SEM analysis is the measurement model assessment. In this study, all constructs were modeled reflectively. Table 1 shows the results of the reflective measurement model assessment. Some of the values for outer loadings were not above the cut-off value of 0.707. The highest outer loading was 0.853 (S2), and the lowest outer loading value was 0.514 (PS18). Even though several scores of outer loadings of items were low, these scores were retained because the HTMT and VIF values were met. The internal consistency reliability was assessed based on two criteria, which are Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. As shown in Table 1, Cronbach's alpha values range from 0.74 to 0.941. Similarly, composite reliability values range from 0.852 to 0.947. Therefore, both criteria exceeded the cut-off value of 0.7 as recommended by Hair et al. (2017). The last criterion displayed in Table 1 is the average variance extracted, a measure of convergent validity. Results showed that all constructs' values exceeded the cut-off value of 0.50. It means that the assigned construct captured at least 50 percent of the variance in a construct's indicators.

Table 1
Results of the Reflective Measurement Model

Construct	Items	Outer loading	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted
Political skill	PS1	0.566	0.941	0.947	0.505
	PS2	0.801			
	PS3	0.769			
	PS4	0.726			
	PS5	0.735			
	PS6	0.769			
	PS7	0.805			
	PS8	0.583			
	PS9	0.629			
	PS10	0.806			
	PS11	0.781			
	PS12	0.751			
	PS13	0.569			
	PS14	0.699			
	PS15	0.711			
	PS16	0.737			
	PS17	0.733			
	PS18	0.514			
Emotional Reaction	PE1	0.642	0.835	0.876	0.506
	PE5	0.615			
	PE6	0.846			
	PE7	0.680			
	PE9	0.671			
	PE10	0.783			
	PE13	0.615			
Resilience	RE1	0.792	0.740	0.852	0.657
	RE2	0.805			
	RE3	0.843			
Stress	S1	0.824	0.847	0.892	0.624
	S2	0.853			
	S3	0.850			
	S4	0.636			
	S5	0.767			

The last reflective measurement model assessment criterion is a heterotrait-monotrait correlation (HTMT). Table 2 shows the HTMT results for the proposed model. As shown, the HTMT reported in this study ranged from 0.153 to 0.649. These values met the recommended cut-off value, which is below 0.85 to establish the model's discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2014). The four assessment criteria at the measurement model stage showed that the model is reliable and valid; therefore, the next assessment is applicable.

Table 2
Results of Discriminant Validity using HTMT

	Emotional Reactivity	Political Skills	Resilience	Stress
Emotional Reactivity				
Political Skills	0.623			
Resilience	0.227	0.153		
Stress	0.427	0.309	0.649	

Structural Model Analysis

The next stage in the PLS-SEM analysis involves assessing the structural model, including assessing the variance inflation factor (VIF), coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), path coefficients and its significance, and predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2017). As shown in Table 3, all VIF values are below 5, indicating no collinearity issue. There were two endogenous latent variables in the proposed model: emotional reactivity and stress. The coefficient of determination for stress was 0.406, meaning 40.6% of the variance in stress was explained by political skill and emotional reactivity. However, since the effect size of political skill (0.04) was much higher than that of emotional reactivity (0.031), nevertheless the difference is not really important. Exogenous latent variables explained political skill with 33.2% and the effect size of political skill on emotional reactivity is (0.498).

Table 3
Results of VIF, Coefficient of Determination and Effect Size

Latent Variables	Emotional Reactivity (R^2=0.332)		Stress (R^2= 0.406)	
	VIF	Effect size (f^2)	VIF	Effect size (f^2)
Political Skill	1.000	0.498	1.565	0.040
Emotional Reactivity	-	-	1.593	0.031

Table 4
The Magnitude and Significance of the Path Coefficients

Hypothesised relationships	β	p-value	95% CI
Political Skill -> Emotional Reactivity	0.576	0.000	[0.462, 0.652]
Emotional Reactivity -> Stress	-0.171	0.013	[-0.295, -0.046]
Political Skill -> Stress	-0.194	0.008	[-0.322, -0.057]
Political Skill -> Emotional Reactivity -> Stress	-0.098	0.020	[-0.180, -0.026]
Resilience x Political Skill -> Stress	0.101	0.027	[0.011, 0.181]

A bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resampling was used to assess the structural model path coefficients and their significance. Table 4 shows the study's path coefficients results. The results revealed a significant relationship between political skill and stress ($β$ = -0.194, p = 0.008), between political skills and emotional reactivity ($β$ = 0.576, p = 0.000), and between emotional reactivity and stress ($β$ = -0.171, p = 0.013). Therefore, Hypothesis 1, Hypothesis 2

and Hypothesis 3 are supported. On the mediation relationship, emotional reactivity was found to mediate the relationship between political skill and stress (β = -0.098, p = 0.020). Therefore, Hypothesis 4 was supported. On the moderation relationships, resilience was found to moderate the relationship between political skill and stress (β = -0.101, p = 0.027). Therefore, Hypothesis 5 was supported.

This figure 2 illustrates a moderating effect of resilience on the relationship between political skill and stress. The plot shows three different lines representing the relationship between political skill and stress at different levels of resilience. Where the negative slope becomes steeper as resilience decreases, suggesting that the negative relationship between political skill and stress is stronger when resilience is low. The diverging lines indicate a significant interaction effect, where the impact of political skill on stress varies depending on the level of resilience, with the relationship being most negative at low RS (blue line) and least negative at high RS (green line).
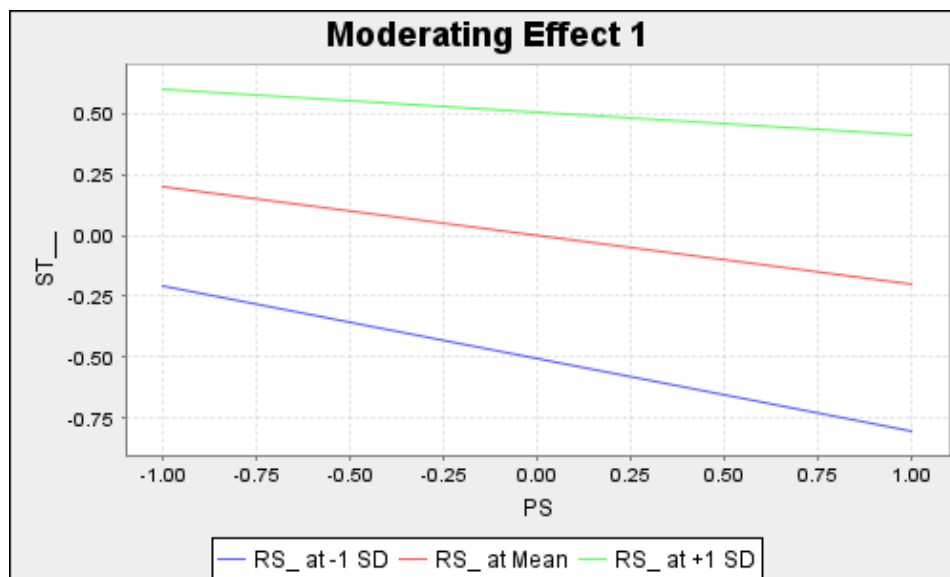

Figure 2: Moderating Effect

Main Findings and Discussion
At work, stress is pervasive. While we cannot prevent stress, we may mitigate its consequences. One of the ways to reduce stress is to have political skill. Political skill helps individuals to overcome work environment complexities. Indeed, there is increasing attention on political skill in various research. Political skill has been suggested as an antidote to stress. However, we intend to offer new avenues on how political skill can reduce stress at work and its interactions with another construct. Thus, we examined the effects of political skill, emotional reactivity, and resilience on stress to fill the theoretical gap.

We tested the direct relationship between political skill and stress. This relationship was statistically supported consistent with the conservation of resource theory (Hobfoll, 1988). First and foremost, we found evidence that employees with political skills will be less likely to experience stress. Through the lens of the conservation of resource perspective (Hobfoll, 1988), we then argued that employees' capacity to regulate their social resources effectively would determine the perceived stress. Politically skilled employees perceive high control over

the processes and outcomes of interactions with others. They also view interpersonal interactions as opportunities rather than as threats. Moreover, under the uncertainty of performance evaluation, politically skilled individuals are able to understand what performance is necessary for this situation, whether performance will be recognised, and how to obtain desirable rewards.

Our mediated hypothesis involving emotional reactivity as the mediator between political skill and stress was also established. Politically skilled employees are not only able to cope with stress but also experience emotion reactively positively, which in turn makes them better able to cope with stress. Therefore, this study provides empirical supports not only to the proposed mediated relationship but also to the utilisation of Conservation of resource theory (Hobfoll, 1988) as the underpinning theory in this study.

Our moderating hypothesis involving resilience as the moderator between political skill and stress was also established. Therefore, this study provides empirical supports not only to the proposed moderating relationship but also to the utilisation of conservation of resource theory (Hobfoll, 1988) as the underpinning theory in this study. The conservation of resource theory application allowed us to achieve our third goal to demonstrate other social resources influencing politically skilled employees to respond differently to stress. Based on the conservation of resource theory, resilience strengthens politically skilled employees to cope with stress.

Theoretical and Managerial Implications
Theoretically, this study advances the understanding of how political skill influences intrapsychic processes, particularly in reshaping individuals' perceptions of stress. It highlights how political skill equips employees with the confidence to effectively regulate their emotions, thereby reducing the likelihood of perceiving stress as negative. By demonstrating the stress-buffering effects of political skill, this research offers novel insights into its role in fostering positive cognitive and emotional appraisals within the workplace, contributing significantly to the existing body of literature on political skill.

Additionally, this research integrates the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1988) to examine the relationship between political skill, resilience, and stress. Political skill and resilience are identified as valuable resources that enable employees to mitigate further resource loss and better navigate stress-inducing situations. By extending the application of COR theory to this domain, the study enriches theoretical discussions on resource dynamics in organizational contexts and highlights the protective mechanisms these resources provide for employees.

Our study informs the management in organisations that political skill is important at work. Results substantiated that politically skilled employees are better able to deal with stress. As illustrated in this study, political skill is vital in influencing employees' reactivity towards stress. Firstly, the current study's findings suggest a way for organisations to facilitate employees' coping with stress, that is, to enhance political skill. In other words, a politically skilled individual could be effective in a stressful environment by utilising their political skills. Organisations are widely viewed as political arenas, and it is long overdue for us to consider seriously the repertoire of skills contributing to success in such environments. Organisations

may provide training programmes, such as drama-based training, developmental simulations, and behaviour modelling (Ferris et al. 2002).

Second, our study suggests that political skill has an important role on employee's emotion in a stressful event. Political skills provide employee with essential skills and information to interpret situational cues accurately. Based on accurate environmental scanning, this could regulate employees' emotions more positively, which would help them with stress management.

Third, our study highlights the role of resilient in organization. Resilience helps adaptation to adversity and instils the conviction to fight back. Efforts aimed at building resilience may thereby increase stress management level among employee. Organisations will reap benefits if employee are able to bounce back when encountering the challenges that are an inevitable part of work life.

Limitation and Future Research

The interesting findings of this study also come with several limitations providing future research avenues. First, the results provide some theoretical generalisation to the emerging phenomenon. The results cannot be generalised to the population at large using judgmental sampling. Therefore, we recommend that future studies replicate our study using different populations and probability sampling techniques whenever possible. Second, we also encourage future researchers to extend our study by including other predictors, mediators, and moderators to enhance the understanding of political skill. Third, this research studied stress on the surface without referring to one specific type of stress: e.g., ambiguity. Future research can benefit by looking deeply into specific stress situations. It may help us explain how political skill can be used in certain situations.

Conclusion

This study enriches the understanding of political skill in the workplace. By examining the relationships among political skill, emotional reactivity, resilience, and stress, we add to the existing body of knowledge on political skill. This study not only suggests that political skill helps employees cope better with stress but also demonstrates that political skill stimulates emotional reactivity, which in turn affects their perceived stress. Our study also provides important implications for managers on how to help employees to deal with stress.

Research Funding

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