

**LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY**

The Influence of Political Skill on Emotional Labor and Turnover Intention: The Moderating  
Role of Perceived Supervisor Support

By

Nada Al Sous

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**THESIS APPROVAL FORM**

Student Name: Nada Al Sous I.D. #: 201702456

Thesis Title: The Influence of Political Skill on Emotional Labor and Turnover Intention:  
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Program: MSHRM

Department: Management

School: AKSOB

The undersigned certify that they have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis and approved it in Partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of:

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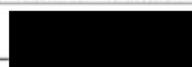
Thesis Advisor's Name: Dr. Leila Messarra

Signature:  Date: 13 / 08 / 2022  
Day Month Year

Committee Member's Name: Dr. Manal Yunis

Signature:  Date: 13 / 08 / 2022  
Day Month Year

Committee Member's Name: Dr. Grace Dagher

Signature:  Date: 13 / 08 / 2022  
Day Month Year

Nada Al Sous



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Nada Al Sous



22 08 2022

# **Dedication**

This research paper is dedicated to the memory of my father, who is my true motivation and inspiration.

# Acknowledgment

This journey has been a roller coaster ride, but somehow I managed to land on my feet and gradually find my way.

While nothing can take my father's place or fill the void he left behind at the time this research paper was being written, this journey reminded me that there is always a way to hold on to the love of knowledge and learning, paying it forward with every challenge and endeavor one takes in life. My father is the one who brightened up the path I am on now, and I will always be grateful for his unconditional love and the courage he has instilled in me.

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# The Influence of Political Skill on Emotional Labor and Turnover Intention: The Moderating Role of Perceived Supervisor Support

Nada Al Sous

## Abstract

An organization encompasses social interactions and emotional norms that coordinate the behaviors and outcomes of its people. Nonetheless, how can an organization ensure that employees from diverse backgrounds, interests, and ideologies comply with these norms? Raising these questions means addressing the fine line between the exercise of political skill and emotional labor. This research studied the impact of political skill on emotional labor and turnover intention and the moderating effect of perceived supervisor support. Data was gathered via a survey link shared on social media platforms and analyzed using SPSS software and Excel MegaStat. Results showed that political skill was negatively related to turnover intention, emotional labor mediated the relationship between the latter, while perceived supervisor support did not moderate the relationship between emotional labor and turnover intention. Furthermore, conclusion, limitations, and recommendation for future studies were also discussed.

Keywords: Emotional Norms, Political Skill (PS), Emotional Labor (EL), Turnover Intention (TI), Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS), Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

PS: Political Skill

EL: Emotional Labor

TI: Turnover Intention

PSS: Perceived Supervisor Support

COR: Conservation of Resources Theory

OCB: Organizational Citizenship Behavior

# Chapter One

## Introduction

In this chapter, the background of the study is presented along with the aims and objectives. Also, the literature gap, as well as the study need, are stated. Finally, the organization of the rest of the thesis is given.

### 1.1 Background of the Study

In times of crises, such as the one the world is currently passing through, and with globalization demanding agility, vigorousness, and briskness of change, organizations must instill various socio-psychological ways to retain their talented workforce. This is particularly applicable to politically skilled employees who are more likely to establish and utilize connections in the work environment and access valued resources necessary to succeed in their job and the organization. From the perspective of politically skilled employees, the fact that environmental stimuli can be associated with interpersonal interactions is by itself an opportunity rather than a threat. Thus, they are better able to utilize commonly known “display rules” that are associated with emotional labor, than employees with lesser political skills. However, research on emotional dissonance has shown that such experiences are very uncomfortable for employees, and employees might become ultimately motivated to quit the emotional dissonance that occurs (Zvobgo, Abraham, & Sabharwal, 2021). Also, there exists

significant evidence between emotional labor strategies and turnover intention; especially surface acting (Kang & Jang, 2022). Hence, it is important to note that political skill might lead to better treatment by the organization and perception of support; all of which oblige employees to reciprocate any form of perceived organizational support, mainly perceived supervisor support. Accordingly, employees who have positive relationships with their supervisors can be productive even when they experience emotional labor (Busoi, Ali, & Gardiner, 2022).

## **1.2 Purpose of the Study**

The objective of the study is to develop a conceptual model linking emotional labor to turnover intention through the effect of political skill on the relationship between emotional labor and turnover intention. The results from this study will aid human resources managers in reducing the turnover rates when cultivating the work environment in their organizations and formulating policies relating to the variables under study.

## **1.3 Need of the Study**

The study aims to answer calls from previous research for further exploration of the transitional linkages between political skill and its outcomes (Kimura, 2015). Derived from a review of the literature and empirical data, this study also investigates the influence of political skill on emotional labor and turnover intention (Liu, Perrewé, Hochwarter, & Kacmar, 2004) with the moderating role of perceived supervisor support in the relationship

between emotional labor and turnover intention (Lee, 2019).

Despite the growing interest in political skill (McAllister, Ellen, Perrewé, Ferris, & Hirsch, 2015), there exists a significant need to use multiple approaches when exploring the different constructs of political skill in a business context requiring efficiency and high performance (Ohlsson, Lindfors, Larsson, & Sverke, 2022). This study examines as well, with empirical data, emotional labor in different local and international industries.

Previous studies have considered the relationship among the four constructs, political skill, emotional labor, turnover intention, and perceived supervisor support. In the work of Perrewé, Zellars, Ferris, Rossi, Kacmar, and Ralston (2004) political skill affects emotional labor and turnover intention whereby politically skilled employees are better able to utilize display rules associated with emotional labor than employees with lesser political skill, hence, are willing and able to regulate oneself and others' emotions in social interactions. Accordingly, if employees can substitute an organizational resource, such as supervisor support, with another resource such as political skill, they will have lower turnover intentions (García-Chas, Neira-Fontela, Varela-Neira, & Curto-Rodríguez, 2019).

This research aims to close the gap in the literature by connecting the above-mentioned four constructs in one holistic model. In particular, we draw upon the conservation of resources theory to develop a conceptual framework in which political skill influences emotional labor and turnover intention, as well as the moderation of perceived supervisor support between emotional labor and turnover intention. In other words, the framework reflects how emotional labor and turnover intention are impacted by political skill.

## **1.4 Study Context**

With external change picking up pace, global leaders believe that their organizations will have to accelerate their “metabolic rate”. To further understand the pace at which organizations will have to change themselves, their social fabric should be navigated. This is why an emphasis has been placed on the increasingly social and equivocal nature of work (Grant, Fried, Parker, & Frese, 2010). A rapidly growing stream of research suggests that the rebalancing toward resources and influence is happening quickly, partly the result of interpersonal savvy and style constructs such as political skill. Political skill has a broad impact on a range of organizational outcomes (Ferris, Treadway, Brouer, & Munyon, 2012).

The questionnaire for this research study was administered to working individuals from different local and international industries.

## **1.5 Outline of this Research**

This thesis is divided into six chapters dedicated to answering the research questions and objectives set for this study. Accordingly, the following Chapter (2) will thoroughly cover the definitions, dimensions, antecedents, and outcomes of each of the four variables - political skill, emotional labor, turnover intention, and perceived supervisor support. Afterward, Chapter (3), a theoretical framework on which this research is based, will uncover the potential association between these variables through formulating clearly stated hypotheses. Chapter (4) will include the procedures and methodology section that contains detailed information about the data collection process and the conceptual framework for analyzing the

data. Chapter (5) will discuss the findings of the study from the data analysis. Lastly, Chapter (6) will provide a detailed explanation of the results recorded in the previous chapter, along with a comprehensive conclusion, limitations, implications, and future recommendations.

# Chapter Two

## Literature Review

This chapter provides a literature review on political skill, emotional labor, turnover intention, and perceived supervisor support.

### 2.1 Political Skill

In the past two decades, many organizations have implemented coordination and control mechanisms operating more horizontally than vertically to accommodate extensive downsizing and restructuring efforts. These flatter, rectangular structures have, as a result, shaped the nature of organizations as well as the static and rigid boundaries formerly placed around jobs and job descriptions into fluid, social ones (Ferris, Treadway, Perrewé, Brouer, Douglas, & Lux, 2007). Likewise, the demise of bureaucracy allowed the adoption of adaptable, flexible forms of chain commands that top management previously enjoyed from the division of labor.

In line with the aforementioned and in an attempt to achieve effective performance not only as a combination of required tasks and duties, but also as a demonstration of extra-role or contextual performance (Ferris, Perrewé, Anthony, & Gilmore, 2003), the construct of political skill has been introduced. It has also been discussed under social intelligence, emotional intelligence, ego resiliency, self-monitoring, and practical intelligence.

Unfortunately, despite the considerable interest from scholars, each of these labels claims to examine an aspect that is slightly different from the other. In other words, none of these labels addresses explicitly interpersonal interactions in organizational settings. The overlap reflects only modest-sized relationships, thus retaining political skill as a distinct construct that is sufficiently different from the others. This construct remained dormant until Ferris and his colleagues developed a measure and research program (Ferris et al., 2007). Demir (2022) reports that to date, executive coaches still spend most of their time on social and political skill development to countermand the leading cause of management derailment which is a lack of good interpersonal skills.

Political skill is an interpersonal style that exhibits a comprehensive pattern of social competencies including cognitive, affective, and behavioral manifestations (Ferris et al., 2007). Also known as “networking”, the political skill itself is considered a dyadic process that enhances social capital, goodwill, and trust between partners (Porter & Woo, 2015).

The dimensionality of political skill indicates four critical factors: social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability, and apparent sincerity. These dimensions are assumed to be interrelated but remain distinct constructs (Good & Schepker Jr, 2022).

To begin with, social astuteness occurs when politically skilled individuals observe others closely such that they accurately interpret their behaviors as well as the behaviors of others during a social interaction (McAllister, Ellen, & Ferris, 2018). The latter mainly allows them to understand the organization’s climate (Tang, Miao, & Jiang, 2020), hence, feeding their self-awareness and keenly attuning them to diverse social settings. Such characteristic is also sometimes referred to as sensitivity towards and identification with others particularly to

eventually obtain things for oneself.

Interpersonal influence describes the unassuming and convincing personal style of politically skilled individuals that are used to exert influence on those around them (McAllister et al., 2018). Such influence is exerted to achieve goals under various contextual conditions but in a precise manner (Tang et al., 2020). This dimension is also known as “flexibility” since it allows individuals to adapt and calibrate their behavior according to different scenarios with an intent to elicit the responses they desire from others (Moon & Morais, 2022).

Politically skilled individuals are known to exhibit networking ability which allows them to identify and develop diverse contacts and networks of people. They aim to form friendships, strong alliances, and coalitions among these network members because the latter often hold assets seen as valuable and significant for successful personal and professional gains. Hence, they become well-positioned to either create or take advantage of opportunities, close a deal, and manage conflicts (McAllister et al., 2018).

Moreover, apparent sincerity is one of the characteristics that politically skilled individuals portray. It includes but is not limited to being or appearing to be authentic, sincere, genuine, honest as well as forthright. Apparent sincerity is the trigger of influence since it highlights the perceived intentions of the behavior portrayed. In other words, these perceived intentions or motives can modify the interpretation and labeling of behavior, thus, when actors are perceived to possess no ulterior motives, influence attempts succeed (Ferris et al., 2007). The latter is followed by trust and confidence; rather than manipulation and coercion, in and from the surrounding of these politically skilled individuals (Bhattarai, 2022).

Since organizations are inherently political arenas, they are likely to be associated with different antecedents. For example, Tang, Miao, and Jiang (2020) argue that managers sometimes rely on political tactics to protect the interests of their firms, particularly if given autonomy (Dimitratos, Liouka, & Young, 2014) or faced with threats or crises (Hopwood, 2009). Dutton (1986) claims that the process of issue resolutions in times of crisis becomes an accurate analogy of a political model. The latter can be linked to the firm's size such that managers engage more in political behavior when the firm is small because it is less structured and centralized, and relationships between members are mostly informal. In contrast, managers in big firms are less likely to depend on their political skills because of fear and insecurity when voicing and/or pursuing top managers' viewpoints or concerns (Elbanna & Child, 2007). This is why organizational bureaucracies are often considered antecedents to political skill (Good & Schwepker, 2022). Also, the inherent uncertainty and novelty of strategic planning increase the attempts of political influence by members (Elbanna, 2016). Coalition building, agenda control, tactics of timing, the use of outside consultants, bargaining or negotiation, as well as tactics concerning the control and manipulation of information (Ferris et al., 2007), are all factors that require the use of political skill (Elbanna, 2016). According to Stone (2002), this view supports the claim that when people with various preferences collate, they are more likely to be able to defend their preferences and prevail in their goals. This is why political skill can also be correlated to competing interest groups, scarce resources, and the exercise of power and influence (Ferris et al., 2003). Traditionally, researchers agreed that political skill, even when exploiting the use of power, justifies personal gains over organizational rules or interests (Child, Elbanna, & Rodriguez, 2010).

People who practice this skill have the social awareness that allows them to understand others at work and consequently, communicate such knowledge in a disarmingly charming and engaging manner to meet their personal and/or professional objectives (Bentley, Treadway, Williams, Gazdag, & Yang, 2017). For example, political skill appears to offer significant potential in the sales context (Good & Schwepker, 2022). Through their inspiring confidence, trust, and sincerity, politically skilled employees manage to adjust their behavior to different monumental transformations and situational demands (Gansen-Ammann, Meurs, Wihler, & Blickle, 2019). In other words, they demonstrate intuitive savvy relative to the right behaviors that should be possessed in certain situations, creating synergy, among discrete behaviors, that transcends the simple sum of the parts to realize a set of interpersonal dynamics and effective execution of personal and career success (Ferris et al., 2003).

The interpersonal influence of politically skilled individuals allows them to exploit their social capital in terms of gaining greater access to information. This is why, in organizational research, political skill is a primary exemplar of this influence (Bentley et. al., 2017). Hence, it is expected that individuals with high political skills will manage their social resources effectively and, thus, perform better. It is important to note that social influence is mostly pertinent to buyers' journeys in the business-to-business markets because all relationships and functions constantly evolve throughout the experience (Grewal & Sridhar, 2021).

Regardless of their inherent political capabilities, politically skilled individuals seize opportunities that help them cultivate and further develop their political skills. The latter is mainly applicable to dispositional antecedents that increase their competitive positions at work (Ahearn, Ferris, Hochwarter, Douglas, & Ammeter, 2004).

Because of its large role in determining an employee's success in enacting social influence behavior in the workplace (Lvina, Maher, & Harris, 2017), political skill reduces perceived work pressure. The latter is particularly true when employees build extensive social networks (Tang et al., 2020) that support them and help them accrue the rewards and outcomes necessary to bolster their social resources (Bentley et al., 2017). Such rewards and outcomes include but are not necessarily limited to greater sincerity, integrity, and trustworthiness (Lvina et al., 2017).

Political skill, as a personal resource, reduces job tension. It strengthens the employee's power of discernment and self-awareness. Politically skilled employees know how to observe people and empathize with them, appropriately controlling themselves and adapting their behaviors according to the situational need (Ferris et al., 2007). The latter can be further explained by their subtle and convincing personal style (Liu, Chen, & Fan, 2021). They profoundly know how to use the information they get to obtain more power and an advantageous position in resource distribution, hence, affecting important decisions in the organization. Consequently, political skill reduces role pressure caused by uncertainty (Tang et al., 2020).

Since politically skilled individuals are more confident and calmer than employees with low-level political skills, they possess the ability to acquire more positive feelings, thus reducing the negative spillover of work stress (Tang et al., 2020). Such employees aim to improve their performance, become proficient, enhance their flexibility, and develop proactivity. On the other hand, employees who exhibit little to no political skill might not acknowledge the value of quality relationships, nor have the skills to do so. Moreover, political skill can be linked to women's career advancement since they need to break the glass ceiling and survive in

organizations. For example, politically skilled women are attuned to social cues, such as masculinity, in male-dominated environments, thus acting upon the implicit rules and norms of this system to gain inclusion, power, and greater access to resources (Walkins & Smith, 2014).

According to Ferris and his colleagues (2002), a high political skill level enhances career success, job effectiveness, and work performance. Many researchers have also argued that political skill is positively correlated to income levels, hierarchical position, and reputation (Meisler, 2014). Empirical evidence has supported this line of thinking, with political skill being found to be a mechanism of social influence and relationship marketing (Palmatier, Dant, Grewal, & Evans, 2006) that builds constructive client relationships and subsequently improves selling performance (Liu, Chen, & Fan, 2021). Moreover, it enhances team performance in organizational leaders (Ahearn et al., 2004; Douglas & Ammeter, 2004; Semadar et al., 2006; Walkins & Smith, 2014). However, Tang, Miao, and Jiang (2020) argue that untimely political behaviors might often be associated with negative impressions because of their undesirable or even malicious consequences. These negative impressions include behind-the-scenes manipulation, self-interested behaviors, favoritism, and irregularities (Tang et al., 2020). A well-suited analogy is the relationships leveraged unethically by some politically skilled politicians (Schweizer, 2020).

## **2.2 Emotional Labor**

Many organizations have adopted, in the past two decades, a service-oriented strategy. This orientation treats internal clients and co-workers as important customer-like constituencies

(Perrewé et al., 2004). Consistent with this trend, research in emotional labor has gone beyond the traditional focus to investigate this concept as a universal phenomenon in the workplace (Perrewé et al., 2004).

Arlie Hochschild originated the concept of emotional labor and defined it as “the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display” (Humphrey, Ashforth, & Diefendorff, 2015, p.749). Empirical findings extend over her seminal work on how displaying emotions as part of employee job duties can commercialize employees’ feelings. Hochschild (as cited in Perrewé et al., 2004) was also among the first professors who coined the term “emotional labor” to define it as effort exerted to control unpleasant emotions and express socially accepted ones only. Humphrey and his colleagues (2015) provide examples of the latter including how hospitals require nurses to empathize with and be concerned about patients, airlines instruct attendants to smile and act friendly, and funeral homes ask employees to act subdued and compassionate.

Display rules are linked to the norms organizations adopt in an attempt to control employees’ private lives or personal thoughts and feelings. Since organizations can not directly regulate unobservable inner emotional states, they focus on outward displays of emotions (Humphrey et al., 2015). The latter is deliberately significant when distinguishing between what is felt and what is displayed because it enforces a new definition of emotional labor to emphasize the regulation of behavior as opposed to feelings.

Research has shown that there exist three methods to perform emotional labor: surface acting, deep acting, and genuine expression. Surface acting is a practice of altering outer expression without modifying interior feelings (Grandey, Diefendorff, & Rupp, 2013). In other words,

an employee may put on certain emotional displays, such as fake smiles that do not reflect their true feelings, without actually trying to feel the emotions they want to portray (Van Dijk & Kirk-Brown, 2006). For instance, “a waiter who is feeling irritated may nevertheless smile at a customer in the hopes of getting a bigger tip” (Humphrey et al., 2015, p.751). On the other hand, deep acting is an attempt to transmute feelings into an organization's emotional requirements (Grady, 2000). To summon the emotions that employees want to portray when interacting with others, they try to feel and experience the actual emotions, thus engaging purposely in thoughts and activities; such as exhorting feelings and trained imagination, which boost those emotions (Martinez-Inigo, Totterdell, Alcover, & Holman, 2009). Behaviors that stimulate desired emotions include but are not necessarily limited to listening to pleasant music while commuting to work, chatting delightfully with coworkers upon arrival, getting excited about new product lines and items, and laughing or joking with customers (Humphrey et al., 2015). Lastly, genuine expression is facing appropriate emotions and expressing them automatically (Grady, 2000). Although scenarios of genuine expression are less common, the spontaneous and natural emotions of service workers may sometimes comply with the social expectations and organizational display rules (Ballard, 2020). A nurse, for example, might naturally sympathize and worry about an injured child (Humphrey, Pollack, & Hawver, 2008).

It is argued that employees are often bound by situational cues, such as job requirements, that do not always allow them to express their real feelings in social settings; instead, these cues may put the felt and expressed emotions of an employee, even if closely related, at odds (Humphrey et al., 2015). Individual differences may predispose individuals to feel and perceive stimuli in certain ways. For example, emotionally adaptable people are usually able to express emotions appropriately and perceive little effort in doing so, unlike people who do

not identify with organizational values of open emotional communication and who perceive more effort in emotional labor. This is why clear discrepancies between felt and expressed emotion are depicted through different employee emotional experiences and contrasted by how they are expressed such that any discrepancy is paved at disequilibrium (Hammiat & Shams, 2021). Negative affectivity, as well, is considered a dispositional characteristic that encourages employees to think and experience negative emotions across time and situations, thus affecting their willingness and perceived effort to regulate emotional experiences (Perrewé et al., 2004).

The positive feedback generated by successfully performing emotional labor (e.g coworkers' friendliness and warmth) serves as a reward and promotes the sense of self-expression and identification (Perrewé et al., 2004). In other words, individuals with high negative affectivity do not view such positive feedback as flattering and reinforcing. Using conservation of resources theory, the latter thus implies a context where workers encounter emotional demands and utilize their emotional resources in anticipation of reward. Accordingly, employees learn to strategically use such emotional expressions to achieve certain goals (Perrewé et al., 2004).

In other cases, however, failure to match feelings with displays and display requirements causes emotion-display dissonance (fake emotional display) and emotion-rule dissonance respectively (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). Such emotional deviance adversely affects employee well-being, causing burnout and higher turnover intention (Humphrey, Ashforth, & Diefendorff, 2015). Liu, Perrewé, Hochwarter, and Kacmar (2004) report consistent evidence that emotional labor affects an employee's psychological wellbeing, job performance, and organizational outcomes. Another four meta-analyses (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011) have

documented that surface acting, in specific, has negative consequences such as stress and impaired well-being. The majority of people perceive faking emotions as lying, depersonalization, and alienation from one's job (Rubin, Tardino, Daus, & Munz, 2005). Since faking emotions requires additional monitoring of words, facial expressions, and vocal tones to match true emotions or portrayed fake ones, it leads to a loss of one's sense of authentic self (Humphrey et al., 2015). By nature, such individuals are less satisfied with themselves and others because they recall the negative aspects of their lives as being "worse than they really were" (Perrewé et al., 2004). In general, they exert more effort to positively reframe and reinterpret their expressed emotions which are at a larger distance than their felt emotions, hence enduring a higher level of emotional labor.

Because employees have to continuously monitor their behaviors throughout their interactions with others, surface acting requires more monitoring than deep acting. Humphrey and his colleagues (2015) explain that expressing spontaneous and genuine emotions does not create emotional dissonance between felt and expressed emotions which indicates that spontaneous and genuine emotional labor requires less monitoring, thus is less resource depleting and cognitively taxing.

The previously mentioned meta-analysis (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011), however, shows a weak correlation between deep acting and impaired well-being and job attitudes since deep acting does not cause psychological strain or feelings of depersonalization. It displays positive relationships with emotional performance, a sense of personal accomplishment, and customer satisfaction.

Although many papers support the propositions about the negative effects of emotional labor,

some researchers claim that a shadow has been cast over the potential benefits of emotional labor under certain conditions when the intense focus was purely on its negative aspects (Diefendorff & Richard, 2003; Gabriel & Diefendorff, 2015; Kang, & Jang, 2022). Such harmful effects can be, in part, relative to the use of maladaptive emotion regulation tactics, poor person-job fit, poor working conditions imposed by management, lack of autonomy in how to perform emotional labor, and a role not reflecting a valued identity. Humphrey and his colleagues (2015) suggest that displaying positive emotions, along with its associated effort, is not entirely harmful. The latter is only true when the imprecise regulation strategies, fit and identity-alignment process, and the broader conditions to pursue them are adopted.

Shuler and Sypher (2000) conducted a study on 911 emergency call center employees and concluded that many employees enjoy performing emotional labor. Despite working in an occupation that is often stereotyped as being difficult or unpleasant, these call center employees felt intrinsically rewarded by the performance of emotional labor. They described it as gratifying, exhilarating, and fulfilling. The aforementioned aligns with Hochschild's theory on flight attendants in terms of many people perceiving it as a dream job (Humphrey et al., 2015).

To conclude, the three forms of emotional labor; surface acting, deep acting, and genuine expression are described by measuring returns against investment. Further, when the return is higher, it is considered positive eustress, whereas when it is lower, it is considered a negative outcome of losing resources (Grady, 2000).

## 2.3 Turnover Intention

In the era of globalization, the long-term success and survival of all organizations significantly depend on their ability to address turnover. Turnover is a persistent problem, especially in the field of human resources management. It is defined as leaving the organization or quitting a profession to move to a different career pathway. Mete, Sökmen, and Sökmen (2021) claim that turnover intention often refers to attitude orientation or cognitive manifestations of behavioral decisions to quit. Maden-Eyiusta, Yalabik, and Nakiboglu (2021) prove as well that turnover intention is one of the most important predictors of behavior, particularly the actual decision of leaving the organization.

More than 1500 articles have been published in the last 50 years on the types of turnover (Nzukuma & Bussin, 2011). By definition, voluntary turnover is at the employee's sole discretion, the decision to leave the organization whereas involuntary turnover is enforced by the organization itself such as in layoffs, forced resignations, and firing (Naidoo, 2018). Since turnover intention has been examined more frequently than actual turnover in empirical research (Cohen, Blake, & Goodman, 2016), it often serves as a proxy predictor for actual turnover (Hom, Lee, Shaw, & Hausknecht, 2017). The aforementioned is more feasible when organizations opt to intervene when employees are considering leaving, rather than after they have already left. Cohen and his colleagues (2016) agree that turnover intention has a direct correlation to actual turnover. This is also in line with Lee's research (2019) which reports that employees intending to leave work may not end up leaving but only display several potential behavioral indicators of such intention. For example, counter-productivity is an indicator. The latter is true because counter-productivity creates hostility and burnout, thus leading to employee turnover intention.

Factors leading to turnover include demographic variables such as age, tenure, education, and income level. For example, age, tenure, and income level are proved to be negatively correlated to turnover intention. On the contrary, education level is positively correlated to employee turnover (Alkahtani, 2015). External environmental variables such as macroeconomic factors (Terborg & Lee, 1984) and organizational factors including industry type, occupation, organizational size, reward system, supervisory levels, and work environment also play a significant role in predicting turnover (Arthur & Rousseau, 2001). Concerning job category, for instance, non-managerial employees have a higher tendency to quit than managerial employees (Alkahtani, 2015). Other factors can also be considered including work-life balance (Abeykoon & Perera, 2019), lack of identification with company objectives (Suárez-Albanchez, Gutierrez-Broncano, Jimenez-Estevez, & Blazquez-Resino, 2022), role ambiguity and work overload (Jones & Gates, 2007), occupational stress (Satyaningrum & Djastuti, 2020), job satisfaction (Yáñez, Jahanshahi, Alvarez-Risco, Li, & Zhang, 2020), occupational health and safety (Suárez et al., 2022), workplace relationships (Soltis, Agneessens, Sasovova, & Labianca, 2013), and organizational support (Wong & Wong, 2017).

Few researchers argue that an insignificant rate of turnover can be functional, however, the majority agree that it depletes the organization-specific human capital accumulated by an employee, eliminates the organization's return on its investment from a productive employee, and disrupts the organization's operations; particularly when it reaches high levels.

Consequently, managers are obliged to redirect human resources to basic product or service delivery activities rather than maintenance and safety activities (Naidoo, 2018). With the latter capacity being encapsulated, leaving insufficient time to keep up with changes, lack of

resources, and lack of supervisory support, withdrawal behaviors start to surface. Withdrawal behaviors lead to depersonalization, job dissatisfaction, career switching, and consequently a decline in productivity (Naidoo, 2018). In other words, withdrawal behaviors are very costly to organizations; particularly in terms of tardiness, rework, workdays lost, lateness, increased absenteeism, cynicism, lack of organizational commitment, intention to leave and turnover (Naidoo, 2018). As a result, turnover adds to the hiring and training costs as well as investment in social capital losses (Wan & Chan, 2013). Abbasi, Hollman, and Hayes (2008) explain that costs may also include termination, advertising, recruitment, and selection. Alkahtani (2015) discusses other hidden costs such as missed deadlines, loss of organizational knowledge, loss of clients, and chain reaction turnover. It is also critical to mention that when an employee leaves an organization, the ability of the remaining employees to complete their duties depletes (Yin-Fah, Foon, Chee-Leong, & Osman, 2010). The remaining employees may possess low loyalty and low morale and, hence, can no longer be fully trusted on the job (Putri & Hasanati, 2022). They may often feel demotivated or disheartened.

Turnover becomes significantly alarming to managers when those leaving are employees of better skills and abilities than those who stay. This can also cause a fear that those who stay only choose to do so because they cannot find other jobs (Nadiri & Tanova, 2010). A similar scenario is particularly depicted in service sectors such as the hospitality industry because of the insecurity due to seasonality (Arici, 2018). Hence, turnover impacts organizations' performance and profitability, causing an important challenge and an ensuing disruption of knowledge transfer which is crucial for sustaining both (Daghfous, Belkhodja, & Angell, 2013).

## 2.4 Perceived Supervisor Support

“Organizations nowadays are facing an increasingly dynamic and complex environment which is characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. This environment demands that organizations must react quickly to ongoing changes that are unpredictable and uncontrollable” (Smithikrai, 2022, p. 1). Because of their role, managers have an additional responsibility to support employee development by providing the necessary resources, tools, and feedback. In some particular contexts, supervisor support is the degree to which employees perceive that supervisors care about their well-being (Pooja, De Clercq, & Belausteguigoitia, 2016). In other words, it is considered a mechanism to ensure a worthwhile pursuit and to target the perception of care and provision of positive social interaction and resources supporting role demands (Steelman, Levy, & Snell, 2004). Hence, supervisor support, as its theoretical definition implies, is one of the most practical and relevant sources of support from the recipient’s point of view (Steelman et al., 2004). Wong and Pang (2003) believe that supervisor support is a key factor in a prosperous relationship between employees and the workplace. Such support, also known as management appreciation, is viewed as recognition of employee work efforts and concern about employee well-being. Cole, Bruch, and Vogel (2006) believe that perceived supervisor support (PSS) is the extent to which supervisors value employee contributions and assist them.

Previous literature claims that supervisor support is valued more than co-workers or organizational support (Naidoo, 2018). Supervisors are viewed as credible sources of feedback and support because of their expertise in the recipient’s job requirements and actual job performance along with their ability to provide accurate performance information and

judgments (Steelman et. al., 2004). Supervisors are more knowledgeable about the latest trends and skillsets that employees demonstrate or have to demonstrate. They are also aware of reward systems, placements, support, and promotions and can therefore communicate any related decisions effectively and in due time (Cable & Judge, 2003).

Perceived supervisor support often requires supervisors to possess interpersonal skills, such as communication skills, interpersonal behavior, and trustworthiness (Škerlavaj, Černe, & Dysvik, 2014). Only when employees hold socio-emotional needs such as esteem, affiliation, emotional support, and social approval (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011), and these needs are fulfilled through verbal and practical resources, would supervisors be perceived as supportive. Accordingly, an obligation to reciprocate, commit, and identify with the organizations is directly created (Wan & Chan, 2013). The latter is particularly true as well when supervisors help employees “sell” creative ideas and assist them in actually getting their ideas implemented such as through problem-solving (Hackney, Maher, Daniels, Hochwarter, & Ferris, 2018).

A successful organization recognizes the importance of cultivating organizational support (Karatepe, 2015), particularly supervisor support, as an imperative business strategy to attain a sustainable competitive advantage (Dawley, Houghton, & Bucklew, 2010). Supervisors work closely with subordinates and thus have a more internal-focused responsibility toward them (Pearce & Herbig, 2004). They can build intimate interactions with employees (Costa, 2003) and create a positive, trustworthy environment (Naidoo, 2018). Costa (2003) also argues that supervisors gain sufficient knowledge and skills to improve group trust when they allocate the proper time and energy to support group members’ engagement in the group decision-making process. Shen, Tian, and Chen (2010) show that such support by supervisors

can lead to positive outcomes including employee retention and organizational commitment (Wan & Chan, 2013).

Other researchers including Hoonakker, Carayon, and Korunka (2013) examine how employees who perceive high levels of supervisor support feel that they are provided with greater emotional and psychological resources for coping with role stressors. Naidoo (2018) agrees that it is vital to relieve employee stress by cultivating the work environment, addressing their complaints, and providing them with the required resources to complete their tasks. For instance, when properly addressing employee complaints, supervisors can provide employees with the necessary resources to meet job responsibilities (Firth, Mellor, Moore & Loquet, 2004; De Clercq, Dimov, & Belausteguigoitia, 2016). If employees can trust that their supervisors care about their well-being and value their contributions to the organizational goals, then they are more likely to exert effort to provide high-quality customer service and achieve organizational objectives (Back, Lee, & Abbot, 2011). DeConinck and Johnson's study (2009) reveals that employees are more likely to improve job performance levels overall when supervisors are supportive of them.

Supervisor support is crucial to encourage employees to expand their knowledge and build on their strengths (Hon & Chan, 2013). Employees who strongly perceive that their supervisors support them can express greater satisfaction with their job. This finding is also supported by Visser and Rothmann (2009), Ghapanchi and Aurum (2011), and Erturk (2014). When supported, employees are motivated to improve their performance (Dawley, Houghton, & Bucklew, 2010) and possess the capability and desire to help achieve group success, hence exhibiting a commitment to improving group performance (Wan & Chan, 2013).

It is important to note that when perceived supervisor support prevails, employees also become more inclined to receive and express opinions freely as well as share information about team issues reasonably and transparently (Ingram & Desombre, 2000). Accordingly, employees engage in organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). They invest their energy in the innovative idea contribution process and conducive organizational growth and development (Pearce & Herbig, 2004). A meta-analysis of 28 studies supports a strong relationship between supervisor support and organizational citizenship behavior since working in a supportive environment promotes OCB as central to employee role at work (Wan & Chan, 2013).

# Chapter Three

## Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development

This chapter presents the theoretical framework upon which the proposed conceptual model will be based.

### 3.1 Theoretical Framework

This study draws upon the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989) which is used as bases for linking the constructs under consideration.

The conservation of resources theory (COR) discusses the acquisition of resources that are “either valued in their own right; such as self-esteem and close attachments, or serve as means to obtain centrally valued ends; such as money, social support, and credit (Ferris et al., 2007). Currently, it is the study of how the accumulation of valued resources provides a mechanism to cultivate interpersonal dependencies and reflects the manifestation of power within the organizational and social structure. This theory stipulates that when resources are lost or threatened or when there is a failure of gain after a significant investment of other resources, a paradox with political skill occurs, particularly because political skill is a personal resource in itself. Accordingly, politically skilled individuals are willing to expend energy in pursuit of personal goals (Ferris et al., 2007). Burhanudin, Tjahjono, and Hartono (2020), on the other hand, argue how supervisor support can be further explained by COR

theory in terms of the two general functions of social support which are securing the available resource and allowing employees to obtain new resources. The COR theory applies as well to the construct of emotional labor such that when employees hold ample resources, they can meet work demands without experiencing any emotional labor (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002). Hence, employees who are better able to accumulate and protect scarce organizational resources, possess lower turnover intentions.

### **3.2 Political Skill and Turnover Intention**

Due to the importance of politics in the success of an organization as well as employee performance in the work arena, researchers have shed light on its correlation with turnover intention. Politically skilled individuals; particularly those with high levels of social astuteness, networking ability, and interpersonal influence, can control and secure information regarding rare organizational resources, hence obtaining powerful positions in the organization (Riaz, Naeem, Khanzada, & Butt, 2018). Such individuals are always a step ahead of others because they spend time in social activities which allows them to build a strong social network. When they gather and access such critical information needed to perform their job, they gain reputation, power, and promotion. Research proves that political skill not only helps individuals build relationships with leaders but also affects organizational citizenship behavior and promotes the employee's positive emotions towards the organization and its members (Moon & Morais, 2022). Ferris and his colleagues (2007) argue that political skill enhances job satisfaction, and consequently reduces turnover intention.

H1: Political skill is negatively related to turnover intention.

### **3.3 Political Skill and Emotional Labor**

The definitions of both political skill and emotional labor embed an ability to influence others (Ferris et al., 2007) which leads to a surmised relationship. Political skill allows employees to achieve goals by leveraging personal and social resources effectively and efficiently.

Accordingly, politically skilled employees do not experience strain reactions when faced with certain stressors as strongly as employees with less political skill (Perrewé, Zellars, Ferris, Rossi, Kacmar, & Ralston, 2004). The aforementioned is directly linked to the politically skilled employees' enhanced sense of security and control over their social environment (Ferris et al., 2007). Ferris and his colleagues claim as well that because politically skilled employees are socially astute, they comprehend the social inferences of resource expenditures, recognize the current and potential value of these resources, and realize how social resources affect the functionality of their social environment. Hence, they can exhibit the appropriate behavior that matches the situation they are in. Since politically skilled individuals also tend to obtain more emotional support from others in terms of trust, likability, confidence, warmth, and enthusiasm, they tend to know exactly what to do and how to act in different social contexts. In other words, politically skilled employees are more likely to engage in successful resource exchanges because they better understand which resources yield the best return on their investment, thus predicting social interactions and avoiding emotional labor (Bentley, Treadway, Williams, Gazdag, Yang, 2017).

H2: Political skill is negatively related to emotional labor.

### **3.4 The mediating effect of Emotional Labor between Political Skill and Turnover Intention**

As previously defined from a job-focused perspective, emotional labor is the level of emotional demands inherent in a job position since it can measure the frequency, duration, variety, and intensity of social interactions in a particular, given setting (Grandey & Sayre, 2019). Similarly, and from an employee-focused approach, emotional labor is defined as an experienced process by an employee in managing emotions at work. It measures individuals' emotion regulation processes when attempting to regulate expressions to meet work demands and their experiences of emotional dissonance.

Since politically skilled employees have better emotional labor strategies, it is expected that they do not engage much in surface acting in terms of effort to fake an emotional display as preferred without varying one's internal feelings (Young, Hassan, & Hatmaker, 2021). On the contrary, employees involved in surface acting; most likely those with less or lacking political skills, feel tension if they have to display emotions that were different from their authentic emotions. In other words, they are more like to experience emotional dissonance as a result of surface acting (Rajak, Kunja, & Singh, 2021). Chao, Jou, Liao, and Kuo (2015) as well as Goodwin, Groth, and Frenkel (2011) found that surface acting was positively related to fatigue and turnover intention. Unlike surface acting, however, there is no relationship between deep acting and turnover intention as well as genuine expression and turnover intention (Lee, 2019).

H3: Emotional labor mediates the relationship between political skill and turnover intention.

### **3.5 The moderating effect of Perceived Supervisor Support between Emotional Labor and Turnover Intention**

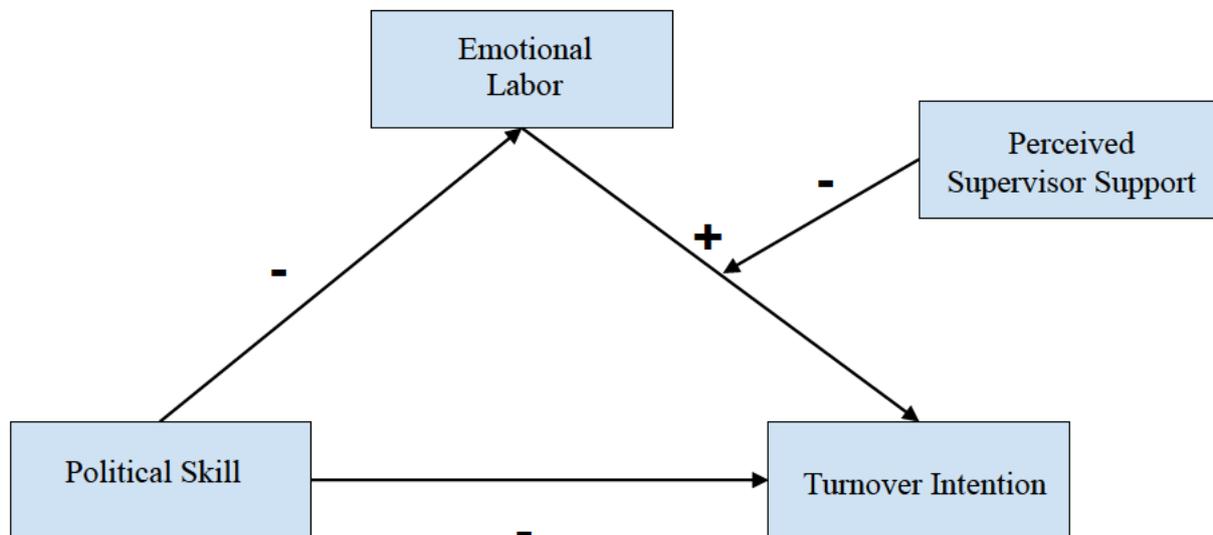
Afzal, Arshad, Saleem, and Farooq (2019) have found that perceived supervisor support negatively affects turnover intention. Employees can stay productive even when they experience severe job stress if they share good relationships with their supervisors (De Clercq, Haq, & Azeem, 2018). Perceived supervisor support helps employees face high work demands, thus becoming less inclined to withdraw from the organization which leads to lower turnover intention (Smith, 2005; Hazrati, 2007). Several studies support this negative relationship between perceived supervisor support and turnover intention (Kurtessis, Eisenberger, Ford, Buffardi, Stewart, & Adis, 2017). In other words, employees who perceive supervisory support are less likely to have the intention to leave the organization. Accordingly, supervisor support is negatively correlated with turnover intention (Wan & Chan, 2013).

H4: Perceived supervisor support moderates the relationship between emotional labor and turnover intention.

### **3.6 The Conceptual Model**

As previously stated, political skill reduces turnover intention by providing employees with the necessary resources they need to perform better (Ferris et al., 2007). In addition, this study examines emotional labor, a variable that can result in positive outcomes for the employee if combined with the appropriate emotional labor strategies and personal

characteristics (Lee, 2019). According to Kurtessis and his colleagues (2017), perceived supervisor support can be defined as an aspect of social support in the workplace for employees. Consistent with the theory of conservation of resources, perceived supervisor support reduces emotional labor and turnover intention (Afzal et al., 2019). Based on the above discussion, this study investigates the effect of political skill on emotional labor and turnover intention, with the moderating role of perceived supervisor support by proposing and testing the following conceptual model.



**Figure 1: The Conceptual Model**

Accordingly, the proposed conceptual model was examined by empirically testing the following hypotheses (as illustrated in figure 1).

H1: Political skill is negatively related to turnover intention.

H2: Political skill is negatively related to emotional labor.

H3: Emotional labor mediates the relationship between political skill and turnover intention.

H4: Perceived supervisor support moderates the relationship between emotional labor and turnover intention.

# Chapter Four

## Methodology

This chapter discusses the data collection procedure which tests the hypotheses set for this research. As such, the objectives, methods, used scales, sample population, data collection, and analysis are detailed.

### 4.1 Population and Sample Selection

This study targeted individuals working at both local and international privately held companies. The participants of the study belong to different industries. Furthermore, the survey was distributed based on convenience with the use of an online survey platform. Participants were introduced to the survey questionnaire via a consent form describing the objectives of the study as aiming to assess the influence of political skill on emotional labor and turnover intention, with the moderating role of perceived supervisor support. The participants were also assured that there are no known risks, harms, or discomforts associated with this study beyond those encountered in normal daily life. A total of 124 complete surveys were collected. The data analysis was performed based on the collected questionnaire.

## **4.2 Variables and Measurements**

The first nominal variable is gender and has four categories: male, female, non-binary, and prefer not to say. The nominal variable will be measured with typical descriptive statistics.

The second variable is age and has five categories: 18-24 years, 25-34 years, 35-44 years, 45-55 years, and lastly 55 years and older. Age is considered an ordinal variable. The third variable is years of service in the company and has five categories: 1-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years, and 20 years and more. The dependent variable represents the employee's intention to quit his/her company whereas the independent variables are political skill, emotional labor, and perceived supervisor support. The dependent and independent variables are measured using five-point Likert scales.

## **4.3 Instrumentation**

This article employs a cross-sectional model for a fixed point in time that allows the examination of the relationship between political skill and turnover intention, mediated by emotional labor and moderated by perceived supervisor support. A quantitative research approach is adopted to collect a significant number of participants in a short time frame.

After reviewing previous literature, the data for this thesis was collected using a questionnaire assessing the relationship between the following dimensions: political skill, emotional labor, turnover intention, and perceived supervisor support. Furthermore, data was collected based on convenience sampling, after obtaining the participant's consent to participate in the study. The questionnaire was structured in such a way that, the political skill section comprised 18

questions, the emotional labor section comprised 15 questions, the turnover intention section comprised 6 questions, and the perceived supervisor support section comprised 4 questions. The respondents were asked to place themselves on a five-point Likert scale in which the answers varied from strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, and strongly agree.

The survey is structured as follows:

#### **4.4 Consent**

To ensure the voluntary participation and anonymity of respondents in this study, the objective and ethicality are described in a general overview. Such ethical considerations align with IRB standards which allow participants to move to the next parts of the survey only if they give their consent to these statements; otherwise, their participation is immediately withdrawn and no data is recorded.

#### **4.5 Demographics**

Single item questions were used to measure the following demographics: (1) gender, (2) age, (3) current country location, (4) current location where the company is based, and (5) years of service in the current organization. This section of the survey helps in analyzing the profiles of the participants in the research objective context.

## 4.6 Political Skill Scale

The four-dimensional political skill scale developed by Treadway, Hochwarter, Kacmar, and Ferris (2005) is adopted. It comprises four subscales: networking ability, apparent sincerity, social astuteness, and interpersonal influence (García-Chas et al., 2019). Employees report their agreement with 18 items about themselves on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Example items include: “I am particularly good at sensing the motivations and hidden agendas of others” and “I am able to communicate easily and effectively with others”.

Several studies relied on this scale in their depiction of political skill, among which are Perrewé et al. (2005), Liu et al. (2007), and Robbins-Roth (2022). All the Cronbach’s alpha values of the scale items are above 0.75, proving that this scale is characterized by internal consistency. The Cronbach’s Alpha values of the Political Skill Inventory scale items are reported in Table 1.

**Table 1: Reliability Statistics for the PSI Scale**

<b>N Items</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha (<math>\alpha</math>)</b>
5 (Social Astuteness)	0.79
4 (Interpersonal Influence)	0.78
6 (Networking Ability)	0.87
3 (Apparent Sincerity)	0.81
18 (PSI)	0.89

#### **4.7 Emotional Labor Scale**

This study will adopt Brotheridge and Lee's (2003) emotional labor scale which views emotional labor as a mechanism for achieving organizational goals. It measures the frequency, intensity, variety, surface acting, and deep acting. The 15 items of the scale were to be answered using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging between "never" and "always".

Several studies relied on this scale in their depiction of emotional labor, among of which are Brotheridge and Lee (2006), Bayram, Aytac, and Dursun (2012), Truta (2014), Mohsin and Ayub (2020), as well as Birze, Paradis, Regehr, LeBlanc, and Einstein (2022). For example, in Brotheridge and Lee's study, the Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.68 to 0.85,

confirming the scale’s validity and reliability, however, the scale measuring the intensity of displayed emotions was the exception, with a Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.58.

**Table 2: Reliability Statistics for the Emotional Labor Scale**

<b>N Items</b>	<b>Cronbach’s Alpha (<math>\alpha</math>)</b>
1 (Duration)	(-)
3 (Frequency)	0.75
2 (Intensity)	0.58
3 (Variety)	0.68
3 (Surface Acting)	0.85
3 (Deep Acting)	0.82
15 (ELS)	0.78

#### **4.8 Turnover Intention Scale**

To measure the turnover intention, Roodt’s turnover intention scale (Bothma & Roodt, 2004) is adopted. The Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6) is a six-item scale designed to measure employees’ intentions for either staying with or leaving an organization. Items are scored using Osgood’s semantic differential technique of five-step (five bipolar pairs of adjectives) response scales defined by two opposites (example never – always). Items include: “How

likely are you to accept another job at the same compensation level should it be offered to you?” and “How often have you considered leaving your job?”.

Some of the previous studies that have utilized the TIS-6 scale include Lambert, Hogan, and Barton (2001), Martin and Roodt (2007), Jacobs and Roodt (2008), as well as Du Plooy and Roodt (2010). For example, Du Plooy and Roodt (2010) reported a Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.8, indicating the scale’s concision, proven reliability, and validity.

**Table 3: Reliability Statistics for the Turnover Intention Scale**

<b>N Items</b>	<b>Cronbach’s Alpha (<math>\alpha</math>)</b>
6 (TIS)	0.8

#### **4.9 Perceived Supervisor Support Scale**

Items measuring supervisor support were adapted from Steelman, Levy, and Snell (2004).

The construct’s four indicators were “my supervisor actively listens to my suggestions”, “my supervisor enables me to perform at my best”, “my supervisor promotes an atmosphere of teamwork”, and “my supervisor does a good job”. This scale aims to measure supervisors’ accountability for providing resources that support employee development, particularly in the form of feedback and coaching.

This scale has been used by several researchers such as Chang, Ferris, Johnson, Rosen, and

Tan (2012); Gabriel, Frantz, Levy, and Hilliard (2014); Naidoo (2018); Drawbaugh, Gianelloni, and Levy (2021). For example, Naidoo (2018) reported a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.924, indicating the scale's internal consistency.

**Table 4: Reliability Statistics for the Supervisor Support Scale**

<b>N Items</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha (<math>\alpha</math>)</b>
4 (SSS)	0.924

#### **4.10 Conceptual Framework for Analyzing Data**

To answer the research questions and test the hypotheses, the software package (SPSS) will be used.

1. Typical descriptive statistics will be used to summarize the data. The results of the data will be displayed in graphs and tables.
2. The reliability and validity of the questionnaire will be tested through the factor analysis and reliability coefficient.
3. For analysis, structural equation modeling will be used to investigate the relationship between the variables to test the hypotheses.

# Chapter Five

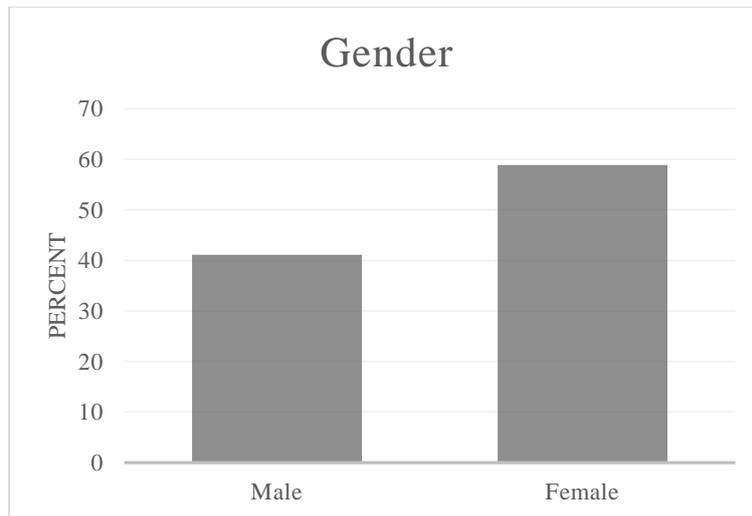
## Data Analysis and Results

In this chapter, the statistical software package – SPSS – is used to report and interpret the data collected from the survey. Descriptive statistical analysis is deployed to analyze the demographics of participants. Factor analysis and MegaStat systems are used to measure scale reliability and instrument validity. Finally, regression and moderation analyses are used to evaluate the relationships between political skill, emotional labor, turnover intention, and perceived supervisor support.

### 5.1 Descriptive Analysis

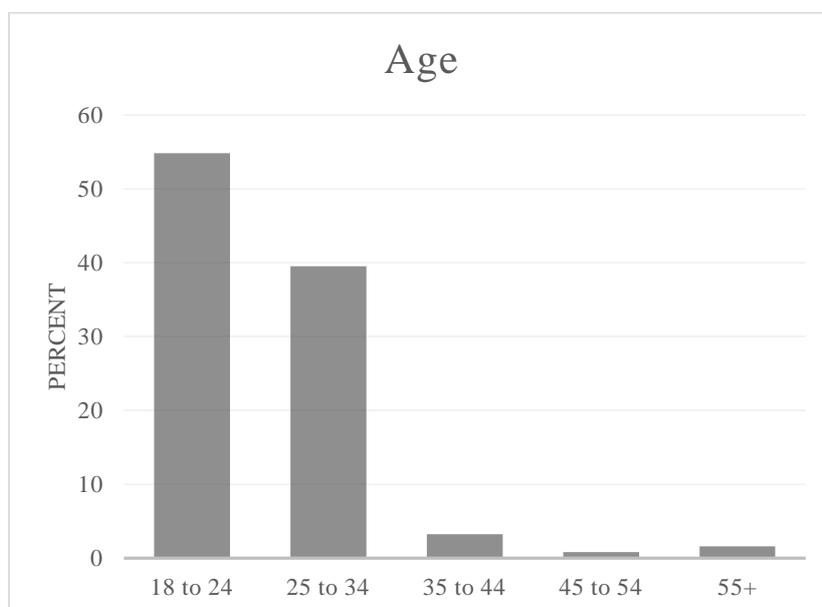
#### 5.1.1 Demographics

The process of data collection began on March 2, 2022, and lasted till July 4, 2022. Using Excel MegaStat, it was found that the sample population of 124 participants consists of 51 males as shown in Figure 2 below, in comparison to 73 females.



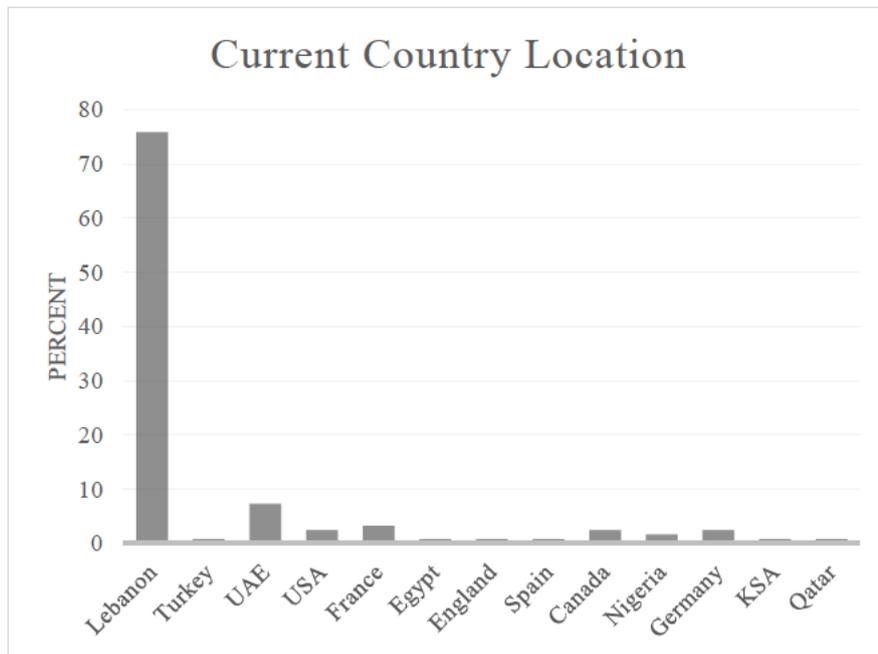
**Figure 2: Histogram depicting Gender distribution of participants**

The majority of these participants were between 18 to 24 years old, representing 54.8% of the sample population. The rest are divided into four other age categories; 39.5% between 25 to 34 years, 3.2% between 35 to 44 years, 0.8% between 45 to 54 years, and 1.6% between 55 and above.



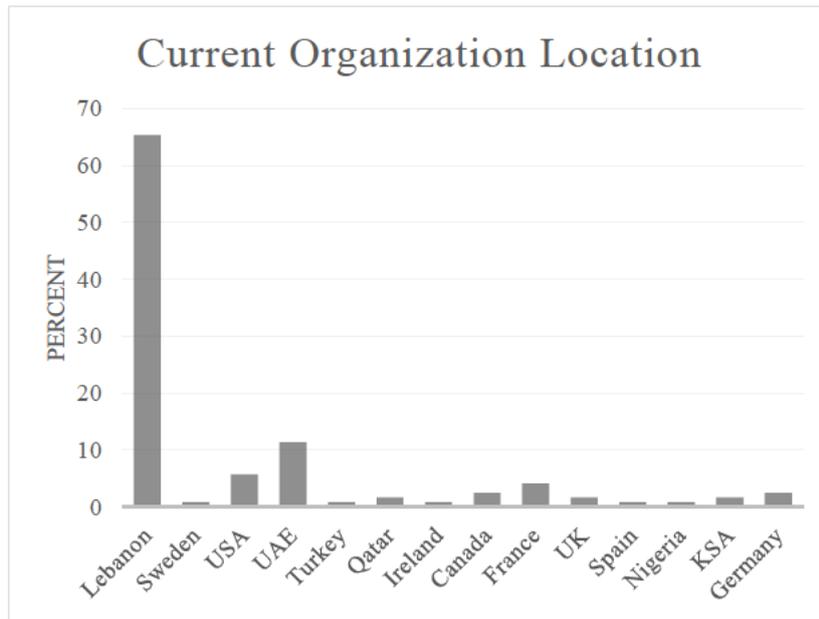
**Figure 3: Histogram depicting Age distribution of participants**

As shown in figure 4, participants are dispersed across different countries. Most of them live in Lebanon (75.8%), UAE (7.3%), France (3.2%), Nigeria (1.6%), Turkey, Egypt, England, Spain, KSA, and Qatar (0.8% each), as well as the USA, Canada, and Germany (2.4% each).



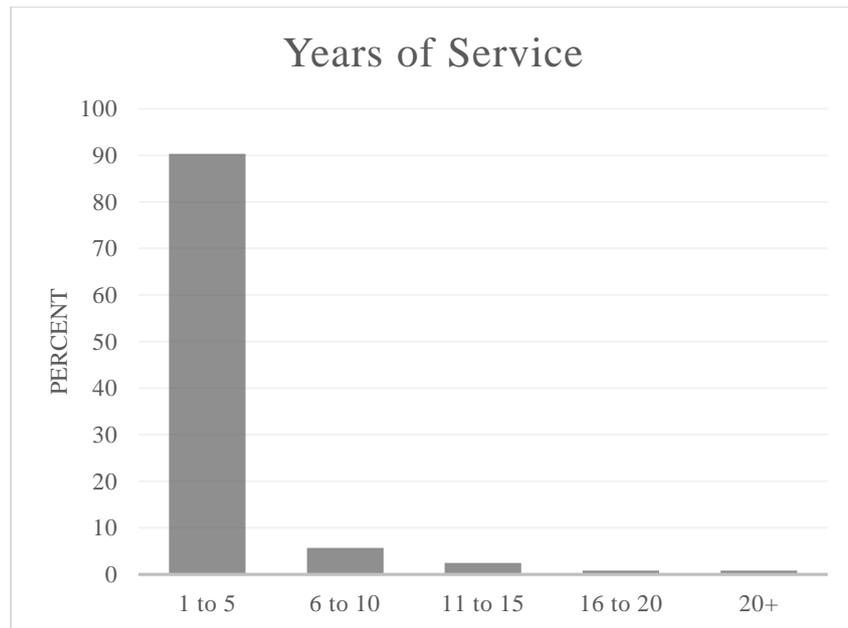
**Figure 4: Histogram depicting Current Country Location distribution of participants**

The majority of participants operate in organizations that are based in Lebanon (65.3%), UAE (11.3%), USA (5.6%), France (4%), Canada, Germany (2.4% each), Qatar, UK, KSA (1.6% each), as well as Sweden, Turkey, Ireland, Spain, and Nigeria (0.8% each). The list of all the organizations' locations is shown in figure 5.



**Figure 5: Histogram depicting Current Organization Location distribution of participants**

The majority of participants (90.3%) had 1-5 years of experience, indicating that they are relatively new to their job position. This is in comparison to only 0.8% of participants who had over 20 years of experience, implying that they are more familiar with the organizational processes due to their long tenure. As for the rest of the sample population, their distribution among the other three categories of years of experience is reflected in Figure 6.



**Figure 6: Histogram depicting Years of Service in Current Organization distribution of participants**

## 5.2 Scale Reliability

### 5.2.1 Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient

Amirrudin and his colleagues (2021) prove the importance of scale reliability as an indicator of its consistency and precision. Accordingly, the Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) of each of the four scales used in this research was computed. Ranging between 0 and 1, Alpha is used to evaluate the internal consistency of a scale in terms of coherence, correlation, and reflection of the same notion or concept (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). To indicate low and excellent reliability respectively, the value of Cronbach's alpha should range between 0.11 and 0.94 (Taber, 2018). Tavakol and Dennick (2011) stated that a threshold or minimum of 0.7 is

needed for a Cronbach’s alpha of a scale to be considered reliable. The “acceptable” values of alpha extend between 0.7 and 0.95.

SPSS was used to compute the Cronbach’s alpha of the PSI, EL, TI, and SS scales deployed in this study as well as that of their dimensions, all of which are depicted in Table 5 below. It can be deduced that all four scales are reliable as  $\alpha > 0.7$ . It can be noted that the supervisor support scale has the highest alpha (0.935), which indicates strong reliability. The political skill and emotional labor scales have an alpha of 0.928 and 0.848 respectively, meaning that they are highly reliable. As for the turnover intention scale, it has an alpha of 0.782, which is also reliable. It is important to note that all items scoring a value  $< 0.6$  were removed.

**Table 5: Reliability Statistics of Scales**

<b>Scale</b>	<b>Cronbach’s Alpha (<math>\alpha</math>)</b>	<b>Number of Items</b>
Political Skill	0.928	18
Emotional Labor	0.848	15
Turnover Intention	0.782	6
Supervisor Support	0.935	4

### 5.2.2 Exploratory Factor Analysis

To assess instrument validity, the SPSS software was used to conduct a Factor Analysis that evaluates each scale used and its dimensions. Table 6 below depicts the factor loadings using the Rotation method, Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

**Table 6: Component Matric of Political Skill Scale**

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Factor Loading</b>
Social Astuteness	SA1	-
	SA2	0.814
	SA3	.717
	SA4	-
	SA5	-
Interpersonal Influence	II1	0.67
	II2	0.72
	II3	0.667
	II4	-
Networking Ability	NA1	0.769

	NA2	-
	NA3	0.703
	NA4	-
	NA5	0.681
	NA6	0.796
Apparent Sincerity	AS1	-
	AS2	-
	AS3	-

**Table 7: Component Matrix of Emotional Labor Scale**

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Factor Loading</b>
Duration	D1	0.871
Frequency	F1	0.726
	F2	0.791
	F3	0.778
Intensity	I1	0.759
	I2	0.693

Variety	V1	0.603
	V2	0.653
	V3	0.43
Surface Acting	SACT1	0.666
	SACT2	0.813
	SACT3	0.836
Deep Acting	DACT1	0.612
	DACT2	-
	DACT3	0.643

**Table 8: Component Matrix of Turnover Intention Scale**

<b>Items</b>	<b>Factor Loading</b>
TI1	0.722
TI2	0.760
TI3	0.758
TI4	0.697
TI5	0.842

TI6	0.821
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**Table 9: Component Matric of Supervisor Support Scale**

<b>Items</b>	<b>Factor Loading</b>
SS1	0.767
SS2	0.867
SS3	0.836
SS4	0.874

It is important to mention that those scale items scoring below 0.6 are suppressed. In other words, only those scoring above 0.6 are included, indicating good factor loadings.

### **5.3 Regression Analysis**

To assess the relationship between political skill dimensions, emotional labor, turnover intention, and supervisor support, SPSS Regression Analysis was used.

**Table 10: Regression Analysis of Political Skill and Turnover Intention**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.518	1	1.518	4.016	.047 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	45.363	120	.378		
	Total	46.881	121			

In table 11, political skill is an independent variable, while turnover intention is the dependent variable. This table lists the regression analysis of turnover intention, with a p-value of 0.047. Since  $0.047 < 0.05$ , this indicates that there is a significant relationship between political skill and turnover intention.

**Table 11: Regression Analysis of Political Skill and Emotional Labor**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5.855	1	5.855	17.179	<.001 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	40.899	120	.341		
	Total	46.754	121			

In table 10, political skill is an independent variable, while emotional labor is the dependent variable. This table lists the regression analysis of emotional labor, with a p-value of 0.00. Since  $0.00 < 0.05$ , this indicates that there exists very strong evidence that political skill has a significant relationship with emotional labor.

## 5.4 Moderation Analysis

Andrew Hays Process Model in SPSS is utilized to conduct the moderation analysis for the moderator in this study – perceived supervisor support (PSS). TI represents the dependent variable (Y), EL is the “constant” or the independent variable (X), and SS is the moderator (M).

Figure 7 documents the moderation analysis of perceived supervisor support in the relationship between emotional labor and turnover intention. This model has an R-square value of 0.1041, signifying that 10.41% of the variation of turnover intention can be determined by emotional labor and supervisor support. The p-value of emotional labor (constant) is  $0.0062 < 0.05$ , supporting previous findings that prove there is a significant relationship between emotional labor and turnover intention. Moreover, the path coefficient of supervisor support is 0.3775, with a p-value of  $0.1064 > 0.05$ , which shows that supervisor support is not significant in this model. The interrelation of this model represents the moderation test between the independent variables in this model; emotional labor (X) and supervisor support (M). At 95% confidence level and with  $X*W$  resulting in a p-value of 0.0556, there is proof that supervisor support does not moderate the relationship between emotional labor and turnover intention.

Model : 1

Y : TIavg

X : ELavg

W : SSavg

Sample

Size: 124

\*\*\*\*\*

OUTCOME VARIABLE:

TIavg

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.3226	.1041	.3553	4.6462	3.0000	120.0000	.0041

Model

coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	.9856	.8613	1.1443	.2548	-.7197 2.6910
ELavg	.8270	.2970	2.7848	.0062	.2390 1.4150
SSavg	.3775	.2321	1.6267	.1064	-.0820 .8370
Int_1	-.1518	.0785	-1.9332	.0556	-.3074 .0037

Product terms key:

Int\_1 : ELavg x SSavg

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):

R2-chng	F	df1	df2	p
X*W	.0279	3.7373	1.0000 120.0000	.0556

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Focal predict: ELavg (X)

Mod var: SSavg (W)

Conditional effects of the focal predictor at values of the moderator(s):

SSavg	Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
3.0000	.3715	.1003	3.7039	.0003	.1729	.5700
4.0000	.2196	.0932	2.3559	.0201	.0351	.4042
5.0000	.0678	.1402	.4835	.6296	-.2098	.3454

**Figure 7: Turnover Intention, Emotional Labor, Perceived Supervisor Support**

# Chapter Six

## Discussion, Implications, Recommendations, and Conclusion

In this chapter, the results established in Chapter (5) will be thoroughly discussed and compared to the findings of other researchers. Accordingly, this chapter will provide theoretical and practical implications for leaders and organizations based on the results found. The shortcoming (limitations) of this study are also recognized in this section, followed by recommendations for future studies and an overall conclusion for this research.

### 6.1 Discussion and Conclusion

The research is built on the notion that organizations are inherently political arenas. In this regard, factors that determine employee turnover intention are considered. These factors include political skill, emotional labor, and perceived supervisor support. The aforementioned is of great importance to managers today in particular, as the current changes taking place have various repercussions on employees' wellbeing and performance. This study targets two main objectives; firstly, to explore the influence of political skill on emotional labor and turnover intention, and secondly, to determine whether perceived supervisor support can act as a moderator in the EL-TI relationship. Using the COR theory, these objectives were broken down into four main hypotheses describing the nature of the relationships between

these variables. To validate them, a survey was developed to collect data from employees, and findings were tabulated then demonstrated in the latter chapter.

After analyzing the correlations under study, the results of the hypotheses set are displayed in Table 12 below.

**Table 12: Results of Hypotheses Set**

<b>Hypotheses</b>	<b>Results</b>
H1: Political skill is negatively related to turnover intention.	<b>Valid</b>
H2: Political skill is negatively related to emotional labor.	<b>Valid</b>
H3: Emotional labor mediates the relationship between political skill and turnover intention.	<b>Valid</b>
H4: Perceived supervisor support moderates the relationship between emotional labor and turnover intention.	<b>Invalid</b>

To begin with, this study found that political skill has a significant relationship with turnover intention, validating H1 which represents political skill as the employee’s ability to effectively understand others at work and capacity to adjust behavior in ways that enhance personal and/or organizational objectives. This goes in line with the findings of other scholars who uncovered a negative relationship between PS and TI including Rashid, Karim, Rashid, and Usman (2013) as well as Landells and Albrecht (2019). Politically skilled individuals

combine social astuteness with their outward focus toward others to maintain proper balance and perspective. Accordingly, they know precisely what to do and how to act in different social situations; specifically, those that mold self-serving motives into sincere intentions (Khan, Kumari, & Najam, 2022). This generates a greater degree of control over activities that transpire in social interactions at work, hence, it increases employees' sense of self-confidence and personal security as well as reduces work-related stress or anxiety, which indicate a decreased turnover intention (Smith & Hibbing, 2011).

Although the display of emotions or the use of feelings is central for employees to accomplish their tasks and perform their roles, it is considered the 'invisible hand' of established organizational norms that not only set certain performance or behavioral expectations, but also determine the frequency, intensity, and the duration that such emotions should be exhibited (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003).

Since a significant relationship between PS and EL exists, H2 is validated. Research has shown that politically skilled employees do not experience emotional dissonance as much as employees with less political skill because they do not exert a lot of effort in expressing the desired emotions; particularly those differing from actual feelings. Hochschild's (1983) study proved that to deal with emotional dissonance, employees either alter their displayed feelings (surface acting) or conjure up the appropriate feeling within themselves (deep acting). It is very important, however, to differentiate between surface acting and deep acting because each suggests a fundamentally different internal state (Ashforth & Tomiuk, 2000). In specific, surface acting is one of misalignment and inauthenticity, which reduces one's sense of wellbeing. Accordingly, politically skilled individuals, who frequently and purposefully display emotions, limit the duration and intensity of these emotions, hence allowing

politically skilled employees to simply form a global impression of their emotional role requirements, and, thus, view these four dimensions as a unitary construct rather than as conceptually distinct aspects of their work (Buchanan & Badham, 2020).

The effort involved in EL can produce psychological strain and loss of emotional control (Hochschild, 1983). Emotional strain or exhaustion may occur when workers must expend energy to realign their feelings. Their depleted energy may then lead them to seek emotional distance or feel estranged from others (e.g. depersonalization); a way of coping with the drain of their emotional resources. Loss of emotional control may lead to a diminished sense of efficacy or accomplishment in their role performance, thus leading to employee turnover. Previous research, with the central role for the construct of surface acting as a particular interest, proved that surface acting was significantly associated with higher levels of emotional exhaustion (Ferris, Treadway, Kolodinsky, Hochwarter, Kacmar, & Frink, 2005). Although the core components of emotional labor, surface and deep acting, are distinct, they both require emotional effort, albeit in different forms.

Results indicated that H4 was not validated. Perceived supervisor support did not have an effect on the relationship between emotional labor and turnover intention. Despite the fact that with perceived supervisor support it is expected that emotions become more appropriate for promoting the right agenda reflecting the employees' prescribed roles, research has shown that the type and frequency of emotional display may still impact whether and how much effort is required to engage in emotional labor. In their research, Beehr, Bowling, and Bennett (2010) found that when stressors were high, supervisor support had a reverse-buffering effect. If unneeded, supervisor support may undermine the employee's sense of competence. McIlroy, Parker, and McKimmie (2021) further explored this reverse-buffering effect and

found that supervisor support is not always the determining factor of turnover intention. When employees actively ask their supervisor for help but do not actually receive the requested support, they develop more negative attitudes toward the workplace, thus reducing their levels of organizational identification and increasing emotional labor (Ferris, Brown, Berry, & Lian, 2008). Since emotions also remain compatible with the employee's mood and/or self-expectations, hiding one's true feelings through surface acting may only be lessened when a true change in feelings occurs as a result of deep acting (Ullah, Islam, & Ukil, 2022). Accordingly, emotional labor can impact employees' well-being and performance, and the higher the emotional labor level is, the higher the turnover intention (Haynie, Varma, & Ragland, 2022).

## **6.2 Implications and Conclusion**

### **6.2.1 Theoretical Implications**

This research made multifarious contributions to the literature on PS and EL. Firstly, there was an addition to the literature in terms of one holistic model that connects the four constructs under study. This study reflected on the influence of political skill on emotional labor and turnover intention, and found a significant relationship for each respectively.

Secondly, the literature on PS and EL lacked research on potential correlations between the dimensions of the constructs that can attenuate the negative corollaries of EL. In this study, this gap was addressed and the results indicated that PSS did not act as a separate moderator in the relationship between EL and TI. In other words, PSS did not reduce the undesirable

outcomes of EL nor prevent them from increasing the likelihood of turnover intention.

Finally, this research confirmed that the relationships between PS, EL, and TI can be based on the principles of the COR theory. Accordingly, PS facilitates the acquisition and accumulation of valued resources which help employees meet work demands without experiencing emotional labor.

### **6.2.2 Practical Implications**

This research also has practical implications that can benefit managers in the workplace. As mentioned earlier, it is evident that EL has undesirable repercussions on the employees' performance and turnover intention. As such, managers should take certain measures to tackle this. For instance, organizations can implement training programs and seminars that target the enhancement of employee skillsets and career development opportunities in the organization, as well as stress management and mindfulness techniques that strengthen employees psychologically and allow them to deal with the challenges accompanied by their emotional labor. Furthermore, managers can apply interactive strategies that determine the causes behind employee concerns and attempt to address these worries. Not to mention, managers can amend HRM practices to improve organizational communication and boost employee involvement and participation in decision-making processes, hence emboldening employees and reassuring them that their role and input in the organization are crucial.

To enhance political skill and reduce emotional labor, organizations have to set realistic expectations of performance and organizational norms. When undergoing hardships, organizations have to determine potential demotivating factors and provide coaching or peer-

mentoring sessions that encourage employees to invest their energy and sustain the pursuit of their goals. Managers can also guide employees to be more perceptive of themselves and others in social situations and accordingly, improve their self-awareness and interpretation of others' behaviors. Organizations can support employees who possess interpersonal influence by helping them establish a good rapport, build cooperative relationships, negotiate ideas, and manage conflicts. This is where 360-degree feedback also comes in handy such that political skill can be incorporated within HRM's performance management and evaluation systems, whereby employees can rate their own political skill levels as well as their peers', and HR personnel can in turn provide employees with feedback and guidance on how to employ their political skills appropriately.

### **6.3 Limitations and Future Recommendations**

Similar to other studies, this research has several limitations. First, the sample population of 124 participants is relatively small, which hinders the generalization of the results found. Hence, should this study be duplicated, it is better to collect more responses and more information from participants that can assist in determining why employees at the same organization or country have different emotional labor levels.

Second, this is a cross-sectional study, mainly in terms of data collection in a specific period of time. Accordingly, this prevents researchers from identifying how emotional labor affects turnover intention over time. This can be amended by conducting a longitudinal study in future research, aiming to yield a more definite conclusion. Furthermore, the data collected during the transition back to work in a post-COVID19 world may have influenced the

participants' perceptions regarding political skill and emotional labor. As such, a longitudinal study is also beneficial in terms of reassessing political skill, emotional labor, turnover intention, and perceived supervisor support, as well as their interrelationships pre-COVID19, thus identifying whether the respondents' answers would have differed. Moreover, future studies can also explore the effect of external factors such as country location, cultural differences, and HR practices on political skill and emotional labor.

Third, data was collected solely using self-reported surveys, which means that the data gathered is prone to various potential limitations and/or biases, including the social desirability bias, where participants choose the answer that is considered more socially acceptable to others rather than reporting their honest answer. Such individuals may report that they have political skills more than they actually do in an attempt to show their eligibility for critical and managerial positions. Another example could be individuals hiding emotional labor they experience at work due to fear of failure or conflict avoidance. In addition, participants may not know how to accurately assess their personal resources and capabilities, which may lead to inaccurate data. As such, future research should include another method for data collection such as in-depth interviews.

Fourth, and as found in the results of the descriptive statistics performed, the majority of participants in this study have 1 to 5 years of experience in their present job position, thus they are considerably new. In addition, the political skill and emotional labor levels of participants might have also been impacted since the majority is Lebanese. Lebanon has been assailed by compounded crises- specifically, an economic and financial crisis, followed by COVID-19 and, lastly, the explosion at the Port of Beirut on the 4<sup>th</sup> of August, 2020. Hence, future research must compare results obtained from those who are relatively new to the job to

those who have had a longer tenure and more time serving their current organization, taking into consideration their nationality and the country where the organization is operating.

Lastly, only perceived supervisor support was incorporated as a moderator in the relationship between emotional labor and turnover intention. Future studies can further explore other personal or organizational resources that can also act as moderators. For example, future research can inspect the potential moderation effect of leadership style such as self-leadership as well as general mental ability and/or personality traits.

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