

## **Testing the Relationship Between Interpersonal Political Skills, Altruism, Leadership Success and Effectiveness: A Multilevel Model**

Jennifer A. Moss  
Bellevue University  
John E. Barbuto, Jr.  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

### **ABSTRACT**

This study (n = 217) examined the moderating effect of altruism on the relationship between political skills and leader success and effectiveness. Multilevel data analysis was conducted using hierarchical linear modeling. Significant relationships were found between altruism and social astuteness in predicting effectiveness; altruism and networking in predicting success and effectiveness; altruism interacting with social astuteness to positively impact effectiveness; and altruism interacting with networking to negatively impact success. Results indicate that altruism is an important component of leadership effectiveness but that altruistic leaders will not seek promotion opportunities as frequently. Networking strategies result in both leadership success and effectiveness.

### **Introduction**

Career success and effectiveness are important issues in practicing management and in the daily lives of most workers; indeed, the popular press has produced many books on topics related to career advancement and promotion (Chambers, 1999; Ferris, Davidson, & Perrewe, 2005; Orth, 2004). Chambers (1999) proposed that to be promoted, leaders need to develop relationships with powerful individuals, increase their visibility, and enhance a positive perception of themselves within the organization, all of which require a commitment to political work.

Unfortunately, however, the majority of practitioner-based books do not differentiate effective leadership from promotability. It is not clear whether effective leaders are promoted more frequently than ineffective leaders, nor whether those who actively shape their image and seek promotions are effective leaders.

Researchers in the field of management and leadership began to differentiate between success and effectiveness in the 1980s (Kotter, 1982; Luthans, Hodgetts, & Rosenkrantz, 1988), concluding that the manner in which leaders communicate with others is the primary determinant of their promotability and perceived success. Leaders

who manage their direct reports effectively (i.e., listening, guiding, finding resources, or motivating) are neither promoted as frequently nor rewarded financially for their efforts, but leaders who exert energy building networks are promoted and rewarded financially. This line of research has not been pursued in recent years.

When success and effectiveness are treated as the same dependent variable, a problem arises in the field from the assumption that if leadership effectiveness increases, leadership success will increase as well. Unfortunately, most practicing managers understand that those promoted are not necessarily the most effective in their jobs. Conversely, many highly effective managers fail to receive the promotions they deserve. So, what factors increase the likelihood of both career success and effectiveness?

Seminal research differentiating success from effectiveness and identifying antecedents of each has shown the primary predictor of leader success to be networking ability, described as a purposeful focus on how one is perceived through his or her relationships (Luthans et al., 1988). Luthans et al. (1988) defined success as the rate and frequency at which a leader gets promoted. In this context, leaders who are promoted more frequently are regarded as more successful and leaders who are passed over for promotions are regarded as less successful. When defining and differentiating success from effectiveness, Luthans et al. (1988) described unit effectiveness in terms of quality and quantity of performance, subordinate satisfaction, and subordinate organizational commitment. Yet, the strongest indicator of leader success was networking ability. This present study extended the work of Luthans et al. (1988) by testing antecedents of success and effectiveness and further delineating these outcomes.

The antecedents of success and effectiveness tested in this study were interpersonal political skills (IPS), as they describe the skills and behaviors most closely linked to the work of Luthans et al. (1988) (Ahearn, Ferris, Hochwarter, Douglas, & Ammeter, 2004; Ferris, Treadway, Kolodinsky, Hochwarter, Kacmar, Douglas, & Frink, 2003). Interpersonal political skills included the ability to accurately assess social situations, communicate in a believable manner, network both inside and outside the organization, and use influence effectively (Kolodinsky, 2003).

Considered manipulative by some, interpersonal political skills reflect a desire to accumulate influence and present a positive image within the organization (Douglas & Ammeter, 2004). Because organizations are political arenas, it is necessary for leaders to exercise socialized political behavior to exert influence and control in a manner that is not viewed as manipulative (Mintzberg, 1983). It also is necessary to understand the motivational forces behind leader behavior, since leaders who are politically skilled have the ability to accumulate power.

Positive and negative motivations of political behavior have been discussed in recent research (Ammeter, Douglas, Gardner, Hochwarter, & Ferris, 2002). The present study examined the motivation to serve the needs of others – altruism – as the primary factor

in leader behavior (Avolio & Locke, 2002; Choi & Mai-Dalton, 1998; Drach-Zahavy, 2004; Peterson & Seligman, 2003; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990). Broadening our understanding of how altruism impacts leader success and effectiveness through the use of political skills will advance the field of leadership and management practice.

This work was the first study known to examine interpersonal political skills and their impact on both success and effectiveness. In addition, this study extends prior research of the antecedents of success and effectiveness by differentiating between the two.

### **Leadership Effectiveness**

Leadership effectiveness, defined as effectively managing employees through communication styles, was first examined in depth at the Ohio State University (Stogdill, 1950; Stogdill, 1963; Stogdill & Shartle, 1956; Stogdill, Goode, & Day, 1963a), Stogdill, Goode & Day, (1963b), Stogdill, Goode, & Day, 1964. Judge (2004) revisited these variables in a meta-analysis and found consistent correlations between consideration and initiating structure with positive leadership outcomes. Overall, the social nature of leadership was confirmed through Judge's (2004) meta-analysis.

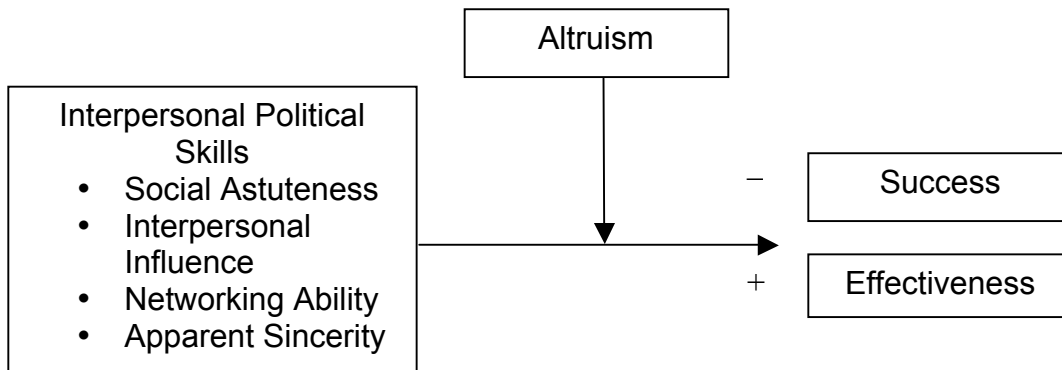
Kotter (1982) also studied leadership effectiveness and found that emotional stability, optimism, intelligence, analytical ability, intuition, and the ability to relate interpersonally and professionally to a broad set of business specialists are especially important. Virtually all general managers studied were both personable and good at building relationships with people. Gardner (1999) considered social skills to be so vital to effectiveness as to constitute a distinct form of intelligence (Gardner, 1999).

Other research supports the notion that social skills are predictors of effectiveness within organizations (Connelly, Gilbert, Zaccaro, Threlfall, Marks, & Mumford 2000; Riggio, Riggio, Salinas, & Cole 2003; Warech, Smither, & Reilly, 1998; Zaccaro, Gilbert, Thor, & Mumford, 1991). While these studies have given the field of leadership a glimpse of what effective leadership is and the importance of social skills, they are limited to specifically describing behaviors that result in leadership effectiveness, not necessarily leader success. Leadership effectiveness is one of the two dependent variables studied in this framework. (See Figure 1.)

### **Leadership Success**

The limited research to date in the area of leadership success has loosely operationalized success as promotion (Jansen & Vinkenburg, 2006) and advancement (Collins, 2002; Vitek, 2003). These studies identified antecedents to career success to be age, demographic variables, social skills, emotional intelligence, networking, supervisor characteristics, the nature of the labor market, resource dependency, mentoring, and politics.

Figure 1. The Framework



Kotter (1978) indicated that successful and effective managers spend significant portions of their day – up to 80 percent – trying to maintain and develop relationships with others who are likely to defer to their ideas and requests. Thus, a manager who needs the cooperation of others is more likely to engage in political behavior than one who does not depend on employee cooperation. To be successful, managers must learn to use their accumulated power over those upon whom they are dependent and develop political allies.

Luthans et al. (1988) empirically determined the key differences between “success” and “effectiveness” and reported that successful managers spend 70 percent more time networking (contact with outside parties and socializing) than managers described as effective. Through this differentiation between success and effectiveness, Luthans et al. found that successful managers were not necessarily effective. The opposite was also true, as effective managers were not necessarily successful. These findings indicate that effectiveness and success need to be studied as separate leadership outcome variables.

### Political Skills

Political behavior in organizations has been operationalized as interpersonal political skills (IPS) and defined as the difference between successful and unsuccessful influence attempts (Kolodinsky, 2003). Similar to organizational power and influence processes, interpersonal political skill impacts how one works with others within an organization (Kipnis, Schmidt, & Wilkinson, 1980; Pfeffer, 1992; Schriesheim & Hinkin, 1990; Yukl & Falbe, 1990). Interpersonal political skills are vital leadership skills in the workplace as organizational settings are becoming more complex with higher expectations required of employees.

Empirical research has found that leaders who possess a moderate amount of political skill experience less job tension ( $r = -.22$ ) and greater job satisfaction ( $r = .16$ ) and

higher job commitment ( $r = .18$ ) (Kolodinsky, 2003). Another study found positive political behaviors to be significantly correlated with employee satisfaction with the supervisor ( $r = .29$ ) and satisfaction with work group ( $r = .34$ ) (Fedor et al., 2003).

Political skill also has been found to directly influence supervisor's liking of ( $r = .16$ ) and perceived similarity to ( $r = .14$ ) subordinates (Kolodinsky, 2003). This result is consistent with work on leadership success and failure, which found that effective managers are able to build strong alliances within the organization that promote positive outcomes (Dalton, 1959; Hogan & Hogan, 2002).

Similarly, a lack of interpersonal political skills has been shown to lead to negative outcomes for leaders. A manager who does not possess interpersonal political skill can appear self-interested, manipulative, and insincere when trying to influence others (Kaplan, 1984). Problems with interpersonal relationships have been found to be a chief cause of career failure (Lombardo & McCauley, 1988; McCall & Lombardo, 1983).

### **Political Skills and Delineations of Success and Effectiveness**

This study examined not what managers do, but how they do it, and proposed that political skills are antecedents of success and effectiveness. Mintzberg (1983) argued that to be successful, individuals need to possess political skill. Because organizational structures are changing from a hierarchical to a team orientation, political skills are more vital than ever (Daft & Lewin, 1993; Kotter, 1985; Stewart & Carson, 1997). For example, Hooijberg, Hunt, and Dodge (1997) found that managers who use a wide range of behaviors are viewed as more effective, and Zaccaro et al. (1991) found that the ability to switch between appropriate leadership behaviors is linked to leader emergence.

Hypothesis 1: The level of leader interpersonal political skills will impact leader success and effectiveness outcomes.

### **Political Skill Constructs and Their Impact on Success and Effectiveness**

#### Social Astuteness

Social astuteness is described as an interpersonal skill that allows one to interpret and effectively react to work situations. Leaders who are socially astute can quickly assess a situation, determine alternative methods to address the situation, and consistently make the right behavioral choice.

Seminal research supports the notion of social astuteness. Thorndike (1920) conceptualized the social nature of leadership by defining social intelligence as "the ability to understand men and women, boys and girls – to act wisely in human relations" (p.228). Kotter (1982) found that effective managers can alter their communication and interpersonal skills in order to relate to individuals from many different professional sectors.

Meichenbaum, Butler, and Gruson (1981) discussed social skill as the knowledge of and ability to understand differing social situations and alter behavior accordingly. Ferris et al. (2005) described social effectiveness as a broad construct that includes social intelligence, emotional intelligence, social skill, interpersonal acumen, and functional flexibility.

This study proposed that leaders high in social astuteness would be both successful (frequent promotions) and effective (measured by rater evaluations). Social astuteness allows leaders to successfully guide units, resulting in high performance and positive peer evaluations. Success within the unit makes the leader prime for promotions.

Hypothesis 2a. Social astuteness will be positively related to effectiveness.

Hypothesis 2b. Social astuteness will be positively related to success.

### Interpersonal Influence

Influence tactics have been extensively researched (Kipnis, Schmidt, & Wilkinson, 1980; Schriesheim & Hinkin, 1990; Yukl & Falbe, 1990). Pfeffer (1992) described interpersonal influence as the ability to change behavior in order to receive cooperation from others for the purpose of attaining personal and professional goals. Understanding which influence behavior to use leads to a strong influential impact within work settings.

This study proposed that employees strong in interpersonal influence will be both successful and effective. Interpersonal influence is comprised of the ability to shape decisions, gain power through influence, and alter influence attempts in order to gain compliance from superiors, subordinates, and peers.

Hypothesis 3a. Interpersonal influence will be positively related to effectiveness.

Hypothesis 3b. Interpersonal influence will be positively related to success.

### Networking Ability

Pfeffer (1992) described the employee who is able to network as one who uses the socially constructed nature of organizations to create and take advantage of opportunities. Social capital is described as resources accumulated for one's benefit through social and interpersonal ties (Coleman, 1988). Networking, both inside and outside the organization, allows employees to accumulate the social capital necessary to receive promotions and obtain a high salary.

Luthans et al. (1988) found networking to be the activity in which successful managers spent most of their time. Their interpersonal political skill validation study showed that networking ability strongly correlates with several variables (self-monitoring,  $r = .30$ ; upward appeal,  $r = .26$ ; coalitions,  $r = .30$ ; assertiveness,  $r = .22$ ; and political savvy,  $r =$

.38). Empirical evidence indicates that networking ability strongly impacts assessments of leader performance ( $r = .61$ ; Ferris et al., 2003). The ability to gain information from and provide special information to others and the ability to socialize positively inside and outside the organization give leaders advantages that lead to increased salary and promotions.

This study proposed that those who effectively network will be successful within the organization, but not necessarily effective. The time and effort required to effectively network takes away valuable time leaders would otherwise be devoting to developing and managing employees. Due to the lack of attention focused on employees, it is proposed that employee evaluations of those scoring higher in networking would not be favorable. Because the leader is frequently networking outside the unit, human resource factors necessary to create a healthy work unit would be lacking. Consistent with the finding of Luthans et al. (1988) that networking is strongly associated with success but not related to effectiveness, this study proposed that those who are skilled at networking would be successful, but not effective.

Hypothesis 4a. Networking ability will be negatively related to effectiveness.

Hypothesis 4b. Networking ability will be positively related to success.

### Apparent Sincerity

Apparent sincerity is a skill that allows one to disguise ulterior motives. Gardner and Avolio's (1998) dramaturgical approach to leadership provides a strong theoretical background for apparent sincerity. Peers positively evaluate leaders who are able to model exemplary behaviors and appear to make personal sacrifices.

Kotter (1982) found that the better managers use a wide variety of influence tactics, but they also do so with greater skill. Jones (1990) notes that influence attempts are successful only if targets perceive them as not grounded in ulterior motives. Leader success and effectiveness depend upon followers trusting that the leader is acting in the followers' best interests (Wrightsman, 1964). Apparent sincerity would likely increase the level of trust peers have in their leader because the leader appears to have high levels of integrity and genuineness (Ferris et al., 2003). Finally, Jones and Pittman (1982) identified proactive self-presentation strategies through which leaders are able to convince others that they are moral and competent.

This study proposed that employees would positively rate those strong in apparent sincerity because they feel their interests are being addressed. Those strong in apparent sincerity would also be highly paid and receive promotions more frequently than those not strong in this skill. They are able to stretch truths to their benefit and manipulate others through their strong "acting" skills (Ammeter et al., 2002).

Hypothesis 5a. Apparent sincerity will be positively related to effectiveness.

Hypothesis 5b. Apparent sincerity will be positively related to success.

#### Moderating Variable - Leader Altruism

Leadership researchers have debated the nature of altruism in the recent past (Avolio & Locke, 2002). The debate still lingers as to whether one can be truly altruistic or whether those who serve others seek to satisfy a personal need to “give,” thereby gaining pleasure from their service. This study examined the altruistic motivations of leaders and how they impact the relationship between political skills and success and effectiveness.

This study proposed that those with strong political skills – with the exception of networking – will be highly successful and effective. The politically skilled employee is an asset to an organization because he or she knows how to reach personal organizational goals through people. If the politically skilled employee is motivated by the best interests of the organization, or the common good, then his or her political skill is of benefit to the organization. If, however, the politically skilled employee is motivated by a self-serving bias, then it is possible he/she would seek self-serving goals that do not necessarily benefit the organization. This study seeks to determine if others can discern motivations of leaders who have varying levels of interpersonal political skill.

Leadership research has recently been emphasizing the benefits of altruistic behavior and moral character in leadership (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Bass & Steidelmeier, 1999; Greenleaf, 1970; Luthans & Avolio, 2003). In fact, authentic and transformational leadership theories are premised on the fact that leaders exhibit some capacity for moral character (Kanungo, 2001). In this context, altruistic employees put others’ interests ahead of their own, do all they can to serve their employees, go above and beyond the call of duty to meet employee needs, and are equated with ethical success (Price, 2003).

Recent experiments found that leaders tend to act more altruistically toward others because they benefit from having a good reputation (Barclay, 2004). In a field study examining social networks, organizational citizenship behavior, altruism and relationships, Bowler and Brass (2006) found that those who develop strong friendships with others are more likely to exhibit citizenship behaviors toward others.

In another study of altruism and attraction, Sturmer, Kiel, Snyder, and Omoto (2005) found that altruistic behavior is more likely when those in need are members of the “in group.” Out-group members receive altruistic assistance only when there is a strong attraction to the out-group member. Finally, in an experimental study examining altruism and punishment in group behavior, Shinada and Yamagishi (2004) found that group norms strongly impact individual behavior within the group.

This study proposed that a politically skilled employee could be other-serving (altruistic) and highly effective. Specifically, leaders scoring higher in altruism would be rated as

more effective than leaders scoring lower in altruism. Leader altruism would strengthen the relationship between each interpersonal political skill and effectiveness.

Additionally, this study proposed that a politically skilled employee could also be self-serving (low in altruism) and highly successful (frequently promoted) within an organization. Politically skilled employees are able to discern social situations and have the ability to use their influence to gain compliance from others. They can use their networking skills to meet personal and professional goals (Ammeter et al., 2002; Ferris et al., 2002). Therefore, this study proposed that leader altruism would neutralize the relationship between interpersonal political skills and success because one who sacrifices self for others would not seek promotions and salary increases as actively as one without altruistic tendencies. Altruistic employees would be more likely to develop those around them and not focus on self-centered needs (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2004, 2006; Lee, Lee, & Kang, 2003). Self-sacrificial behaviors of altruistic employees would not lend themselves to rapid promotions or salary increases.

Hypothesis 6a: Altruism will enhance the relationship between political skills and effectiveness.

Hypothesis 6b: Altruism will neutralize the relationship between political skills and success.

## **Methodology**

Interpersonal political skills were tested as predictors of success and effectiveness and moderated by altruism. The research design was a multi-level model centering on employees from four organizations (Level 1) nested within work groups who interact with the same employee (Level 2). A web-based survey was used for data collection. The sections immediately following describe the population, research design, and instrumentation.

### Population

Participants in this study (n = 217) were leader-rater dyads (108 dyads) from four separate organizations located in the Midwestern United States. Organizations that served as data collection sites were contacted by researchers and invited to participate in the study. An attempt was made by researchers to recruit different types of organizations (public, private, educational, manufacturing, and financial) in order to capture a wide variance of responses. All data collection sites voluntarily participated in the study.

Leader participants in the study were emailed a link to the online survey, requesting participation. Once they had completed the survey, they were asked to provide the names and email addresses of three individuals – peers, supervisors, and/or subordinates – who could rate their leadership skills. The researcher e-mailed potential rater participants the rater survey link. Rater participants totaled 217 of a potential 285 respondents, for a response rate of 76 percent. To encourage participation and

anonymity, any identifying information collected from either participants or raters was accessible only to the researcher. Identifiers were removed once data were collected.

### Research Design

Data were collected and analyzed at the dyadic level. Leader participants self-reported demographic data and responded to questions about the independent variables of political skill and altruism. Responses to questions about the independent variables also were collected from raters. Information on one dependent variable, effectiveness, was collected only from raters through a 5-item effectiveness scale. Information on the other dependent variable, success, was self-reported by leader participants.

Because data were collected from both leader participants and their raters, Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM) data analysis procedures were used. HLM allows researchers to examine data from two levels – the rater participant (level 1) and the leader participant (level 2) (Hofmann, 1997). Raters are said to be “nested” within related level 2 participants, creating the ability to examine data both for an individual leader participant and his or her raters and also among participants. HLM analyses result in estimates of error and significance not possible with traditional regression. By utilizing HLM, researchers can analyze individual and group level variance and obtain higher statistical rigor than simple correlations and regression analysis (Hofmann, 1997).

### **Measures**

Leader participants completed the 18-item political skill inventory (Ferris et al., 1999). Raters completed a modified version of the political skill inventory to report on the political skill of their peer, subordinate, or supervisor. The political skill inventory consists of 18 items comprising four subscales in a Likert format. It has consistently achieved reliable subscale coefficients (.92; Ferris et al., 1999). In this study, the four subscales were sound -- Social Astuteness ( $\alpha = .83$ ), Interpersonal Influence ( $\alpha = .86$ ), Networking ( $\alpha = .77$ ), and Apparent Sincerity ( $\alpha = .82$ ).

Leader participants completed a seven-item altruism scale, a subscale of the Organizational Citizenship Scale developed by Smith, Organ, and Near (1983). Items from the altruism measure have been shown to be reliable and valid with alphas ranging from .70 to .78. In this study, the altruism measure was sound ( $\alpha = .82$ ).

Following the real managers procedure devised by Luthans et al. (1988), success was operationalized using the Manager Success Index (MSI), which provides objective measures of success and is derived by dividing the employee's level within the organization by their tenure in the field.

To determine leader effectiveness, the subscales used to measure effectiveness in this study are items derived from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1999) that relate to satisfaction and effectiveness. Items from the MLQ have been

*Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix IPS, Success, Effectiveness and Altruism*

M	SD	Leader Social Astuteness	Leader Inter-personal Influence	Leader Net-Working Ability	Leader Apparent Sincerity	Leader Altruism	Rating of Social Astuteness	Rating of Inter personal Influence	Rating of Networking Ability	Rating of Apparent Sincerity	Rating of Altruism	Success	Effective
5.44	3.06	1											
3.20	2.35	.65**	1										
8.26	3.91	.65**	.65**	1									
0.41	1.69	.58**	.65**	.49**	1								
1.33	3.32	.52**	.59**	.56**	.62**	1							
6.27	3.26	.17*	.15*	.16*	.10	.12	1						
3.51	2.63	.13	.16*	.16*	.11	.02	.74**	1					
0.11	4.01	.11	.10	.18*	.05	.06	.72**	.69**	1				
9.97	1.95	.06	.15*	.12	.14*	.01	.60**	.71**	.54**	1			
6.48	3.39	.06	.10	.13	.12	.04	.65**	.67**	.65**	.65**	1		
.37	.61	-.01	-.11	.10	-.01	.01	-.06	-.07	-.09	.06	.01	1	
4.14	.80	.08	.09	.15*	.12	.05	.65**	.68**	.56**	.65**	.73**	-.01	1

\*p < .05 (Two tailed test).

\*\*p < .01. (Two-tailed test).

found to be reliable and effective, with a coefficient alpha ranging from .75 – .92 (Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1999). In this study, the effectiveness measure was sound ( $\alpha = .89$ ).

## Data Analysis

Data in this study were collected from leader participants and individual raters of these participants. Data collected from two sources are considered multilevel data, as they are drawn from the raters (level 1) and participants (level 2). These data are analyzed using the Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM) statistical technique, as it is able to investigate and analyze relationships at the dyad, or two data collection levels.

HLM adopts a two-level approach to cross-level investigations, wherein the Level 1 model is estimated separately for each group. Effectiveness and success variables were examined separately, as effectiveness is a level 1 variable (reported by raters) and success is a level 2 variable (reported by leader participants).

## Results

The results of this model indicate that two level 2 within variables (Interpersonal Influence=2.54 and Altruism=4.49) had direct effects in predicting effectiveness and achieved statistical significance. The Wald statistic for level 2 between variables in predicting effectiveness indicated that one direct effect (Networking ability=2.52) and one interaction effect (Social Astuteness x Altruism=2.67) achieved significance (see Table 2).

Table 2. Model Results for Test of Interpersonal Political Skills and Altruism on Effectiveness.

	Estimates	S.E.	Est./S.E. (Wald Statistic)
<u>Within Level</u>			
Interpersonal Influence	.325	.128	2.54*
Altruism	.486	.108	4.49*
Residual Variances	.23	.05	4.61*
<u>Between Level</u>			
Networking Ability	.269	.107	2.51*
Altruism x Social Astuteness	.442	.165	2.67*
Intercepts	4.22	.05	11.19*
Residual Variances	.099	2.47	.70

\*p < .05. (One-tailed test).

The results of this model indicate that none of the level 2 within variables had direct effects in predicting success and did not achieve statistical significance. The Wald statistic for level 2 between variables in predicting success indicated that one direct effect (Networking Ability=2.33) and one interaction effect (Networking x altruism=-2.07) achieved significance (see Table 3).

Findings indicate that interpersonal influence was positively related to effectiveness, and networking ability was positively related to both effectiveness and success. In addition, altruism enhanced the relationship between social astuteness and effectiveness.

Table 3. Model Results for Test of Interpersonal Political Skills and Altruism on Success.

	Estimates	S.E.	Est./S.E. (Wald Statistic)
<u>Between Level</u>			
Networking Ability	.331	.139	2.33*
Networking x Altruism	.576	.277	-2.07
Intercepts	.400	.071	-1.42
Residual Variances	.317	.172	.85

\*p < .05. (One-tailed test).

Second, the leader participant altruism x networking interaction resulted in a significant, yet negative, relationship to success. The more altruistic the participant was viewed, the less networking contributed to his/her success. The less altruistic the person was viewed, the more networking contributed to his/her success. Figure 2 depicts significant findings through HLM analysis.

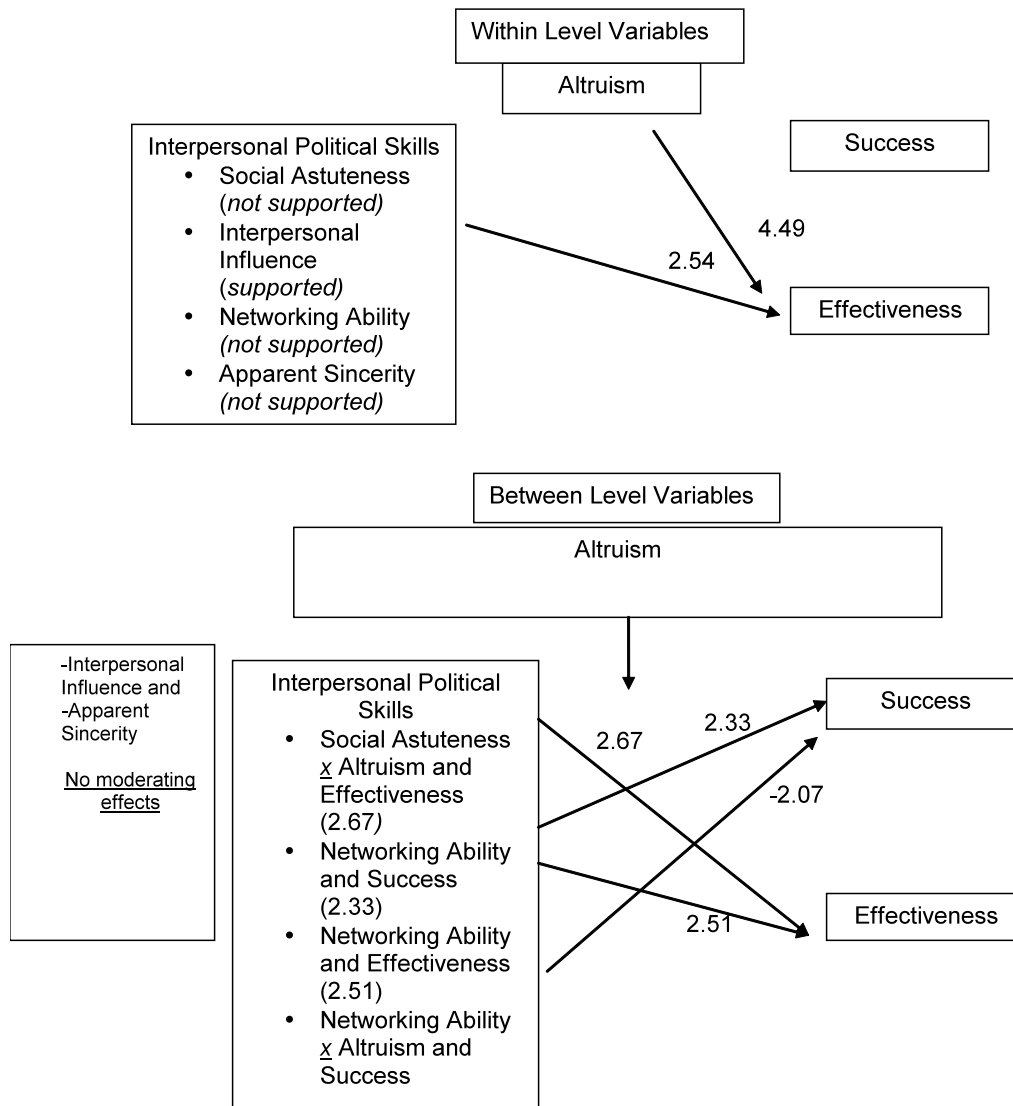
## Discussion

### Implications for Research

Results for the within and between models for hierarchical linear modeling indicate only two significant predictors in the within model (interpersonal influence and altruism as predictors of effectiveness) and four significant predictors in the between model (direct effects were found for networking ability as a predictor of both success and effectiveness; and moderating effects were found for altruism in neutralizing networking and strengthening social astuteness).

The research questions in this study sought to examine leader political skills and altruism and their impact on success and effectiveness. In order to eliminate single method bias and to enhance our understanding of the constructs, data needed to be collected from more than one source. In the case of this study, data were collected at two levels -- leader (level 2) and rater (level 1). In order to accurately analyze these types of data, multilevel data analysis was necessary. Utilizing correlations and regressions could lead to Type 1 errors.

Figure 2. Final Model After Hypotheses Testing.



Between-level analysis utilizes the data results from the within-level variables, or rater data, and then analyzes them between all the leaders in the study. In this manner, two levels of data are accounted for. Not only do we understand how raters evaluate leaders (within level), but we also understand how leaders rate themselves (between level) and how those data combined with rater data impact the variables in the study. Prior studies that relied on simple correlations between multilevel variables need to be reanalyzed using HLM procedures.

## Implications for Practice

Practicing managers need to consider the overwhelming impact of altruism on effectiveness. While altruism is sometimes thought of as a component of character within an individual, it can also be thought of as a manifestation of corporate culture. Organizations that promote the value of serving others would be able to bring forth altruistic tendencies in their workers. Organizations that articulate socially responsible values and ethical practices would likely attract and retain altruistic employees. Organizations that thrive on competitive, self-serving values would not attract altruistic—hence highly effective – employees.

Practicing managers who want to develop their leadership effectiveness should focus on developing interpersonal influence and networking ability. These two constructs, given the results of this study, seem to lead most directly to positive effectiveness ratings. On the other hand, for those managers who seek to climb the corporate ladder, only networking ability seems to lead to success, although managers should be wary of partaking in empty networking strategies that truly do not serve the organization. As Bedeian and Day (2004) reiterate, over time, these hollow corporate climbing strategies are detected by others and lead to career failure rather than success.

Most people understand that politics are prevalent in organizations, and most still perceive them in a negative manner. It is the linkage between altruism and networking that impacts how politics work in organizations. If more managers were truly altruistic, then politics in organizations would not have such a stigma. This study revealed that politics can be positive if used to improve the condition of the workplace not only for self, but for others.

Finally, in this study apparent sincerity did not impact either success or effectiveness. This is a surprising result, as research in authentic leadership (Luthans & Avolio, 2003) indicates that leaders scoring higher in authenticity, or sincerity, would be evaluated as effective and successful. In contrast, those who do not appear sincere would be evaluated less positively. Although a measure has not yet been developed to capture authenticity, it is clear through this study that the apparent sincerity subscale is not easily discerned by raters, or that apparent sincerity does not lead to effectiveness or success.

## **Conclusion**

This study found that a leader's interpersonal influence significantly impacts ratings of effectiveness. Interpersonal influence is the ability to use communication to influence others in a positive manner. This study also found support for the notion that those who are skilled at networking within an organization are more successful. This finding is in line with previous research (Luthans et al., 1988). Another finding was that altruism strengthens the relationship between social astuteness and effectiveness. Raters in this study reported that leaders who are more socially astute are more effective. The most interesting aspect of this finding, however, is that altruism strengthens the relationship

between social astuteness and effectiveness. This work lends clarity to previous work by showing that serving others in combination with social astuteness is a stronger predictor of effectiveness than social astuteness alone.

A final result of this study was the interaction effect between altruism and networking in predicting success. Altruism negatively impacts the relationship between networking and success. Therefore, the more altruistic a leader is, the less his or her networking ability leads to success. The less altruistic a leader is, the greater the relationship between networking and success.

A surprising finding from this study is that altruism has a direct impact on leadership effectiveness. Serving others, putting their needs first and foregoing self-interest were all perceived by raters to lead to greater leadership effectiveness, lending support to previous and recent research indicating that a servant- or other-orientation leads to leadership effectiveness (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2004, 2006; Bass & Steidmeier, 1999; Greenleaf, 1970; Luthans & Avolio, 2003). Another surprising finding of this study is the significant relationship of networking ability with effectiveness. Raters in this study perceived those with strong networking skills as highly effective.

This study examined management success and effectiveness as outcomes of interpersonal political skills. Altruism moderates the relationship between political skills, success and effectiveness. A multilevel model was tested and results indicated that altruism is an important component of leadership effectiveness and that altruistic leaders will not seek promotion opportunities as frequently as those who are not altruistic. Networking strategies lead to both leadership success and effectiveness. This work emphasizes the importance of networking, indicating that those who seek to serve others should purposefully develop networks if they wish to be successful. Future researchers should consider the use of multilevel modeling when examining leader behavior and its outcomes. Because interpersonal political skills were found to be predictors of success and effectiveness, future research should focus on antecedents of political skills.

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