



Employee perceptions of organizational politics and job burnout: The roles of organization-based self-esteem and perceived organizational support

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Abstract: This study tested a moderated mediation model on the role of employee organization-based self-esteem (OBSE) and perceived organization support in the relationship between perceptions of organizational politics (POP) and job burnout. A two-wave online survey was conducted with 313 employees of 9 enterprises (females = 28.4% mean age = 3.35, SD = 0.808). These enterprises cover the manufacturing (76.4%), service (3.5%), and other industries (20.1%). PROCESS linear regression analyses results show that POP is associated with higher job burnout. Organization-based self-esteem mediates the relationship between POP and job burnout. Furthermore, POS moderates the relationship between POP and OBSE so that when POS is high level, OBSE is higher. The indirect effect of POP on job burnout via OBSE weakens when employees have a high level of POS. These findings are consistent with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, which proposes that a reduction in job resources (e.g., perceptions of organizational politics) exacerbates job burnout; meanwhile, job resources (e.g., perceived organizational support) can buffer the indirect effect of POP on job burnout via OBSE. The study findings convey the practical implications POS as an imperative resource in alleviating job burnout and enhancing OBSE among employees in organizations where POP is prevalent.

Keywords: Perceptions of organizational politics; organization-based self-esteem; perceived organizational support; job burnout

Introduction

Organizational politics is a ubiquitous phenomenon (Lee, 2024) as employees engage in behaviors that benefit themselves at the expense of the organization or others. These behaviors are rooted more in perceptions of organizational politics (POP) than by actual organizational political behaviors (Chang & Pak, 2024). Nonetheless, they can be stress inducing to employees by their organization-based self-esteem and/or perceptions of organizational support in ways yet to be determined. Understanding the role of organization-based self-esteem and POP is valuable for mitigating unwanted organizational politics effects with employee organizational support.

Employee perceptions of organizational politics and job burnout

Perceptions of organizational politics (POP) reflect employees' subjective evaluation of the extent to which self-serving behaviors occur within the organization (Lee, 2024). A substantial body of research has confirmed the detrimental effects of POP. For instance, POP has been shown to reduce employees' task performance, organizational citizenship behavior (Kaur & Lakhwinder, 2023), organizational commitment, perceptions of organizational fairness (Lee, 2024), openness to change (Zhao et al., 2016), and job satisfaction (Gad & Elsayed, 2023). Conversely, it increases turnover intentions, work stress, negative emotions, counterproductive work behaviors (De Clercq & Pereira, 2022; Malik & Pichler, 2023), and job insecurity (Zhao et al., 2016). A higher level of POP indicates that employees perceive a greater prevalence of

individuals exploiting their authority or misusing organizational resources for personal gain, which poses a significant threat to their own work resources.

Job burnout is a psychological state characterized by emotional exhaustion resulting from prolonged workplace stress. It is typically conceptualized as a three-dimensional construct comprising emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and feelings of reduced personal accomplishment (or professional efficacy) (Cheng et al., 2023). Specifically, emotional exhaustion refers to a state of feeling emotionally drained and depleted; depersonalization manifests as withdrawal or mental detachment from recipients, accompanied by a cynical attitude toward others in the workplace; and reduced personal accomplishment involves a lack of confidence and a diminished sense of achievement in one's work. Recognized as one of the most significant occupational hazards of the 21st century, job burnout has been shown to significantly impair employees' self-management performance (Morikawa et al., 2025), creativity (Mushtaq et al., 2022), task performance (Moch, 2024), and safety behaviors etc. (Liu et al., 2022).

In other words, POP reflects a perception of being deprived of proper work resources. According to the loss principle of Conservation of Resources Theory, employees may experience job burnout when they suffer such resource loss (Hobfoll, 1989). From another perspective, the loss of resources means an increase in employees' job demands. JD-R model clearly posits that job demands will induce job burnout. According to the JD-R model, such job demand resulting from resource loss threats hinder employees to fulfill work tasks, leading to withdrawal behaviors and ultimately inducing job burnout.



The mediating role of organization-based self-esteem

Organizational-based self-esteem refers to the degree to which individuals view themselves as important and valuable members of their organization (Pierce et al., 1989), reflecting their self-evaluation of worth within the workplace (Pierce & Gardner, 2004). It is a key employee personal resource (Xanthopoulou et al., 2009), may be influenced by employees' POP, which in turn affects their job burnout. Employees with high organizational-based self-esteem tend to hold positive self-views, seeing themselves as competent, significant, and valuable at work. Conversely, those with low organizational-based self-esteem may hold negative self-perceptions, viewing themselves as incompetent, insignificant, and of little value to the organization.

In organizational settings, heightened perceptions of organizational politics lead to employees to perceive a greater prevalence of power abuse and the misuse of public resources for personal gain. Such a perceived environment makes it more difficult for employees to obtain the resources needed to perform their tasks effectively, thereby hindering task completion and limiting the demonstration of their work competencies. Consequently, these experiences foster self-doubt regarding their value and significance within the organization, ultimately resulting in lower levels of organization-based self-esteem (OBSE).

The moderating role of perceived organizational support

Perceived Organizational Support refers to the extent to which employees perceive that the organization values their contributions, cares about their well-being, and provides support for their work (Rockstuhl et al., 2020). As such, POS can be conceptualized as a form of organizational resource (Rockstuhl et al., 2020). Specifically, when employees perceive high levels of organizational support, they are more likely to feel valued by the organization, with their competence and contributions recognized. This high level of POS reflects access to critical resources, which fosters both task performance and psychological well-being. In such cases, resources provided by organizational support can promptly replenish the resource depletion caused by political behaviors, thereby alleviating the negative impact on organizational-based self-esteem and, subsequently, on job burnout. In contrast, employees with low POS perceive that they receive minimal concern and support from the organization and have access to fewer resources. Consequently, the buffering effect of POS on the negative impact of POP on organizational-based self-esteem is weakened, which in turn leading to a weaker influence on job burnout.

Theoretical background

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model commonly is widely used to explain the relationship between job demands and job burnout. This model points that job demands can impact job burnout either directly or indirectly (i.e., through personal resources) impact job burnout. Job demands refer to “those physical, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical or mental effort and are therefore associated with certain physiological and psychological costs (e.g.,

exhaustion)”. POP reflects employees' perception of unfair or unreasonable resource allocation and resource utilization (Lee, 2024). As a negative workplace factor that depletes individual energy, POP aligns with the defining characteristics of job demands. Therefore, based on the JD-R model, POP may be conceptualized as a job demand that negatively impacts employee job burnout.

Additionally, the JD-R model points out that job demands can deplete personal resources, and further impact job burnout. Personal resources refer to “the psychological characteristics or aspects of the self that show general associations with resiliency and that refer to the ability to control and impact one's environment successfully”. As a typical personal resource (Li et al., 2022), organizational-based self-esteem (OBSE) reflects the degree to which individuals perceive themselves as important and valuable members of an organization (Pierce et al., 1989). OBSE may be affected by job demands such as POP and in turn influence job burnout.

Meanwhile, the buffering hypothesis of the JD-R model suggests that job resources can buffer the negative influence of job demands on job burnout. We propose that POS may play a moderator between POP and OBSE because POS can be conceptualized as a job resource. Specifically, POS refers to employees' beliefs that the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being, representing a key psychological resource.

Accordingly, based on the JD-R theoretical framework, this study incorporates OBSE and POS to construct a theoretical model explaining why and how POP influences job burnout, and proposes the following: (1) POP, as a job demand, may induce job burnout among employees; (2) POP may influence employees' self-evaluation of the resources they possess, thereby assessing their value and significance within the organization. This perception can affect organizational-based self-esteem (OBSE, a personal resource), which in turn impacts job burnout. Following this logical reasoning, OBSE may serve as a mediating mechanism explaining why POP influences job burnout; (3) In line with the JD-R theory, perceived organizational support (a form of organizational resource) functions as a resource supplement for employees. Consequently, in contexts with high levels of organizational support, the effect of POP on OBSE may be altered, thereby influencing employees' job burnout.

Goal of the study

This study tested a moderated mediation model to explore the relationship between POP and job burnout, examining the mediating role of OBSE and the moderating effect of POS. It tested the following hypotheses based on our conceptual model (as in Figure 1).

H1: Perceptions of organizational politics (POP) is associated with lower job burnout.

H2: Organizational-based self-esteem mediates the relationship between perceptions of organizational politics and job burnout for lower job burnout.

H3: Perceived organizational support buffers perceptions of organizational politics on organizational-based self-esteem for higher organizational-based self-esteem.

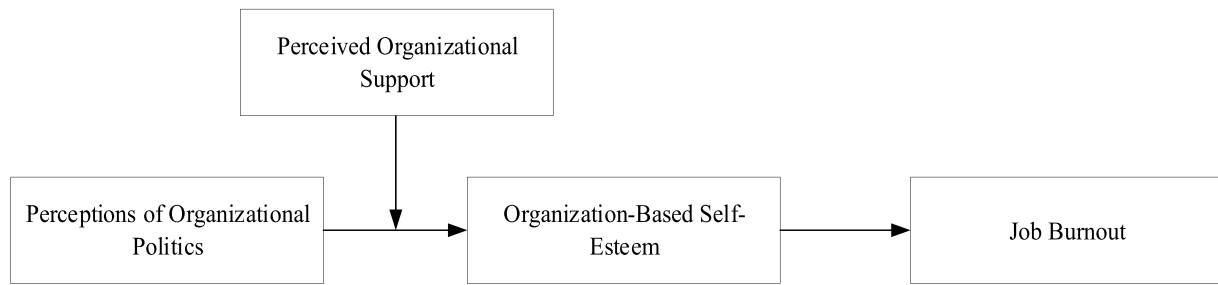


Figure 1. Theoretical model

H4: Perceived organizational support buffers the indirect effect of perceptions of organizational politics on job burnout through organizational-based self-esteem for lower job burnout.

Although existing studies have extensively investigated the antecedents of job burnout from a resource perspective, identifying factors such as workload, time pressure, role conflict, work stress, workplace loneliness (Cole et al., 2012; Kalmanovich-Cohen & Stanton, 2025), organizational support, job autonomy, perceptions of organizational change, goal facilitation, and career development as significant predictors of job burnout (Day et al., 2017; Cole et al., 2012; Alimbekov et al., 2025), the relationship between POP and job burnout remains underexplored. This study examines the effect of POP on job burnout from the perspective of the JD-R model.

Methods

Participants and setting

Participants were a convenience sample of 523 employees (females = 31.93%) from 9 enterprises. These enterprises cover the manufacturing, service, and other industries. 313 (28.4% females) were retained for a second wave data collection using the measures described below. Regarding education, 33.90% held a high school diploma, 25.20% had a college degree, 36.40% held a bachelor's degree, and 4.50% had a postgraduate degree. Regarding tenure, 17.90% of employees had worked in their current organization for less than one year, 41.20% for 1–3 years, 13.40% for 3–5 years, 16% for 5–8 years, and 21.50% for more than 8 years. In terms of the duration of working with their current supervisor, 25.20% had worked together for less than one year, 43.10% for 1–3 years, 14.70% for 3–5 years, and 17% for more than five years.

Measures

We employed standardized measures for the study variables. In this study, all constructs were measured by the seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

Perceptions of organizational politics. We adopted a nine-item scale from Liu et al. (2008) to measure employees' perceptions of organizational politics. An example item is "Managers leverage institutional policies to advance their own professional development". The Cronbach's alpha for POP scores from this scale in the present study was 0.901, and Composite reliability is 0.903, which is good reliability.

Organization-based self-esteem. The OBSE is an eight-item of ten-item scale developed by Pierce et al. (1989), see also Shu and Liang (2015). An example item is "I am valuable". The Cronbach's alpha for OBSE scores in this study is 0.928 and Composite reliability is 0.935, demonstrating good reliability.

Perceived organizational support. We measured employees perceived organizational support using a six-item scale from Liu et al. (2015). One example is "If I make a request, the company will assist me". Cronbach's alpha of this scale in this study is 0.957, and Composite reliability is 0.953. These results show that POS demonstrates good reliability.

Job burnout. We used a fifteen-item scale from Li (2003) to measure employee burnout level. Two examples are "I often feel exhausted". Cronbach's alpha for scores from this scale 0.962 in the present study, and Composite reliability is 0.963, which is good reliability.

Control variables. Demographic variables may influence employees' access to resources, and self-rated work life satisfaction (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Consequently, in this study we controlled employee gender, age, education, job tenure, and length of collaboration with supervisors.

Procedure

This study collected data through anonymous questionnaires and did not involve any sensitive personal information. The researcher provided a detailed introduction of the study to the participants. The respondents voluntarily participated in the study after we fully introduced the respondents on the study and assured them of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. Then, we sent the questionnaire link to those who agreed to participate in this study voluntarily. Each employee was rewarded with 15 RMB after completing the survey and their responses to the questionnaire were kept confidential.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed using SPSS to conduct descriptive and correlational analyses, as well as assess common method bias. The discriminant validity of the constructs (i.e., confirmatory factor analysis, CFA) was examined using Mplus. The SPSS PROCESS macro was employed to test the mediation and moderated mediation effects using the bootstrap method with 5000 resamples. Given that the present study focused on testing a moderated mediation model with observed variables (scale scores) rather than latent variable structure validation, the SPSS

PROCESS macro was employed instead of structural equation modeling (SEM). PROCESS provides a direct, robust, and widely accepted framework for examining direct, indirect, and conditional indirect effects via bootstrapping and yields more straightforward output for moderated mediation effects. SEM was not adopted because this study did not aim to evaluate measurement models or factor structures.

Confirmatory factor analysis

In this study, Mplus software is used to assess the discriminant validity of the constructs through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), as shown in Table 1. The results indicate that the four-factor model (M0), which includes perceptions of organizational politics (POP), organization-based self-esteem, perceived organizational support (POS), and job burnout, demonstrated a superior fit compared to alternative models ($\chi^2 = 1720.90$, $df = 659$, $RMSEA = 0.07$, $SRMR = 0.06$, $CFI = 0.88$, $TLI = 0.87$). Additionally, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of POP is 0.51, AVE of OBSE is 0.64, AVE of POS is 0.79, and AVE of job burnout is 0.64. These are all greater than 0.5. These results confirm the distinctiveness of the constructs and their robust discriminant validity.

Common method basis assessment

We measured variables at two separate times to reduce the impact of a common method basis. But questionnaire data was collected through self-reported methods by employees, which may introduce common method bias. To assess this potential bias, Harman's single-factor test was employed (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The results revealed that all items of the four main variables loaded onto five distinct factors, collectively explaining 71.75% of the total variance. The first factor accounted for 33.22% of the variance, which is below the threshold of 35%, indicating that common method bias is not a significant concern in this study (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986).

Results

Descriptive statistics

Table 2 shows the mean, standard deviations, and correlations analysis for both the demographic characteristics and the main variables examined in this study. The results show that POP is negatively correlated with organization-based self-esteem ($r = -0.295$, $p = 0.000$), positively correlated with job burnout ($r = 0.383$, $p = 0.000$), and negatively correlated with perceived organizational support ($r = -0.348$, $p = 0.000$). Organization-based self-esteem is negatively correlated with job burnout ($r = -0.257$, $p = 0.000$) and positively correlated with

Table 1. CFA results for the predicting discriminant validity of main variables

	χ^2	d.f.	$\Delta \chi^2$	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	SRMR
Four-factor model (M0)	1720.90	659		0.07	0.88	0.87	0.06
Three-factor model (M1)	2633.82	662	912.92	0.10	0.77	0.76	0.13
Three-factor model (M2)	3130.16	662	1409.26	0.11	0.71	0.69	0.12
Two-factor model (M3)	4014.81	664	2293.91	0.13	0.61	0.58	0.15

Note. $N = 313$. M0 = perceptions of organizational politics, organization-based self-esteem, perceived organizational support, job burnout; M1 = perceptions of organizational politics + job burnout, organization-based self-esteem, perceived organizational support; M2 = perceptions of organizational politics, organization-based self-esteem + perceived organizational support, job burnout; M3 = perceptions of organizational politics + job burnout, organization-based self-esteem + perceived organizational support.

Table 2. Means, standard deviations and correlations among study variables

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 Gender	1.28	0.452								
2 Age	3.35	0.808	0.030							
3 Education	2.12	0.933	-0.093	-0.042						
4 Tenure	2.62	1.268	-0.001	0.445**	0.010					
5 Work time with supervisor	2.27	1.101	-0.061	0.319**	0.003	0.665**				
6 Perceptions of organizational politics	2.74	1.165	-0.040	0.036	-0.136*	-0.074	-0.022			
7 Perceived organizational support	4.63	1.386	-0.023	0.007	0.261**	0.026	0.090	-0.348**		
8 Organization-based self-esteem	5.21	0.994	-0.043	0.137*	0.205**	0.132*	0.149**	-0.295**	0.364**	
9 Job burnout	2.65	1.273	-0.013	0.032	-0.166**	-0.001	0.013	0.383**	-0.090	-0.257**

Note. $N = 313$. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$.

Table 3. The results of hypotheses test

Variables	Organization-based self-esteem		Job burnout	
	Model 1 Est.	Model 2 Est.	Model 3 Est.	Model 4 Est.
Intercept	4.855**	4.534**	1.742**	2.682**
Gender	−0.035	−0.040	−0.009	−0.015
Age	0.130	0.114	0.003	0.022
Education	0.170	0.103	−0.117	−0.091
Tenure	−0.024	−0.024	0.022	0.019
Work time with supervisor	0.114	0.085	0.005	0.023
Perceptions of organizational politics	−0.277**	−0.210**	0.368**	0.326**
Perceived organizational support		0.252**		
Organization-based self-esteem				−0.151**
Perceptions of organizational politics* Perceived organizational support		0.126 * *		
R ²	0.150**	0.219**	0.160**	0.180
ΔR ²		0.069		0.020

Note. $N = 313$. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$. The values in the table are standardized coefficients.

Table 4. Results of mediating effects test

Effects	First path	Second path	Indirect effect	Direct effect	95% Confidence intervals	
					Lower	Upper
POP-OBSE-job burnout	−0.236**	−0.194**	0.046*	0.356**	0.0028	0.1035

Note. $N = 313$. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$. perceptions of organizational politics = POP, organization-based self-esteem = OBSE.

perceived organizational support ($r = 0.364$, $p = 0.000$). Perceived organizational support is not insignificantly correlated with job burnout ($r = -0.090$, $p = 0.111$). These outcomes serve as a preliminary basis for the forthcoming hypothesis testing.

Perceptions of organizational politics and job burnout

This study posits that perceptions of organizational politics (POP) is significantly and positively predict employee job burnout (Hypothesis 1). As shown in Model 3 of Table 3, after controlling for demographic variables (gender, age, education, tenure, work time with supervisor), POP significantly and positively predicts job burnout ($\beta = 0.368$, $p = 0.000$), providing support for Hypothesis 1.

Organizational-based self-esteem as a mediator

Hypothesis 2 proposes that organizational-based self-esteem mediates the relationship between perceptions of organizational politics (POP) and job burnout. Using the SPSS PROCESS macro and employing the bootstrap method with 5000 repeated samples, the analysis revealed that POP is significantly and negatively related to organizational-based self-esteem ($\beta = -0.277$, $p = 0.000$) that is indicated in the Model 1 in Table 3. Similarly, organizational-based self-esteem is significantly and negatively associated with job burnout ($\beta = -0.151$, $p = 0.008$) as indicated in the Model 4 in Table 3. Table 3 further shows that the effect of POP on job burnout decreases from 0.368 ($p = 0.000$) which is shown in the Model 3 to 0.326 ($p = 0.000$) presented in the Model

4. The indirect effect of POP on job burnout through organizational-based self-esteem is significantly positive ($b = 0.046$, $p = 0.019$), detailed in Table 4, with a 95% confidence interval of [0.0028, 0.1035], which does not include zero. This indicates that organizational-based self-esteem plays a significant partial mediating role in the relationship between POP and job burnout, thereby supporting Hypothesis 2.

Perceived organizational support as a moderator

Hypothesis 3 posits that perceived organizational support (POS) positively moderates the relationship between perceptions of organizational politics (POP) and organizational-based self-esteem. The model 2 in Table 3 demonstrates that the interaction term between POS and POP significantly and positively influences organizational-based self-esteem ($\beta = 0.126$, $p = 0.017$). To further examine this effect, a simple slope test was conducted, and the moderation effect is illustrated in Figure 2. When POS is low (1 standard deviation below the mean), POP is significantly and negatively related to organizational-based self-esteem ($b = -0.269$, $t = -3.346$, $p = 0.001$). Conversely, the relationship between POP and organizational-based self-esteem becomes insignificant ($b = -0.089$, $t = -1.106$, $p = 0.270$) when POS is high (1 standard deviation above the mean). In summary, POS significantly moderates the relationship between POP and organizational-based self-esteem. For employees with high POS, the negative

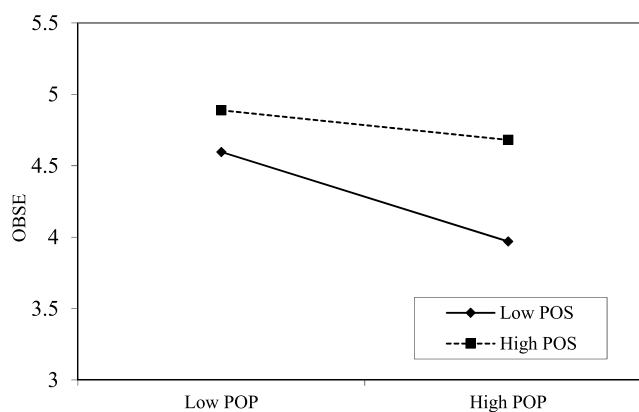


Figure 2. Moderating effects. *Note.* High POS = POS + 1 SD; Low POS = POS – 1 SD.

Table 5. Results of moderated mediation effects analysis

POP (X)→OBSE (M)→job burnout (Y)			
Descriptions	Indirect effects	SE	95% confidence intervals
High POS (+1 SD)	0.017	0.016	[−0.0030, 0.0658]
POS (Mean)	0.035	0.021	[0.0025, 0.0878]
Low POS (−1 SD)	0.052	0.031	[0.0018, 0.1243]
Index of moderated mediation effect	−0.013	0.009	[−0.0355, −0.0001]

Note. $N = 313$. perceptions of organizational politics = POP, organization-based self-esteem = OBSE, perceived organizational support = POS.

relationship between POP and organizational-based self-esteem is weaker, indicating that POS buffers the negative impact of POP on organizational-based self-esteem. This result supports Hypothesis 3.

Moderated mediation of perceived organizational support

Hypothesis 4 proposes that perceived organizational support (POS) moderates the indirect effect of perceptions of organizational politics (POP) on job burnout via organizational-based self-esteem. To test this hypothesis, the moderated mediation approach (Li et al., 2020b) was employed. The results indicate that under high POS, the indirect effect of POP on job burnout through organizational-based self-esteem is 0.017, with a 95% confidence interval of [−0.0030, 0.0658], which includes zero. In contrast, under low POS, the indirect effect is 0.052, with a 95% confidence interval of [0.0018, 0.1243], which does not include zero. The moderated mediation effect is −0.013, with a 95% confidence interval of [−0.0355, −0.0001], which does not include zero and is statistically significant and details are in Table 5. In summary, these findings provide support for Hypothesis 4.

Discussion

This study found that perceptions of organizational politics (POP) significantly and positively predict employee job burnout. Specifically, when POP is high, employees perceive threats to resource acquisition and must expend more of their existing resources to obtain necessary support, thereby increasing the likelihood of job burnout. This finding is consistent with the JD-R model, which states that a reduction in job resources or an increase in job demands

leads to employee job burnout. In this study, employee's POP, a perception of allocation of resources, appears to reduce employees' personal resource (i.e., OBSE), and undermines employees' confidence and effort in work, thereby contribute to job burnout (Pierce et al., 2016). Consequently, there exists an opportunity for organizations to alleviate employee job burnout by mitigating POP.

Our findings show that POP reduces employees' organizational-based self-esteem (OBSE), which in turn increases job burnout. This finding confirms the mediating role of organizational-based self-esteem in the relationship between POP and job burnout, unveiling the “black box” of how POP affects burnout. It can be understood from the perspective of the JD-R model. Specifically, as employees' perceptions of organizational politics (POP) increase, they find it difficult to obtain job resources, while job demands increase, to carry out their work (Lee, 2024). This reduces their evaluation of their own value and importance within the organization (Pierce et al., 1989; Pierce & Gardner, 2004), which in turn causes them to lose the motivation to demonstrate themselves, showing a sense of powerlessness toward their work, contributes to job burnout (Hobfoll, 1989). This mediation mechanism elucidates the underlying process—perceptions of organizational politics enhances employee job burnout via impairing employees' organizational-based self-esteem (OBSE).

Additionally, this study identifies perceived organizational support (POS) as a moderator in the relationships between POP, organizational-based self-esteem, and job burnout. It buffers the negative effect of POP on OBSE, and then reduces job burnout. Specifically, the buffering hypothesis of the JD-R model posits that job resources can buffer the depletion of employees caused by high

job demands. That is, job resources can mitigate the negative impacts of job demands on employees. Thus, employees with high POS can access additional resources to replenish those depleted by political behaviors, thereby mitigating the negative impact of POP on organizational-based self-esteem. Conversely, employees with low POS have fewer resources to offset the depletion caused by political behaviors, resulting in a weaker buffering effect on organizational-based self-esteem and a smaller reduction in burnout.

Implications for research and practice

Furthermore, these findings advance understanding of the JD-R model: job burnout is induced not only by job demands but also by perceived deprivation of job resources (i.e., POP). It provides a new perspective for further understanding the JD-R model and supports its applicability in explaining workplace burnout. By revealing the relationship between POP and job burnout, this study not only expands research on the antecedents of burnout but also deepens understanding of the negative consequences of POP, providing empirical evidence for interventions aimed at alleviating job burnout.

Although prior research has explored boundary conditions for POP, it has primarily focused on individual-level factors, such as self-monitoring, employee traditionalism, task self-efficacy, and political skills (Lee, 2024; Zhao et al., 2016). By examining the moderating role of organizational support resources, this study broadens the boundary conditions of POP's effects and offers a new theoretical perspective for exploring these boundary conditions of POP. It clearly reveals the pathway through which POS alters the indirect impact of job demands on job burnout via OBSE.

The findings of this study offer practical implications for mitigating job burnout. These strategies provide actionable insights for organizations and managers to create a healthier work environment and improve employee well-being. Our findings show that employee's perceptions of organizational politics increase job burnout. This is because perceptions of organizational politics reflect employees' awareness that resources are being exploited by certain individuals for personal gain, making it difficult for them to access the resources needed for their work, ultimately leading to job burnout. This suggests that reducing job burnout can be achieved by lowering employees' perceptions of organizational politics (POP). Thus, organizations can standardize work processes, enforce strict organizational policies, and establish oversight mechanisms to minimize the occurrence of political behaviors (Li et al., 2020a).

For instance, in daily managerial practice, it is imperative for managers to duly acknowledge employees' contributions, demonstrated competencies, and intrinsic value. Through effective communication that conveys genuine recognition, employees' perceived value and significance within the organization—namely their organization-based self-esteem—can be substantially enhanced (Li et al., 2022). Moreover, by building a workplace trust, organizations can support employees by

fostering a beneficial career development reducing the likelihood of employee job burnout (Sengüllendi, 2026).

Limitations and directions for future research

There are two limitations to this study that should be addressed in future research. First, although this study examines the mediating role of organizational-based self-esteem, the findings indicate that OBSE only partially mediates the effect of POP on job burnout. This implies that there are additional underlying mechanisms beyond OBSE that account for the relationship between POP and job burnout. Thus, future research could explore these potential mechanisms from new perspectives to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships between POP and job burnout. Second, although a two-wave data collection approach was employed, this study remains cross-sectional in nature. To better establish causal relationships among the variables in the theoretical model, future research could adopt experimental or longitudinal designs.

Conclusions

This study draws on JD-R theory to develop a moderated mediation model in which POP impacts job burnout. Our findings show that POP can positively predict employee job burnout and OBSE plays an underlying mechanism between POP and job burnout. That is, POP can alter employees' self-worth evaluation, thereby affecting their work status. From the perspective of resource deprivation, this study extends the JD-R theory by conceptualizing POP as a job demand that consumes employees' personal resources (i.e., OBSE), thereby leading to job burnout. Additionally, this study deepens our understanding of how POP increases job burnout and how such effect can be alleviated. The findings suggest that managers should address organizational political behaviors and mitigate the negative impacts of such unequal resource allocation on employees. Furthermore, this study finds that POS can reduce the effect of POP on job burnout via OBSE, which is consistent with the JD-R model. That is, POS, as a form of resource replenishment, can alleviate the negative effects generated by POP. This suggests that organizations should prioritize the cultivation of perceived organizational support (POS) and reduce perceptions of organizational politics (POP), as these constructs serve as critical antecedents influencing employees' job burnout levels.

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Availability of Data and Materials: The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Ethics Approval: This study collected data through anonymous questionnaires and did not involve any sensitive personal information. The researcher provided a detailed introduction of the study to the participants. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents could withdraw at any time without any negative consequences.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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