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In the Eye of the Beholder: A Daily Diary Investigation of Appraisals of Illegitimate Tasks

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IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER: A DAILY DIARY INVESTIGATION OF APPRAISALS OF ILLEGITIMATE TASKS

by

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Psychology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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ABSTRACT

In the Eye of the Beholder: A Daily Diary Investigation of Appraisals of Illegitimate Tasks

by

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Traditional research on illegitimate tasks has focused on two dimensions, unreasonable tasks and unnecessary tasks, and has assumed that threat appraisal is the underlying mechanism explaining their effects. This study introduced a revised three-dimensional framework of illegitimate tasks that consists of promoting unreasonable tasks, demoting unreasonable tasks, and unnecessary tasks. Further, it explored the differential relationships of each dimension of illegitimate tasks with three outcomes: emotional exhaustion, organization-based self-esteem (OBSE), and psychological empowerment. Furthermore, it proposed that among the three appraisals, challenge appraisal is the strongest mediator between promoting unreasonable tasks and outcomes, threat appraisal is the strongest mediator between demoting unreasonable tasks and outcomes, and hindrance appraisal is the strongest mediator between unnecessary tasks and outcomes. Last, it examined regulatory focus (i.e., prevention focus and promotion focus) as an individual difference variable that moderates the direct relationship between dimensions of illegitimate tasks and different appraisals. A daily diary methodology was used to collect data from full-time employees recruited from Prolific, and the final sample included 53 participants for promoting unreasonable tasks, 62 participants for demoting unreasonable tasks, and 46 participants for unnecessary tasks, with data collected for at least two workdays per participant. Promoting unreasonable tasks positively related to emotional exhaustion and OBSE and

negatively related to psychological empowerment. Demoting unreasonable tasks negatively related to OBSE but did not relate to emotional exhaustion or psychological empowerment. Unnecessary tasks negatively related to OBSE and psychological empowerment but did not relate to emotional exhaustion. Furthermore, threat appraisal mediated the promoting unreasonable tasks-OBSE, promoting unreasonable tasks-psychological empowerment, demoting unreasonable tasks-emotional exhaustion, and unnecessary tasks-emotional exhaustion relationships, challenge appraisal mediated the demoting unreasonable tasks-psychological empowerment and unnecessary tasks-emotional exhaustion relationships, and hindrance appraisal mediated the promoting unreasonable tasks-emotional exhaustion, demoting unreasonable tasks-OBSE, demoting unreasonable tasks-psychological empowerment, unnecessary tasks-emotional exhaustion, unnecessary tasks-OBSE, and unnecessary tasks-psychological empowerment relationships. Last, promotion focus moderated the demoting unreasonable tasks-threat appraisal relationship and prevention focus moderated the promoting unreasonable tasks-challenge appraisal relationship. Taken together, results from this study showed that different types of illegitimate tasks relate to outcomes differently and are appraised different ways, and that personality traits such as regulatory focus can affect illegitimate task appraisals.

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This dissertation is dedicated to my daughter, Scarlett Sophia.

The future is yours.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

In recent years, the concept of illegitimate tasks (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019) has been gaining considerable attention among scholars. Illegitimate tasks are work tasks that violate norms about what can be expected from employees in their professional roles. Illegitimate tasks are traditionally conceptualized to have two dimensions: unreasonable tasks and unnecessary tasks (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019). Unreasonable tasks are tasks that should be done by someone else because they are incompatible with one's specific job role, such as when a task is above or below one's job level, skills, or abilities. Unnecessary tasks are those that should simply not exist, either because they do not make sense or should not be completed at all. The concept of illegitimate tasks was developed within the Stress-as-Offense-to-Self (SOS; Semmer et al., 2007, 2019) framework, which suggests that maintaining a positive self-image is an important goal that humans strive for. According to the SOS framework, illegitimate tasks threaten the self by sending social messages that disrespect an employee's professional identity, and thus, global sense of self (Sluss & Ashforth, 2007). SOS framework argues that illegitimate tasks can result in psychological strain because they are appraised as a threat to this self-image.

Meanwhile, the broader workplace stress literature generally notes that appraisals explain the differential effects of stressors, and therefore often categorizes stressors according to how they are typically appraised. These categories include challenge stressors, hindrance stressors, and threat stressors (Cavanough et al., 2000; LePine et al., 2005; Tuckey et al., 2015): challenge stressors are typically appraised as offering the potential for future personal growth or gains, hindrance stressors are typically appraised as interfering with goal obtainment or work achievement, and threat stressors are typically appraised as causing future harm or loss such as a

threaten the self. While all three types of stressors can result in increased strains (e.g., emotional exhaustion), challenges stressors may sometimes produce positive non-strain outcomes as well (e.g., motivation and organization-based self-esteem; Crawford et al., 2010).

To date, illegitimate tasks have been categorized as a threat stressor, with researchers relying primarily on SOS framework's proposed threat appraisal pathway (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019) as an explanatory mechanism for its negative effects. However, whether illegitimate tasks can elicit threat appraisal has not been empirically tested. As will be described below, the types of illegitimate tasks vary considerably, and it is possible that not all types of illegitimate tasks will be typically appraised as a threat. Based on the challenge-hindrance-threat framework (Tuckey et al., 2015), SOS framework (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019), and the conceptualization of illegitimate tasks (Semmer et al., 2010), it is likely that different types of illegitimate tasks will be categorized as a challenge, hindrance, and threat, and thus relate to outcomes differently.

To illustrate, unnecessary tasks (i.e., tasks that should have never existed; Semmer et al., 2007, 2019) may be categorized as a hindrance because they are appraised as interfering with goal attainment by distracting from one's core tasks (tasks within one's professional role). For example, a secretary might appraise the task of filing paperwork that is no longer required by company policy as a hindrance because it interferes with the completion of one's core tasks. Further, based on Semmer and colleagues' (2007) conceptualization of unreasonable tasks (i.e., tasks that fall above *or* below one's job role), unreasonable tasks can be divided into demoting unreasonable tasks (i.e., tasks that fall below one's job role) and promoting unreasonable tasks (i.e., tasks that fall above one's job role). Since demoting unreasonable tasks fall below one's job role, they can be categorized as a threat because they are appraised as disrespecting one's professional identity by underutilizing one's capabilities (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019). For

example, a school administrator may appraise the assignment of cleaning the school bathroom as a threat because it falls within the janitor's role, and below one's skillset. Further, since promoting unreasonable tasks fall above one's job role, they can be categorized as a challenge because they are appraised as providing opportunities for future growth and gains by requiring a greater level of capabilities (Tuckey et al., 2015). For example, a new resident may appraise the responsibility of overseeing a unit overnight as a challenge because it falls within the role of someone with more seniority, but also an opportunity to gain new experiences or skillset.

Taken together, it is likely that different types of illegitimate tasks can be appraised differently and thus relate to outcomes differently. By considering a refined three-dimensional framework that consists of promoting unreasonable tasks, demoting unreasonable tasks, and unnecessary tasks, research can more accurately distinguish types of illegitimate tasks, appraisals that they typically form, and differential relationships with outcomes that they may produce.

Study Goals

This work aims to advance our understanding of illegitimate tasks in four ways. First, it introduces a refined three-dimensional framework of illegitimate tasks that consists of promoting unreasonable tasks, demoting unreasonable tasks, and unnecessary tasks and argues that each dimension is fundamentally different from one another because they may be typically appraised differently and therefore fall within different stressor categories (Semmer et al., 2017, 2019; Tuckey et al., 2015). More specifically, this work argues that promoting unreasonable tasks can be categorized as a challenge, demoting unreasonable tasks as a threat, and unnecessary tasks as a hindrance.

Second, as mentioned earlier, different categories of stressors (i.e., challenge, hindrance, threat) predict outcomes differently. Since this work categorizes the three dimensions of

illegitimate tasks as different types of stressors, it is expected that they will relate to outcomes differently too. To test this proposition, emotional exhaustion (a state of depletion resulting from being overextended by the demands present in the work environment; Maslach & Jackson, 1981) is examined as a strain outcome. Organization-based self-esteem (OBSE, the extent to which employees perceive themselves as worthy and competent organizational members; Pierce et al., 1989) and psychological empowerment (a form intrinsic motivation that reflects the sense of control that individuals have in relation to their work; Spreitzer, 1995) are examined as non-strain outcomes.

Third, since appraisal is thought to be the underlying mechanism explaining why different categories of stressors relate to outcomes differently (Tuckey et al., 2015), this work considers all three appraisals (i.e., challenge, hindrance, and threat) and predicts that challenge appraisal will most strongly mediate the relationship between promoting unreasonable tasks and outcomes, threat appraisal will most strongly mediate the relationship between demoting unreasonable tasks and outcomes, and hindrance appraisal will most strongly mediate the relationship between unnecessary tasks and outcomes.

Fourth, research suggests that appraisals can also be influenced by individual differences (e.g., Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, Liu & Li, 2018). The current study examines regulatory focus as an individual difference variable that may moderate the link between illegitimate tasks and appraisals. Regulatory focus describes two coexisting motivational orientations—promotion focus and prevention focus—which impacts the nature of the goal pursued, the information processing style, and strategies used during goal pursuit. Regulatory focus is an important individual difference variable to examine because one's motivational orientation (promotion focus and prevention focus) affects the type of information that individuals search for and rely on

(Wang & Lee, 2006; Yoon et al., 2012). Regulatory focus should therefore play a crucial role in influencing how individuals appraise illegitimate tasks.

This study uses a daily diary methodology, in which participants complete surveys twice a day for three consecutive workweeks. Daily diary methodology is well suited for this study because it allows for the examination of psychological states resulting from stressors shortly after the situation occurs, mitigating problems of memory decay (Schonfeld & Chang, 2017). Further, daily diary studies allow for the examination of within-person variability of focal constructs, which is beneficial as stress appraisal theories take an intraindividual approach to stress (e.g., Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). As mentioned earlier, stressor appraisals reflect momentary judgments of a stressor situation (e.g., Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), and emotional exhaustion (Maslach & Jackson, 1981), OBSE (Pierce et al., 1989), and psychological empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995) are three possible proximal outcomes of such appraisals.

It is important to note that during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, employees experienced various psychological consequences (see Van Bavel et al., 2020). Many in-person jobs have largely shifted to remote work, and the boundaries of what work tasks fall inside and outside of one's job role (i.e., illegitimate tasks) are certainly more ambiguous and unclear. These workplace changes pose a strong need to study employees' appraisals and reactions to illegitimate tasks.

Literature Review

Decades of research on workplace stress has largely supported the notion that workplace stressors have negative implications for employee health, attitudes, and behaviors (e.g., Ganster & Rosen, 2013; Sonnentag & Frese, 2003; Spector & Jex, 1998). Meanwhile, researchers have also recognized that not all workplace stressors are equal. While all types of workplace stressors

have negative effects on strain outcomes (e.g., psychological and physical health), some types of workplace stressors can produce positive effects on a variety of non-strain outcomes (e.g., attitudes, emotions, motivation, and performance; Crawford et al., 2010; Podsakoff et al., 2007; Webster et al., 2011). Although the positive and negative effects of stressors have long been recognized in the general stress literature (i.e., eustress and distress; Selye, 1974), this idea was first applied to the study of workplace stressors by the challenge-hindrance framework (Cavanough et al., 2000; LePine et al., 2005).

Challenge-Hindrance Framework

The challenge-hindrance framework (Cavanough et al., 2000) proposes that workplace stressors can be divided into two categories based on how they are typically appraised. Challenge stressors, such as workload (Karasek, 1979), job complexity (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006), and responsibility (French & Caplan, 1970), are "work-related demands or circumstances that, although potentially stressful, have associated potential gains for individuals" (Cavanough et al., 2000, p. 68). Hindrance stressors, such as organizational constraints (Spector & Jex, 1998), role ambiguity, and role conflict (Rizzo et al., 1970), are "work-related demands or circumstances that tend to constrain or interfere with an individual's work achievement and that do not tend to be associated with potential gains for the individual" (Cavanough et al., 2000, p. 68).

Indeed, both meta-analytic evidence and primary examinations have supported the distinction between challenge and hindrance stressors. Collectively, this research shows that while both stressor categories are associated with increased strain outcomes, they have different effects on non-strain outcomes. For example, both challenge and hindrance stressors have been positively linked to strains such as anger and anxiety (Tuckey et al., 2015), emotional exhaustion (Boswell et al., 2004; Crawford et al., 2010; LePine et al., 2005), perceived stress (Edwards et

al., 2014), somatic complaints (Kim & Beehr, 2018), and metabolic risk factors (French et al., 2019). Meanwhile, challenge stressors have been positively linked to non-strain outcomes such as work attitudes (e.g., job satisfaction; Podsakoff et al., 2007), engagement (Crawford et al., 2010), motivation, job performance (LePine et al., 2005), psychological empowerment, organization-based self-esteem (Kim & Beehr, 2018), general well-being (i.e., positive attitude toward life; Widmer et al., 2012), and reduced turnover (Podsakoff et al., 2007). For hindrance stressors, the relationships described above have been shown to operate in the opposite direction.

Challenge-Hindrance-Threat Framework

The challenge-hindrance-threat framework expands the dimensionality of the challenge-hindrance framework (Cavanough et al., 2000; LePine et al., 2005) by introducing a third stressor category: threat stressors. Threat stressors, such as workplace bullying and harassment (e.g., Einarsen & Raknes, 1997), abusive supervision (e.g., Tepper, 2007), customer-related social stressors (Dormann & Zapf, 2004), and illegitimate tasks (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019), are "work-related demands or circumstances that tend to be directly associated with personal harm or loss" (Tuckey et al., 2015, p.133). Threat stressors are particularly damaging because they are typically appraised as a threat to one's professional identity and fundamental desire to maintain a positive sense of self such as the basic psychological need to feel positively regarded by others, belongingness to a group, self-worth, and trust in others.

While both threat and hindrance stressors represent a negative experience for individuals, the challenge-hindrance-threat framework draws on theoretical work by Semmer et al. (2005) to argue that they are conceptually distinct from each other because their foci are qualitatively different. While hindrance stressors indicate that something good may not happen, may be delayed, or may be made more difficult to obtain, threats stressors indicate that something bad is

expected to happen in the future. Thus, when faced with hindrance stressors, individuals are motivated to invest efforts and resources to overcome demands because doing so can potentially result in adequate levels of performance. However, given the negative implications for the future and salience to the self, when faced with threat stressors, the best possible option is to invest efforts and resources to lessen the distress of threat appraisals and to avoid future harm or loss, such as potential degradations to one's sense of self. Since threat stressors threaten one's desire to maintain a positive sense of self and are impossible to overcome, they are theorized to have more serious consequences than hindrance stressors.

Since the challenge-hindrance-threat framework (Tuckey et al., 2015) has only recently been introduced into the literature, research using its framework is limited (for exceptions see Espedido & Searle, 2018; Espedido et al., 2019). However, it provides clear distinction between hindrance and threat stressors. As such, the current study draws on the challenge-hindrance-threat framework to advance our understanding of one workplace stressor that has been historically categorized as a threat stressor, known as illegitimate tasks (Semmer et al., 2010).

Illegitimate Tasks

Illegitimate tasks are work tasks that violate role norms about what can reasonably be expected of employees in their professional roles (Semmer et al., 2010). What makes a task illegitimate can be understood through role theory (Thoits, 1991). Employees take on professional roles at work, which consists of normative expectations regarding what *can* and *cannot* be reasonably asked of them as role occupants. As employees tend to identify with their professional roles, they become integrated with the self, providing them with meaning and purpose in life, as well as a sense of who they are and how they should behave. Thus, when employees are assigned tasks that match their role expectations, they affirm their professional

identity. However, when employees are assigned tasks that violate their role expectations, they offend their professional identity. Since one's professional identity is a form of social identity (Warr, 2007) and a part of global identity (Stryker & Burke, 2000) and thus inherently tied to one's sense of self (Sluss & Ashforth, 2007), affirmations and offenses to one's professional identity have strong implications for psychological well-being. According to Semmer and colleagues (2007, 2019), illegitimate tasks violate one's professional identity because they fall outside the boundary of what can be reasonably expected of individuals in their professional roles.

Illegitimate tasks are traditionally conceptualized to have two dimensions: unreasonable tasks and unnecessary tasks. Unreasonable tasks are tasks that employees believe should be done by someone else because they are incompatible with one's specific job role, such as when a task is above or below one's job level, skills, or abilities. Unnecessary tasks are task assignments that employees believe should simply not exist, either because they do not make sense or should not be completed at all. These tasks may leave an employee feeling "this is not my job!" because the task assignment violates the boundary of what can be reasonably asked of the role occupant (Semmer et al., 2015).

To date, research has examined illegitimate tasks as an overall construct (e.g., creating a total illegitimate tasks mean score; e.g., Eatough et al., 2016; Semmer et al., 2015) or as two separate dimensions (e.g., Meier & Semmer, 2018; Pindek et al., 2018), with research overall showing that illegitimate tasks produce detrimental effects for employees. For example, illegitimate tasks have been linked to a host of well-being and strain outcomes, including degraded self-esteem (Eatough et al., 2016; Schulte-Braucks et al., 2019; Semmer et al., 2015), heightened negative emotions (e.g., depressive mood and anger, Eatough et al., 2016; anxiety,

Fila & Eatough, 2017; resentment and irritability, Semmer et al., 2015), increased burnout (Semmer et al., 2015), decreased job satisfaction (Björk et al., 2013; Omansky et al., 2016; Stocker et al., 2010), increased psychological strains (Semmer et al., 2015), decreased overall mental health (Madsen et al., 2014), and more sleep disturbances (Pereira et al, 2014). Further, illegitimate task effects also negatively spill over into one's family domain (Ahmed et al., 2018; Meier & Semmer, 2018). Illegitimate tasks have also been linked to behavioral strain, such as counterproductive work behavior (e.g., Semmer et al., 2010, 2015; Zhou et al., 2018). To predict and explain these negative effects, researchers have categorized illegitimate tasks as a threat stressor, relying primarily on Stress-as-Offense-to-Self (SOS) framework's threat appraisal pathway (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019).

Stress-as-Offense-to-Self (SOS) Framework

The concept of illegitimate tasks was developed within the Stress-as-Offense-to-Self (SOS) framework (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019). SOS framework is built on the commonly accepted notion that maintaining a positive sense of self-worth is an important goal that humans strive for (Leary & Baumeister, 2000). Given the importance of preserving a positive sense of self-worth, SOS framework suggests that workplace events have important implications for the self. In fact, whereas previous stress research has investigated self-esteem as either an outcome of a stressor (e.g., Frone, 2000; Kivimaki & Kalimo, 1996), as a buffer (e.g., Jex & Elacua, 1999), or as a personal resource in the stress process (e.g., Xanthopoulou et al., 2007), SOS framework takes an alternative perspective and argues that threats to the self is the core aspect of the stressor experience. In other words, SOS framework places self-esteem at a center of the stress process and postulates that threat appraisal is the underlying mechanism linking stressors to outcomes (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019).

SOS framework proposes that workplace events can threaten or boost two types of self-worth: personal self-esteem and social esteem (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019). *Personal self-esteem* refers to the degree to which one meets his or her personal standards for behavior and performance, implying that one is a capable, dependable, high performing, and honorable individual. Personal self-esteem is threatened when individuals fail to meet these self-prescribed standards but boosted when they have succeeded to. Semmer and colleagues (2007, 2019) note that personal self-esteem is only affected when individuals have attributed personal failure or success to an internal cause, such as to one's (in)competence, and/or (lack of) moral strength. *Social esteem* refers to the degree to which one feels esteemed, appreciated, valued, and acknowledged by others. Since it is an important self-motive for one to feel accepted and respected, and to derive a social identity through feelings of belongingness to a group, social esteem is threatened when individuals experience disregard, disrespect, or inconsideration from others. Conversely, social esteem is boosted when individuals experience external cues of respect, regard, and consideration.

In SOS framework (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019), threats and boosts to one's personal self-esteem is labeled as Stress though (In)sufficiency, or "SIN", and threats and boosts to one's social esteem is labeled as Stress as (Dis)respect, or "SAD". While these two pathways are distinguished from one another, they are strongly related. For example, Semmer and colleagues (2007) suggest that threats to one's social esteem (SAD) is likely to affect one's personal self-esteem (SIN), such as when another's experience of inconsiderate or demeaning behavior becomes internalized and viewed as indicative of one's self-worth. Personal self-esteem (SIN) may also be threatened in the absence of social esteem (SAD; i.e., personal failure) and threats to social esteem (SAD) may be deflected, thus avoiding effects on personal self-esteem (SIN).

In line with this rationale, task assignments at work can boost the self when they align with one's role expectations but threaten the self when they violate them. This may occur when they indicate (in)sufficiency (SIN), (dis)respect (SAD), or both. SOS framework (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019) argues that the reason why illegitimate tasks are particularly damaging is because the violation of role norms sends social messages that convey disrespect to one's professional identity and disrupt or prohibit adequate fulfillment of one's professional role. Since one's professional identity is tied to one's broader sense of self (Sluss & Ashforth, 2007), illegitimate tasks are appraised as a threat to the self. Given an individual's desire to maintain a positive sense of self-worth, these threats to the self are expected to negatively impact employee well-being and behaviors. This argument is consistent with the large body of literature demonstrating the negative effects of illegitimate tasks as cited previously.

The Current Study

Not All Illegitimate Tasks are Equal

When considering the traditional conceptualization of illegitimate tasks (unreasonable and unnecessary tasks), along with SOS framework (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019), and challenge-hindrance-threat framework (Tuckey et al., 2015), it is possible that not all types of illegitimate tasks will be typically appraised as a threat to the self. Rather, some types of illegitimate tasks might be typically appraised as a challenge or a hindrance. Based on this logic, different types of illegitimate tasks may fall within the different stressor categories outlined in the challenge-hindrance-threat framework (Tuckey et al., 2015). Considering this possibility is important when understanding the effects of illegitimate tasks, specifically because challenge, hindrance, and threat stressors relate to outcomes differently (Tuckey et al., 2015). To this end, the first goal of this work is to distinguish between the different types of illegitimate tasks based on how they are

assumed to be typically appraised. In doing so, this work introduces a refined three-dimensional framework of illegitimate tasks that consists of promoting unreasonable tasks, demoting unreasonable tasks, and unnecessary tasks.

In the proposed three-dimensional framework of illegitimate tasks, the dimensions of promoting unreasonable tasks and demoting unreasonable tasks derive from Semmer and colleagues' (2007, 2019) traditional conceptualization of unreasonable tasks. According to this conceptualization, unreasonable tasks are tasks that employees believe should be done by someone else because they are incompatible with one's specific job role, such as when a task is above or below one's job level, skills, or abilities. Although they argue that all types of unreasonable tasks constitute a threat, an integration of its conceptualization along with SOS framework (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019) and challenge-hindrance-threat framework (Tuckey et al., 2015) suggests that unreasonable tasks that fall above one's job role would not be typically appraised in the same threatening way as unreasonable tasks that fall below one's job role. In fact, even though both types of unreasonable tasks violate role norms, unreasonable tasks that fall above one's job role may be typically appraised as a challenge. To distinguish between these different underlying appraisals, this work divides the traditional dimension of unreasonable tasks (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019) into promoting unreasonable tasks and demoting unreasonable tasks that are categorized as a challenge and threat, respectively. Whereas promoting unreasonable tasks should be done by someone else because they fall above one's job role, demoting unreasonable tasks should be done by someone else because they fall below one's job role. For both types of unreasonable tasks, these incompatibilities may be due to a mismatch between the task assignment and one's job level, knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Further, the third dimension in the proposed three-dimensional framework of illegitimate tasks is unnecessary tasks. Consistent with Semmer and colleagues' (2007, 2019) traditional conceptualization, this work conceptualizes unnecessary tasks as tasks that employees believe should simply not exist, either because they do not make sense or should not be completed at all. Although historically considered to be a threat (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019), this work argues that unnecessary tasks may be typically appraised as a hindrance, and thus more accurately categorized as a hindrance stressor.

In sum, the current study argues that illegitimate tasks can be divided into three dimensions—promoting unreasonable tasks, demoting unreasonable tasks, and unnecessary tasks—that are likely to be typically appraised differently and therefore fall within different stressor categories. It is also worth noting that previous research has not yet considered the same workplace stressor to be both a challenge, hindrance, and threat stressor simultaneously. Further, research on illegitimate tasks to date has not considered the same work task to be both an unreasonable and unnecessary task. Thus, the current study considers promoting unreasonable tasks, demoting unreasonable tasks, and unnecessary tasks as three types of illegitimate tasks that are mutually exclusive from one another.

Promoting Unreasonable Tasks

In this work, promoting unreasonable tasks are defined as tasks that employees believe should be done by someone else because they fall above one's job role, such as when a task falls above one's job level, knowledge, skills, or abilities. Promoting unreasonable tasks are categorized as a challenge because they are likely to be typically appraised as a challenge, meaning that individuals are likely to appraise them as taxing but at the same time offering the potential for growth and gains (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Tuckey et al., 2015). For example,

when assigned a task that should be done by someone at a higher job level, individuals may appraise it as an opportunity to gain new experiences or expand one's professional network. Similarly, when assigned tasks that require more advanced knowledge, skills, or abilities than expected of them in their job roles, individuals may appraise it as a chance for learning (e.g., acquiring new knowledge) or development (e.g., growing one's skillset or ability level). Promoting unreasonable tasks may also result in extrinsic gains for individuals. Although they require the investment of efforts and energy, individuals can prove their competence, which may result in rewards such as a promotion or bonus. By completing promoting unreasonable tasks quickly and effectively, individuals can demonstrate that have what it takes to move up and excel in the organization.

Further, promoting unreasonable tasks might be especially meaningful because they give individuals the chance to obtain a very important goal: to boost the self. According to SOS framework's SAD pathway (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019), workplace events that send positive social signals (e.g., appreciation) affirm one's professional identity. When considering the challenges tied to promoting unreasonable tasks, it is possible that they may be perceived as a form of appreciation and that boosts the self.

In sum, it is possible that promoting unreasonable tasks can be perceived as a violation of role norms, but at the same time an opportunity to boost the self. Since maintaining a positive sense of self is a basic motive that humans strive for (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019), affirmations of the self should represent an important aspect of the "gains" offered by challenge stressors. This argument is consistent with theoretical and empirical research demonstrating the critical role that the self plays with regards to challenge stressors. For example, in a recent review of SOS framework, Semmer and colleagues (2019) argued that although self-esteem is not a central

aspect of the challenge-hindrance framework (Cavanough et al., 2000; LePine et al., 2005), the growth and gains offered by challenge stressors can be "regarded as affirming the self" (p. 2010). Further, using SOS framework (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019), Widmer and colleagues (2012) showed that time pressure, which has been commonly documented as a challenge stressor, positively related to organization-based self-esteem (OBSE; the extent to which employees perceive themselves as worthy and competent organizational members; Pierce et al, 1989). Empirical support has also been provided by Kim and Beehr (2018, 2020) who demonstrated the positive effect of workload (a prototypical challenge stressor) on OBSE, both directly and indirectly through challenge appraisal.

Demoting Unreasonable Tasks

In this work, demoting unreasonable tasks are defined as tasks that employees believe should be done by someone else because they fall below one's job role, such as when a task falls below one's job level, knowledge, skills, or abilities. Demoting unreasonable tasks are categorized as a threat because they are likely to be typically appraised as a threat to one's professional identity, and thus, sense of self (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Tuckey et al., 2015; Semmer et al., 2007, 2019). Although SOS framework (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019) argues that all types of illegitimate tasks are likely to be appraised this way, the dimension of demoting unreasonable tasks represents the prototypical situation in which threat appraisals form.

Based on SOS framework (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019), demoting unreasonable tasks send social messages indicating disrespect to individuals in their professional roles. When task assignments underutilize the capabilities expected in one's role, individuals are likely to feel undervalued and disrespected. Since individuals strive to feel accepted and respected by others,

deriving a social identity through feelings of belongingness to a group, these messages of disrespect and poor social standing should be appraised as a threat to one's social-esteem (SAD).

Furthermore, as previously mentioned, Semmer and colleagues (2007) argue that threats to one's social esteem (SAD) are likely to result in threats to one's personal self-esteem (SIN). Drawing on this idea, it is possible that the social messages of disrespect sent by demoting unreasonable tasks will be attributed internally, such as to a lack of competence in one's professional role. These internal attributions of personal failure to meet an ideal self-representation should threaten one's personal self-esteem. Further, demoting unreasonable tasks are likely to prevent personal growth (e.g., growing one's skills and abilities), which could hinder or disable individuals from performing successfully in their roles in the future. The inability to meet self-prescribed standards for a positive self-evaluation may be attributed to a lack of competence on their part (e.g., not being able to grow one's skills, even in the presence of demoting unreasonable tasks), which could indicate personal failure and threaten the self. Indeed, research demonstrates illegitimate tasks to negatively relate to state context-free self-esteem (e.g., Eatough et al., 2016; Schulte-Braucks et al., 2019; Semmer et al., 2015; Sonnentag & Lischetzke, 2018).

Unnecessary Tasks

Consistent with Semmer and colleagues' (2007, 2019) traditional conceptualization, this work defines unnecessary tasks as tasks that employees believe should simply not exist, either because they do not make sense or should not be completed at all. As with demoting unreasonable tasks, unnecessary tasks also represent a negative experience for individuals. However, unnecessary tasks may be more accurately categorized as a hindrance, rather than a threat (Tuckey et al., 2015).

Although unnecessary tasks violate norms about what can be expected of individuals in their professional roles, compared to demoting unreasonable tasks, they should not be as salient to the self. According to SOS framework (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019), demoting unreasonable tasks directly relate to the self because they require individuals to take on work that belongs to someone else in a job role that is below them. These assignments are likely be viewed as unfair because the distribution of work is imbalanced and below their job role, providing no opportunities for gains. When employees feel that they are treated unfairly in their professional roles, they are likely to feel disrespected and perceive a direct threat to the self. However, when it comes to unnecessary tasks, individuals may not feel this sense of injustice. This is because unnecessary tasks do not make sense and are unnecessary for everyone (e.g., they may be assigned at random, and thus, less personal specific), so they are not interpreted in reference to other employees and are therefore not as meaningful or relevant to one's identity. Indeed, research shows that unnecessary tasks are less powerful to one's self-worth than unreasonable tasks (e.g., Fila & Eatough, 2019; Pindek et al., 2019; Schmitt et al., 2015).

When assigned unnecessary tasks, individuals are more likely to appraise them as constraints that hinder goal attainment and work achievement. Since unnecessary tasks are those that should have never existed in the first place, individuals are required to invest unjustified time and efforts, which will leave them with less time and energy to complete the tasks that fall within their professional role (i.e., core tasks). Since research suggests that it is making progress on one's core tasks that is gratifying (Gabriel et al., 2011), these assignments should be typically appraised as a hindrance (Lazarus, 1991; Tuckey et al., 2015).

Taken together, a refined three-dimensional framework that consists of promoting unreasonable tasks (challenge), demoting unreasonable tasks (threat), and unnecessary tasks

(hindrance) should more accurately distinguish between the different types of illegitimate tasks based on how they might be typically appraised (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019; Tuckey et al., 2015). Specifically, promoting unreasonable tasks should be categorized as a challenge, demoting unreasonable tasks should be categorized as a threat, and unnecessary tasks should be categorized as a hindrance. Since challenge, hindrance, and threat stressors relate to outcomes differently (Tuckey et al., 2015), it is critical to distinguish between each dimension of illegitimate tasks in order to properly predict and explain their different effects. In the following section, this proposition will be examined by exploring the differential effects of each type of illegitimate tasks on outcomes.

Differential Effects of Illegitimate Tasks Dimensions

The second goal of this work is to empirically test the differential relationships between the proposed three dimensions of illegitimate tasks and outcomes. As discussed, both the challenge-hindrance-threat framework (Tuckey et al., 2015) and empirical research on challenge, hindrance, and threat stressors (e.g., Cavanough et al., 2000; LePine et al., 2005; Tuckey et al., 2015) suggest that different stressor categories have different effects on outcomes. To explore the proposition that all stressor categories positively relate to strain outcomes but challenge stressors have the potential to produce positive effects on non-strain outcomes (Tuckey et al., 2015), three outcomes are examined: emotional exhaustion (Maslach & Jackson, 1981) is examined as a strain outcome and organization-based self-esteem (OBSE; Pierce et al., 1989) and psychological empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995) are examined as non-strain outcomes.

Emotional Exhaustion

Emotional exhaustion has been commonly studied when examining the effects of different stressor categories on strains (e.g., Crawford et al., 2010; LePine et al., 2005; Tuckey et

al., 2015). Emotional exhaustion is defined as ‘‘feelings of being overextended and depleted of one’s emotional and physical resources” (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 399). This examination extends previous research linking illegitimate tasks to increased emotional exhaustion (e.g., Fila & Eatough, 2017; Meier & Semmer, 2018; Semmer et al., 2015) by distinguishing between the different dimensions of illegitimate tasks to examine each of its effects on emotional exhaustion. To understand why challenge, hindrance, and threat stressors result in emotional exhaustion, researchers (e.g., Crawford et al., 2010; LePine et al., 2005; Tuckey et al., 2015) have drawn on the Job Demands-Resources model (JD-R model; Demerouti et al., 2001). According to JD-R model (Demerouti et al., 2001), when confronted with stressors, employees invest efforts and resources to cope with its demands, which depletes energy and results in strains.

By integrating JD-R model (Demerouti et al., 2001) with challenge-hindrance-threat framework (Tuckey et al., 2015) and SOS framework (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019), all three dimensions of illegitimate tasks should require the mobilization of coping efforts that deplete energy and lead to emotional exhaustion. Since promoting unreasonable tasks are categorized as a challenge, individuals are likely to cope with its demands to obtain future growth and gains (e.g., acquire new knowledge, grow one’s skills and abilities, and affirm one’s positive sense of self). For example, on days employees are assigned more promoting unreasonable tasks that require information that is outside of one’s domain of knowledge, individuals may engage in active efforts to learn this knowledge by soliciting information, help, or advice from relevant colleagues. While these resource investments are beneficial for obtaining future growth and gains, they should deplete energy and relate to increased emotional exhaustion.

Meanwhile, since demoting unreasonable tasks are categorized as a threat stressor and maintaining a positive self-image is an important goal that humans strive for (Semmer et al.,

2007, 2019), these assignments should evoke negative emotions and result in high levels of distress. Individuals are likely to cope with the demands of demoting unreasonable tasks by investing efforts to avoid future harm or loss and to manage the distress associated with these threat appraisals. For example, on days where employees are assigned more demoting unreasonable tasks, individuals may devote resources and efforts to overcome the distress accompanied by these assignments, which should relate to increased emotional exhaustion.

Last, since unnecessary tasks are categorized as a hindrance stressor, individuals cope by investing efforts and resources to remove obstacles to goal attainment and work achievement. For example, on days employees are assigned more unnecessary tasks, individuals might consider several approaches that will allow them to complete the tasks faster so that they can move onto their core tasks. Further, since unnecessary tasks are viewed as tasks that should never have existed, they should leave individuals feeling frustrated by having to invest unjustified time and efforts to remove these blockages. Coping efforts are therefore also likely to be directed at managing these negative emotions (e.g., frustration). These efforts should deplete energy and relate to increased levels of emotional exhaustion.

> *Hypothesis 1:* Daily experience of a) promoting unreasonable tasks, b) demoting unreasonable tasks, and c) unnecessary tasks will positively relate to emotional exhaustion.

Organization-Based Self-Esteem

Organization-Based Self-Esteem (OBSE) is a domain-specific form of self-esteem and defined as the "degree to which organizational members believe that they can satisfy their needs by participating in roles within the context of an organization" (Pierce et al., 1989, p. 625). In other words, OBSE reflects one's *state level* of self-esteem as an organizational member and is

thought to be a fluctuating self-relevant value that is orientated to one's role in the organization. OBSE results from employees' self-evaluations within the organization and the extent to which they feel capable, significant, and worthy as organizational members.

Research exploring the differential effects of challenge, hindrance, and threat stressors on OBSE (and other self-esteem variables) is limited (for exceptions, see Kim & Beehr, 2018, 2020; Widmer et al., 2012). However, this examination is particularly relevant to this work because illegitimate tasks are theorized to have strong negative implications for the self (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019). Indeed, several empirical studies demonstrate that illegitimate tasks negatively relate to general self-esteem (e.g., Eatough et al., 2016; Schulte-Braucks et al., 2019).

Daily promoting unreasonable tasks should positively relate to OBSE because promoting unreasonable tasks are likely to be typically appraised as promoting future growth and gains, all of which can affirm one's self-esteem at work (e.g., Semmer et al., 2019; Widmer et al., 2012). In fact, previous researchers (Semmer et al., 2019; Widmer et al., 2012) have drawn on SOS framework (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019) to argue that affirmations of one's self represent an important aspect of the "gains" offered by challenge stressors. This is because maintaining a positive sense of self is an important goal that humans strive for and challenge stressors (such as promoting unreasonable tasks) directly contribute to this goal. Since promoting unreasonable tasks fall above one's job role, they offer individuals with the opportunity to demonstrate their competence, value, and worthiness at high levels, which can lead to favorable evaluations of themselves in their job roles. For example, by overcoming the demands associated with daily promoting unreasonable tasks, individuals may feel a strong sense of accomplishment which can affirm their personal self-esteem as an organizational member (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019).

Further, based on SOS framework (Semmer al., 2007, 2019) promoting unreasonable tasks may send positive signals of appreciation from others, and thus, contribute to one's level of OBSE. Given the challenging demands associated with promoting unreasonable tasks, individuals might perceive that other individuals view them as competent organizational members, capable of completing the task successfully. Further, given the growth and gains offered by these assignments, individuals might also feel appreciated, valued, and supported by others in the organization. Semmer and colleagues (2007, 2019) suggest that acts of appreciation can boost the self by communicating value, respect, acknowledgement, and esteem from others. Therefore, while promoting unreasonable tasks could be perceived as a violation of role norms, they at the same time confirm one's professional identity and relate to increased OBSE through the positive social signals they send. This is consistent with Pierce and Gardner's (2004, p. 593) notion that OBSE may be influenced by "messages sent from significant others in one's social environment" and from "the implicit signals sent by the environmental structures to which one is exposed."

Hypothesis 2a: Daily experience of promoting unreasonable tasks will positively relate to OBSE.

In contrast, daily demoting unreasonable tasks should negatively relate to OBSE because demoting unreasonable tasks are likely to be typically appraised as a threat to the self, both in terms of one's social esteem (SAD) and personal self-esteem (SIN; Semmer et al., 2007, 2019). Since demoting unreasonable tasks fall below one's job role, they should threaten one's social esteem by sending social messages that indicate a poor social standing and belongingness to a group. Since it is an important self-motive for one to feel positively regarded by others, these assignments are likely to be seen as a form of disrespect to individuals in their professional roles.

Further, these external cues of disrespect are likely to threaten one's personal self-esteem through internal attributions of personal failure to meet self-prescribed standards for a positive self-evaluation at work. Demoting unreasonable tasks may also threaten one's personal self-esteem and subsequently impair one's OBSE by preventing personal growth (e.g., growing one's skills and abilities), which could hinder or disable individuals from performing successfully in their job roles in the future. The inability to meet self-prescribed standards for a positive self-evaluation may be attributed to a lack of competence on their part (e.g., not being able to grow one's skills even in the presence of daily demoting unreasonable tasks), which could relate to reduced perceptions of being competent organizational members.

Hypothesis 2b: Daily experience of demoting unreasonable tasks will negatively relate to OBSE.

Daily unnecessary tasks should also negatively predict OBSE. Since unnecessary tasks should have never existed in the first place, they are likely to be appraised as constraints that hinder progress toward goal attainment and work achievement (Tuckey et al., 2015). By investing unjustified time and efforts into overcoming the demands of daily unnecessary tasks, individuals have less time and energy to demonstrate their competence and self-value through the completion of their core tasks. Being unable to adequately fill one's core role should relate to feelings of incompetence as organizational members (Tuckey et al., 2015).

Hypothesis 2c: Daily experience of unnecessary tasks will negatively relate to OBSE.

Psychological Empowerment

Substantial research examining the effects of stressors on non-strain outcomes has supported the notion that challenge stressors increase motivation, while hindrance and threat stressors decrease motivation. In fact, employee motivation has been identified as a key underlying mechanism that can be used to explain the differential effects of stressor categories on more distal outcomes, such as performance (e.g., LePine et al., 2005). Since motivation represents an important non-strain outcome that is differentially impacted by challenge, hindrance, and threat stressors, it is important to examine whether these effects can be seen when distinguishing between the different dimensions of illegitimate tasks as well. Thus, this work will examine the relationship between each dimension of illegitimate tasks on the motivational construct of psychological empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995). This is examination is in line with previous research demonstrating that illegitimate tasks negatively relates to intrinsic motivation (e.g., Muntz & Dormann, 2020; Omansky et al., 2016). Also, the workforce changes (e.g., shifts to remote work, workplace uncertainty and layoffs, changes in one's job role, and ambiguity in terms of what falls within and outside of one's role boundaries) are likely to impact one's ability to experience psychological empowerment, making it important to determine if the relationship between illegitimate tasks and psychological empowerment exists.

According to Spreitzer (1995), psychological empowerment is a type of intrinsic motivation that reflects a sense of control in relation to one's work and an active orientation to one's work role. In other words, psychological empowerment is a domain-specific form of intrinsic motivation that reflects one's level of motivation with respect to the workplace. Psychological empowerment manifests in four cognitions: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. *Meaning* refers to the relative fit between one's work role and one's

own beliefs, values, and standards (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). *Competence* refers to the belief that one has the skills and abilities to perform his or her work activities well (Bandura, 1989). *Self-determination* refers to a sense of autonomy or control over one's work behaviors and processes and reflects how much choice one has with regards to initiating and regulating action (Deci et al., 1989). Last, *impact* refers to the belief that one can make a difference at work, specifically by influencing strategic, administrative, or operational work outcomes (Ashforth, 1989). Together, these four cognitions represent the complete set of cognitions necessary to understand an individual's felt psychological empowerment, with psychological empowerment being the highest when all four cognitions are high.

When stressors are appraised as a challenge, individuals experience positive emotions (e.g., eagerness, excitement, exhilaration) and feel more confident that they can overcome the demands of the stressor if they invest efforts and energy while coping. Further, since overcoming demands are appraised as resulting in future growth and gains and thus a strong sense of accomplishment, individuals are motivated to actively invest themselves because doing so is perceived as meaningful and worthwhile. Challenge stressors are therefore often met with problem-focused forms of coping, which are active strategies that attempt to resolve the demands of the stressor (e.g., defining the problem, generating alternative solutions, and choosing the best solution and then acting on it). Since promoting unreasonable tasks are categorized as a challenge that offers future growth and gains (Tuckey et al., 2015), individuals should be motivated to invest efforts and energy while coping (i.e., problem-focused coping) with daily promoting unreasonable tasks because doing so offers the chance obtain future growth and gains. The social messages sent by these assignments should also be intrinsically motivating as their "promoting" nature is likely to imply that they are viewed as capable by others.

Hypothesis 3a: Daily experience of promoting unreasonable tasks will positively relate to psychological empowerment.

Conversely, when stressors are appraised as a threat, individuals experience negative emotions (e.g., fear, anxiety, anger) and perceive demands as impossible to overcome. Since no amount of effort or energy can overcome these demands, individuals are not motivated to actively invest themselves. However, because threat appraisals pose negative implications for the self and are highly distressing, individuals are motivated to engage in coping strategies that avoid future harm or loss and manage its associated negative emotions. Threat appraisals of stressors are therefore often met with emotion-focused forms of coping, which are passive strategies directed toward lessening the emotional distress associated with appraisals of future harm or loss (e.g., avoidance, minimization, distancing, and selective attention). Since demoting unreasonable tasks are categorized as a threat, they should threaten the self through the disrespectful social messages they send (SAD) and through internal attributions of personal failure (SIN; Semmer et al., 2007, 2019; Tuckey et al., 2015). These threat appraisals should also elicit a high level of distress and be perceived as impossible to overcome, and individuals with high levels of daily promoting unreasonable tasks may not be intrinsically motivated to invest efforts and energy to complete them. Instead, individuals might engage in more passive coping strategies (e.g., emotion-focused coping) to avoid future harm or loss and lessen the distress of threat appraisals.

Hypothesis 3b: Daily experience of demoting unreasonable tasks will negatively relate to psychological empowerment.

The challenge-hindrance-threat framework (Tuckey et al., 2015) explains that while hindrance stressors are viewed as possible to overcome, they cannot result in a strong sense of accomplishment but rather adequate performance, causing individuals to experience negative

emotions (e.g., frustration). Thus, while coping efforts are directed at removing constrains and blockages to goal attainment and work achievement, individuals should be less motivated to invest themselves because of the frustration of these blockages and inability to experience a strong sense of achievement. Coping is therefore also directed at managing the negative emotions (e.g., frustration) associated with these constrains. Since unnecessary tasks are categorized as a hindrance, they should be appraised as constraints to goal attainment and work achievement (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019; Tuckey et al., 2015). While it is possible for individuals to remove hindrances by investing enough efforts and energy while coping (e.g., problem-focused coping), they are likely to be less intrinsically motivated to do so because they do not offer the chance to for future growth and gains, and thus, overcoming them is likely to result in adequate performance rather than exceptional performance.

Hypothesis 3c: Daily experience of unnecessary tasks will negatively relate to psychological empowerment.

Mediating Effect of Appraisals

Categorizing illegitimate tasks based on how they are assumed to be typically appraised is consistent with the challenge-hindrance framework (Cavanough et al., 2000; LePine et al., 2005), which applies a priori categorizations to stressors to explain their differential effects. However, instead of explicitly measuring appraisal, researchers have implicitly assumed that—on average—individuals appraise a stressor a given way. This has been done by asking participants to report the experienced level of stressors (e.g., Rodell & Judge, 2009) and the amount of stress caused by stressors (e.g., Cavanaugh et al., 2000; LePine et al., 2004). This categorization approach is also consistent with the existing research on illegitimate tasks, which relies primarily on SOS framework's threat appraisal pathway (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019) as an

explanatory mechanism for its negative effects. Instead of explicitly measuring threat appraisal, research thus far has assumed that—on average—individuals appraise illegitimate tasks in the same threating way and have the same threat inducing reactions.

Since appraisals are implicitly assumed to be the underlying mechanism linking stressors to outcomes (Cavanough et al., 2000; LePine et al., 2005; Tuckey et al., 2015), the third goal of this work is to explicitly test appraisals as the mediator linking each dimension of illegitimate tasks to the study outcomes (emotional exhaustion, OBSE, psychological empowerment). Indeed, both theoretical (Brief & George, 1995; Semmer et al., 2005) and empirical (Tuckey et al., 2015; Webster et al., 2011) research has primarily supported the notion that individuals appraise different types of stressors in fairly consistent ways. However, since an individual's appraisal of a stressor may vary (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), this work considers all three appraisals (i.e., challenge, hindrance, and threat) as mediators linking all types of illegitimate tasks to outcomes and proposes which appraisal is likely to be the strongest for each mediation.

In other words, this work directly tests challenge appraisal as the strongest mediator between promoting unreasonable tasks and outcomes, threat appraisal as the strongest mediator between demoting unreasonable tasks and outcomes, and hindrance appraisal as the strongest mediator between unnecessary tasks and outcomes. This could provide empirical support for (a) the a priori categorizations applied in the proposed three-dimensional framework of illegitimate tasks and (b) the theoretical explanation used to explain why each dimension should influence outcomes the way they are proposed to in this study. It also fills gaps in previous illegitimate tasks research by testing whether threat appraisal indeed functions as a mediator between illegitimate tasks (demoting unreasonable tasks in particular) and outcomes. In addition, while all types of illegitimate tasks have been previously theorized to relate to outcomes through SOS

framework's threat appraisal pathway (Semmer et al., 2007, 2009), this work draws on the challenge-hindrance-threat framework (Tuckey et al., 2015) to explore whether promoting unreasonable tasks relate to outcomes through a challenge appraisal pathway and whether unnecessary tasks relate to outcomes through a hindrance appraisal pathway. Measuring appraisal as a mediator between illegitimate tasks and outcomes is also consistent with the increasing efforts that highlight the importance of directly measuring appraisals from participants (e.g., Kim & Beehr, 2020; Searle & Auton, 2015; Webster et al., 2011). This appraisal-based approach has been applied to the existing studies in the challenge-hindrance-threat framework as well (e.g., Espedido & Searle, 2018; Espedido et al., 2019; Tuckey et al., 2015).

In sum, consistent with the rationale used to develop and explain the three-dimensional framework on illegitimate tasks (see pages 12-19), challenge appraisal will most strongly mediate the relationship between daily promoting unreasonable tasks and outcomes. Further, threat appraisal will most strongly mediate the relationship between daily demoting unreasonable tasks and outcomes. Last, hindrance appraisal will most strongly mediate the relationship between daily unnecessary tasks and outcomes.

Hypothesis 4: The indirect effect of daily experience of promoting unreasonable tasks on (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) OBSE, and (c) psychological empowerment through challenge appraisal is stronger than the indirect effects through hindrance appraisal and threat appraisal.

Hypothesis 5: The indirect effect of daily experience of demoting unreasonable tasks on (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) OBSE, and (c) psychological empowerment through threat appraisal is stronger than the indirect effects through challenge appraisal and hindrance appraisal.

Hypothesis 6: The indirect effect of daily experience of unnecessary tasks on (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) OBSE, and (c) psychological empowerment through hindrance appraisal is stronger than the indirect effects through challenge appraisal and threat appraisal.

Moderating Effect of Regulatory Focus

A considerable amount of research has identified individual difference variables (e.g., regulatory focus, Byron et al., 2018; Sacramento et al., 2013; conscientiousness, emotional stability, and cognitive ability, LePine et al., 2004; cynicism and humor, van Oortmerssen et al., 2019; extraversion and neuroticism, Rodell & Judge, 2009) that moderate the degree to which different stressor categories directly impact outcomes. However, because appraisal was not explicitly measured in these studies but rather assumed, they overlooked the influential role that individual differences have on an individual's appraisal of a stressor (for an exception, see Liu & Li, 2018). LePine and colleagues (2016) argued that more research is needed regarding the appraisal process because it "could potentially identify factors that moderate the role of appraisals as transmitter of stressor effects, and, in the end, significantly impact how stressors influence outcomes" (p. 1037). Further, there have been several additional calls for research focusing on individual difference variables that impact individual appraisals of stressors (e.g., Griffin & Clarke, 2011; Kim & Beehr, 2020; Podsakoff et al., 2007). While it is likely that daily experiences of promoting unreasonable tasks, demoting unreasonable tasks, and unnecessary tasks will be typically appraised as a challenge, threat, and hindrance, respectfully, it is also likely that the degree to which each of these appraisals are experienced will vary somewhat as a function of the characteristics of the individual (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). To this end, the fourth goal of this work is to examine regulatory focus (Higgins 1997) as an individual

difference variable that may moderate the direct link between daily experiences of different types of illegitimate tasks and appraisals.

According to regulatory focus theory (Higgins 1997, 1998) theory, there are two distinct motivational orientations—promotion focus and prevention focus—that differ in terms of the needs, goals, desired end-states, and strategies used during goal pursuit. Individuals with a promotion focus have needs for nurturance (i.e., growth and development) and goals related to fulfilling their "ideal self" (e.g., their hopes, wishes, and aspirations). They frame situations through the lens of "gain" versus "non-gain" and focus on maximizing positive outcomes by approaching matches to desired end-states (i.e., ideal goals) such as by pursuing advancement, growth, and accomplishment. In contrast, individuals with a prevention focus have needs for safety and security and goals related to fulfilling their "ought self" (i.e., their duties, obligations, and responsibilities). They frame situations through the lens of "loss" versus "no loss" and focus on avoiding negative outcomes by avoiding mismatches to desired end-states (i.e., ought goals) such as by meeting the basic needs and requirements of their job. It is important to note that promotion focus and prevention focus are not two ends of a continuum, but rather independent dimensions (Higgins et al., 2001; Wallace & Chen, 2006).

Regulatory focus is likely to influence the way that individuals appraise stressors, specifically because one's motivational orientation (promotion focus and prevention focus) affects the type of information that individuals search for and rely on (Wang & Lee, 2006; Yoon et al., 2012). Since individuals with a promotion focus strive to match their desired end-states, they are more sensitive to gain-related information that relates to the presence or absence of positive outcomes. Conversely, individuals with a prevention focus strive to avoid a mismatch to their desired end-states, and they are more sensitive to loss-related information that relates to the

presence or absence of negative outcomes (Higgins 1997). It is likely that this selective attention will impact the degree to which different dimensions of illegitimate tasks are appraised.

Promotion Focus

As a challenge stressor, promoting unreasonable tasks should be typically appraised as offering future growth and gains, such as being able to acquire new knowledge, grow one's skills and abilities, and affirm one's positive sense of self (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019; Tuckey et al., 2015). Since individuals with a high promotion focus emphasize positive outcomes and are concerned with realizing gains and precluding non-gains, they should attend to these high potential opportunities because they directly contribute to their nurturance needs and goals of fulfilling their "ideal self." As such, individuals with a high promotion focus should appraise daily promoting unreasonable tasks as more of a challenge, compared to those with a low promotion focus.

> *Hypothesis 7:* Promotion focus will moderate the positive relationship between daily experience of promoting unreasonable tasks and challenge appraisal, such that the relationship is stronger for individuals with high promotion focus.

Further, as a threat stressor, demoting unreasonable tasks should be typically appraised as a threat to one's professional identity, and thus, sense of self (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019; Tuckey et al., 2015). However, it is likely that individuals with a high promotion focus will be less sensitive to these threats due to their lower awareness of, and more resilience to, information about losses. These individuals focus on maximizing positive outcomes to meet their nurturance needs and ideals and should therefore be less attentive to the social signals of disrespect, devaluation, and degradation sent by demoting unreasonable tasks (SAD; Semmer et al., 2007,

2019). Thus, individuals with a high promotion focus should appraise daily demoting unreasonable tasks as less of a threat, compared to those with a low promotion focus.

Hypothesis 8: Promotion focus will moderate the positive relationship between daily experience of demoting unreasonable tasks and threat appraisal, such that the effect is weaker for individuals with high promotion focus.

Last, as a hindrance stressor, unnecessary tasks should be typically appraised as constraints to goal attainment or work achievement (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019; Tuckey et al., 2015). For example, these assignments require unjustified time and effort, hindering successful completion of one's core tasks. However, since individuals with a high promotion focus are sensitive to the presence of positive outcomes, they are likely to focus their attention on the potential to remove these constraints. While overcoming demands cannot result in growth and gains (as with promoting unreasonable tasks), they allow individuals the opportunity to obtain adequate levels of performance, such as filling their core roles. These potential opportunities should be salient as they align with the nurturance needs and ideal goals of individuals with a promotion focus. Thus, individuals with a high promotion focus should appraise daily unnecessary tasks as less of a hindrance, compared to those with a low promotion focus.

Hypothesis 9: Promotion focus will moderate the positive relationship between daily experience of unnecessary tasks and hindrance appraisal, such that the effect is weaker for individuals with high promotion focus.

Prevention Focus

Given that individuals with a high prevention focus emphasize negative outcomes and are concerned with avoiding losses, they are likely to attend to the risk, uncertainty, and potential failure that is accompanied by promoting unreasonable tasks. Since promoting unreasonable

tasks fall above one's job role, they require individuals to cope effectively with its challenges, and only when demands are overcome can individuals obtain growth and gains (Tuckey et al., 2015). As individuals with a high prevention focus strive bring themselves into alignment with their need for safety and security and goals related to their "ought self", they are more likely to attend to the negative consequences (e.g., unsuccessful task completion) that may result if demands are not overcome and growth and gains are not obtained. Thus, individuals with a high prevention focus are likely to appraise daily promoting unreasonable tasks as less of a challenge, compared to those with a low prevention focus.

Hypothesis 10: Prevention focus will moderate the positive relationship between daily experience of promoting unreasonable tasks and challenge appraisal, such that the effect is weaker for individuals with high prevention focus.

Further, because individuals with a high prevention focus care greatly about losses, strive for security and safety, and hold goals related to their "ought self", they should be more attentive to the disrespectful and degrading social signals attached to these assignments. The potential harm or loss to one's sense of self should be salient, causing them to perceive demoting unreasonable tasks as more of a threat. It is therefore likely that individuals with a high prevention focus will appraise daily demoting unreasonable tasks as more of a threat, compared to those with a low prevention focus.

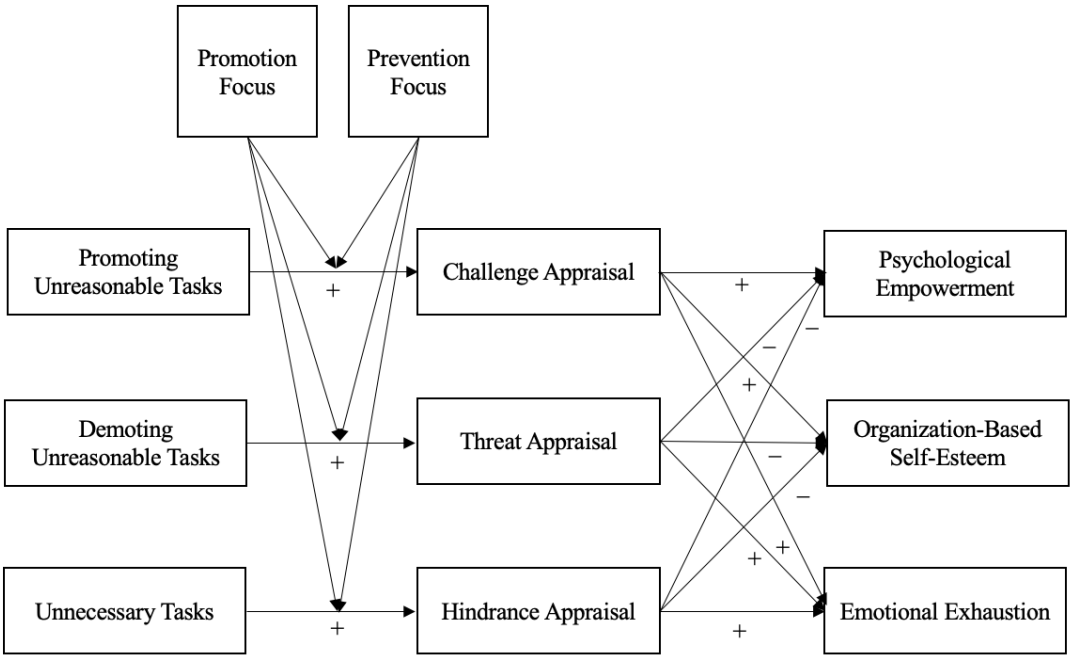
Hypothesis 11: Prevention focus will moderate the positive relationship between daily experience of demoting unreasonable tasks and threat appraisal, such that the effect is stronger for individuals with high prevention focus.

Last, because individuals with a high prevention focus are sensitive to the presence of negative outcomes, they are likely to focus on the potential losses that may result if they are

unable to overcome the demands of unnecessary tasks. For example, being unable to remove constraints to goal attainment and work achievement may prevent one from adequately filling one's core role. Taken together, individuals with a high prevention focus should appraise daily unnecessary tasks as more of a hindrance, compared to those with a low prevention focus.

Hypothesis 12: Prevention focus will moderate the positive relationship between daily experience of unnecessary tasks and hindrance appraisal, such that the positive effect is stronger for individuals with high prevention focus.

Figure 1. Summary of Theoretical Model.



CHAPTER TWO

Method

Two studies, a pilot study and a main study, were conducted. The pilot study developed and validated a refined three-dimensional illegitimate tasks scale. The main study tested the study hypotheses using the three-dimensional illegitimate tasks scale developed during the pilot study.

Pilot Study: Development and Validation of the Three-Dimensional Illegitimate Tasks Scale

The aim of the pilot study was to develop and validate a refined three-dimensional measure of illegitimate tasks. Although our current theoretical knowledge on illegitimate tasks provides reason to believe that promoting unreasonable tasks should be categorized as a challenge stressor and unnecessary tasks should be categorized as a hindrance stressor (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019; Tuckey et al., 2015), additional data was needed to ensure that the construct and all of its dimensions were fully uncovered. Further, several of the items in the Bern Illegitimate Tasks Scale (BITS; Semmer et al., 2015) assess an individual's threat appraisal of illegitimate tasks, rather than the construct of illegitimate tasks itself (e.g., "I am assigned tasks that are unfair for me to have to deal with", "I am assigned tasks that put me in an awkward position"). Since the main study examines the impact of illegitimate tasks *on* appraisal, it was necessary to revise the BITS items so that threat appraisal was not embedded within them.

The pilot study consisted of three phases. Phase 1 used a combination of deductive (i.e., using existing theory to generate items) and inductive (i.e., conducting a content analysis to categorize qualitative data to generate items) methods to generate an initial pool of items for the refined three-dimensional illegitimate tasks scale. Phase 2 reduced and refined the item pool by

assessing evidence of substantive validity (i.e., the degree to which an item assesses the intended construct rather than some other construct) and thus content validity (i.e., the extent to which the items adequately capture the domain of interest) for each item through an item-sort task. Phase 3 assessed the scale's psychometric properties and validity evidence, including construct validity (i.e., the extent to which a scale measures what it claims to measure), convergent validity (i.e., the extent to which a scale relates to other measures of constructs it should theoretically relate), discriminant validity (i.e., the extent to which a scale is unique and distinct from distally related constructs), and criterion-related validity (i.e., the extent to which a measure effectively relates to the criterion of interest). These phases were guided by the recommended steps outlined in the survey measurement development literature (Hinkin, 1995, 1998).

Phase 1. Item Generation

Both deductive and inductive methods were used to generate an initial pool of items for the refined three-dimensional illegitimate tasks scale. Items were first generated using a deductive method, which was appropriate because the traditional conceptualization, theoretical foundation (SOS framework; Semmer et al., 2007, 2019), and measurement (BITS; Semmer et al., 2010) of illegitimate tasks provided sufficient information to generate items. An inductive method was then used to identify additional items that were not generated through the deductive method. The inductive method involved conducting semi-structured phone interviews, followed by open-ended online surveys. Semi-structured phone interviews were used to generate items that were not identified during the deductive method and open-ended online surveys were used to cross check the final pool of items (i.e., items generated from the deductive method and semi-structured phone interviews) to ensure that the final pool of items was representative of entire illegitimate tasks construct and that no items were missing.

Participants. For the phone interviews, recruitment was done by sending broadcast emails to those in the principal investigator's (PI; Danielle Wald) personal and professional network and by posting the recruitment statement on the PI's social media accounts. Individuals who expressed interest in participating were contacted via email, screened for the inclusion criteria, and scheduled a phone interview at a time that was convenient for them. For the online surveys, participants were recruited from Baruch College's Psychology and Management participant pool via the SONA-SYSTEMS webpage. Since the online surveys were hosted completely online (through SONA-SYSTEMS), participants were able to complete them at any location they preferred as long as they had Internet access.

The inclusion criteria for the phone interviews and online surveys included working 35 or more hours per week (i.e., full time), having at least one coworker and one supervisor, having tenure of at least 6 months, being 18-years or older, and being fluent and literate in English. Participants were required to work 35 or more hours per week and have a tenure of at least 6 months to ensure that they have a good understanding of what work tasks fall outside of their job role (i.e., illegitimate tasks). Further, since illegitimate tasks can originate from supervisors and coworkers, it was important that participants had at least one supervisor and one coworker. For the semi-structured interviews only, participants were also eligible to participate if they were previously employed within the past 2 years as long as they met the above inclusion criteria. The time frame of 2 years was used to mitigate problems of memory decay and ensure that accurate descriptions of illegitimate tasks were provided.

The phone interview included a sample of 31 participants, totaling to 102 illegitimate tasks examples. This sample size is consistent with previous research using interview data for item generation (e.g., O'Neill & Sevastos, 2013; Wilson & Holmvall, 2013). The sample was

majority female (58%) with a mean age of 31.16 (*SD* = 8.37). Eighty-seven participants were Caucasian (7% Asian or Pacific Islander, 3% Hispanic, 3% African American). Participants worked an average of 44.77 (*SD* = 8.78) hours per week, with 22% working in the retail or service industry (e.g., restaurant, server, cashier, salesperson) and 22% working in healthcare (e.g., nurse, physical therapist). Their average tenure was 3.03 years (*SD* = 2.57). Furthermore, 55% of participants reported having a bachelor's degree (22% doctorate degree, 3% master's degree, 1% other). The average number of illegitimate tasks examples provided during the interview was 3.29 (*SD* = .90). Twenty-six participants reported on task experiences during their current employment, and 5 participants reporting on task experiences during their previous employment.

The online survey included an initial sample of 126 participants, totaling to 350 illegitimate tasks examples. However, 9 surveys were removed due to incomplete data. Further, 36 illegitimate tasks examples were excluded from the analyses, either because the example did not fit the definition of illegitimate tasks, the example was repetitive of a previous example provided by the participant, or the description of the example was unclear. The final sample included 117 participants, totaling to 314 illegitimate tasks examples. This sample size is consistent with previous research using survey data for item generation (e.g., Brady et al., 2017; Farley et al., 2016). The sample was approximately half male (51%) with a mean age of 23.11 (*SD* = 4.49). Thirty-two participants were Asian or Pacific Islander (25% Caucasian, 24% Hispanic, 9% African American, 5% other). Participants worked an average of 36.98 (*SD* = 6.38) hours per week, with 46% working in the retail or service industry (e.g., restaurant, server, cashier, salesperson) and 31% working in some professional industry (e.g., accounting or law).

Their average tenure was 2.31 years (*SD* = 1.90). Furthermore, 33% of participants reported having a degree from some college.

Procedure. A deductive approach was first used to generate items for the revised three-dimensional illegitimate tasks scale. Following the recommended steps by Hinkin (1995, 1998), a thorough literature review was conducted to examine the existing theoretical and empirical research on illegitimate tasks. The core tenants of SOS framework (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019) were closely examined to ensure that the existing theoretical foundation of illegitimate tasks was comprehensively understood. Stressor constructs (e.g., role conflict, justice, psychological contract breach) that Semmer and colleagues (2015) identified as overlapping with the illegitimate tasks construct were also reviewed. Understanding its interrelations with other constructs was critical to ensure that the items generated at this stage were representative of the illegitimate tasks construct, rather than the overlapping constructs mentioned above.

An inductive approach was then used to identify additional items that were not generated through the deductive approach. Semi-structured phone interviews were first conducted, followed by open-ended online surveys. At the start of the phone interview, participants were explained the study goals, provided oral informed consent, and answered several demographic questions relating to gender, age, ethnicity, education level, fluency in English, tenure, hours worked per week, industry, and job title. For the remainder of the phone interview, participants were asked to describe 3 examples of illegitimate tasks they received at work. Participants were allowed to provide a fourth example if they were interested. To avoid bias in participant responding, the term "illegitimate" was not used. Rather, illegitimate tasks were described as "task assignments that fall outside of the boundaries of an employee's job role". Upon study completion, participants were verbally debriefed, asked if they had any questions, and thanked

for their time. Participants were compensated with a $15 electronic Amazon gift card, which was emailed to them within 7 days of study completion. Phone interviews lasted 1 hour.

Data was then collected from online surveys. At the start of the study, participants were screened for the inclusion criteria and provided informed consent. Eligible participants were redirected to the main study survey, which asked them to provide qualitative descriptions of 3 examples of illegitimate tasks (4 if they wished). The information and questions asked throughout the survey were the same as those provided during the phone interviews. Upon study completion, participants were debriefed, thanked for their time, compensated one SONA credit, and provided the contact information for the PI and Baruch's HRPP coordinator in case they had questions about the research at that moment or in the future. The online surveys took 1 hour to complete.

Results. The process of creating items via both the deductive and inductive methods resulted a total of 29 items. Twelve items were generated from the deductive method and 17 items were generated from the inductive method, specifically via semi-structured phone interviews. All items were identified and written by the PI. Following Hinkin's (1998) recommendation, items were written in simple language, consistent in terms of perspective, not double-barreled, and not leading questions. All items were written such that the appraisal of illegitimate tasks was not embedded within the items.

As mentioned above, all 17 items generated from the inductive method were developed from the semi-structured phone interviews. This is because no additional items were identified from the open-ended online surveys, which were used to cross check the pool of items generated from the deductive method and semi-structured phone interviews. This process involved three coders (the PI and two undergraduate research assistants in their senior year) independently

coding the illegitimate tasks examples provided in the online surveys. For each illegitimate tasks example, the coders were required to reference the pool of 29 items developed from the deductive approach and semi-structured phone interviews and make note of illegitimate tasks examples that did were not redundant with one of the previously generated items. To ensure a higher inter-rater reliability (i.e., degree of agreement among raters) in the coding process, the PI held an informal training with the other two coders to review the coding procedures before the before coding began. Further, to build a frame of reference for the coders, the PI independently coded several illegitimate tasks examples and presented the coding to the other 2 coders. Coders were encouraged to ask questions to clarify any confusion or ambiguity. Following the training, all 3 coders independently coded 20 randomly selected illegitimate tasks examples from the survey data. Their codings were compared and agreement rates between the raters were 88.2%; any disagreement was resolved through a discussion.

Phase 2. Item Reduction

Using the initial pool of items generated during Phase 1 (item generation), the substantive validity of each item was assessed through an item-sort task via an online survey. Substantive validity is defined as the degree to which an item assesses the intended construct rather than some other construct (Holden & Jackson, 1979) and is a necessary requirement for demonstrating evidence of content validity (e.g., the extent to which the items adequately capture the domain of interest). Item-sort tasks are recommended in the early stages of scale development to test for substantive validity, as they provide a way to remove items that are not conceptually consistent with the construct definition (Hinkin, 1998). The goal of the item-sort task was to identify and retain items that assess the construct of illegitimate tasks and to eliminate items that do not. Items assigned to their correct constructs demonstrate higher levels

of substantive validity than items that are assigned to incorrect constructs.

Participants. Doctoral students earning a degree in Industrial/Organizational (I/O) Psychology were recruited for this study. Doctoral students are an appropriate sample for the item-sort task because they understand the similarities and differences between items and definitions (Schriesheim et al., 1993). Further, I/O Psychology doctoral students were targeted because the constructs assessed in the item-sort task would be known to those in the field of I/O Psychology.

Recruitment was done by sending broadcast emails to those in the PI's professional network. A snowball sampling technique was also used, where participants had the ability to refer other qualified participants to the study. Individuals who were interested in participating were screened for the inclusion criteria and then emailed the direct link to the online survey.

Inclusion criteria included doctoral students being enrolled in a I/O doctoral program in the United States and being in their second year or above in the doctoral program. The latter criterion was implemented to ensure that participants had adequate knowledge on psychological constructs and measurement.

Twenty-five doctoral students participated in the study. This sample size is consistent with recommendations for item-sort tasks (Hinkin & Tracey, 1999) and previous research using item-sort tasks for scale development (e.g., Ferris et al., 2008). Data from all 25 doctoral students were included in the final analysis. Participants were majority female (72%), Caucasian (68%, 20% Asian or Pacific Islander, 8% Hispanic, 4% Other), with a mean age of 27.88 (SD = 4.71). Their mean year in Ph.D. program was 3.84 (SD = 1.49).

Procedure. After clicking on the survey link, participants were required to agree to the informed consent. After agreeing to the informed consent, participants completed the item-sort

task via an online survey hosted by Qualtrics. To complete the item-sort task, participants were presented with the definition of illegitimate tasks (i.e., tasks that employees think they should not have to carry out because it is not expected of them in their role), along with other construct definitions that Semmer and colleagues (2015) previously identified as overlapping with the construct of illegitimate tasks. These constructs included role conflict (i.e., when employees perceive that other people in the organization have expectations of them that are incompatible with one another; Rizzo et al., 1970), distributive justice (i.e., the extent to which employees perceive that the distribution of outcomes are fair; Colquitt, 2001), and psychological contract breach (i.e., when employees perceive that the organization failed to fulfill one or more obligations associated with perceived mutual promises; Robinson & Morrison, 2000). Participants were then provided with a list of scale items and were instructed to choose the construct definition that they believed each item was assessing. The list of items included the illegitimate tasks item pool (N=29) identified in the Phase 1 (item generation) along with the scale items from the overlapping constructs mentioned above. In line with research on best practices in scale development (Hinkin, 1995, 1998), to control for any response bias caused by order effects, two alternate forms were used with items presented in randomized order. To reduce bias and increase rational decision-making, construct names were not provided.

After completing the item-sort task, participants were provided with the construct name and definition of illegitimate tasks. They were then presented with each of the 29 illegitimate tasks items. For each item, participants were asked “Is this item clear?" and were required to choose "yes" or "no.” For items that were rated as unclear (i.e., participants who responded “no”), participants were asked to provide feedback as why they perceived it to be unclear. Further, for each item, participants were able to provide open-ended feedback with any general

comments or suggestions for improvement. In the end, participants answered demographic questions on their age, gender, ethnicity, and year in their Ph.D. Program. After completing the survey, participants were thanked for their participation and provided the contact information for the PI and Baruch's HRPP coordinator in case they had questions about the research at that moment or in the future. Participants were compensated with a $5 electronic Amazon gift card, which was emailed to them within 7 days of study completion. The study lasted 30 minutes.

Measures.

Illegitimate Tasks Item Pool. The revised three-dimensional illegitimate tasks scale was measured using the 29 items generated during the Phase 1 (item generation). Example items included, "At work, I am assigned tasks that…Should be done by someone above my job level" and "Involve less skills and/or abilities than should be expected of me."

Role Conflict. Role conflict was measured using the 8-item scale (Rizzo et al., 1970). Example items included "I have to do things that should be done differently."

Distributive Justice. Distributive justice was measured using 4 items (Colquitt, 2001). An example item was "To what extent does your outcome reflect the effort you have put into your work?"

Psychological Contract Breach. Psychological contract breach was measured using 5 items (Robinson & Morrison, 2000). An example item was "I have not received everything promised to me in exchange for my contributions."

Results. According to MacKenzie and colleagues' (1991; see Hinkin, 1995, 1998), items are substantially valid if they are assigned to the correct construct more than 75% of the time. Illegitimate tasks items were first evaluated based on this agreement index (minimum of 75%), which resulted in 17 items being retained and 12 items being eliminated. However, consistent

with research using item-sort tasks for item refinement (e.g., Brady et al., 2017; Wilson & Holmvall, 2013), illegitimate tasks items were then re-evaluated based on the feedback participants provided regarding item clarity. This resulted in 1 of the 17 substantially valid items being dropped due to its redundancy. Further, of the 12 items that fell below the minimum cutoff of 75%, 8 items were retained after rewording (based on the item clarity feedback provided). Additionally, as mentioned above, participants were given the opportunity to provide feedback with any general comments or suggestions for improvement. This open-ended feedback resulted in 4 unique items being generated. This process resulted in a pool of 28 illegitimate tasks items. See Appendix A for the list of 28 items.

Phase 3. Assessing Psychometric Properties and Validity

There were four goals to phase 3. The first goal was to explore the scale's underlying structure. The second goal was to reduce the scale by removing unreliable and unrepresentative items. The third goal was to examine the scale's reliability, specifically to show that it demonstrated internal consistency (i.e., consistency between the scale items). The fourth and final goal was to garner evidence for the scale's validity.

Participants and Procedures. Data was collected using an online marketplace for work services known as Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). The study was posted to a list of human intelligence tasks (HITs), and participants were able to browse through the list and choose the HIT they wished to participate in. Only participants who had a 95% HIT rate and completed 100 or more HITs were able to view this study HIT on MTurk. Research recommends including these 2 qualifications to obtain high quality data because it increases the likelihood of recruiting committed and experienced participants (e.g., Cheung et al., 2017; Keith et al., 2017).

Inclusion criteria for the study HIT required that participants work at least 30 hours per week (i.e., full-time workers), have at least one coworker and one supervisor, been working at their job for at least 6 months, be fluent and literate in English, and reside and work in the United States. While the study's inclusion criteria required that participants be 18 years or older, it was not screened for because the minimum sign up age for MTurk is 18. Participants were only allowed to participate in the study HIT once.

While it was possible to provide participants with the inclusion criteria within the description of the study HIT, literature discussing MTurk best practices recommends against doing so (e.g., Cheung et al., 2017; Keith et al., 2017). Empirical findings examining participant honesty on crowdsourcing platforms such as MTurk show that when the inclusion criteria are disclosed upfront, participants often misrepresent themselves in order to participate in the study and receive compensation (Chandler & Paolacci, 2017). Thus, while researchers often try to exclude unqualified participants from study participation by providing a list of screening questions at the start of the study, this method is deemed to be inefficient because participants can provide the "correct" responses to these screening questions based on the disclosed inclusion criteria.

Thus, to minimize participant fraud, the recommended prescreening technique discussed in the literature was followed (Chandler & Paolacci, 2017; Cheung et al., 2017; Keith et al., 2017). That is, two studies were employed. The first study was a stand-alone prescreening study, where all participants (95% HIT rate and 100 completed HITS) were eligible to participate as long as they had not previously participated in the study. To verify that participants have not yet participated, they were first asked to enter in their MTurk Worker IDs. Those who had not yet participated in the study were asked to agree to the informed consent document and complete

prescreening questions, which related to the study's inclusion criteria as well as other demographic questions (e.g., ethnicity, and industry) as to prevent Workers from "guessing" what the study's inclusion criteria questions was ("distractor" questions). Participants who did not meet the inclusion criteria, were directed to the end of the study, thanked for their time, and provided a randomly generated completion code that they were instructed to enter the MTurk website to receive compensation. All participants were compensated with 5 cents regardless of whether they qualified for the main study or not. The prescreening study took no longer than 5 minutes to complete.

Participants who passed the prescreening study were routed to the main study, which was used to test the four goals of Phase 3. Participants completed the 28 items identified for the revised three-dimensional illegitimate tasks scale, along with several other measures to provide evidence for the scale's validity. Specifically, participants completed the original illegitimate tasks scale (BITS; Semmer et al., 2015), role conflict (Rizzo et al., 1970), procedural justice, distributive justice (Colquitt, 2001), negative emotions (Caplan et al., 1980), frustration at work (Peters et al., 1980), job satisfaction (Cammann et al., 1979), and counterproductive work behavior (Spector & Fox, 2010). In additional to these measures, participants also completed several demographic questions relating to age, gender, ethnicity, education, tenure, hours per week, industry, job title, annual income, HITs completed per work, and tenure as a MTurk Worker.

Further, three instructed response items ("To show that you are paying attention during the survey, please select X") were randomly disbursed throughout the survey. Best practices on MTurk suggests that participants may vary in their levels of effort and attention provided during study completion, which can threaten evidence for the study's internal validity, statistical

conclusion validity, and construct validity. Meade and Craig (2012) suggest that subject inattentiveness is particularly problematic when scale development and validation studies are based on large amounts of inattentive or carless responders. In their research, they showed that a sample with as few as 10% careless responses can negatively impact the scale's factor structure, item correlations, and model fit indices, ultimately causing conclusions about the scale to be unreliable. To limit careless responses, they suggested that researchers incorporate approximately one item in every 50-100 items, up to a maximum of three. This recommendation was followed. Additionally, 2 questions were added to detect BOTS (i.e., internet robots), which have been argued to be problematic on MTurk. Since BOTS are unable to respond to qualitative open-ended questions, participants were first asked, "What do you think this HIT was about?". Then, they were asked to respond to a captcha verification question, which required them to type the letters seen in the image. At the conclusion of the study, participants were thanked for their time and the study purpose was disclosed to them. As with the prescreening study, participants were provided with a randomly generated completion code, which they were instructed to enter MTurk in order to receive compensation. These participants were paid $1 for the main study and 5 cents for the prescreening study (totaling to $1.05). The main survey took no longer than 30 minutes to complete.

A total sample for 715 participants passed the prescreening study and completed the main study. However, after data cleaning, 77 participants were excluded from the analyses for several reasons. Sixteen participants were excluded from analyses because they failed 2 of the 3 instructed response questions (i.e., attention check questions). Further, to remove careless responders, response speed was assessed. Following recommendations by Wood and colleagues (2017), participants who responded at rates faster than 1 second per item were identified.

Response time estimates were calculated as the time taken to make a first click on each page and to click submit on each page, divided by the number of items rated on the page minus 1. Based on these criteria, 21 participants were removed. Further, the average amount of time it took participants to complete the entire survey were considered. Six participants were excluded from analyses because they had shorter than anticipated response times (5 minutes), which could compromise the quality of the data. Thirteen participants were removed because it took them between 1.0 hour to 166.1 hours to complete the entire survey. Last, 16 participants were removed because of duplicate MTurk Worker IDs, suggesting that they participated in the study more than once. Five participants were also removed because the MTurk Worker IDs provided were not consistent with the standard formatting of a MTurk Worker ID (e.g., "1moneys"). No BOTS were identified and thus no participants were excluded based on these questions.

The final sample size included 638 participants. The sample was approximately half male (56%) with a mean age of 39 (*SD* = 11.10). Most participants were Caucasian (78%, 9% African American, 7% Asian and Pacific Islander) and 43% reported having a bachelor's degree as their highest degree. Participants had an average tenure of 7.80 years (*SD* = 7.15) and worked an average of 42 (*SD* = 7.56) hours per week. Further, participants worked in a variety of industries; 17% worked in a professional industry (e.g., accounting or law), 15% worked in retail or service industry (e.g., restaurant, server, cashier, salesperson), 14% worked in education (e.g., teacher, work at a university), 14% worked in healthcare (e.g., nurse, physical therapist), 12% worked in a technical industry (e.g., mechanics, computer programming), 10% worked in a manufacturing industry (e.g., construction, assembly line), and 8% worked in a government agency (e.g., military, city hall). Their income varied, with 17% earning an average of $30,000-39,000 and 14% earning an average of 40,000-49,000 at their job. In terms of MTurk, 79% participants

complete more than 10 HITS per week and have been working at MTurk for an average year of 2.34 (*SD*= 2.38).

Measures. For all measures, participants were required to consider their job in the last 2 months.

Illegitimate Tasks Item Pool. The 28 items finalized in Phase 2 (i.e., Item Reduction) were used. Example items included, "At work, I am assigned tasks that should be completed by someone above my job level", "At work, I am assigned tasks that involved less advanced knowledge than should be expected of me", and "At work, I am assigned tasks that should not have to be done at all." Responses options ranged on a 5-point scale (*1 = never; 5 = frequently*).

Illegitimate Tasks (BITS). The original illegitimate tasks items were measured using the 8-item BITS scale developed by Semmer and colleagues (2015). Example items included "Do you have work tasks to care of which keep you wondering if…They have to be done at all?" and "Do you have work tasks to take care of, which you believe…Should be done by someone else?" Responses options ranged on a 5-point scale (1 = *never; 5 = frequently*).

Role Conflict. Role conflict was measured using the 8-item scale from Rizzo et al. (1970). Example items included "I have to do things that should be done differently." Responses options ranged on a 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 5 = *strongly agree*).

Procedural Justice. Procedural Justice was measured using 7 items from Colquitt (2001). Participants were asked to refer to the procedures used to arrive at the outcomes you receive from their job (e.g., pay, promotions, etc.). An example item was "Have you been able to express your views and feelings during those procedures?" Responses options ranged on a 5-point scale (1=*to a small extent;* 5 = *to a large extent*).

Distributive Justice. Distributive justice was measured using 4 items from Colquitt (2001). Participants were asked to refer to the outcomes you receive from their job (e.g., pay, promotions, etc.). An example item was "Do your outcomes reflect the effort you have put into your work?" Responses options ranged on a 5-point scale (1= *to a small extent;* 5 = *to a large extent*).

Job satisfaction. Job satisfaction was measured with 3 global job satisfaction items from Cammann et al. (1983). A sample item is "In general, I like working at my job." Responses options ranged on a 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree;* 5 = *strongly agree*).

Negative Emotions. Anger (3 items), anxiety (4 items), and depression (6 items) were measured were measured using a scale developed by Caplan and colleagues (1980). Example items were "I feel aggravated" (anger), "I feel jittery" (anxiety), and "I feel sad" (depression). Items ranged on a 4-point scale (1= *never or a little;* 4 = *most of the time*). Further, frustration was measured using the 3-item Frustration at Work Scale (Peters et al., 1980). An example item was "Trying to get this job done was a very frustrating experience." Responses options ranged on a 4-point scale (1= *never or a little of the time;* 4 = *most of the time*).

Counterproductive work behavior. Counterproductive work behavior was measured using the 10-item Counterproductive Work Behavior Checklist (Spector et al., 2010). An example item was "Purposely wasted your employer's materials/supplies." Responses options ranged on a 5-point scale (1 = *never;* 5 = *everyday*).

Demographics. Demographic information collected included age, gender, ethnicity, education, tenure, hours per week, industry, job title, annual income, HITs completed per work, and tenure as a MTurk Worker.

Data Analysis. Anderson and Gerbing (1988) recommend the random assignment of two subsamples, where one sample is used to develop the measurement model and the other to validate the solution obtained. In line with this recommendation, the data file was randomly split in half. One half of the data (N= 319) was used to analyze the scale's psychometric properties (factor structure and reliability). To do so, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to assess the dimensionality of the scale and to remove unrepresentative items. The second half of the data (N= 319) was used to confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and provide evidence for the scale's validity. Convergent validity, which examines the extent to which a scale relates to other measures of constructs it should theoretically relate to, was assessed by correlating the revised three-dimensional illegitimate tasks scale with the original illegitimate tasks scale (BITS; Semmer et al., 2015), role conflict (Rizzo et al., 1970), procedural justice, and distributive justice (Colquitt, 2001). The BITS (Semmer et al., 2015) was selected because the revised scale was based on the same SOS framework (Semmer et al., 2007; 2019) as the BITS (Semmer et al., 2015) was based on, and thus, they were expected to strongly correlate with one another.

Further, the other measures were chosen because Semmer and colleagues (2010, 2015) suggested that illegitimate tasks overlap with these constructs. The CFA results were used to provide construct validity and discriminant validity evidence. Construct validity examines the extent to which a scale measures what it claims to measure, and discriminant validity examines the extent to which a scale is unique and distinct from distally related constructs. Last, criterion-related validity, which examines the extent to which a measure effectively relates to a criterion of interest, was examined by correlating the revised three-dimensional scale with outcome variables that have been previously shown to result from illegitimate tasks. The scales used for criterion-related validity evidence were negative emotions (Caplan et al., 1980), frustration at work (Peters

et al., 1980), job satisfaction (Cammann et al., 1979), and counterproductive work behavior (Spector & Fox, 2010).

Results: Psychometric Properties.

Item-level analysis. Before analyzing the scale's factor structure, an item-level analysis was conducted. All 28 scale items were examined based on their inter-item correlations, item-total correlations, means (M =1.53-3.01), standard deviations (SD =.92-1.27). In total, 3 items were removed after conducting this analysis because they demonstrated low correlations (less than .3) with most of the other items ("*Expose me to dangerous or hazardous conditions, which should not be expected of me",* "*Require me to violate organizational rules or policies when I should not be expected to do so*", "*Require me to use my personal belongings or supplies when I should not be expected to do so*").

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). An EFA was conducted on the remaining 25 scale items using a principal axis factor analysis with a direct oblique rotation (promax rotation). A principal axis factor analysis was used because it is primarily concerned with the common variance and identifying the underlying dimensions. Additionally, a direct oblique ration was used since the items were expected to correlate.

Bartlett's test of sphericity, which tests the overall significance of all the correlations within the correlation matrix, was significant ($\chi^2(300) = 5308.652$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that it was appropriate to use the factor analytic model to analyze the data. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy indicated that the strength of the relationships among variables was high (KMO = .95) and therefore acceptable to proceed with the analysis.

Extracted eigenvalues, the break in the scree plot, and the percentage of variance explained by the factors suggested a three-factor solution. Specifically, the Kaiser-Guttman

retention criterion of eigenvalues greater than 1.0 showed that 60.71% of the variance among the 25 items was accounted by 3 factors and the factors on the scree plot leveled off after the third factor. Further, the correlations among the factors were strongly correlated with one another (.65 ~ .72).

Consistent with recommendations by Hinkin (1995), a factor loading of .40 was used as a minimum cutoff score. Additionally, items were only allowed to load on one factor. Items that had less than .10 as the minimum differences between weights were removed from scale. In total, 5 items were eliminated because they did not meet these criteria. Three items *("Just exist because some people simply demand it this", "Should not be expected of me since they are unrelated to my job", "Should not be expected of me due to the lack of resources available to me*") did not demonstrate factor weights above .4. Additionally, one item (*"Should be completed by a coworker (someone at my level) with different responsibilities than me"*) cross-loaded onto 2 factors with less than .10 for the difference.

Another EFA was run using the remaining 21 items. Consistent with the first EFA, the extracted eigenvalues, the break in the scree plot, and the percentage of variance explained (62.67%) by the factors suggested a 3-factor solution. Further, the correlations among the factors were still strongly correlated with one another (.60 ~.70).

However, upon examining the factor weights and loadings, one item ("*Serve little or no purpose"*) was removed because it did not meet the factor weight cutoff score of .4. Further, five items (*"Require me to complete another person's nonwork-related responsibilities when I should not be expected to do so", "Should not be expected of me even though they relate to my job in some way", "Require skills and/or abilities that are unrealistic for me to obtain", Should be completed by someone working in a different profession within my organization", "Require*

more effort from me than necessary") were removed because they were not conceptually similar to the other items in the factor it loaded on and one item ("*Require me to balance more responsibilities than should be expected of me"*) was removed because they were redundant with the other items in that factor.

Hinkin (1998) recommends that scales should achieve parsimony by including the fewest numbers of items needed to adequately measure the construct. Not only should they reflect the simplest possible structure, but shorter scales help reduce biases caused by boredom and fatigue. Thus, the scale was further reduced by retaining the four items with the highest factor loadings for each factor. As such, one more item ("*Involve skills and/or abilities that are entirely unlike those I should be expected to use"*) was removed from the scale.

To examine the scale's final structure, a third EFA with the remaining 12 items was conducted. A three-factor solution was demonstrated, and 70.82% of the variance was explained by the three factors. As anticipated, four items loaded onto each factor. Factor 1 had loadings that ranged from .57 to .96., Factor 2 had loadings that ranged from .70 to .80, and Factor 3 had loadings that ranged from .51 to .88. The correlations among the factors were modestly correlated with one another (.44 ~.67). Table 1 displays the factor loadings for the final 12 illegitimate tasks items.

Internal Consistency. Reliability, or the accuracy or precision of an instrument, is a necessary condition to provide evidence for validity. Therefore, to ensure the scale is a reliable measure of illegitimate tasks, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were examined for the entire scale and for each factor. Reliability analyses demonstrated a high reliability coefficient for the entire scale (.90) and for each factor (Factor 1=.89, Factor 2=.84, Factor 3=.84).

Taken together, results showed that the revised three-dimensional illegitimate tasks scale includes 3 factors, with 4 items in each factor. The items in Factor 1 were consistent with the conceptualization of promoting unreasonable tasks (tasks that employees believe should be done by someone else because they fall above one's job role; i.e., *Require more autonomy than should be expected of me", "Should be completed by someone above my job level", "Involve more advanced knowledge than should be expected of me"," Involve more advanced skills and/or abilities than should be expected of me)*. The items in Factor 2 were consistent with the conceptualization of demoting unreasonable tasks (tasks that employees believe should be done by someone else because they fall below one's job role; i.e., *Involve less advanced knowledge than should be expected of me", "Are completely beneath what should be expected of me", "Involve less advanced skills and/or abilities than should be expected of me", "Should be completed by someone below my job level")*, and the items in Factor 3 were consistent with the conceptualization of unnecessary tasks (tasks that employees believe should simply not exist, either because they do not make sense or should not be completed at all; i.e., *"Should not be completed by anyone employed by my organization", "Do not make sense at all", Should not have to be done at all", "Should never have existed in the first place"*).

Results: Scale Validation.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). A CFA was conducted on the final 12 items to confirm the three-factor structure of the revised three-dimensional illegitimate tasks scale. Three CFA models were compared. This included comparing the a priori three-factor model (Model A) with a one factor model in which all items loaded on a single factor (Model B), a two-factor model in which items for promoting unreasonable tasks and demoting unreasonable tasks loaded on one factor and items for unnecessary tasks loaded on the other (Model C), and a three-factor

orthogonal model in which the three factors were not allowed to covary (Model D). Results showed adequate fit for the a priori three-factor model ($\chi^2(51) = 180.83$, $p < .001$; CFI = .94; RMSEA = .09; SRMR = .06). As Table 2 indicates, the three-factor model also fit the data significantly better than Models B, C, and D (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002). These findings provide evidence for construct validity and discriminant validity for the revised three-dimensional illegitimate tasks scale.

Convergent validity. To provide evidence for convergent validity, the revised three-dimensional illegitimate tasks scale was correlated with the original illegitimate tasks scale (BITS) as well as three other constructs that Semmer and colleagues (2010; 2015) identified as overlapping with the illegitimate tasks construct. These constructs were role conflict, procedural justice, and distributive justice. As expected, the revised three-dimensional illegitimate tasks scale significantly positively related to BITS ($r = .79$; $p < .001$) and role conflict ($r = .71$; $p < .001$) and significantly negatively related to procedural justice ($r = -.29$; $p < .001$) and distributive justice ($r = -.32$; $p < .001$; See Table 3 and 4).

Criterion-related validity. To provide evidence for criterion-related validity**,** the revised three-dimensional illegitimate tasks scale was correlated with outcome variables that have been previously shown to result from illegitimate tasks. These outcome variables include a variety of negative emotions (depression, anxiety, anger, frustration at work), job satisfaction, and counterproductive work behavior (CWB). As seen in Table 3 and 4, the revised three-dimensional illegitimate tasks scale significantly positively related to depression ($r = .47$; $p < .001$), anxiety ($r = .43$; $p < .001$), anger ($r = .52$; $p < .001$), and frustration at work ($r = .56$; $p < .001$). Further, it negatively related to job satisfaction ($r = -.50$; $p < .001$) and positively related to counterproductive work behavior ($r = .52$; $p < .001$).

Results also show that the three dimensions of illegitimate tasks relate to outcomes as well. For example, promoting unreasonable tasks positively related to depression ($r = .31$; $p < .001$), anxiety ($r = .38$; $p < .001$), anger ($r = .34$; $p < .001$), and frustration at work ($r = .45$; $p < .001$). Demoting unreasonable tasks positively related to depression ($r = .43$; $p < .001$), anxiety ($r = .33$; $p < .001$), anger ($r = .47$; $p < .001$), and frustration at work ($r = .46$; $p < .001$). Furthermore, unnecessary tasks positively related to depression ($r = .46$; $p < .001$), anxiety ($r = .38$; $p < .001$), anger ($r = .52$; $p < .001$), and frustration at work ($r = .52$; $p < .001$).

Pilot Study Discussion

The pilot study developed and validated a revised three-dimensional illegitimate tasks scale. The findings from this study provide initial support for the scale's three-factor solution (i.e., promoting unreasonable tasks, demoting unreasonable tasks, and unnecessary tasks), and demonstrate that the scale is distinct from overlapping constructs (i.e., the original illegitimate tasks scale [BITS], role conflict, procedural justice, and distributive justice). Furthermore, the three dimensions collectively and individually related to negative emotions (i.e., depression, anxiety, anger, frustration at work), job satisfaction and counterproductive work behavior. Overall, these findings contribute to the illegitimate tasks literature by introducing a more comprehensive illegitimate tasks scale that holistically addresses its dimensions and allows researchers to assess one's appraisal of illegitimate tasks (rather than appraisal being embedded within the scale). These results enable researchers to examine the three dimensions of illegitimate tasks collectively or individually as distinct from one another, which will be done during the main study.

It is important to note that the relationship between the revised three-dimensional framework of illegitimate tasks is more strongly related to role conflict than research utilizing the

BITS scale. For example, in Semmer et al's (2010) study, the relationship between illegitimate tasks and role conflict was .37. It is possible that a stronger effect is seen with the revised three-dimensional framework because of the distinction between promoting unreasonable tasks and demoting unreasonable tasks. Illegitimate tasks represent a special case of role conflict (Semmer et al., 2010), especially in terms of person-role conflict (i.e., conflict between a person's internal standards or values and the defined role behavior; Rizzo et al., 1970). The revised three-dimensional framework provides three, rather than two, instances in which illegitimate tasks are experienced as a form of role conflict.

Main Study

Participants

Participants were recruited through Prolific, which is an online crowdsourcing platform used for psychological research. Prolific has grown in popularity as it helps mitigate issues related to participant misrepresentation (Palan & Schitter, 2018). As described earlier (Pilot study, Phase 3), participants using crowdsourcing platforms often misrepresent themselves in order to participate in the study and receive compensation (Chandler & Paolacci, 2017). Prolific mitigates this issue by gathering participant characteristics independent of specific studies (Palan & Schitter, 2018). To avoid misrepresentation in participant data when conducting the proposed daily diary study, Prolific was selected as an appropriate data collection method. This is consistent with previous research using Prolific to conduct daily diary studies (e.g., Huppertz et al., 2020)

Inclusion criteria for the study required that participants work at least 30 hours per week (i.e., full-time workers), been working at their job for at least 6 months, have at least one coworker and one supervisor, be fluent and literate in English, be 18 years or older, reside and

work in the United States, and have a 90% approval rate in previous Prolific studies. Participants were required to work full time to ensure that they have established a professional identity in the organization (a prerequisite to feeling as though a task is "illegitimate"; Semmer et al., 2010). Participants were also required to have been working at their job for at least 6 months to help ensure that they have a good understanding of which tasks fall within (and which tasks fall outside) of their job descriptions. Since illegitimate tasks are assigned by another person at work (Semmer et al, 2010), participants were required to have a supervisor and coworker to ensure that they have received illegitimate tasks at their job.

Two hundred and two participants completed T1 survey. However, 107 participants were not included in the final sample because they either completed the T1 survey in less than one third of the expected completion time or did not have at least 2 days of paired data during the diary study (i.e., daily survey 1 and daily survey 2). The final sample included 95 participants. The majority were male (59%) and Caucasian (69%; 18% Asian and Pacific islander), and their mean age was 33.34 years old (*SD* = 7.66). Participants worked an average of 41.79 hours per week (*SD* = 5.38), 22% worked in a technical industry (e.g., mechanics, computer programming), and 16% worked in education (e.g., teacher, work at a university). Their average job tenure was 5.57 years (*SD* = 4.59) and organizational tenure was 3.92 years (*SD* = 3.68). Further, 43% had a bachelor's degree (23% master's degree; 11% doctoral level degree [e.g., Ph.d., M.D., J.D]).

Procedure

The study was advertised as a daily diary study, where participants who completed the Time 1 (T1) survey were invited to complete the diary portion. Those who chose to participate in the daily diary study were directed to the T1 survey where they agreed to the informed consent,

completed a measure of regulatory focus (Neubert et al., 2008), and answered several demographic questions (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, education, tenure in role and in organization, job title, industry, hours per week, annual income, Prolific studies completed per week, tenure as a Prolific participant, and time zone).

Participants who completed the T1 study were invited to participate in the daily diary study, which started the following Monday. The duration of the participants' involvement was three workweeks and participants were required to complete two daily surveys each day. On each workday, invitations to the two daily surveys were sent out (via Prolific's mailing system) at 1:00 PM (daily survey 1; available between 1:00 PM-3:00 PM) and 5:00 PM (daily survey 2, available between 5:00PM-7:00 PM) of their local time. To ensure compliance with study procedures, surveys were open for 2 hours. All diaries were taken on a computer or mobile phones of their choosing. To link participant data over time without using any identifying information, Prolific recorded Prolific IDs automatically.

Illegitimate tasks and appraisals were measured in daily survey 1. Emotional exhaustion, OBSE, and psychological empowerment were measured in daily survey 2. All surveys (T1 and daily diaries) were hosted on Qualtrics (Qualtrics.com). Participants were compensated $1.50 for the T1 survey, $1.40 for the daily survey 1, and $1.20 for the daily survey 2. Thus, each participant obtained up to $40.50 for the study.

Time 1 (T1) Measures

Regulatory Focus. Regulatory focus was measured using the 18-item Work Regulatory Focus Scale (Neubert et al., 2008). Promotion focus and prevention focus were measured using 9 items each. Example items are "I take chances at work to maximize my goals for advancement" (i.e., promotion focus) and "I do everything I can to avoid loss at work" (i.e., prevention focus).

Responses options ranged on a 5-point scale (1 =*strongly disagree;* 5 = *strongly agree*). Cronbach's alpha was .79 for promotion focus and .81 for prevention focus.

Demographics. Demographic information including age, gender, ethnicity, education, tenure in role and in organization, job title, industry, hours per week, annual income, Prolific studies completed per week, tenure as a Prolific participant, and time zone were collected.

Daily Survey 1 Measures

Three-Dimensional Illegitimate Tasks Scale. Illegitimate tasks were measured using the 12-item Three-Dimensional Illegitimate Tasks scale developed in the pilot study. Promoting unreasonable tasks, demoting unreasonable tasks, and unnecessary tasks were measured using 4 items each. Participants responded to all items using a Yes or No format to indicate whether they experienced each of the 12 illegitimate tasks items that day. Indices of daily promoting unreasonable tasks, demoting unreasonable tasks, and unnecessary tasks were created by summing the number of illegitimate tasks experienced on a given workday. Higher scores indicated a greater frequency of illegitimate tasks (i.e., promoting unreasonable tasks, demoting unreasonable tasks, unnecessary tasks) experienced that day. Given the nature of Yes/No responses, coefficient alphas were not calculated in the main study.

Stress Appraisal. Challenge appraisal and hindrance appraisal of illegitimate tasks were measured using Searle and Auton' s (2015) scale with 4 items for each appraisal, and threat appraisal of illegitimate tasks was measured using 3 items from Feldman and colleagues (2004). All 11 appraisal items were presented immediately after participants responded to each dimension of the illegitimate tasks measure. For example, right after completing the 4 items for promoting unreasonable tasks, participants were presented the 11 appraisal items and asked to refer to those tasks when answering each appraisal item. The same procedure occurred for

demoting unreasonable tasks and unnecessary tasks. If participants did not report experiencing at least 1 of the 4 items in each illegitimate task dimension (i.e., they reported "no" to all 4 items), they were not presented with the appraisal items for that given dimension. However, to mitigate potential issues of participant dishonesty (participants reporting not having experienced any items to avoid having to complete appraisal items), participants were required to complete alternative measures of the same item length (e.g., 11, 22, or 33 items). The alternative scales included workload (Spector & Jex, 1998), role conflict (Rizzo et al., 1970), role ambiguity (Rizzo et al., 1970), workplace incivility (Cortina et al., 2001), abusive supervision (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007), and time pressure (Semmer et al., 1999).

An example item for challenge appraisal is "Those tasks will show me I can do something new", an example item for hindrance appraisal is "Those tasks will hinder any achievements I might have", and an example item for threat appraisal is "Those tasks are going to have a negative impact on me." Responses options ranged on a 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 5 = *strongly agree*). For promoting unreasonable tasks, Cronbach's alpha was .85 for challenge appraisal, .85 for threat appraisal, and .84 for hindrance appraisal. For demoting unreasonable tasks, Cronbach's alpha was .88 for challenge appraisal, .84 for threat appraisal, and .86 for hindrance appraisal. For unnecessary tasks, Cronbach's alpha was .91 for challenge appraisal, .86 for threat appraisal, and .90 for hindrance appraisal.

Daily Survey 2 Measures

Emotional Exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion was measured using Gabriel and colleagues' (2018) 3-item adapted version of Wharton's (1993) measure of exhaustion. This scale was specifically validated measuring emotional exhaustion on the daily level, adding additional evidence that emotional exhaustion can fluctuate across days (Klusmann et al., 2020;

Liu et al., 2015; Xu et al., 2021). An example item is "I feel emotionally drained". Responses options ranged on a 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 5 = *strongly agree*). Cronbach's alpha was .91.

Organization-Based Self-Esteem. OBSE was measured using Xanthopoulou and colleagues' (2009) 2-item adapted version of Pierce et al.'s (1989) Organization-Based Self-Esteem Scale (inter-item correlations ranged from .63 to .92). This scale was used to explore OBSE on the daily level and therefore provides additional evidence suggesting that it can fluctuate across days. An example is "Today while at work, I felt valuable for the company." Responses options ranged on a 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 5 = *strongly agree*). Cronbach's alpha was .93.

Psychological Empowerment. Psychological Empowerment was measured using Spreitzer's (1995) 12-item scale. Participants were asked to agree or disagree to the extent to which item describes their self-orientation. An example item is "I have mastered the skills necessary for my job." Response options ranged on a 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree;* 5 = *strongly agree*). Although psychological empowerment has not yet been examined using daily diary methodology, research suggests that motivational outcomes such as these fluctuate on a daily level (e.g., van Hooff & Geurts, 2015). Cronbach's alpha was .89.

Data Analysis

In order to test the within-person hypotheses, multilevel modeling analyses were conducted using R (R Core Team, 2019). Level 1 variables included the within-person constructs of illegitimate tasks, appraisals, emotional exhaustion, OBSE, and psychological empowerment. Level 2 variables included promotion and prevention focus. Direct and indirect effects (1-1-1 mediation model with fixed slopes) were conducted using the laavan package (Rosseel, 2012)

and followed the multilevel structural equation modeling framework proposed by Preacher and colleagues (2010). Implicit centering took place in this approach when the variance of the variables was modeled at both the within and between levels. Further, a Wishart likelihood estimator was used to test the direct and indirect effects as this approach is robust to small sample sizes (Boomsma, 1983). Direct effects were tested such that only one independent variable and one dependent were included in a model at a time, and the indirect effect models included all three appraisals to account for the fact that stressors can be appraised in multiple ways (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Further, Clogg's tests were conducted to compare the strengths of mediators within the same model (Clogg et al., 1995). Multilevel moderation analyses were conducted using a linear mixed effects modeling package called lme4 (Bates et al., 2014).

Results

Means, standard deviations, Intraclass Correlations, Cronbach's alphas, and bivariate correlations for all main study variables can be found in Tables 5-7. A summary of the study hypotheses are results are presented in Table 8. The direct effects are presented in Table 9, mediation models in Table 10-12, and moderation models in Tables 13-15.

Hypothesis 1 proposed that the daily experience of promoting unreasonable tasks (Hypothesis 1a), demoting unreasonable tasks (Hypothesis 1b) and unnecessary tasks (Hypothesis 1c) would positively relate to emotional exhaustion. Promoting unreasonable tasks showed a significant positive relationship with emotional exhaustion ($\gamma = 0.07$, $p = .01$), supporting Hypothesis 1a. Demoting unreasonable tasks ($\gamma = 0.04$, $p = .16$) and unnecessary tasks ($\gamma = 0.07$, $p = .059$) did not relate to emotional exhaustion. Thus, Hypothesis 1 was partially supported.

Hypothesis 2 proposed that the daily experience of promoting unreasonable tasks (Hypothesis 2a) would positively relate to organization-based self-esteem (OBSE) and demoting unreasonable tasks (Hypothesis 2b) and unnecessary tasks (Hypothesis 2c) would negatively relate to OBSE. Promoting unreasonable tasks positively related to OBSE ($\gamma = 0.05$, $p = .03$), and demoting unreasonable tasks ($\gamma = -0.10$, $p < .001$), and unnecessary tasks ($\gamma = -0.10$, $p = .002$) negatively related to OBSE. Thus, Hypothesis 2 was fully supported.

Hypothesis 3 proposed that the daily experience of promoting unreasonable tasks (Hypothesis 3a) would positively relate to psychological empowerment and demoting unreasonable tasks (Hypothesis 3b) and unnecessary tasks (Hypothesis 3c) would negatively relate to psychological empowerment. Unnecessary tasks negatively related to psychological empowerment ($\gamma = -0.03$, $p = .03$), supporting Hypothesis 3c. Inconsistent with hypotheses, promoting unreasonable tasks demonstrated a negative significant relationship with psychological empowerment ($\gamma = -0.04$, $p < .001$). Demoting unreasonable tasks did not relate to psychological empowerment ($\gamma = -0.02$, $p = .08$). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was partially supported.

Hypothesis 4 proposed that challenge appraisal would most strongly mediate the relationship between daily experience of promoting unreasonable tasks and (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) OBSE, and (c) psychological empowerment, compared to threat appraisal and hindrance appraisal. Challenge appraisal did not mediate the relationship between promoting unreasonable tasks and emotional exhaustion (indirect effect = .000, 95% CI [-.006, .005]), OBSE (indirect effect = .001, 95% CI [-.013, .015]), or psychological empowerment (indirect effect = .000, 95% CI [-.001, .001]). Contrary to study hypotheses, hindrance appraisal mediated the promoting unreasonable tasks-emotional exhaustion relationship (indirect effect = .049, 95% CI [.027, .072]), and threat appraisal mediated the promoting unreasonable tasks-OBSE

relationship (indirect effect = -.048, 95% CI [-.068, -.029]) and the promoting unreasonable tasks-psychological empowerment relationship (indirect effect = -.022, 95% CI [-.030, -.014]). Thus, Hypothesis 4 was not supported.

Hypothesis 5 proposed that threat appraisal would most strongly mediate the relationship between daily experience of demoting unreasonable tasks and (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) OBSE, and (c) psychological empowerment, compared to challenge appraisal and hindrance appraisal. Hypothesis 5a was supported as threat appraisal was the only mediator that significantly mediated the relationship between demoting unreasonable tasks and emotional exhaustion (threat appraisal indirect effect = .030, 95% CI [.013, .049]; challenge appraisal indirect effect = -.003, 95% CI [-.016, .010]); hindrance appraisal indirect effect = -.005, 95% CI [-.023, .012]). Contrary to expectations, hindrance appraisal mediated the demoting unreasonable tasks-OBSE relationship (Hypothesis 5b; indirect effect = -.023, 95% CI [-.040, -.008]), while challenge appraisal (indirect effect = .003, 95% CI [-.008, .014]) and threat appraisal (indirect effect = -.006, 95% CI [-.020, .008]) did not. Also contrary to Hypothesis 5c, both challenge appraisal (indirect effect = -.005, 95% CI [-.009, -.001]) and hindrance appraisal (indirect effect = -.010, 95% CI [-.016, -.004]) mediated the demoting unreasonable tasks-psychological empowerment relationships, while threat appraisal did not. A Clogg's test (Clogg et al., 1995) was conducted to compare the strengths of both mediators, and results suggested that there was no significant difference between the two ($z = 1.39$, $p = .17$). Thus, no mediating relationship is stronger than the other. This was further confirmed as the confidence intervals between the two indirect effects overlapped with one another. Thus, Hypothesis 5 was partially supported.

Hypothesis 6 proposed that hindrance appraisal would most strongly mediate the relationship between daily experience of unnecessary tasks and (a) emotional exhaustion, (b)

OBSE, and (c) psychological empowerment, compared to challenge appraisal and threat appraisal. This study hypothesis was confirmed with regards to OBSE as neither challenge nor threat appraisal significantly mediated those relationships, while hindrance did (Hypothesis 6b; indirect effect = -.022, 95% CI [-.041, -.008]). Further, while hindrance appraisal most strongly mediated the relationship between unnecessary tasks and psychological empowerment (Hypothesis 6c; indirect effect = .010, 95% CI [.004, .018]), the indirect effect was positive and is therefore inconsistent with the study hypotheses.

Additionally, all three appraisals mediated the relationship between unnecessary tasks and emotional exhaustion (Hypothesis 6a; challenge appraisal indirect effect = .029, 95% CI [.014, .047], threat appraisal indirect effect = -.013, 95% CI [-.029, -.002], hindrance appraisal indirect effect = .039, 95% CI [.018, .064]). Results from a Clogg's test (Clogg et al., 1995) and from comparing the confidence intervals show that challenge appraisal is a stronger mediator when comparing challenge appraisal and threat appraisal as mediators in the unnecessary tasks-emotional exhaustion relationship (z = -3.95, p < .001) and hindrance appraisal is a stronger mediator when comparing hindrance appraisal and threat appraisal in the unnecessary tasks-emotional exhaustion relationship (z = -3.74, p < .001). There was no significant difference in the mediating relationship of unnecessary tasks and emotional exhaustion when comparing challenge appraisal and hindrance appraisal as mediators (z = -0.69, p = .49).

Hypothesis 7 proposed that promotion focus would moderate the positive relationship between daily experience of promoting unreasonable tasks and challenge appraisal, such that the relationship is stronger for individuals with high promotion focus. This hypothesis was not supported (γ = -0.03, p = .65).

Hypothesis 8 proposed that promotion focus would moderate the positive relationship between daily experience of demoting unreasonable tasks and threat appraisal, such that the effect is weaker for individuals with high promotion focus. As shown in Table 14 (Model 1), this moderation effect was significant ($\gamma = 0.19$, $p = .02$). The pattern is shown in Figure 3, suggesting that the positive effect of demoting unreasonable tasks on threat appraisal was weaker for individuals of high promotion focus and stronger for individuals with low promotion focus. Thus, Hypothesis 8 was supported.

Hypothesis 9 proposed that promotion focus would moderate the positive relationship between daily experience of unnecessary tasks and hindrance appraisal, such that the effect is weaker for individuals with high promotion focus. This hypothesis was not supported ($\gamma = -0.03$, $p = .76$).

Hypothesis 10 proposed that prevention focus would moderate the positive relationship between daily experience of promoting unreasonable tasks and challenge appraisal, such that the effect is weaker for individuals with high prevention focus. As shown in Table 13 (Model 2), the moderation effect was significant ($\gamma = -0.17$, $p = .007$). This pattern is shown in Figure 4. A simple slopes analysis showed that the effect of promoting unreasonable tasks on challenge appraisal was significant and positive at low level of prevention focus ($\gamma = 0.18$, $p = .01$), but not significant at high level of prevention focus ($\gamma = -0.08$, $p = .16$). These findings indicate that the relationship between illegitimate tasks and challenge appraisal is weaker for those with high prevention focus, thus supporting Hypothesis 10.

Hypothesis 11 proposed that prevention focus would moderate the positive relationship between daily experience of demoting unreasonable tasks and threat appraisal, such that the

effect is stronger for individuals with high prevention focus. This hypothesis was not supported ($\gamma = 0.02$, $p = .68$).

Hypothesis 12 proposed that prevention focus would moderate the positive relationship between daily experience of unnecessary tasks and hindrance appraisal, such that the positive effect is stronger for individuals with high prevention focus. This hypothesis was not supported ($\gamma = 0.04$, $p = .60$).

CHAPTER THREE

Main Study Discussion

Overview of Findings

Overall, results of the direct effects were largely consistent with the study's predictions. Promoting unreasonable tasks positively related to emotional exhaustion and OBSE and negatively related to psychological empowerment. Demoting unreasonable tasks negatively related to OBSE but did not have a significant relationship with emotional exhaustion or psychological empowerment. Unnecessary tasks negatively related to OBSE and psychological empowerment but did not have a significant relationship with emotional exhaustion. Further, while different appraisals were found to mediate the relationships between different types of illegitimate tasks and outcomes, the proposed dominant appraisals were not always found. The indirect effects that were supported included threat appraisal mediating the promoting unreasonable tasks-OBSE, promoting unreasonable tasks-psychological empowerment, demoting unreasonable tasks-emotional exhaustion, and unnecessary tasks- emotional exhaustion relationships, challenge appraisal mediating the demoting unreasonable tasks-psychological empowerment and unnecessary tasks-emotional exhaustion relationships, and hindrance appraisal mediating the promoting unreasonable tasks-emotional exhaustion, demoting unreasonable tasks-OBSE, demoting unreasonable tasks-psychological empowerment, unnecessary tasks-emotional exhaustion, unnecessary tasks-OBSE, and unnecessary tasks-psychological empowerment relationships. Last, promotion focus moderated the relationship between demoting unreasonable tasks and threat appraisal but not the promoting unreasonable tasks-challenge appraisal or unnecessary tasks-hindrance appraisal relationships. Furthermore, while prevention focus moderated the relationship between promoting unreasonable tasks and

challenge appraisal, it did not moderate the demoting unreasonable tasks-threat appraisal or unnecessary tasks-hindrance appraisal relationships. A more comprehensive review of the study results and research implications are presented below.

Research Implications

Main Effects

As expected, promoting unreasonable tasks positively related to emotional exhaustion. It is likely that having to cope with the demands of promoting unreasonable tasks to obtain future growth and gains requires the investment of resources, which depletes energy and relates to increased emotional exhaustion (Demerouti et al., 2001). Contrary to study hypotheses, demoting unreasonable tasks and unnecessary tasks did not relate to emotional exhaustion. These findings are inconsistent with the large amount of literature demonstrating the positive relationships between illegitimate tasks and emotional exhaustion (e.g., Meier & Semmer, 2018; Semmer et al., 2015).

There are two possible reasons for the nonsignificant findings above. First, the current study utilized an event-based approach to measure illegitimate tasks. As a result, the number of participants who had at least two workday's data were 53 for promoting unreasonable tasks, 62 for demoting unreasonable tasks, and 46 for unnecessary tasks. Although Scherbaum and Ferreter (2009) note that sample sizes of at least 30 can be used in multilevel research to avoid biased results, a large sample size and days is desirable to avoid generalizability concerns. For example, it was suggested at least five days' data per person are needed to focus on predictors at the day level (see Ohly et al., 2010). Thus, it is possible that these nonsignificant effects would be significant if a larger sample size was obtained.

Further, the nonsignificant findings might be due to the way that illegitimate tasks were measured in this study. As explained earlier, all items in the three-dimensional illegitimate tasks scale were measured using a Yes or No format to indicate whether they experienced each of the illegitimate tasks that day. Indices of daily promoting unreasonable tasks, demoting unreasonable tasks, and unnecessary tasks were created by summing the number of illegitimate tasks endorsed on a given workday, with higher scores indicating a greater frequency of promoting unreasonable tasks, demoting unreasonable tasks, unnecessary tasks experienced that day. This approach is limiting in that it provides less variability in responses as compared using the Likert-scale response options, which is typically used to collect illegitimate tasks data.

Consistent with study hypotheses, promoting unreasonable tasks were positively related to OBSE and demoting unreasonable tasks and unnecessary tasks were negatively related to OBSE. Since promoting unreasonable tasks fall above one's job role, they give individuals the chance to demonstrate their competence, value, and worthiness at high levels, leading to favorable self-evaluations in their job roles (i.e., OBSE). Further, based on SOS framework (Semmer al., 2007, 2019), promoting unreasonable tasks may send positive signals of appreciation from others, which contribute to one's level of OBSE. The significant negative relationship between demoting unreasonable tasks and OBSE is consistent with SOS framework (Semmer et al, 2007, 2019), which suggests that illegitimate tasks threaten the self, both in terms of one's social esteem (SAD) and personal self-esteem (SIN; Semmer et al., 2007, 2019), reducing one's self-esteem in the workplace (i.e., OBSE). Moreover, it is not surprising that unnecessary tasks negatively related to OBSE because these tasks should not have existed in the first place and give individuals less time and energy to demonstrate their competence through the

completion of their core tasks. Being unable to adequately fill one's core role should result in feelings of incompetence as organizational members (Tuckey et al., 2015).

Consistent with expectations, unnecessary tasks negatively related to psychological empowerment. Since unnecessary tasks do not offer the chance for future growth and gains, individuals are less likely to be intrinsically motivated (i.e., psychological empowerment) to cope with its demands. Surprisingly, promoting unreasonable tasks demonstrated a significant negative relationship with psychological empowerment. This is inconsistent with the study proposition for a positive relationship. It could be that although promoting unreasonable tasks offer the chance for growth and gains, they are not intrinsically motivating because they still detract from one's core tasks. Further, given that these tasks fall above one's job role, individuals might not be as intrinsically motivated to cope with its demands given the increased knowledge, skills, and abilities required to successfully complete them. Also unexpectedly, demoting unreasonable tasks did not demonstrate a significant relationship with psychological empowerment. This nonsignificant finding is inconsistent with the current illegitimate tasks literature linking illegitimate tasks to intrinsic motivation (psychological empowerment is a domain-specific form of intrinsic motivation; e.g., Muntz & Dormann, 2020; Omansky et al., 2016). These null findings might be due to the study's small sample size, number of workdays that data was collected per participant, and the way that illegitimate tasks were measured, as mentioned earlier.

Taken together, results from the direct effects contribute to the expanding body of literature on illegitimate tasks, illustrating its relevance as a compelling and meaningful workplace stressor that impacts employee outcomes. Although previous literature has examined the impact of illegitimate tasks on state context-free self-esteem (e.g., Eatough et al., 2016;

Schulte-Braucks et al., 2019; Semmer et al., 2015; Sonnentag & Lischetzke, 2018) and intrinsic motivation (e.g., Muntz & Dormann, 2020; Omansky et al., 2016), this work adds the domain-specific constructs of OBSE and psychological empowerment to the growing list of correlates linked with illegitimate tasks and shows the differing effects of each type of illegitimate task on each outcome. Furthermore, it expands on the current literature linking illegitimate tasks to emotional exhaustion (e.g., Fila & Eatough, 2017; Meier & Semmer, 2018) by testing the relationship that different types of illegitimate tasks have with emotional exhaustion.

Importantly, these results provide some utility for the three-dimensional framework of illegitimate tasks. Consistent with the challenge-hindrance-threat framework (Tuckey et al., 2015), different types of illegitimate tasks have different relationships with outcomes. For example, while the SOS framework (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019) assumes that all types of illegitimate tasks negatively relate to OBSE, the current three-dimensional framework shows that promoting unreasonable tasks positively relate to OBSE, while demoting unreasonable tasks negatively relate to OBSE.

Mediation Effects

Results show that challenge appraisal did not mediate the relationship between promoting unreasonable tasks and emotional exhaustion, OBSE, or psychological empowerment. Alternatively, promoting unreasonable tasks had a positive indirect effect on emotional exhaustion through hindrance appraisal and negative indirect effects on the OBSE and psychological empowerment through threat appraisal. These findings suggest that, even though promoting unreasonable tasks fall above one's job role, they do not impact outcomes via challenge appraisals that indicate opportunities for growth and gains. Instead, promoting

unreasonable tasks relate to outcomes through appraisals of hindrance and threat, both indicating negative experiences for individuals that negatively impact outcomes.

More specifically, promoting unreasonable tasks positively related to emotional exhaustion through hindrance appraisal, likely because having to do someone else's work, regardless of if they are promoting in nature, detract from one's core tasks and require additional efforts and resources to remove obstacles to goal attainment and work achievement. Furthermore, SOS framework's Stress as Insufficiency (SIN) pathway (Semmer et al., 2017, 2019) can help explain why promoting unreasonable tasks related to reduced OBSE and psychological empowerment through threat appraisals. If promoting unreasonable tasks are perceived as requiring knowledge, skills, or abilities that are beyond what one believes can be learned or developed, they could be appraised as a threat to one's personal self-esteem because of the potential failure that might result from having to complete tasks that are above one's job role. Failing to successfully complete promoting unreasonable tasks at work can decrease one's self esteem as an organizational member (i.e., OBSE). Further, if promoting unreasonable tasks are viewed as a threat because of the inability to learn or develop the knowledge, skills, or abilities needed overcome the demands of promoting unreasonable tasks, individuals are not likely to feel intrinsically motivated to invest efforts and energy to complete them (i.e., psychological empowerment).

Consistent with predictions, demoting unreasonable tasks had a positive indirect effect on emotional exhaustion through threat appraisal. Individuals are likely to cope with the threatening demands of demoting unreasonable tasks by investing efforts to avoid future harm or loss and to manage the distress associated with threat appraisals. These coping efforts deplete energy and relate to increased emotional exhaustion. However, surprisingly, threat appraisal did not mediate

the relationships between demoting unreasonable tasks on OBSE or psychological empowerment. Instead, hindrance appraisal mediated the effects of demoting unreasonable tasks on OBSE and both hindrance appraisal and challenge appraisal negatively mediated the effects of demoting unreasonable tasks on psychological empowerment, with one mediator not being more dominant than the other. These finding are inconsistent with the SOS framework (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019), which suggests that threat appraisal is the core aspect of the illegitimate tasks experience.

The nonsignificant indirect effect between demoting unreasonable tasks and OBSE via threat appraisal might be because threat appraisals of demoting unreasonable tasks reduce *general self-esteem*, not OBSE. Indeed, SOS framework (Semmer et al., 2007; 2019) discusses reductions in general self-esteem as a result of threat appraisals. However, the study measured OBSE as the outcome variable because research suggests that context specific measures have higher fidelity than general measures because they provide respondents with a common frame-of-reference, thus yielding stronger links with work related outcomes (e.g., Hunthausen et al., 2003). While context specific state measures of self-esteem should have higher utility than general self-esteem measures (Pierce et al., 1989), results from this study suggest that OBSE may not be interchangeable with general self-esteem. In other words, the specific operationalization of self-esteem is important because demoting unreasonable tasks threaten one's general sense of self rather than one's sense of self in the context of the organization. This rationale might be a possible reason as to why threats to one's sense of self following demoting unreasonable tasks might not have impacted OBSE. A similar argument could be made for the nonsignificant indirect effect of demoting unreasonable tasks on psychological empowerment. Psychological empowerment is a context specific measure of intrinsic motivation to the

workplace (Spreitzer, 1995). Psychological empowerment might be impacted by demoting unreasonable tasks that threatens one's sense of self in the workplace, but not one's general sense of self.

It is possible that the negative indirect effect of demoting unreasonable tasks on OBSE via hindrance appraisals occurred because investing unjustified time and efforts into overcoming the demands of daily demoting unreasonable tasks gave individuals less time and energy to complete their core tasks, which related to feelings of incompetence as organizational members (Tuckey et al., 2015). Furthermore, the negative indirect effects of demoting unreasonable tasks on psychological empowerment via both hindrance appraisals and challenge appraisals could have occurred because demoting unreasonable tasks detract employees from significant or challenging work and prevent opportunities for growth or gains, and thus investing effort and energy to complete these tasks is not intrinsically motivating.

Last, consistent with the study hypotheses, unnecessary tasks had a positive indirect effect on emotional exhaustion and negative indirect on OBSE through hindrance appraisals. Unnecessary tasks should have never existed in the first place and are therefore appraised as a hindrance to attaining goals and work achievement. Hindrance appraisals of unnecessary tasks positively relate to emotional exhaustion because they require the investment of efforts and resources to remove obstacles to goal attainment and work achievement, relating to increased emotional exhaustion. Further, as mentioned above, hindrance appraisals of unnecessary tasks reduced OBSE because individuals have less time and energy to demonstrate their competence and self-value through the completion of their core tasks. Being unable to adequately fill one's core role should reduce the degree to which individuals feel high levels of self-esteem as organizational members (Tuckey et al., 2015).

Further, hindrance appraisal mediated the relationship between unnecessary tasks and psychological empowerment, however, in an unexpected direction. Whereas it was proposed that hindrance appraisal of unnecessary tasks would negatively relate to psychological empowerment because it does not offer the chance of exceptional performance, it was positively related to psychological empowerment. This finding might be because, even though unnecessary tasks do not offer the chance for exceptional performance, individuals might be intrinsically motivated to remove hindrances by investing enough efforts and energy.

Importantly, results showed that hindrance appraisal was not the only appraisal mediating unnecessary tasks and emotional exhaustion; threat appraisal and challenge appraisal did as well. Unnecessary tasks had a positive indirect on emotional exhaustion through challenge appraisal. This is consistent with the Job Demands-Resources Model (JD-R Model; Demerouti et al., 2001), which suggests that all types of stressors require increased coping efforts that deplete energy and lead to emotional exhaustion. However, unnecessary tasks had a negative indirect effect on emotional exhaustion through threat appraisal. This finding is surprising and inconsistent with the study hypotheses; it is possible that a suppression effect occurred as the direct effect of unnecessary tasks on emotional exhaustion is positive (Cliff & Earleywine, 1994; Tzelgov & Henik, 1991). Further, when comparing the strengths of all three mediators, challenge appraisal and hindrance appraisal were stronger mediators than threat appraisal, with both challenge appraisal and hindrance appraisal being equally as strong. This extends the literature examining challenge and hindrance stressors and appraisals, which has not yet compared the strengths of stressors and appraisals on emotional exhaustion (e.g., Crawford et al., 2010; LePine et al., 2005; Tuckey et al., 2015).

Overall, these findings demonstrate that while stressors might show direct effects on outcomes, they don't necessarily function based on how they are expected to be typically appraised. Instead, the results of the mediation analyses suggest that the three types of illegitimate tasks can be appraised in multiple ways and affect outcomes through these appraisals (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). As discussed in this dissertation, the large body of work on challenge and hindrance stressors have categorized stressors based on how they are assumed to be typically appraised rather than actually measuring appraisal (Cavanough et al., 2000; LePine et al., 2005). The results from the current work underscore the importance of measuring appraisal in stressor-strain relationships and show that the relationship between stressors and outcomes might vary across individuals and depend on a variety of external conditions as there was no one dominant appraisal linking each type of illegitimate tasks to outcomes (Lazarus & Folkman 1984).

Moderation Effects

Contrary to the study hypotheses, promotion focus did not moderate the positive relationship between promoting unreasonable tasks and challenge appraisal. There are two possible reasons for this finding. First, despite being promoting in nature, promoting unreasonable tasks do not represent a desirable task that employees would voluntarily pursue (Semmer et al., 2007, 2019). Therefore, although high promotion focused individuals focus on maximizing positive outcomes, they do not focus their attention on the possible positive outcomes resulting from promoting unreasonable tasks. Second, it is possible that promoting unreasonable tasks can trigger high potential opportunities of future growth and gain and elicit challenge appraisals regardless of individuals' promotion focus.

As hypothesized, prevention focus moderated the positive relationship between promoting unreasonable tasks and challenge appraisal, such that the relationship between promoting unreasonable tasks and challenge appraisal was weaker for prevention focused individuals. Individuals with a low prevention focus are not as focused on bringing themselves into alignment with their need for safety and security and goals. Thus, these individuals are more likely to appraise promoting unreasonable tasks as a challenge because they are less attentive to the negative consequences (e.g., unsuccessful task completion) that may result if demands if promoting unreasonable tasks are not overcome and growth and gains are not obtained.

Results from the moderation analyses showed that promotion focus moderated the positive relationship between demoting unreasonable tasks and threat appraisal. These findings are consistent with the study hypotheses and suggest that individuals with higher levels of promotion focus were less sensitive to the threats of demoting unreasonable tasks due to their lower awareness of, and more resilience to, information about losses. Since individuals with a high promotion focus maximize positive outcomes to meet their nurturance needs and ideals, they are less attentive to the threatening social messages sent by demoting unreasonable tasks (SAD; Semmer et al., 2007, 2019) and therefore appraise these tasks as less of a threat, compared to those with lower levels of promotion focus.

Contrary to predictions, prevention focus did not moderate the positive relationship between demoting unreasonable tasks and threat appraisal. This nonsignificant effect might be due to strength that demoting unreasonable tasks already have on threat appraisal. Demoting unreasonable tasks send powerful social signals of disrespect and degradation (Semmer et al., 2007, 2015), causing individuals to experience threat appraisals regardless of whether they are high or low in prevention focus.

Last, neither promotion nor prevention focus moderated the positive relationship between unnecessary tasks and hindrance appraisal. These findings suggest that employees perceive unnecessary tasks as a hindrance regardless of one's level of promotion or prevention focus. Unnecessary tasks are appraised as constraints that unnecessarily hinder progress toward goal attainment and work achievement and require the investment of unjustified time and effort, leaving less time to complete tasks that fall within one's professional role (i.e., core tasks). It is likely that both promotion and prevention focused individuals perceive these equally as a hindrance, specifically because research suggests that it is making progress on one's core tasks that is gratifying (Gabriel et al., 2011).

The moderation results demonstrate that individual difference variables, such as regulatory focus, have the potential to impact an individual's appraisal of a stressor. These results show that the degree to which appraisals of different types of illegitimate tasks are experienced will sometimes vary depending on an individual's type and level of regulatory focus. These findings once again underscore the importance of measuring an individual's appraisal of a stressor, rather than categorizing stressors based on their assumed typical appraisal, a priori. Further, this work contributes knowledge on the moderating role of regulatory focus in illegitimate task relationships, as previous illegitimate tasks research has not yet examined this individual difference variable.

Practical Implications

The findings from this study have several important practical implications. First, results demonstrated that all types of illegitimate tasks negatively related to outcomes. For example, promoting unreasonable tasks related to increased emotional exhaustion, demoting unreasonable tasks related to decreased OBSE, and unnecessary tasks related to decreased OBSE and

psychological empowerment. Thus, organizations should take steps to reduce the frequency of illegitimate tasks in the workplace. For example, implementing training programs that raise awareness among supervisors regarding the nature of these tasks are critical. One's perception of "illegitimacy" varies between people such that one person might find a task to be illegitimate while another person does not. Since the very same tasks that subordinates *perceive* as illegitimate may be seen as part of one's job role by supervisors, it is critical that these sessions educate supervisors on the social meaning attached to these illegitimate tasks assignments and how to best identify employee-perceived illegitimate tasks. However, it is also important to note that although promoting unreasonable tasks related to increased strains (i.e., emotional exhaustion), it related to increased OBSE as well. Thus, training programs should also educate supervisors on situations in which assigning promoting unreasonable tasks might be more beneficial than harmful.

Second, since illegitimate tasks are often unavoidable and since appraisals can explain the effects of different types of illegitimate tasks on outcomes, individuals might want to consider how they assign illegitimate tasks to others. For example, Minei and colleagues (2018) showed that including an acknowledgement and/or explanation when assigning illegitimate tasks can help mitigate its perceived illegitimacy and effects on anger. Therefore, helping employees frame how illegitimate tasks are appraised when they are assigned can help mitigate the degree to which they negatively impact outcomes. Further, organizations might want to implement interventions aimed at changing negative appraisals (i.e., threat and hindrance) of illegitimate tasks. For example, cognitive-behavioral approaches have been shown to consistently produce larger effects than other types of occupational stress management interventions; these approaches can help employees reappraise unnecessary tasks as challenges rather than threats, thus

mitigating the degree to which emotional exhaustion is impacted (Richardson & Rothstein, 2008).

Another important finding from this study is that regulatory focus can impact the degree to which illegitimate tasks are appraised a certain way. For example, promotion focus weakens the degree to which demoting unreasonable tasks were appraised as a threat. Further, the positive relationship between promoting unreasonable tasks and challenge appraisal was weaker for those with low levels of prevention focus. Thus, leaders might want to orient employees' attention to the benefits of illegitimate tasks, if possible. For example, completing demoting unreasonable tasks might indicate to others that one is a team player, willing to take on a coworker's job tasks.

Limitations and Future Research

There are several limitations to this study that future research can address. First, the study has small sample size. As mentioned, the number of participants who had at least two workday's data were 53 for promoting unreasonable tasks, 62 for demoting unreasonable tasks, and 46 for unnecessary tasks. This small sample size was largely due to the event-based approach used to measure illegitimate tasks. Further, as previously described, the study utilized Yes/No format to indicate whether individuals experienced illegitimate tasks that day. Participants who did not select at least 1 of the 4 items in each of the illegitimate task dimensions were not presented with the appraisal scale for that given dimension. Although alternative measures of the same length were presented to avoid participant dishonesty (e.g., reporting that one did not experience any items to avoid having to complete appraisal items), it is still possible that participants did not act in good faith to avoid having to report on their illegitimate task experience. This might be especially true for individuals who appraised illegitimate tasks as a threat or a hindrance. In line with the study's theoretical framework, individuals who appraised illegitimate tasks as a threat to

the self might have avoided reporting on the experience in order to cope with their emotions (i.e., emotion focused coping; Tuckey et al., 2015). Further, individuals who appraised illegitimate tasks as a hindrance might have been experiencing exhaustion or fatigue resulting from resource depletion, and too tired to report on the illegitimate task (Demerouti et al., 2001). Thus, future research should test these relationships using a larger sample size across a larger number of days (if using daily diary methodology) using Likert scale measurement (e.g., level of frequency).

Second, although the viability of the mediating pathways linking the different types of illegitimate tasks on outcomes were tested, this work cannot establish causal relationships. While the daily diary design of this study implemented a temporal separation of the predictor variables and outcome variables, an experimental design is needed to test the causality of the proposed relationships. Future research might want to consider replicating the study results with an experimental design.

Third, only self-reported measures were used to collect data, which may raise concerns for common method variance (CMV). While the temporary separation of variables can potentially reduce common-method problems, the data is still susceptible to response bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). However, according to Spector (2006), the study design should be selected based on the study purpose and researcher inference. Since illegitimate tasks and appraisals are variables that measure an individual's perception, self-report is the most appropriate method to collect data.

Fourth, domain-specific measures of self-esteem and intrinsic motivation were used as study outcomes. However, to properly test the SOS framework's theoretical assumptions, which suggests that illegitimate tasks threaten one's *general* sense of self (Semmer et al., 2007, 2015),

general measures of self-esteem and intrinsic motivation should have been used. Future research should test the study hypothesis using general measures of self-esteem and intrinsic motivation.

In addition to the calls for future research demonstrated above, future research should continue to utilize the three-dimensional framework of illegitimate tasks to examine its differing effects on a wide range of outcomes, including those that are behavioral in nature. For example, much research has demonstrated the relationship between illegitimate tasks and counterproductive work behavior (Semmer et al., 2010; Schulte-Braucks et al., 2019; Zhou et al., 2018). Future research should consider replicating these findings using the revised three-dimensional framework. Further, future research should consider additional personality (e.g., core self-evaluation, Judge et al., 1997, hostile attribution bias; Spector, 2011) and contextual factors (e.g.., intent attributions [hostile and motivational intent], Eschelman et al., 2014; acknowledgement and explanations, Minei et al., 2018; time pressure, Kinicki & Vecchio, 1994; appreciative leadership, Rafferty & Griffin, 2004; organizational culture and norms, leader-member exchange [LMX], Graen & Cashman, 1975) that can moderate the degree to which different types of illegitimate tasks relate to appraisals. Lastly, while employees might have to deal with inevitable illegitimate tasks and suffer from negative consequences, their engagement in completing these tasks might be perceived as organizational citizenship behavior by the coworkers. Thus, future research might want to examine the impact of completing illegitimate tasks on observers' reactions.

Conclusion

The current dissertation expands previous illegitimate tasks research by introducing a revised three-dimensional framework of illegitimate tasks that includes promoting unreasonable tasks, demoting unreasonable tasks, and unnecessary tasks. Results further showed that the

different types of illegitimate tasks related to outcomes differently and are appraised in multiple different ways, and that personality traits such as regulatory focus can affect illegitimate task appraisals. Results of this work underscore the importance of examining different types of illegitimate tasks separately and provide a more comprehensive understanding of how the different types of illegitimate tasks are appraised and relate to outcomes.

Table 1.

Factor Loadings from Principal Component Factoring with Oblique Rotation of Final Illegitimate Tasks Items

At work, I am assigned tasks that...	Promoting Unreasonable Tasks	Demoting Unreasonable Tasks	Unnecessary Tasks
Should be completed by someone above my job level	.74		
Involve more advanced knowledge than should be expected of me	.95		
Involve more advanced skills and/or abilities than should be expected of me	.96		
Require more autonomy than should be expected of me	.57		
Should be completed by someone below my job level		.76	
Involve less advanced knowledge than should be expected of me		.70	
Involve less advanced skills and/or abilities than should be expected of me		.80	
Are completely beneath what should be expected of me		.69	
Should not have to be done at all			.75
Should never have existed in the first place			.88
Do not make sense at all			.75
Should not be completed by anyone employed by my organization			.51

Note. N=319.

Table 2.

Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Three-Dimensional Illegitimate Tasks Scale

Model	χ^2	*df*	*CFI*	*RMSEA*	*SRMR*	*Loading Range (L)*	*Loading Range (H)*
Model A (a priori three factor model)	180.830	51	0.941	0.089	0.062	0.075	0.104
Model B (one factor model)	691.243	54	0.710	0.192	0.094	0.18	0.205
Model C (two factor model)	537.725	53	0.780	0.169	0.088	0.156	0.182
Model D (three factor model, orthogonal)	471.091	54	0.810	0.156	0.319	0.143	0.169

Note. CFI = comparative fit index; RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation; SRMR = standardized root-mean-square residual; L = loading range lower bound; H = loading range higher bound.

Table 3.

Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations for Pilot Study Variables

	M	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Three-Dimensional Illegitimate Tasks Scale	2.13	0.81	*(.90)*						
2. P IT	2.20	0.95	.82***	*(.86)*					
3. D IT	2.23	0.94	.87***	.56***	*(.84)*				
4. U IT	1.97	0.95	.86***	.54***	.65***	*(.85)*			
5. BITS	2.65	1.05	.79***	.66***	.64***	*.72***	*(.93)*		
6. Role Conflict	2.74	0.98	.71***	.59***	.58***	.65***	.78***	*(.90)*	
7. Procedural Justice	3.21	0.99	-.29***	-.16**	-.24***	-.33***	-.43***	-.46***	*(.90)*
8. Distributive Justice	3.59	1.18	-.32***	-.21***	-.27***	-.33***	-.41***	-.43***	.62***
9. Job Satisfaction	3.67	1.16	-.49***	-.31***	-.46***	-.49***	-.57***	-.51***	.46***
10. Anger	1.94	0.81	.52***	.34***	.47***	.52***	.60***	.55***	-.49***
11. Anxiety	1.85	0.78	.43***	.38***	.33***	.36***	.51***	.49***	-.36***
12. Depression	1.90	0.75	.47***	.31***	.43***	.46***	.55***	.50***	-.51***
13. Frustration	2.37	0.83	.56***	.45***	.46***	.52***	.70***	.65***	-.46***
14. CWB	1.55	0.66	.52***	.47***	.40***	.44***	.49***	.44***	-.21***
15. Age	38.69	11.03	-.12*	-.12*	-.05	-.13*	-.12*	-.03	.06
16. Gender	1.53	0.50	-.05	.08	-.10	-.10	.04	-.02	-.07
17. Tenure	2.29	2.58	.01	-.02	.02	.02	-.05	.02	.04

Note. Cronbach's αs are presented in the diagonal. Gender coded such that Male = 0, Female = 1. Tenure measured in years. BITS= Berne Illegitimate tasks Scale; P IT = Promoting Unreasonable Tasks; D IT = Demoting Unreasonable Tasks; U IT = Unnecessary Tasks CWB= Counterproductive Work Behavior. N = 319. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .01$,

Table 4.

Continuation of Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations for Pilot Study Variables

	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
8. Distributive Justice	*(.95)*									
9. Job Satisfaction	.51***	*(.94)*								
10. Anger	-.46***	-.67***	*(.90)*							
11. Anxiety	-.34***	-.56***	.59***	*(.86)*						
12. Depression	-.48***	-.79***	.74***	.68***	*(.91)*					
13. Frustration	-.46***	-.64***	.68***	.55***	.62***	*(.79)*				
14. CWB	-.22***	-.31***	.48***	.37***	.40***	.33***	*(.89)*			
15. Age	.07	.08	-.10	-.19***	-.12*	-.12*	-.17**	—		
16. Gender	.03	.02	.04	.12*	.06	.06	.00	-.09	—	
17. Tenure	.08	.03	-.05	-.12*	-.06	-.07	-.04	.55**	-.16**	—

Note. Cronbach's αs are presented in the diagonal. Gender coded such that Male = 0, Female = 1. Tenure measured in years. BITS= Berne Illegitimate tasks Scale; CWB= Counterproductive Work Behavior. N = 319. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 5.

Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations for Main Study Within-Level Variables

	M	*SD*	ICC	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. P IT	2.24	1.24	0.82						
2. D IT	2.84	1.16	0.88	.05					
3. U IT	2.47	1.25	0.84	.17	.39***				
4. P Chall App	3.56	0.96	0.88	.01	-.39***	-.10	*(.85)*		
5. P Threat App	2.52	1.01	0.86	.18**	.27**	.17	-.42***	*(.85)*	
6. P Hind App	2.69	1.02	0.86	.24***	.08	.03	-.40***	.61***	*(.84)*
7. D Chall App	2.32	1.08	0.91	.05	-.38***	-.27**	.63***	-.33***	-.18
8. D Threat App	2.39	1.04	0.87	.24*	.30***	.29**	-.35***	.75***	.42***
9. D Hind App	2.78	1.11	0.88	.21*	.29***	-.01	-.47***	.41***	.72***
10. U Chall App	2.35	1.11	0.92	-.16	-.40***	-.34***	.52***	.03	-.07
11. U Threat App	2.56	1.09	0.84	.06	.32***	.22**	-.12	.80***	.55***
12. U Hind App	2.76	1.11	0.87	.31*	.16	.13	-.39**	.50***	.82***
13. EE	3.04	1.24	0.87	.19**	.19***	-.14	-.42***	.40***	.41***
14. OBSE	3.34	1.15	0.9	-.09	-.18**	-.24**	.48***	-.43***	-.30***
15. Psych Emp	3.61	0.77	0.97	-.08	-.10	-.21**	.34***	-.56***	-.31***

Note. Cronbach's αs are presented in the diagonal. P IT = Promoting Unreasonable Tasks; D IT = Demoting Unreasonable Tasks; U IT = Unnecessary Tasks; P Chall App = Challenge Appraisal of Promoting Unreasonable Tasks; P Threat App = Threat Appraisal of Promoting Unreasonable Tasks; P Hind App = Hindrance Appraisal of Promoting Unreasonable Tasks; D Chall App = Challenge Appraisal of Demoting Unreasonable Tasks; D Threat App = Threat Appraisal of Demoting Unreasonable Tasks; D Hind App = Hindrance Appraisal of Demoting Unreasonable Tasks; U Chall App = Challenge Appraisal of Unnecessary Tasks; U Threat App = Threat Appraisal of Unnecessary Tasks; U Hind App = Hindrance Appraisal of Unnecessary Tasks; EE = Emotional Exhaustion; OBSE = Organization-Based Self-Esteem; Psych Emp = Psychological Empowerment. N = 225-589. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 6.

Continuation of Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations for Main Study Within-Level Variables

	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
7. D Chall App	*(.88)*								
8. D Threat App	-.14*	*(.84)*							
9. D Hind App	-.16**	.70***	*(.86)*						
10. U Chall App	.84***	-.12	-.05	*(.91)*					
11. U Threat App	-.09	.73***	.61***	-.13	*(.86)*				
12. U Hind App	-.04	.48***	.82***	-.06	.71***	*(.90)*			
13. EE	-.14*	.35***	.28***	.06	.16*	.29***	*(.91)*		
14. OBSE	.30***	-.19***	-.07	.09	-.30***	-.21**	-.24***	*(.93)*	
15. Psych Emp	.28***	-.39***	-.15**	.07	-.39***	-.11	-.26***	.63***	*(.89)*

Note. Cronbach's αs are presented in the diagonal. D Chall App = Challenge Appraisal of Demoting Unreasonable Tasks; D Threat App = Threat Appraisal of Demoting Unreasonable Tasks; D Hind App = Hindrance Appraisal of Demoting Unreasonable Tasks; U Chall App = Challenge Appraisal of Unnecessary Tasks; U Threat App = Threat Appraisal of Unnecessary Tasks; U Hind App = Hindrance Appraisal of Unnecessary Tasks; EE = Emotional Exhaustion; OBSE = Organization-Based Self-Esteem; Psych Emp = Psychological Empowerment. N = 225-589. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 7.

Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations for Main Study Between-Level Variables

	M	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Age	33.34	7.66	—					
2. Gender	1.38	0.49	-.15	—				
3. Job Tenure	3.92	3.68	.31**	-.15	—			
4. Org Tenure	5.57	4.60	.36***	-.08	.74***	—		
5. Promotion Focus	3.80	0.60	-.29**	.10	-.06	.08	*(.79)*	
6. Prevention Focus	3.13	0.77	.05	.07	-.07	.05	-.07	*(.81)*

Note. Cronbach's αs are presented in the diagonal. Gender coded such that Male = 1, Female = 2. Tenure measured in years. Org Tenue = Organizational Tenure. N = 95 * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 8.

Summary of Main Study Hypotheses and Results

Hypothesis	Independent Variable	Mediator Variable	Dependent Variable	Supported?
1a	Promoting Unreasonable Tasks		Emotional Exhaustion	Yes
1b	Demoting Unreasonable Tasks		Emotional Exhaustion	No
1c	Unnecessary Tasks		Emotional Exhaustion	No
2a	Promoting Unreasonable Tasks		OBSE	Yes
2b	Demoting Unreasonable Tasks		OBSE	Yes
2c	Unnecessary Tasks		OBSE	Yes
3a	Promoting Unreasonable Tasks		Psychological Empowerment	No
3b	Demoting Unreasonable Tasks		Psychological Empowerment	No
3c	Unnecessary Tasks		Psychological Empowerment	Yes
4a	Promoting Unreasonable Tasks	Challenge Appraisal will be the strongest.	Emotional Exhaustion	No
4b	Promoting Unreasonable Tasks	Challenge Appraisal will be the strongest.	OBSE	No
4c	Promoting Unreasonable Tasks	Challenge Appraisal will be the strongest.	Psychological Empowerment	No
5a	Demoting Unreasonable Tasks	Threat Appraisal will be the strongest.	Emotional Exhaustion	Yes
5b	Demoting Unreasonable Tasks	Threat Appraisal will be the strongest.	OBSE	No

Table 9.

Continuation of Summary of Main Study Hypotheses and Results

Hypothesis	Independent Variable	Mediator Variable	Dependent Variable	Supported?
5c	Demoting Unreasonable Tasks	Threat Appraisal will be the strongest.	Psychological Empowerment	No
6a	Unnecessary Tasks	Hindrance Appraisal will be the strongest.	Emotional Exhaustion	Challenge and Hindrance Appraisal were equally as strong.
6b	Unnecessary Tasks	Hindrance Appraisal will be the strongest.	OBSE	Yes
6c	Unnecessary Tasks	Hindrance Appraisal will be the strongest.	Psychological Empowerment	No
7	Promoting Unreasonable Tasks X Promotion Focus		Challenge Appraisal	No
8	Demoting Unreasonable Tasks X Promotion Focus		Threat Appraisal	Yes
9	Unnecessary Tasks X Promotion Focus		Hindrance Appraisal	No
10	Promoting Unreasonable Tasks X Prevention Focus		Challenge Appraisal	Yes
11	Demoting Unreasonable Tasks X Prevention Focus		Threat Appraisal	No
12	Unnecessary Tasks X Prevention Focus		Hindrance Appraisal	No

Table 10.

Main Effects of Illegitimate Tasks on Study Outcomes

Variable	Emotional Exhaustion		Organization-Based Self-Esteem (OBSE)		Psychological Empowerment	
	Est. (SE)	*z*	Est. (SE)	*z*	Est. (SE)	*z*
Intercept						
Promoting IT						
Demoting IT						
Unnecessary IT						
Direct Effect						
Promoting IT	0.06*(0.03)	2.51	0.05*(0.02)	2.16	-0.04***(0.01)	-3.88
Demoting IT	0.04(0.03)	1.42	-0.10***(0.03)	-3.75	-0.02(0.01)	-1.73
Unnecessary IT	0.07(0.34)	1.89	-0.10**(0.03)	-3.07	-0.03*(0.01)	-2.24
Residual Variance						
Promoting IT	0.64***(0.03)		0.54***(0.02)		0.09***(0.004)	
Demoting IT	0.72***(0.03)		0.55***(0.02)		0.07***(0.003)	
Unnecessary IT	0.64***(0.03)		0.54***(0.03)		0.08***(0.004)	
Intercept Variance						
Promoting IT	2.48***(0.19)		3.82***(0.17)		3.65***(0.14)	
Demoting IT	2.40***(0.20)		3.73***(0.19)		3.69***(0.14)	
Unnecessary IT	4.05***(0.20)		3.71***(0.19)		3.96***(0.14)	

Note. Promoting IT = Promoting unreasonable Tasks; Demoting IT = Demoting unreasonable Tasks; Unnecessary IT = Unnecessary Tasks. Promoting IT N = 53; Demoting IT N = 62; Unnecessary IT N = 46. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 11.

Mediation Effects of Promoting Unreasonable Tasks on Outcomes through Appraisals

Predictors	Challenge Appraisal	Threat Appraisal	Hindrance Appraisal	Emotional Exhaustion	OBSE	Psychological Empowerment
Promoting IT	0.003	0.249***	0.257***	0.007	0.083***	-0.022*
Challenge Appraisal				-0.121**	0.350***	0.019
Threat Appraisal				0.051	-0.192***	-0.087***
Hindrance Appraisal				0.190***	0.032	0.016

Note. Promoting IT = Promoting unreasonable tasks. N = 53. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 12.

Mediation Effects of Demoting Unreasonable Tasks on Outcomes through Appraisals

Predictors	Challenge Appraisal	Threat Appraisal	Hindrance Appraisal	Emotional Exhaustion	OBSE	Psychological Empowerment
Demoting IT	-0.184***	0.197***	0.214***	0.023	-0.074**	-0.003
Challenge Appraisal				0.017	-0.015	0.026*
Threat Appraisal				0.152***	-0.030	0.003
Hindrance Appraisal				-0.023	-0.107**	-0.045***

Note. Demoting IT = Demoting unreasonable tasks. N = 62. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 13.

Mediation Effects of Unnecessary Tasks on Outcomes through Appraisals

Predictors	Challenge Appraisal	Threat Appraisal	Hindrance Appraisal	Emotional Exhaustion	OBSE	Psychological Empowerment
Unnecessary IT	-0.124***	0.075*	0.121***	0.009	-0.092**	-0.036**
Challenge Appraisal				-0.231***	-0.069	-0.014
Threat Appraisal				-0.179***	0.061	-0.056**
Hindrance Appraisal				0.320***	-0.186***	0.083***

Note. Unnecessary IT = Unnecessary tasks. N = 46. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 14.

The Moderating the Effect of Regulatory Focus on the Relationship between Promoting Unreasonable Tasks and Challenge Appraisal

	Challenge Appraisal					
	Null model		Model 1		Model 2	
	Est. (SE)	*t*	Est. (SE)	*t*	Est. (SE)	*t*
Intercept	3.56*** (0.11)	32.870	2.78**(.87)	3.20	2.15***(0.58)	3.71
Promoting IT			0.15 (0.27)	0.56	0.63** (0.22)	2.83
Promotion Focus			0.19 (0.22)	0.83		
Promotion Focus X Promoting IT			-0.03 (0.07)	-0.46		
Prevention Focus					0.41* (0.17)	2.32
Prevention Focus X Promoting IT					-0.17** (0.06)	-2.74
Level 1 Residual variance	0.39 (0.62)		0.39 (0.62)		0.39 (0.62)	
Level 2 Intercept variance	0.52 (0.72)		0.52 (0.72)		0.45 (0.67)	

Note. Promoting IT = Promoting unreasonable tasks. N = 53. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 15.

The Moderating the Effect of Regulatory Focus on the Relationship between Demoting Unreasonable Tasks and Threat Appraisal

	Threat Appraisal					
	Null model		Model 1		Model 2	
	Est. (SE)	*t*	Est. (SE)	*t*	Est. (SE)	*t*
Intercept	2.27*** (0.11)	21.18	5.37*** (1.03)	5.22	1.76 ** (0.64)	2.76
Demoting IT			-0.53 (0.31)	-1.73	0.12 (0.19)	0.63
Promotion Focus			-0.95*** (0.27)	-3.58		
Promotion Focus X Demoting IT			0.19* (0.08)	2.39		
Prevention Focus					-0.01 (0.20)	-0.04
Prevention Focus X Demoting IT					0.03 (0.06)	0.42
Level 1 Residual variance	0.48 (0.70)		0.46 (0.68)		0.46 (0.68)	
Level 2 Intercept variance	0.59 (0.77)		0.47 (0.69)		0.57 (0.75)	

Note. Demoting IT = Demoting unreasonable tasks. N = 62. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 16.

The Moderating the Effect of Regulatory Focus on the Relationship between Unnecessary Tasks and Hindrance Appraisal

	Hindrance Appraisal					
	Null model		Model 1		Model 2	
	Est. (SE)	*t*	Est. (SE)	*t*	Est. (SE)	*t*
Intercept	2.67*** (0.13)	20.50	1.14 (1.21)	0.94	2.16** (0.82)	2.64
Unnecessary IT			0.22 (0.34)	0.64	-0.03 (0.28)	-0.11
Promotion Focus			0.33 (0.33)	1.04		
Promotion Focus X Unnecessary IT			-0.03 (0.10)	-0.31		
Prevention Focus					0.09 (0.24)	0.36
Prevention Focus X Unnecessary IT					0.04 (0.08)	0.52
Level 1 Residual variance	0.51 (0.71)		0.50 (0.71)		0.50 (0.71)	
Level 2 Intercept variance	0.63 (0.79)		0.63 (0.79)		0.64 (0.80)	

Note. Unnecessary IT = Unnecessary tasks. N = 46. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Figure 2.

Theoretical Model Displaying Only Supported Links

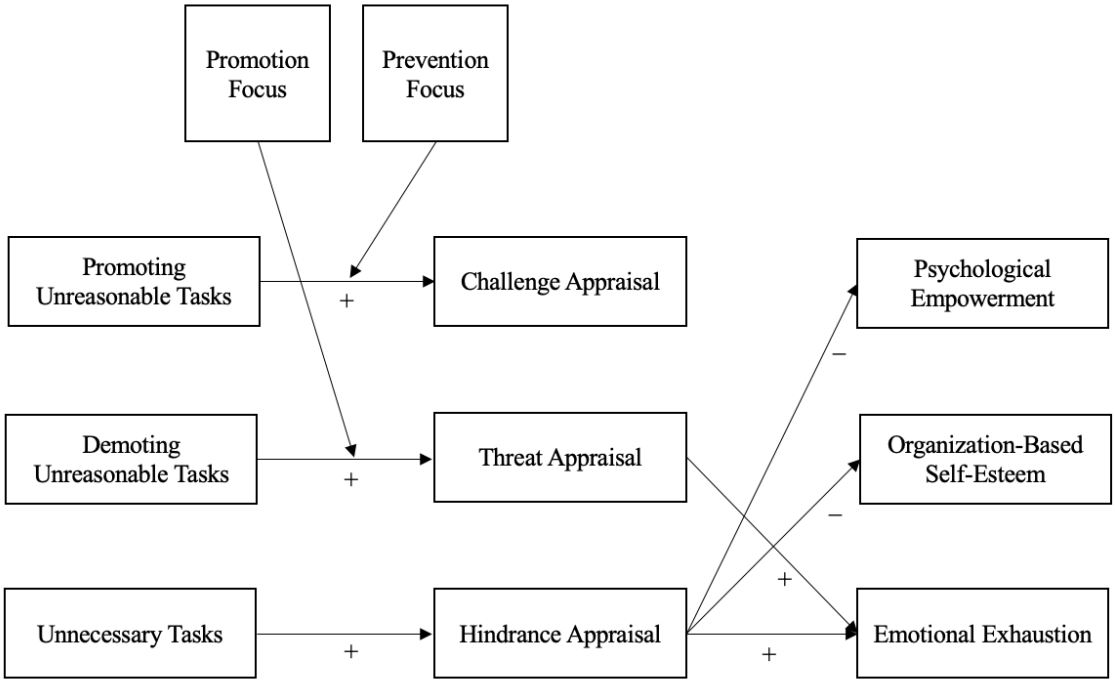


Figure 3.

Cross-level Interaction of Promotion Focus on the Relationship Between Demoting Unreasonable Tasks and Threat Appraisal

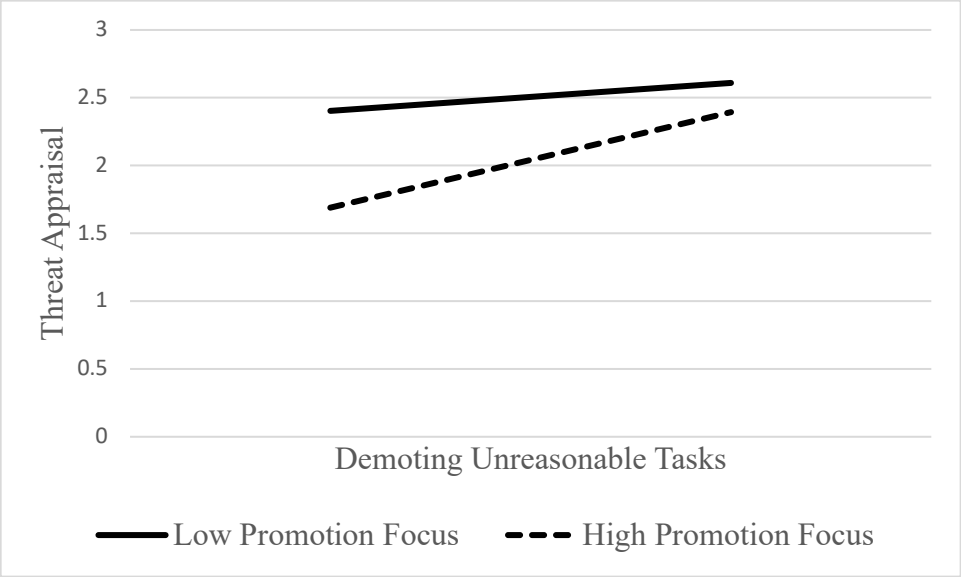
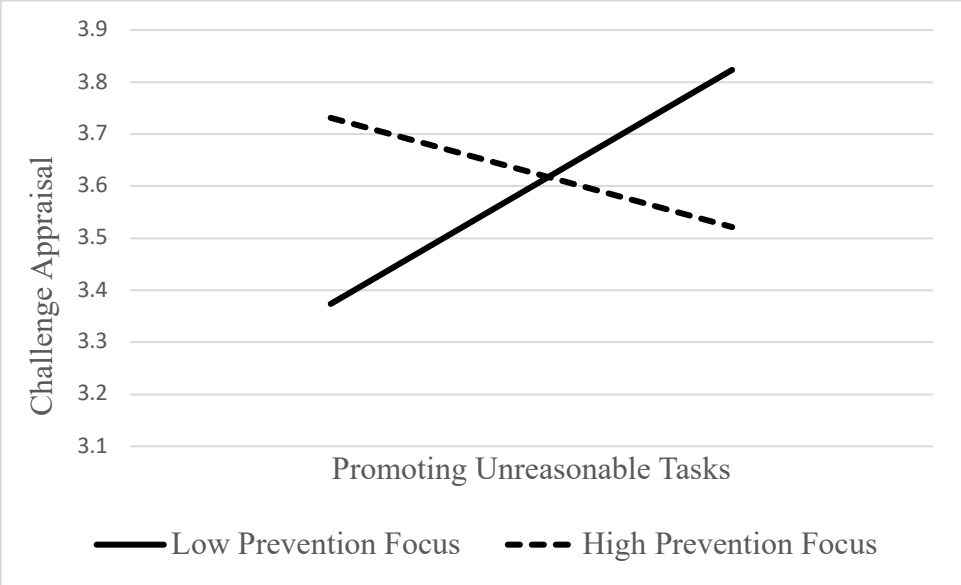


Figure 4.

Cross-level Interaction of Prevention Focus on the Relationship Between Promoting Unreasonable Tasks and Challenge Appraisal



Appendix A

The pool of illegitimate tasks items used in Phase 3 (Assessing Psychometric Properties and Validity)

	At work, I am assigned tasks that...
Promoting Unreasonable Tasks item 1	**Should be completed by someone above my job level**
Promoting Unreasonable Tasks item 2	**Involve more advanced knowledge than should be expected of me**
Promoting Unreasonable Tasks item 3	**Involve more advanced skills and/or abilities than should be expected of me**
Promoting Unreasonable Tasks item 4	**Require more autonomy than should be expected of me**
Demoting Unreasonable Tasks item 1	**Should be completed by someone below my job level**
Demoting Unreasonable Tasks item 2	**Involve less advanced knowledge than should be expected of me**
Demoting Unreasonable Tasks item 3	**Involve less advanced skills and/or abilities than should be expected of me**
Demoting Unreasonable Tasks item 4	**Are completely beneath what should be expected of me**
Unnecessary Tasks item 1	**Should not have to be done at all**
Unnecessary Tasks item 2	**Should never have existed in the first place**
Unnecessary Tasks item 3	**Do not make sense at all**
Unnecessary Tasks item 4	**Should not be completed by anyone employed by my organization**
	Serve little or no purpose
	Require more effort from me than necessary
	Just exist because some people simply demand it this
	Require me to balance more responsibilities than should be expected of me
	Should not be expected of me even though they involve skills and/or abilities that I possess
	Should not be expected of me even though they relate to my job in some way
	Should be completed by a coworker (someone at my level) with different responsibilities than me
	Should be completed by someone working in a different profession within my organization
	Involve skills and/or abilities that are entirely unlike those I should be expected to use
	Should not be expected of me since they are unrelated to my job
	Require skills and/or abilities that are unrealistic for me to obtain
	Should not be expected of me due to the lack of resources available to me
	Require me to complete another person's nonwork-related responsibilities when I should not be expected to do so
	Expose me to dangerous or hazardous conditions, which should not be expected of me
	Require me to use my personal belongings or supplies when I should not be expected to do so

	Require me to violate organizational rules or policies when I should not be expected to do so

Note. Bolded items are the final 12 items used for the revised three-dimensional illegitimate tasks scale.

Appendix B

Supplementary Analyses conducted in Phase 3 (Assessing Psychometric Properties and Validity)

An EFA was conducted on the full set of 28 items using a principal axis factor analysis with a direct oblique rotation (promax rotation). Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($\chi^2(300) = 5831.306$, $p < 0.001$). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy indicated that the strength of the relationships among variables was high (KMO = .95). Extracted eigenvalues, the break in the scree plot, and the percentage of variance explained by the factors suggested a 4-factor solution. The Kaiser-Guttman retention criterion of eigenvalues greater than 1.0 showed that 62.48% of the variance among the 28 items was accounted by 4 factors and the factors on the scree plot leveled off after the fourth factor. The factors were strongly correlated with one another (.58 ~ .68).

Using a factor loading of .40 as a minimum cutoff score (Hinkin, 1995), 5 items were removed (*"Should not be expected of me even though they relate to my job in some way", "Should not be expected of me since they are unrelated to my job", "Should not be expected of me due to the lack of resources available to me", "Just exist because some people simply demand it this", "Serve little or no purpose").* Further, 1 item ("*Should be completed by a coworker (someone at my level) with different responsibilities than me*") was removed because it had less than .10 as the minimum differences between weights.

A second EFA was run using the remaining 22 items. Consistent with the first EFA, the extracted eigenvalues, the break in the scree plot, and the percentage of variance explained (65.79%) by the factors suggested a 4-factor solution. Further, the correlations among the factors were still strongly correlated with one another (.52 ~.65). Seven items (*"Require more effort from me than necessary", "Require me to balance more responsibilities than should be expected*

of me", Require skills and/or abilities that are unrealistic for me to obtain", "Should not be expected of me even though they involve skills and/or abilities that I possess", "Involve skills and/or abilities that are entirely unlike those I should be expected to use", "Should be completed by someone working in a different profession within my organization", "Require me to complete another person's nonwork-related responsibilities when I should not be expected to do so") were removed because they were not conceptually similar to the other items in the factor it loaded on.

When running a final EFA on the structure, results suggested a 4-factor solution (as suggested by the extracted eigenvalues, break in the scree plot, percentage of variance explained [71.33%]). Four items loaded onto factor 1 (*"Should be completed by someone above my job level", "Require more autonomy than should be expected of me", "Involve more advanced knowledge than should be expected of me", "Involve more advanced skills and/or abilities than should be expected of me"),* factor 2 (*"Involve less advanced knowledge than should be expected of me", "Involve less advanced skills and/or abilities than should be expected of me", "Should be completed by someone below my job level", "Are completely beneath what should be expected of me"*), and factor 3 *("Should not be completed by anyone employed by my organization," "Expose me to dangerous or hazardous conditions, which should not be expected of me", "Require me to use my personal belongings or supplies when I should not be expected to do so", "Require me to violate organizational rules or policies when I should not be expected to do so"*) and 3 items loaded onto factor 4 *("Should not have to be done at all", "Should never have existed in the first place", "Do not make sense at all"*). The correlations among the factors were modestly correlated with one another (.43 ~.62).

When examining the items and factors they loaded as compared to the scale structure identified in the primary analyses, the items and factors are largely consistent with one another.

There are two exceptions. First, the item "*should not be employed by anyone in my organization*" was identified as an item within "unnecessary tasks" in the primary analyses but fell within the additional factor of items that were not present in the primary analyses (factor 3). Secondly, 3 of the 4 items in factor 3 (*"Expose me to dangerous or hazardous conditions, which should not be expected of me", "Require me to use my personal belongings or supplies when I should not be expected to do so", "Require me to violate organizational rules or policies when I should not be expected to do so"*) were not examined in the EFA in the primary analyses because these three items demonstrated low correlations with most of the other items, which can explain the differential number of factors present in this analysis compared to the primary analysis.

Appendix C

Demographics and Measures for the Main Study

In the following sections you will be asked to provide basic demographic information about yourself. Please answer honestly, as your responses will remain confidential and will not be linked to your identity.

1. **Age:** How old are you? (Dropdown)
2. **Gender:** What is your gender?
    a. Female
    b. Male
3. **Ethnicity:** Please indicate your ethnicity:
    a. White, not Hispanic
    b. African American
    c. Asian and Pacific Islander
    d. American Indian/Alaskan Native
    e. Hispanic
    f. Other _____
4. **Education:** Please indicate your highest level of education:
    a. Doctoral level degree (e.g., Ph.D., M.D., J.D)
    b. Master's degree
    c. Bachelor's degree
    d. Some college but no degree (includes post-secondary vocational training)
    e. Associate's degree
    f. High school diploma or G.E.D
    g. Less than high school diploma or G.E.D
5. **Tenure Job:** How long have you been working at your current role at your organization? Please indicate both years and months:
6. **Tenure Organization:** How long have you been working at your organization? Please indicate both years and months:
7. **Job Title**: What is your official job title?
8. **Industry:** What industry do you work in (not including your work at Prolific)?
    a. Professional industry (e.g., accounting, law)
    b. Manufacturing industry (e.g., construction, assembly line)
    c. Retail or Service industry (e.g., restaurant, server, cashier, salesperson)
    d. Technical industry (e.g., mechanics, computer programming)
    e. Government agency (e.g., Military, City Hall)
    f. Education (e.g., teacher, work at a university)
    g. Healthcare (e.g., nurse, physical therapist)
    h. Other _____
9. **Hours/Week:** On average, how many **hours per week** do you work at your current job (not including your work at Prolific)?
10. **Annual Income:** Not including your work at Prolific, which of these describes your personal income in 2020 (before tax)?
    a. Less than $10,000

b. $10,000 – $19,999
c. $20,000 – $29,999
d. $30,000 – $39,999
e. $40,000 – $49,999
f. $50,000 – $59,999
g. $60,000 – $69,999
h. $70,000 – $79,999
i. $80,000 – $89,999
j. $90,000 – $99,999
k. $100,000 - $149,999
l. $150,000 or more

11. **Prolific.** At Prolific, on average, how many studies do you complete in a week?
    a. 1-2
    b. 2-3
    c. 3-4
    d. 4-5
    e. 5-6
    f. 6-7
    g. 7-8
    h. 8-9
    i. 9-10
    j. More than 10
12. **Tenure at Prolific:** How long have you been working at Prolific (in months)?
13. **What time zone are you located in?**
    a. Hawaii-Aleutian Time (HAT)
    b. Alaska Time (AST)
    c. Pacific Time (PT)
    d. Mountain Time (MT)
    e. Central Time (CT)
    f. Eastern Time (ET)

Measures

Revised Three-Dimensional Illegitimate Tasks Scale: 12 items, 2-point scale (1= *yes*; 2= *no*)

Today at work, I am assigned tasks that...

1. Should be completed by someone above my job level.
2. Involve more advanced knowledge than should be expected of me.
3. Involve more advanced skills and/or abilities than should be expected of me.
4. Require more autonomy than should be expected of me.
5. Should be completed by someone below my job level.
6. Involve less advanced knowledge than should be expected of me.
7. Involve less advanced skills and/or abilities than should be expected of me.
8. Are completely beneath what should be expected of me.
9. Should not have to be done at all.
10. Should never have existed in the first place.

11. Do not make sense at all.
12. Should not be completed by anyone employed by my organization.

Primary Appraisal: 11-items, 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 5 = *strongly agree*).

Please respond to each item considering the work tasks you reported on the previous statements.

Challenge (Searle & Auton, 2015)

1. Those tasks will help me to learn a lot.
2. Those tasks will make the experience educational.
3. Those tasks will show me I can do something new.
4. Those tasks will keep me focused on doing well.

Hindrance (Searle & Auton, 2015)

1. Those tasks will hinder any achievements I might have.
2. Those tasks will respect my capabilities.
3. Those tasks will limit how well I can do.
4. Those tasks will prevent me from mastering difficult aspects of the work.

Threat (Feldman, et al., 2004)

1. Those tasks may be a negative experience for me.
2. Those tasks will result in negative outcomes.
3. Those tasks are going to have a negative impact on me.

Emotional Exhaustion (Gabriel et al., 2018): 3-items, 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 5 = *strongly agree*)

Please indicate your agreement with the following statements.

1. I feel used up.
2. I feel emotionally drained.
3. I feel burned out.

Organization-Based Self-Esteem (Xanthopoulou et al., 2009): 2 items, 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 5 = *strongly agree*)

Considering your role as an organizational member, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each item.

1. Today while at work, I felt valuable for the company.
2. Today while at work, I felt important for the company.

Psychological Empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995): 12-items, 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 5 = *strongly agree*)

Listed below are a number of self-orientations that people may have with regard to their work role. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree that each item describes your self-orientation.

1. I am confident about my ability to do my job.
2. The work that I do is important to me.
3. I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job.
4. My impact on what happens in my department is large.
5. My job activities are personally meaningful to me.
6. I have a great deal of control over what happens in my department.
7. I can decide on my own how to go about doing my own work.
8. I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do my job.
9. I have mastered the skills necessary for my job.
10. The work I do is meaningful to me.
11. I have significant influence over what happens in my department.
12. I am self-assured about my capabilities to perform my work activities.

Regulatory Focus (Neubert et al., 2008): 18 items, 5-point scale (*1 =strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree)*

Please choose the one response that comes closest to characterizing you.

1. I concentrate on completing my work tasks correctly to increase my job security.
2. At work I focus my attention on completing my assigned responsibilities.
3. Fulfilling my work duties is very important to me.
4. At work, I strive to live up to the responsibilities and duties given to me by others.
5. At work, I am often focused on accomplishing tasks that will support my need for security.
6. I do everything I can to avoid loss at work.
7. Job security is an important factor for me in any job search.
8. I focus my attention on avoiding failure at work.
9. I am very careful to avoid exposing myself to potential losses at work.
10. I take chances at work to maximize my goals for advancement.
11. I tend to take risks at work in order to achieve success.
12. If I had an opportunity to participate on a high-risk, high-reward project I would definitely take it.
13. If my job did not allow for advancement, I would likely find a new one.
14. A chance to grow is an important factor for me when looking for a job.
15. I focus on accomplishing job tasks that will further my advancement.
16. I spend a great deal of time envisioning how to fulfill my aspirations.
17. My work priorities are impacted by a clear picture of what I aspire to be.
18. At work, I am motivated by my hopes and aspirations.

Workload (Spector & Jex, 1998): 5 items, 5-point scale (*1 =strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree)*

Today at work,

1. My job required me to work very fast.

2. My job required me to work very hard.
3. My job left me with little time to get things done.
4. There was a great deal to be done.
5. I had to do more work than I can do well.

Role Conflict (Rizzo et al., 1970): 8 items, 5-point scale (*1 =strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree)*

Today at work,

1. I had to do things that should be done differently.
2. I had to buck a rule or a policy in order to carry out an assignment.
3. I received incompatible requests from two or more people.
4. I did things that are likely to be accepted by one person and not accepted by others.
5. I worked on unnecessary things.
6. I worked with two or more groups who operate quite differently.
7. I received assignments without the manpower to complete them.
8. I received assignments without adequate resources and material to execute them.

Role Ambiguity (Rizzo et al., 1970): 6 items, 5-point scale (*1 =strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree)*

Today at work,

1. I knew exactly what is expected of me.
2. I knew that I had divided my time properly.
3. Explanation was clear of what had to be done.
4. I felt certain about how much authority I had.
5. I knew what my responsibilities were.
6. Clear, planned goals and objectives existed for my job.

Workplace Incivility (Cortina et al., 2001): 7 items, 6-point scale (*1 =never; 6 = five times or more)*

Today, have you been in a situation where any of your superiors or coworkers:

1. Put you down or was condescending to you?
2. Paid little attention to your statement or showed little interest in your opinion?
3. Made demeaning or derogatory remarks about you?
4. Addressed you in unprofessional terms, either publicly or privately?
5. Ignored or excluded you from professional camaraderie?
6. Doubted your judgment on a matter over which you have responsibility?
7. Made unwanted attempts to draw you into a discussion of personal matters?

Abusive Supervision (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007): 5 items, 6-point scale (*1 =never; 6 = five times or more)*

Your boss...

1. Ridiculed you.
2. Told you your thoughts or feelings are stupid.
3. Put you down in front of others.
4. Made negative comments about you to others.
5. Told you that you are incompetent.

Time Pressure (Semmer et al., 1999): 2 items, 5-point scale (*1 =strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree)*

Today at work,

1. I had to work faster than normal in order to complete my work.
2. I was pressed for time.

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