Mountains Out of Molehills? Tests of the Mediating Effects of Self-Esteem in Predicting Workplace Complaining[1]

ANITA KONIECZKA HECK
Department of Business
Troy State University–Phenix City

ARTHUR G. BEDEIAN[2]
Rucks Department of Management
Louisiana State University

DAVID V. DAY
Pennsylvania State University

This study explores the possibility that the effects of various work-related antecedents on complaining behavior are transmitted through the beliefs that employees hold about themselves. Data obtained from 317 schoolteachers and their principals provide strong support for the proposition that organization-based self-esteem (OBSE) is an intervening mechanism between the antecedents of job satisfaction, affective commitment, procedural justice, distributive justice, and leader–member exchange quality and workplace complaining. The relationships that emerged were fully mediated, suggesting that OBSE is a central feature in how employees think, feel, and interact with others in the workplace. Avenues for future research and study limitations are discussed.

Though some employees seldom seem to complain about workplace events, others rarely appear to be content. Evidence as far back as the Hawthorne studies has suggested that some employees, known then as *chronic kickers*, are perennially displeased (Roethlisberger, 1941). Little seems to have changed in the intervening years. Such employees, now labeled *complainers*, continue to be known as "squeaky wheels" and for making "mountains out of molehills." By focusing on the negative, rather than on the positive side of workplace events, these employees are noted for causing dissension, destroying team spirit, and creating attitude problems.

2262

The popular press has long regarded workplace complaining (or simply griping or whining) to be an unavoidable part of the social calculus that necessarily develops within organizations and among organization members (e.g., Schellhardt, 1996). At the individual level, to the extent that employees become known as complainers, they run the risk of being excluded from informal groups and other social interactions (Kowalski, 1996), as well as being placed in a leader's out-group (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). From an organizational perspective, such employees also may undermine the interpersonal interactions necessary for effective performance. In this respect, research on emotional contagion (e.g., Barsade, 2002) has shown how the transfer of moods can directly and indirectly influence individual and workgroup cognitions, attitudes, and behaviors. Given its prevalence and potential detrimental effects, it is surprising that workplace complaining has received scant attention in the organizational behavior literature.

Drawing primarily on self-theory and existing research on why people complain, we have developed a conceptual scheme in which self-esteem mediates the effects of various attitudinal and relational antecedents on workplace complaining. Self-theory holds that one's self-concept is the frame of reference through which one views the world. Both empirical and experimental data confirm that self-appraisal can be a powerful influence on how one thinks, feels, and interacts with others (Cross, Morris, & Gore, 2002). Scholarly interest in the self has been an enduring focus of various allied disciplines (for a recent literature review, see Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs, 2003). Over the past 25 years, self-esteem has emerged as a central construct in organizational behavior. Tharenou's (1979) review of the employee self-esteem literature traces this emergence to various origins.

Of relevance to our present interest is Tharenou's (1979) lament that organizational researchers rarely have considered the mediational role of the self in initiating behavior. The limited attention devoted to self-esteem as a mediator in organizational studies contrasts with models that have been developed by learning, personality, and developmental theorists, as well as clinicians with a cognitive-behavioral orientation (Harter, 1999). These models emphasize that the self is more than a passive set of cognitive appraisals, but rather is an "active, interpretative structure that is continually involved in the regulation of on-going behavior" (Markus & Wurf, 1987, p. 328). As such, the self not only structures perceptions and regulates behaviors, but also guides decisions and actions (Leary, 2002).

Mediating Role of Self-Esteem

The active, controlling aspect of the self has been dubbed the *agent* or *executive* function (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven, & Tice, 1998). The self's capacity to mediate between individuals' contacts with the social environment

and their willingness to engage in volitional action (including attempts to control the environment, control the self, and make choices) has been the focus of various theoretical perspectives dating back to at least the early work of Freud (1923/1961). In the Freudian scheme, an individual's social environment would have its effect on behavior through its effect on one's self-esteem. Freud argued, for example, that individuals try to counter threats to their self-esteem by engaging in compensatory activities. The mediating role of self-esteem in linking the self and behavior has now become an accepted part of self-theory (e.g., Symister & Friend, 2003).

In developing our thinking about workplace complaining, we hypothesized that various attitudinal and relational antecedents would be related to self-esteem, which in turn would be related to complaining behavior. We took as our point of departure the Freudian (1923/1961) belief that the social environment shapes an individual's self-esteem and that individuals try to cope with threats to their selfhood by engaging in compensatory activities. In doing so, we suggest that individuals take on social roles that communicate their self-perceptions (e.g., complainer) and use acts of communication (e.g., complaining) to shield their self-view.

Our position, following self-theory, is that to the degree employees derive self-esteem from their workplace experiences, self-esteem functions as a psychological conduit through which workplace experiences influence complaining behavior (Baumeister & Vohs, 2003). With this in mind, our goal is to examine the potential role of self-esteem as a mediator in the following conceptual scheme.

Conceptual Scheme Development

Kowalski (1996) proposed a theoretical framework outlining the functions, antecedents, and consequences of complaints and complaining. Within this framework, she conceptualized a *complaint* as being the expression of displeasure for the purpose of venting one's emotions, achieving personal goals, or both. *Complaining* is a behavioral manifestation of this discontentment.

In this respect, researchers have identified two distinct types of complaints. *Instrumental complaints* are expressed for the purpose of changing an undesirable state of affairs. For example, a consumer who demands a refund for a faulty product or who speaks to a supervisor concerning a rude customer-service employee is expressing dissatisfaction and seeking redress by registering an instrumental complaint. A substantial portion of the consumer-satisfaction literature has addressed this type of complaining. Likewise, research in labor–management relations concerning the nature of grievances and the grievance process also has focused primarily on instrumental complaining. In contrast, our focus is on *noninstrumental complaints*; that is, complaints that are meant to

serve a social expressive or goal-enhancing function. Common noninstrumental complaints include "This company doesn't appreciate me," or "My last raise was too long ago, and too small." Such complaints are not generally instrumental in bringing about change.

Related to our present focus, Organ (1990) proposed a theoretical connection between complaining and the sportsmanship dimension of organizational citizenship behavior by suggesting that good sports (i.e., individuals high in sportsmanship) do not tend to complain when inconvenienced by others, whereas poor sports (i.e., individuals low in sportsmanship) are unwilling to tolerate the inevitable inconveniences and impositions of work without complaining. This distinction acknowledges variations in the prevalence of complaining across individuals. Moreover, it intimates that, whereas at times complaining might be an appropriate (i.e., legitimate) expression of one's displeasure, doing so too frequently can jeopardize interpersonal relationships and social interactions.

A key aspect underlying Kowalski's (1996) framework is a state of self-focused attention. Self-focus initiates an evaluative process wherein individuals make judgments about circumstances in their social environment. When circumstances are deemed sufficiently unfavorable, the displeasure that is experienced finds voice in complaining behavior.

Within a workplace setting, displeasure may stem from discontentment or disaffection emanating from circumstances associated with work-related attitudes and interpersonal relationships that are inconsistent with one's self-esteem. Paralleling the notion that the self serves an executive function by actively initiating behavior, Kowlaski (1996) suggested that complaints are a means of controlling events in one's social environment. As she noted, when individuals complain, "they are trying to regain control of a situation by putting an end to the experience of an aversive event" (p. 183). From Freudian and self-theory perspectives, complaining thus may be seen as a compensatory activity for countering threats to one's self-esteem.

Similarly, in line with cognitive theory, complaining may be viewed as a means by which individuals bring their influence to bear on events that affect how they live their lives (Leary, 2002). According to the literature on organizational citizenship, poor sports are individuals who tend to complain because they are unwilling "to sacrifice their personal interest for the good of the organization" (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000, p. 517).

Recognizing the etiological role attributed to the self in understanding complaining, our conceptual scheme (presented in Figure 1) proposes that a domain-specific expression of self-esteem (i.e., organization-based self-esteem) mediates the effects of attitudinal (i.e., job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational justice) and relational (i.e., leader–membership exchange) antecedents on workplace complaining. That is, individuals do not respond to their work environment directly, choosing instead to filter their emotional and behavioral

responses through their working self-concept (Lord & Brown, 2004). Self-esteem is thought to be an important component of that self-concept.

The notion that the self is a vital mediator that enables individuals to maintain and modify their behavior is an essential feature of established social psychological theories involving attribution, cognitive dissonance, and self-awareness (Shrauger & Schoeneman, 1979). The importance of self-esteem in maintaining and modifying behavior is underscored by the conclusion that of the four traits (viz. neuroticism, self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, and locus of control) comprising core self-evaluation theory, self-esteem "displays the highest loading on the latent core self-evaluation concept, suggesting that of the four traits it is the best indictor of core self-evaluations" (Bono & Judge, 2003, p. S8). In brief, numerous theories support the view that the self is the frame of reference through which individuals interact with their world and, thus, is a powerful influence on how they negotiate the complexities of everyday life (Baumeister & Voh, 2003).

Organization-Based Self-Esteem

Self-esteem as a trait is typically defined as one's appraisal of one's value as a human being. *Global self-esteem* represents an overall value judgment about the self, whereas *domain-specific self-esteem* denotes one's appraisal of one's value in a particular area (e.g., work, family, social, athletic, or intellectual spheres; Leary & Baumeister, 2000).

Pierce, Gardner, Cummings, and Dunham (1989) observed that, within an organizational context, global self-esteem measures with their wide-ranging focus often fail to show anticipated relationships with other constructs. Drawing on the work of Korman (1976), who viewed self-esteem at work to be domain specific, Pierce et al. introduced the concept of *organization-based self-esteem* (OBSE), defined as one's evaluation about one's value and worthiness as an organization member. In doing so, they reasoned that, if self-esteem were placed in a specific context, it would be a better predictor of workplace outcomes than global measures commonly used in the literature. A growing body of evidence showing that measures which specify context yield higher criterion-related validities and fewer error variances than generalized measures supports this reasoning (Hough, 2003).

Because we seek to explore antecedents of workplace complaining within a specific context and to do so as accurately as possible, we likewise judge OBSE to be more appropriate to our conceptual scheme than global self-esteem. In doing so, we recognize that individuals cannot ascribe meaning to themselves in a vacuum. Rather, as described by Super (1963), "the self is generally a picture of the self in some role, some situation, in a position, performing some set of functions, or in some web of relationships" (p.18). Consequently, the beliefs employees form about themselves as role occupants have implications not only

for workplace complaining (as a behavioral manifestation of employee attitudinal discontent), but other more general behaviors reflecting disaffection. Moreover, our use of OBSE rather than a global self-esteem measure is also supported by research indicating that, given the multifarious nature of the self, individuals' domain-specific self-conceptions (rather than their global self-conception) underlie their reactions to self-relevant stimuli (cf. Swann, Hixon, Stein-Seroussi, & Gilbert, 1990), as well as cognitive research indicating that one's self-view is context dependent (Kühnen & Oyserman, 2002).

Our reasoning also fits with symbolic interactionists' specification of the self as a reflection of appraisals made by significant others (Yeung & Martin, 2003). According to interaction theory, based on the writings of Cooley (1902) and Mead (1934), individuals infer self-views from their experiences with others and, in turn, this guides or influences their behavior. Although some hold that self-esteem is something personal that comes from within an individual (Tafarodi, Marshall, & Milne, 2003), the interactionist perspective contends that self-knowledge develops out of social experience and is a reflected appraisal of how one is appraised by significant others, specified by Cooley as the "reflected or looking-glass self" (p. 152) and by Mead as the "self as social object" (p. 277). In this sense, OBSE with its emphasis on signals received from the attitudes and behaviors of one's supervisors is an interactionist conception and not an internalized self-esteem construct.

Workplace Complaining

Although our work is indebted to previous research, it is the first, to our knowledge, to explore the possibility that the effects of work-related antecedents on complaining behavior are transmitted through the beliefs that employees hold about themselves. At best, some dispositional correlates of complaints about supervisory requests and job satisfaction have been reported (Ekpo-Ufot, 1979; Sachau, Houlihan, & Gilbertson, 1999). With this in mind, we believe that conceptual clarification is needed to better differentiate complaining from how sportsmanship typically is viewed.

As defined in the organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) literature, *sportsmanship* is "the willingness of an employee to tolerate less than ideal circumstances without complaining—to 'avoid complaining, petty grievances, railing against real or imagined slights, and making federal cases out of small potatoes'" (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Hui 1983, p. 7). The items developed by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, and Fetter (1990) to gauge this dimension (described in the following section) are consistent with this definition. This label, however, does not correspond with the standard definition of *sportsmanship* as "the quality of showing fairness, respect and generosity towards [an] opposing team or player" (cf. *Cambridge Dictionary of American English*, 2002).

Coleman and Borman (2000) and LePine, Erez, and Johnson (2002) noted the lack of structure in describing OCB and suggested that inadequate attention has been devoted to defining its dimensions. We agree and underscore that the label *sportsmanship* is inconsistent within the broader context of the meaning of this term. Recognizing this labeling dilemma, we carefully reviewed the OCB literature only to find that as reported in Podsakoff et al.'s (2000) recent review, satisfaction is the only variable included in the present study that has been investigated previously as an antecedent of what we argue is more appropriately labeled *complaining*. Acknowledging the difficulty of interpreting empirical findings related to these cognate concepts and to convey more clearly our central focus and results, we thus restrict ourselves to the use of the descriptive term *workplace complaining*.

Attitudinal Antecedents

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is commonly defined as a general attitude reflecting one's overall global feeling about one's job (Spector, 1997). It also has been conceptualized as an individual's appraisal of the degree to which the various facets of a work environment fulfill one's needs (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). Studies reporting a positive relationship between job satisfaction and OBSE are common (Pierce & Gardner, 2004). This relationship is in keeping with the view of theorists such as Coopersmith (1967), who proposed that self-esteem arises from aspects of one's life that are experienced as satisfactory. In the context of the proposed conceptual scheme, there is evidence to suggest that satisfaction with the basic characteristics of one's job influences one's self-esteem (Lee, 2003).

At the same time, Lehman and Simpson (1992) reported finding that *workplace complaining*—broadly defined to include work-related behaviors such as filing formal complaints, spreading rumors or gossip about coworkers, and reporting others for wrongdoing—is negatively associated with job satisfaction. Given the role attributed to job satisfaction as a source of one's attitude toward the self, the possibility is raised that the actual relationship between job satisfaction and workplace complaining may be mediated through OBSE.

Affective Commitment

Affective commitment is defined as an individual's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in an employing organization, characterized by a strong belief in and an acceptance of its goals, a willingness to exert considerable effort on the organization's behalf, and a strong desire to maintain

membership in the organization (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982). Employees with strong, positive affective commitment remain with an organization because they want to, rather than because they feel they ought to or because they need to (Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993).

Committed employees identify with, are involved in, and enjoy their workplace membership. Moreover, they tend to develop a strong workplace bond and to internalize work-related problems as their own, showing a willingness to go the extra distance (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002). As Luchak (2003) reasoned, given their close emotional ties, affectively committed employees have a strong desire to see their organizations succeed and, rather than suffer in silence, will engage in efforts to bring about change, using not only established two-way communication channels (e.g., petitioning directly to a supervisor), but also more flexible modes of communication (e.g., griping to a team member or coworker).

This reasoning implies a direct relationship between affective commitment and complaining behavior. As noted by Gecas (2000), however, to the extent that positive commitment represents an individual's identification with an organization and its goals, it also supports an individual's self. This suggests that the effects of affective commitment are indirect, working through the self's motivational system. Such reasoning is consistent with the general view that the formation of satisfactory workplace bonds is related positively to self-esteem (Leary & Baumeister, 2000), as well as both Steele's (1988) psychological theory, which emphasizes motivational processes that affirm valued aspects of one's self-identity, and Murray and colleagues' (Murray, Griffin, Rose, & Bellavia, 2003) recent emphasis on the interpersonal or relational origins of self-esteem. Each of these views of the self gives priority to emotional relations and social connectedness, holding that one's self-esteem is influenced and shaped by one's feelings as derived from the social context in which they interact. To the degree that the self arises from one's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in an employing organization, and that individuals act (i.e., engage in complaining behavior) to protect their self-views, it is possible that the influence of affective commitment on workplace complaining may be through its mediational relationship with self-esteem.

Organizational Justice

It is generally held that perceived unfairness related to either distributive or procedural justice within an employment relationship is associated with employee alienation and, by extension, an increased likelihood of workplace difficulties (Viswesvaran & Ones, 2002). *Distributive justice* focuses on the perceived fairness of outcomes received from work-related decision procedures (e.g., raises, promotions, evaluations). In contrast, *procedural justice* focuses on

judgments about the process or means by which such decisions are rendered. Employees tend to be more accepting of decisions based on procedures that are perceived as just. Whereas procedural justice and distributive justice are distinct concepts, they are related because individuals who perceive a lack of distributive justice tend to question the fairness of procedural decisions (Lease, 1998).

To the extent that the self-devaluating implications of perceived unfairness engender employee alienation and threaten employees' self-worth, we reason that employees will be more likely to complain. Our reasoning draws on Lind and Tyler's (1988) *group-value model*, which suggests that procedural justice is important to individuals because it implies that they are valued members of their groups. In turn, by providing individuals with positive information about their worth as group members, fair treatment enhances their self-esteem (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001).

Building on Crocker, Luhtanen, Cooper, and Bouvrette's (2003) efforts to identify the domains on which individuals stake their self-worth, this latter finding would seem to be especially germane to workplace settings where individuals' self-esteem is likely to be influenced by the degree to which they attain specific outcomes based on assessments of procedural- and distributive-justice judgments. Consistent with this logic, Niehoff and Moorman (1993) reported that employees who feel unfairly treated in work-related procedures are more likely to complain, and Chattopadhyay (1999) reported finding a positive relationship between perceived workplace justice and OBSE.

These findings raise the possibility that the actual relationship between justice perceptions and workplace complaining may be mediated through OBSE. Lord and Brown (2004) similarly proposed that individuals' reactions and responses to workplace injustice are filtered through their working self-concept, which is comprised of OBSE and other aspects of identity.

Relational Antecedent: Leader–Member Exchange

Leader–member exchange (LMX) theory suggests that supervisors develop unique, interpersonal relationships with each subordinate (Gerstner & Day, 1997). This suggestion rests on the belief that in social exchanges, individuals must offer something others see as valuable. Thus, in a high-quality superior–subordinate relationship, a subordinate feels obligated to engage in behaviors that benefit a supervisor (i.e., leader), and the supervisor reciprocates. In this connection, Korman (1976) and others have posited that an individual's self-esteem is a function of the extent to which psychologically significant others (e.g., one's supervisor) exhibit through their behaviors that one is a valued organization member. Likewise, George and Brief (1996) contended that the self as a valued employee is one of the many possible selves in need of motivational attention.

Of importance to our interests is research indicating that subordinates who experience a low-quality relationship with their supervisors complain more about unfair managerial treatment than do their workplace counterparts (Sias, 1996). This finding supports Leary's (1999) conception of self-esteem as a "psychological meter, or gauge, that monitors the quality of people's relationships with others" (p. 33), and reflects their general sense of being the sort of person who is valued and accepted by psychologically significant others.

Combining these findings with self-theory, to the extent that the reciprocal behaviors of an employee's supervisor signal that the employee is a valued organization member, the employee should feel more accepted and should be less likely to complain. This reasoning is consistent with Andersen and Chen's (2002) concept of the *relational self*, which holds that knowledge about the self is linked with knowledge about significant others; Epstein's (1973) notion that one's self-concept develops out of experience, especially during interactions with significant others; and the general view that signals of approval from significant others play a major role in enhancing self-esteem (Harter, 1999). Taken together, theory and research thus suggest the possibility that the effects of LMX on complaining behavior are transmitted through OBSE.

Method

Participants and Data Collection

Our initial target sample consisted of 471 schoolteachers and their immediate supervisors (i.e., principals), representing 25 elementary, middle, and high schools located within one school district in the southeastern United States. Systematic sampling was employed to establish a predefined domain wherein we selected every fourth teacher from an alphabetized list of all teachers at each school. It was deemed necessary to select a subset of teachers from each school to reduce the burden placed on principals who were asked to rate the workplace complaining of each teacher included in the study.

Interaction among coworkers and between respondents and their supervisors is a necessary presumption for testing our hypotheses. With respect to our focal sample, there existed ample opportunity for teacher–coworker and teacher–principal interactions during classroom observations, lunch hours, class breaks, weekly committee meetings, and monthly faculty meetings attended by principals. The sample was thus considered to be appropriate for examining the proposed hypotheses.

Because of the number of schools and the teachers' varied schedules, data were collected via surveys distributed through a central-office mail system. As an incentive to participate, the names of all teachers and principals returning completed surveys were entered in a random drawing to receive one of three $100

money orders. Of the 25 principals, 22 (88%) returned 449 surveys. The response rate for teachers was 67% ($n = 317$). Of this total, 18% were male and 82% were female, with 94.6% being Caucasian and 4.2% being African American. The teachers' average age was 40 years ($SD = 10.35$). Their average tenure with the school district was 12 years ($SD = 9.62$), average tenure with current school was 9 years ($SD = 8.91$), and average tenure in current position was 7 years ($SD = 8.30$).

Responses to all survey measures were summed and coded such that a high score indicates a high level of agreement. All 449 principal survey responses were used in establishing the measurement properties of the workplace complaining construct. Pairwise deletion of data for zero-order correlations on the mediating and explanatory variables of interest yielded sample sizes ranging from 302 to 312.

Predictor Variables

Job satisfaction. Job satisfaction ($\alpha = .80$) was self-assessed using Chalykoff and Kochan's (1989) six-item measure, which gauges the extent of satisfaction toward one's job, pay, benefits, promotion opportunities, recognition received for a job well done, and amount of say individuals have in how their work is done. Unless otherwise indicated, responses for all measures were rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

In selecting a facet rather than a global measure of job satisfaction, we were influenced by the work of Schimel, Arndt, Pyszczynski, and Greenberg (2001). This work suggests, "beyond the simple evaluative valence of one's self-evaluation, the nature of the sources from which one's self-worth is derived is a critical determinant of how self-esteem affects ongoing psychological processes" (p. 35). Accordingly, we use a facet measure (as opposed to an overall or global assessment) of satisfaction so as to reflect the heterogeneous nature of the various dimensions that comprise this construct's content domain.

Affective commitment. Affective commitment ($\alpha = .80$) was self-assessed by a six-item measure developed by Meyer and Allen (1991). Sample items include "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization"; "I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own"; and "I do not feel a strong sense of 'belonging' to my organization" (reverse scored).

Procedural justice. The perceived fairness of procedures used in making workplace decisions was self-assessed using Naumann and Bennett's (2000) nine-item measure ($\alpha = .88$). The measure began with "In this organization . . .," which was followed by items such as ". . . consistent rules and procedures are used to make decisions about things that affect me"; ". . . decisions that affect me are made ethically"; and ". . . my input is obtained prior to making decisions."

Distributive justice. The perceived fairness of outcomes resulting from workplace decisions (e.g., pay, promotion, evaluation) was self-assessed using Price

and Mueller's (1986) six-item measure ($\alpha = .94$). The stem "I am fairly rewarded . . ." was followed by items such as ". . . considering the responsibilities I have"; ". . . taking into account the amount of education and training that I have had"; and ". . . in view of the amount of experience that I have."

Leader–member exchange. Teachers' perceptions of the quality of their relationship with their supervisors (i.e., principals) were self-assessed using Scandura and Graen's (1984) seven-item LMX measure ($\alpha = .90$). Sample items include "My supervisor understands my problems and needs"; "My supervisor would 'bail me out' at his/her expense"; and "I have an effective working relationship with my supervisor."

Mediating Variable: OBSE

OBSE ($\alpha = .87$) was self-assessed using a 10-item measure developed by Pierce et al. (1989). Respondents were asked to think about the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each of 10 statements intended to tap the degree to which they saw themselves as *capable*, *significant*, *successful*, and *worthwhile* within their employing organization. Sample items include "I count around here"; "I am taken seriously around my school"; "I am an important part of this place"; and "I can make a difference around my school."

Criterion Variable: Workplace Complaining

Principals were asked to assess the degree to which teachers complained using the following five items adapted from Podsakoff et al. (1990): "This teacher consumes a lot of time complaining about trivial matters"; "This teacher always focuses on what's wrong, rather than the positive side"; "This teacher tends to make mountains out of molehills"; "This teacher always finds fault with what the organization is doing"; and "This teacher is the classic 'squeaky wheel' that always needs greasing."

Assessments were returned to the researchers under separate cover and matched to teacher surveys. We chose to use this measure ($\alpha = .96$) because it not only captures the nature of complaining as conceptualized by Kowalski's (1996) framework, but also reflects the essence of workplace complaining that we sought to tap. An independent-sample *t* test confirmed that there were no systematic differences between respondents and nonrespondents on principals' assessment of complaining.

Controls

Because self-report data are susceptible to contamination caused by common source variance (i.e., percept–percept bias), affective feelings, and pressure for

positive self-presentation, we took precautions to control for response biases. To minimize biased relations among study variables as a result of common source bias, we used multiple sources to collect our data (i.e., principals and teachers). Teachers completed the attitudinal and relational measures, and principals completed the complaining measure.

To control for the possibility that teacher responses, especially in relation to self-esteem, might be confounded by individual differences in emotionality, as advised by Watson, Suls, and Haig (2002), negative affectivity was entered as a covariate in our statistical analyses. Prior studies have shown that individuals high in negative affectivity are more likely to have a downbeat view of the world and to dwell on their failures and shortcomings. Consequently, they are less satisfied with their lives and have a less favorable self-view (Watson & Slack, 1993).

As these differences are stable over time and across contexts, we chose to treat negative affectivity as a trait, rather than as a state factor, and entered it in our analyses as a control variable rather than an antecedent of workplace complaining. Trait negative affectivity (α = .86) was self-assessed by 11 items from the Multidimensional Personality Index (Watson & Tellegen, 1985). Sample items include "I often find myself worrying about something"; "My feelings are hurt rather easily"; and "Often I get irritated at little annoyances."

Finally, to control for the tendency of individuals to present themselves in a favorable light relative to social norms and standards, social desirability also was entered as a covariate. Social desirability was self-assessed using a short form of the Marlowe–Crowne measure (α = .70; Ballard, 1992). This measure consists of 13 true–false items and has been the preferred measure of the vast majority of researchers conducting organizational behavior studies (Moorman & Podsakoff, 1992). Items were scored with 1 indicating *true* and 0 indicating *false*, with reverse scoring resulting in a possible range in scores from 0 to 13 when all responses are summed. Sample items include "On a few occasions, I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability"; "There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right"; and "No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener."

Results

Descriptive statistics, internal consistency reliability estimates, and intercorrelations for all study variables are reported in Table 1. The correlations among variables correspond closely to those reported in the literature and display the conditions necessary to test for mediation as proposed by our conceptual scheme. To wit, each of the focal antecedent variables was related significantly to workplace complaining; each antecedent variable was related significantly to OBSE; and, finally, OBSE was related significantly to workplace complaining (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

Table 1

Intercorrelations and Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables

Variable	n	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Outcome variable												
1. Workplace complaining (principal)	449	9.50	4.86	$(.96)^a$								
Mediating variable												
2. Organization-based self-esteem	302	40.27	4.89	-.35	$(.87)^a$							
Explanatory variables												
3. Job satisfaction	305	19.13	4.28	-.22	.43	$(.80)^a$						
4. Affective commitment	309	21.69	4.35	-.28	.59	.52	$(.80)^a$					
5. Procedural justice	308	29.53	6.38	-.27	.64	.63	.59	$(.88)^a$				
6. Distributive justice	311	18.12	5.99	-.23	.46	.71	.43	.65	$(.94)^a$			
7. Leader–member exchange	312	24.42	5.44	-.28	.67	.64	.61	.81	.66	$(.90)^a$		
Covariates												
8. Social desirability	305	8.48	2.70	-.03	.23	.22	.17	.18	.10	.16	$(.70)^b$	
9. Negative affectivity	297	32.57	7.80	.18	.22	-.11	-.07	-.10	-.03	-.14	-.33	$(.86)^a$

Note. Correlations > ±.11 are significant at $p < .05$ (two-tailed).
[a]Coefficient alpha. [b]KR-20.

The absolute correlation of study variables with socially desirable responding averaged .16, with a range from -.03 to .23; and with negative affectivity averaged .12, with a range of -.22 to .18. This indicates the absence of a general response set associated with either control variable.

To confirm the value of using all six predictor variables in our analyses, we first examined the strength of their linear relationships. Tolerance statistics for the predictors placed in a complete equation with workplace complaining as the outcome variable and social desirability and negative affect as covariates ranged from 0.45 for affective commitment to 0.27 for LMX ($M = 0.38$, $SD = 0.07$), indicating that multicollenarity among the predictors was not a concern (Norušis, 1997).

As indicated in Figure 1, we expected that the designated attitudinal and relational antecedents would influence workplace complaining through their impact on OBSE. This expectation was tested using structural equation modeling; specifically, by means of the recommended approach for testing nested models (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Two competing models were tested: a fully mediated model and a partially mediated model.

For the fully mediated model (Figure 1), we specified paths from all antecedents to OBSE, and from OBSE to a latent construct of principal-rated workplace complaining. The partially mediated model also specified direct paths from all antecedents to the latent complaining construct. Significant direct paths would suggest that other mechanisms beyond OBSE are needed to explain the effects of the antecedents on workplace complaining. The models were compared directly using a sequential chi-square difference test based on each model's respective chi-square goodness-of-fit estimate and corresponding degrees of freedom.

We controlled for the effects of negative affectivity and social desirability by including them as exogenous variables with paths freely estimated to all antecedents, the mediator, and the workplace complaining outcome construct (cf. Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2002). Following the recommendations of Ping (2002), we used a mixed latent and manifest model to improve the ratio of our sample size to the size of our input matrix and, thus, the accuracy of our competing model estimates.

The antecedents and the mediator (all teacher-rated) were specified as single-indicator manifest variables based on the mean for each variable. Workplace complaining was specified as a latent construct using five principal-rated items for the measure (Method section). The measurement properties of the complaining construct were estimated by means of composite reliability and variance extracted (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). These estimates are based on the standardized loadings for the construct and variance as a result of random measurement error (cf. Netermeyer, Johnston, & Burton, 1990). Composite reliability (similar to internal consistency) was estimated to be .96 and variance extracted (amount of construct variance in relation to variance as a result of random measurement
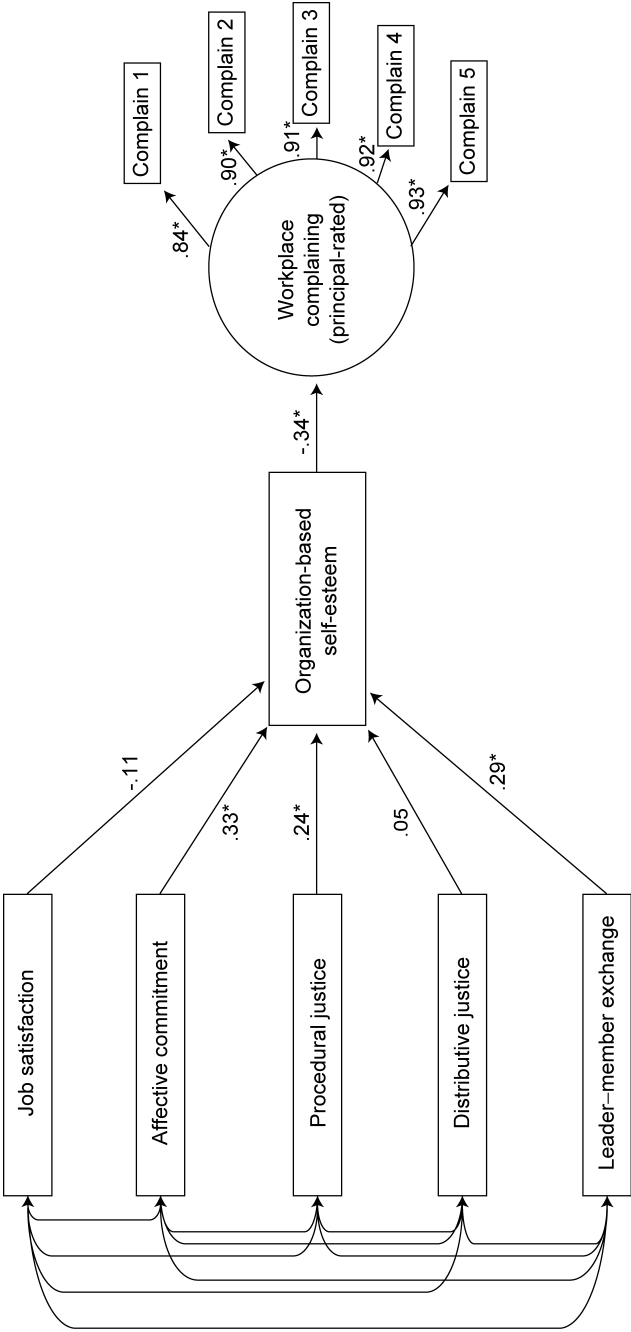
Figure 1. Results of the mediation model tests. *$p < .05$.

error) was estimated to be .81. Both estimates suggest that the latent complaining construct had favorable psychometric properties.

The fully mediated model, $\chi^2(37, N = 293) = 68.92, p < .01$ (root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .054; goodness-of-fit index [GFI] = .968; adjusted GFI [AGFI] = .922; comparative fit index [CFI] = .989), fit the data as well as the less parsimonious partially mediated model, according to the chi-square difference test, $\chi^2_{\text{diff}}(7, N = 293) = 11.04, p > .10$. These results suggest that the fully mediated model is the preferred model in that it fit the data as well as a competing model (i.e., partially mediated) that included additional estimated parameters.

An examination of the standardized parameter estimates (Figure 1) indicates significant positive paths from affective commitment, procedural justice, and LMX to OBSE, suggesting that workplace experiences directly impact the beliefs that employees hold about themselves. The parameter estimates for job satisfaction and distributive justice were not statistically significant. As expected, OBSE was significantly and negatively related to workplace complaining, suggesting that teachers with positive feelings about their value and worthiness as organization members were viewed by their respective principals as being less likely to engage in complaining behavior. Consistent with the results of the chi-square difference test between models, there were no significant direct paths from any of the model antecedents to workplace complaining.

Discussion

OBSE was found to completely mediate the hypothesized relationships between affective commitment, procedural justice, and LMX quality with workplace complaining. Tests of a partial mediation model show that this conceptual alternative was not a good fitting model, as there were no significant direct paths from any of the antecedents we examined to workplace complaining. Furthermore, tests of relative model fit indicate that the more parsimonious fully mediated model fit the data as well as did the less parsimonious partially mediated model. Therefore, our findings support the notion that OBSE fully mediates the relationships between affective commitment, procedural justice, and LMX quality and workplace complaining. Put somewhat differently, our results suggest that OBSE is a psychological conduit through which workplace experiences influence complaining behavior. Whereas it has long been postulated that a relationship exists between one's work role and associated job behaviors and attitudes, our findings underscore the importance of OBSE as an active agent in the subjective workplace experience.

We did not find a reliable relationship between job satisfaction and OBSE once the effects of the other antecedents were considered. This suggests that the self-esteem of the teachers in our study operated independently of their

satisfaction levels; at least as reflected by the signals they received from the attitudes and behaviors of their supervisors. Our null finding relating to distributive justice and OBSE likewise suggests that perceived fairness of outcomes resulting from workplace decisions (e.g., pay, promotion, evaluation) is not associated with employees' judgments of self-worth. Perhaps the standardized nature of the reward structures and evaluation processes operative in a public school setting are so impersonal as to have had no impact on the self-esteem of the teachers in our study.

The consistency of our findings across the paths for affective commitment ($b = .33$), procedural justice ($b = .24$), and LMX quality ($b = .29$) with OBSE suggests the value of managerial efforts aimed at enacting fair procedures, engendering affective commitment, and improving leader–member relations as means of strengthening employees' sense of being valuable and worthy organization members. Moreover, being cognitively based, we would expect OBSE motives to activate emotional responses (e.g., workplace complaining) in other matters involving self-esteem. For this reason, efforts should be made to ensure that work experiences lead to emotional outcomes that help employees maintain a sense of psychological coherence and personal control over their social environment.

Actions in this regard might be as simple as managers attending to employees' self-esteem as part of daily workplace interactions. This could be done in any number of ways, including enhancing employees' perceptions of empowerment and fair treatment through efforts such as employee involvement programs and formal grievance policies, reaffirming their workplace worth through praise and constructive criticism, designing jobs so that they provide for increased responsibility and significance, and initiating training programs that allow them to develop their abilities. Conversely, every attempt should be made to avoid work experiences that lead to emotional outcomes that threaten employees' sense of self-integrity. As self-theory holds, and as our results suggest, one's self-esteem provides a frame of reference through which one views one's world and, thus, can be a powerful influence on one's thoughts, feelings, and actions.

In our tests for mediation, paths representing the direct effects on workplace complaining of the attitudinal and relational variables we studied were found to be nonsignificant. This suggests that mediational linkages incorporating self-esteem are relatively robust and that the mediating effect of self-esteem may be an important resource in reducing the magnitude of workplace alienation on psychological well-being.

On a general level, our results indicate that OBSE plays a critical role in guiding and regulating workplace behavior and may provide valuable insights into how the effects of workplace experiences are produced. On a more immediate level, our results suggest that the study of how workplace experiences affect complaining behavior offers value for improving our understanding of the

intervening pathways between such experiences and psychological adjustment. Further investigation of these pathways will provide information about how and under what circumstances OBSE may either attenuate or exacerbate the dynamics of work-related experiences.

From an applied perspective, our results carry an additional message for practicing managers. Employees increasingly have become recognized as an invaluable source of ideas for doing things better, especially in organizations undergoing turmoil associated with change. In such situations, it may be tempting to label those who express counter opinions (i.e., complain) as *troublemakers*. Indeed, combined with the fear of retaliation, this likely explains the reluctance of many employees to share ideas for needed changes (Premeaux & Bedeian, 2003). We suggest, however, that there may be a measure of wisdom in first asking if such employees are actually trouble*finders*, rather than trouble*makers*.

Beyond potentially being a source of ideas for improvement, our results suggest that by influencing employees' affective commitment, perceived procedural justice, and the quality of leader–member relations, this alternative strategy will encourage open dialogue by directly affecting employees' self-esteem. Even more broadly considered, research shows that silence can exact not only a high psychological premium from employees, but give rise to a culture that shuts down creativity and undermines productivity. Understandably, specific interventions for changing such cultures have become the focus of mounting attention (Perlow & Williams, 2003).

Our findings suggest several avenues for future research. First, the preliminary conceptual scheme we employed should be extended to include a more complete representation of potential antecedents, as well as other relevant constructs. For example, it might be useful to include a wide range of situational factors, such as organizational structure and workgroup dynamics that might influence OBSE and, ultimately, reduce workplace complaining. Future research also could assist in disentangling the interrelationships of the antecedents included in this study. Further, Kowalski (1996) has suggested that because complaining may lead others to form a negative impression of those who complain, individuals who are dispositionally attuned to the impressions that others are forming of them may be less likely to complain than individuals who are not as sensitive to self-presentational concerns. Thus, a third avenue of future research would be to examine the potential influence of *self-monitoring*, which refers to the observation and control of expressive and self-presentational behaviors (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000), on complaining behavior.

Another area for future research would be to explore the dynamics of complaining contagion. According to Kowalski and Erickson (1997), chronic complaining is often contagious, exhibiting a domino effect that is initiated by a single person. They suggested that hearing another's complaints makes listeners more aware of their own negative feelings, thereby triggering negative affect and

a desire to complain. Further, hearing another's complaints creates a cognitive burden in listeners that may be alleviated by complaining to others. Listening to others' complaints also may remind listeners of events they have experienced and consequently instill a need to relate those negative experiences. Therefore, to the extent that mood transfer occurs between workgroup members and, in turn, influences group dynamics and outcomes (e.g., cooperation, conflict, task performance; Neumann & Strack, 2000), future researchers may wish to examine the nature of workplace complaining contagion over time and the kinds of interventions that might help to impede negative emotional contagion instigated by complainers.

In a similar cast, an organizational climate is a set of shared perceptions of policies, practices, and procedures that are rewarded, supported, and expected through group interaction (Schneider, 1990). Future researchers may wish to investigate whether a climate for complaining exists within some groups or entire organizations, wherein employees feel comfortable complaining and do not consider it to be an aversive behavior. For example, it is plausible that complaining is supported in some settings where individuals listen to each another and, by commiserating, encourage a complaining climate. In such circumstances, complaining may be a somewhat perverse form of job enrichment.

As with all studies, a word of caution regarding our results is in order. First, it is important to stress that the use of school principals' perceptions to assess our criterion variable presents complaining not simply as a behavior, but as a complex phenomenon related to the subjective evaluation and categorization of individuals. The role of perceptions in determining individuals' judgments, however, is a cornerstone of the symbolic interactionist tradition, which holds that one's interpretation of an item or event is not based directly on the characteristics of objective stimuli, but rather on one's conception of social reality (Younts & Mueller, 2001). Nonetheless, the veridicality of the principals' assessments of the teachers' complaining behavior and whether that behavior actually comprised *complaining*, according to some reasonable standard, remains an empirical question. Hence, future research would benefit by varying the source of complaining ratings.

For instance, an individual's coworkers could rate complaining, as peers are likely to have unique opportunities to observe one another's complaining behavior. Indeed, prior research has shown that because coworkers have closer and more frequent contact with one another, the information they possess about one another may be more accurate than that of any other source (Barclay & Harland, 1995). In this regard, one might speculate to the extent that teachers complain about their principals, coworkers would be more aware of such complaints than would the principals themselves. Principals may catch some of this, but not the full extent. Thus, our findings actually may understate the extent to which our responding teachers engaged in workplace complaining.

Second, given that the data we used to test our conceptual scheme are cross-sectional, rather than being grounded in a carefully controlled experiment, our results cannot be interpreted to indicate causality. Whereas the presence of causal relations among variables is implied by the use of the terms *impact* and *effect*, it was only possible (given our study design) to test the extent to which the observed associations among the focal variables could be predicted from the hypothesized conceptual scheme (Figure 1), without respect to causation. Whereas the reported results are consistent with our proposed model, the arrows in Figure 1 may operate in the reverse direction, or the hypothesized effects may be bidirectional.

Additional evidence based on other types of research designs is needed before confident attributions of causality are warranted. Although alternative orderings of paths cannot be ruled out, prior theory and empirical findings nonetheless suggest that the hypothesized ordering of the variables is justified.

Third, our analyses are based on a single population (viz. teachers). Future research should be undertaken with other populations to corroborate the generalizability of our sample. It is possible that the antecedents of OBSE are at least somewhat job specific. For instance, in some professions, an individual's OBSE may develop based on the evaluations of professional peers who may belong to the same professional societies, but who do not share organizational affiliations. In such cases, supervisors may play a minimal role in affecting one's OBSE.

In an academic setting, for example, an individual may garner a sense of self-esteem based on peer-reviewed research and reputation within the academy. Similar dynamics may exist in professional-service firms that are common in law, accounting, consulting, and other fields. Future research may benefit from incorporating job type as a focal variable to ascertain whether a general model is even possible.

Finally, subsequent studies examining workplace complaining may do well to consider other antecedents of OBSE, as well as other potentially confounding dispositional variables that may influence emotionality. In reality, even if it were possible to identify and measure all relevant variables, because of constraints on respondents' time and energy no study can examine every putative cause and effect. Rather, researchers must proceed with the data that are available, recognizing that few models are self-contained and thereby encouraging future researchers to investigate alternative models (Bouchard, Arvey, Keller, & Segal, 1992).

The purpose of our study was to evaluate empirically the general hypothesis that an individual's self-esteem mediates the impact of attitudinal and relational variables on workplace complaining. In doing so, we have responded to Tharenou's (1979) lament that organizational researchers rarely have considered esteem as a mediator, a condition that largely continues today, and have endeavored to move beyond simple self-enhancement explanations for how individuals define themselves. To our knowledge, we are the first researchers to explore the

possibility that the effects of work-related antecedents on complaining behavior are transmitted through the beliefs that employees hold about themselves.

We were unable to find any examples of experimental or survey research that has tested directly the mediating role of OBSE, as we proposed in this study. We do not suggest, however, that the antecedents we investigated are the only precursors of workplace complaining or that they are better predictors than are other constructs (e.g., supervisor trust and respect). We also acknowledge that multiple motives beyond an affinity for feeling good about oneself may influence complaining behavior. Likewise, we do not suggest that organization-based self-esteem is the best or only mediating factor intervening between the antecedents we examined in this study and workplace complaining. We do suggest—and we believe that our findings indicate—that the constructs we examined have potential to increase our understanding of workplace complaining.

References

Andersen, S. M., & Chen, S. (2002). The relational self: An interpersonal social-cognitive theory. *Psychological Review, 109*, 619-645.

Anderson, J. C., & Gerbing, D. W. (1988). Structural equation modeling in practice: A review and recommended two-step approach. *Psychological Bulletin, 103*, 411-423.

Ballard, R. (1992). Short forms of the Marlowe–Crowne Social Desirability Scale. *Psychological Reports, 71*, 1155-1160.

Barclay, J. H., & Harland, L. K. (1995). Peer performance appraisals. *Group and Organization Management, 20*, 39-60.

Baron, R. M., & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The moderator–mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 51*, 1173-1182.

Barsade, S. G. (2002). The ripple effect: Emotional contagion and its influence on group behavior. *Adminsitrative Science Quarterly, 47*, 644-675.

Baumeister, R. F., Bratslavsky, E., Muraven, M., & Tice, D. (1998). Ego depletion: Is the active self a limited resource? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 74*, 1252-1265.

Baumeister, R. F., Campbell, J. D., Krueger, J. I., & Vohs, K. D. (2003). Does high self-esteem cause better performance, interpersonal success, happiness, or healthier lifestyles? *Psychological Science in the Public Interest, 4*, 1-44.

Baumeister, R. F., & Vohs, K. D. (2003). Self-regulation and the executive function of the self. In M. R. Leary & J. P. Tangney (Eds.), *Handbook of self and identity* (pp. 197-217). New York, NY: Guilford.

Bono, J. E., & Judge, T. A. (2003). Core self-evalutions: A review of the trait and its role in job satisfaction and job performance. *European Journal of Personality, 17*, S5-S18.

Bouchard, T. J., Jr., Arvey, R. D., Keller, L. M., & Segal, N. L. (1992). Genetic influences on job satisfaction: A reply to Cropanzano and James. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 77*, 89-93.

Ca*mbridge Dictionary of American English*. (2002). Sportsmanship. Retrieved June 6, 2003, from http://dictionary.cambridge.org/

Chalykoff, J., & Kochan, T. A. (1989). Computer-aided monitoring: Its influence on employee job satisfaction and turnover. *Personnel Psychology, 42*, 807-834.

Chattopadhyay, P. (1999). Beyond direct and symmetrical effects: The influence of demographic dissimilarity on organizational citizenship behavior. *Academy of Management Journal, 42*, 273-287.

Cohen-Charash, Y., & Spector, P. E. (2001). The role of justice in organizations: A meta-analysis. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 86*, 278-321.

Coleman, V. I., & Borman, W. C. (2000). Investigating the underlying structure of the citizenship performance domain. *Human Resource Management Review, 10*, 25-44.

Cooley, C. H. (1902). *Human nature and the social order*. New York, NY: Scribner's.

Coopersmith, S. (1967). *The antecedents of self-esteem*. San Francisco, CA: Freeman.

Crocker, J., Luhtanen, R. K., Cooper, M. L., & Bouvrette, A. (2003). Contingencies of self-worth in college students: Theory and measurement. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 85*, 894-908.

Cross, S. E., Morris, M. L., & Gore, J. S. (2002). Thinking about oneself and others: The relational-interdependent self-construal and social cognition. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 82*, 394-418.

Dawis, R. V., & Lofquist, L. H. (1984). *A psychological theory of work adjustment*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Eisenberger, R., Armeli, S., Rexwinkel, B., Lynch, P. D., & Rhoades, L. (2002). Reciprocation of perceived organizational support. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 86*, 42-51.

Ekpo-Ufot, A. (1979). Self-perceived task-relevant abilities, rated job performance, and complaining behavior of junior employees in a government ministry. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 64*, 429-434.

Epstein, S. (1973). The self-concept revisted or a theory of a theory. *American Psychologist, 28*, 404-416.

Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research, 18*, 39-50.

Freud, S. (1961). The ego and the id. In J. Strachey (Ed. & Trans.), *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol. 19, pp. 12-66). London, UK: Hogarth. (Original work published 1923)

Gangestad, S. W., & Snyder, M. (2000). Self-monitoring: Appraisal and reappraisal. *Psychological Bulletin*, *126*, 530-555.

Gecas, V. (2000). Value identities, self-motives, and social movements. In S. Stryker, T. J. Owens, & R. W. White (Eds.), *Self, identity, and social movements* (pp. 93-104). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

George, J. M., & Brief, A. P. (1996). Motivational agenda in the workplace: The effects of feelings on focus of attention and work motivation. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, *18*, 75-109.

Gerstner, C. R., & Day, D. V. (1997). Meta-analytic review of leader–member exchange theory: Correlates and construct issues. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *82*, 827-844.

Graen, G. B., & Uhl-Bien, M. (1995). Relationship-based approach to leadership: Development of leader–member exchange (LMX) theory of leadership over 25 years: Applying a multi-level multi-domain approach. *Leadership Quarterly*, *6*, 219-247.

Harter, S. (1999). *The construction of the self: A developmental perspective*. New York, NY: Guilford.

Hough, L. M. (2003). Emerging trends and needs in personality research and practice: Beyond main effects. In M. R. Barrick & A. M. Ryan (Eds.), *Personality and work: Reconsidering the role of personality in organizations* (pp. 289-325). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Korman, A. K. (1976). Hypothesis of work behavior revisited and an extension. *Academy of Management Review, 1*, 50-63.

Kowalski, R. M. (1996). Complaints and complaining: Functions, antecedents, and consequences. *Psychological Bulletin*, *119*, 179-196.

Kowalski, R. M., & Erickson, J. R. (1997). Complaining: What's all the fuss about? In R. M. Kowalski (Ed.), *Aversive interpersonal behaviors* (pp. 91-109). New York, NY: Plenum.

Kühnen, U., & Oyserman, D. (2002). Thinking about the self influences thinking in general: Cognitive consequences of salient self-concept. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *38*, 492-499.

Leary, M. R. (1999). Making sense of self-esteem. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 8*, 32-35.

Leary, M. R. (2002). When selves collide: The nature of the self and the dynamics of interpersonal relationships. In A. Tesser, D. Stapel, & J. Wood (Eds.), *Self and motivation: Emerging psychological perspectives* (pp. 119-145). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Leary, M. R., & Baumeister, R. F. (2000). The nature and function of self-esteem: Sociometer theory. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, 32*, 1-62.

Lease, S. H. (1998). Annual review, 1993-1997: Work attitudes and outcomes. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *53*, 154-183.

Lee, J. (2003). An analysis of the antecedents of organization-based self-esteem in two Korean banks. *International Journal of Human Resource Management, 14*, 1046-1066.

Lehman, W. E. K., & Simpson, D. D. (1992). Employee substance use and on-the-job behaviors. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 77*, 309-321.

LePine, J. A., Erez, A., & Johnson, D. E. (2002). The nature and dimensionality of organizational citizenship behavior: A critical review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 87*, 52-65.

Lind, E. A., & Tyler, T. R. (1988). *The social psychology of procedural justice.* New York, NY: Plenum.

Lord, R. G., & Brown, D. J. (2004). *Leadership processes and follower self-identity.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Luchak, A. A. (2003). What kind of voice do loyal employees use? *British Journal of Industrial Relations, 41*, 115-134.

Markus, H., & Wurf, E. (1987). The dynamic self-concept: A social psychological perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology, 38*, 299-337.

Mead, C. W. (1934). *Mind, self, and society.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Meyer, J. P., & Allen, N. J. (1991). A three-component conceptualization of organizational commitment. *Human Resource Management Review, 1*, 61-98.

Meyer, J. P., Allen, N. J., & Smith, C. A. (1993). Commitment to organizations and occupations: Extension and test of a three-component conceptualization. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 78*, 538-551.

Meyer, J. P., Stanley, D. J., Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, L. (2002). Affective, continuance, and normative commitment: A meta-analysis of antecedents, correlates, and consequences. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 61*, 20-52.

Moorman, R. H., & Podsakoff, P. M. (1992). A meta-analytic review and empirical test of the potential confounding effects of social desirability response sets in organizational-behavior research. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 65*, 131-149.

Mowday, R. T., Porter, L. W., & Steers, R. M. (1982). *Employee–organizational linkages: The psychology of commitment, absenteeism, and turnover.* New York, NY: Academic.

Murray, S. L., Griffin, D. W., Rose, P., & Bellavia, G. M. (2003). Calibrating the sociometer: The relational contingencies of self-esteem. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 85*, 63-84.

Naumann, S. E., & Bennett, N. (2000). A case for procedural justice climate: Development and test of a multilevel model. *Academy of Management Journal, 43*, 881-889.

Netermeyer, R. G., Johnston, M. W., & Burton, S. (1990). Analysis of role conflict and role ambiguity in a structural equations framework. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 75*, 148-157.

Neumann, R., & Strack, F. (2000). "Mood contagion": The automatic transfer of mood between persons. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *79*, 211-223.

Niehoff, B. P., & Moorman, R. H. (1993). Justice as a mediator of the relationship between methods of monitoring and organizational citizenship behavior. *Academy of Management Journal*, *36*, 527-556.

Norušis, M. J. (1997). *SPSS 7.5 guide to data analysis*. Upper Saddle, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Organ, D. W. (1990). The subtle significance of job satisfaction. *Clinical Laboratory Management Review*, *4*, 94-98.

Perlow, L., & Williams, S. (2003). Is silence killing your company? *Harvard Business Review*, *81*(3), 52-58.

Pierce, J. L., & Gardner, D. G. (2004). Self-esteem within the work and organizational context: A review of the organization-based self-esteem literature. *Journal of Management*, *30*, 591-622.

Pierce, J. L., Gardner, D. G., Cummings, L. L., & Dunham, R. B. (1989). Organization-based self-esteem: Construct definition, measurement, and validation. *Academy of Management Journal*, *32*, 622-648.

Ping, R. A., Jr. (2002). *Testing latent variable models with survey data* [on-line monograph]. Retrieved June 6, 2003, from http://www.wright.edu/~robert.ping/lv/v.doc

Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., & Hui, C. (1983). Organizational citizenship behaviors and managerial evaluations of employee performance: A review and suggestions for future research. *Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management*, *11*, 1-40.

Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Moorman, R. H., & Fetter, R. (1990). Transformational leader behaviors and their effects on followers' trust in leader, satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behaviors. *Leadership Quarterly*, *1*, 107-142.

Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Paine, J. B., & Bachrach, D. G. (2000). Organizational citizenship behaviors: A critical review of the theoretical and empirical literature and suggestions for future research. *Journal of Management*, *26*, 513-563.

Premeaux, S. F., & Bedeian, A. G. (2003). Breaking the silence: The moderating effects of self-monitoring in predicting speaking up in the workplace. *Journal of Management Studies*, *40*, 1537-1562.

Price, J. L., & Mueller, C. W. (1986). *Handbook of organizational measurement*. Marshfield, MA: Pitman.

Roethlisberger, F. J. (1941). *Management and morale*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Sachau, D. A., Houlihan, D., & Gilbertson, T. (1999). Predictors of employee resistance to supervisors' requests. *Journal of Social Psychology*, *139*, 611-621.

Scandura, T. A., & Graen, G. B. (1984). Moderating effects of initial leader–member exchange status on the effects of leadership intervention. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 69,* 428-436.

Schellhardt, T. D. (1996, October 16). How to handle those nightmare employees. *Wall Street Journal,* pp. B1, B10.

Schimel, J., Arndt, J., Pyszczynski, T., & Greenberg, J. (2001). Being accepted for who we are: Evidence that social validation of the intrinsic self reduces general defensiveness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 80,* 35-52.

Schneider, B. (1990). The climate for service: An application of the climate construct. In B. Schneider (Ed.), *Organizational climate and culture* (pp. 383-412). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Shrauger, J. S., & Schoeneman, T. J. (1979). Symbolic interactionist view of self-concept: Through the looking glass darkly. *Psychological Bulletin, 86,* 549-573.

Sias, P. M. (1996). Constructing perceptions of differential treatment: An analysis of coworker discourse. *Communication Monographs, 63,* 171-187.

Spector, P. E. (1997). *Job satisfaction: Application, cause, and consequences.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Steele, C. M. (1988). The psychology of self-affirmation: Sustaining the integrity of the self. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, 21,* 261-302.

Super, D. E. (1963). Toward making self-concept theory operational. In D. E. Super, R. Starishevsky, N. Natlin, & J. P. Jordaan (Eds.), *Career development: Self-concept theory* (pp. 17-32). New York, NY: College Entrance Examination Board.

Swann, W. B., Jr., Hixon, J. G., Stein-Seroussi, A., & Gilbert, D. (1990). The fleeting gleam of praise: Cognitive processes underlying behavioral reactions to self-relevant feedback. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 59,* 17-26.

Symister, P., & Friend, R. (2003). The influence of social support and problematic support on optimism and depression in chronic illness: A prospective study evaluating self-esteem as a mediator. *Health Psychology, 22,* 123-129.

Tafarodi, R. W., Marshall, T. C., & Milne, A. B. (2003). Self-esteem and memory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84,* 29-45.

Tharenou, P. (1979). Employee self-esteem: A review of the literature. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 15,* 1-29.

Viswesvaran, C., & Ones, D. Z. (2002). Examining the construct of organizational justice: A meta-analytic evaluation of relations with work attitudes and behaviors. *Journal of Business Ethics, 38,* 193-203.

Watson, D., & Slack, A. K. (1993). General factors of affective temperament and their relation to job satisfaction over time. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 54,* 181-202.

Watson, D., Suls, J., & Haig, J. (2002). Global self-esteem in relation to the structural models of personality and affectivity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 83*, 185-197.

Watson, D., & Tellegen, A. (1985). Toward a consensual structure of mood. *Psychological Bulletin, 98*, 219-235.

Yeung, K-T., & Martin, J. L. (2003). The looking glass self: An empirical test and elaboration. *Social Forces, 81*, 843-879.

Younts, C. W., & Mueller, C. W. (2001). Justice processes: Specifying the mediating role of perceptions of distributive justice. *American Sociological Review, 66*, 125-145.