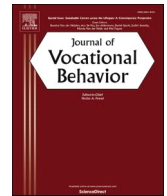




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Powerful, high-performing employees and psychological entitlement: The detrimental effects on citizenship behaviors

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ABSTRACT

We extend the performance literature by moving beyond a focus on antecedents of employees' job performance. Rather, we consider the effects of employees' high performance on their subsequent psychological states and behaviors. We adopt a social exchange approach to explain why powerful, high-performing employees may feel psychologically entitled (i.e., a belief that they are owed more than what is typical from the organization), which then prevents them from engaging in organizational citizenship behaviors (i.e., discretionary behaviors that contribute to the effective functioning of the organization). We first establish internal validity by testing our theoretical model using an experimental study design. We then establish external validity by testing our theoretical model using multi-source field data from university employees in the United States. Both studies provide support for our theoretical model in that psychological entitlement mediates the negative indirect relationship between employees' performance and OCB when employee power is higher versus lower. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

1. Introduction

Employees' high performance (i.e., those behaviors that result in the production of high-quality goods and services; [Rotundo & Sackett, 2002](#)) is extremely valuable to their organizations because it improves the organization's reputation ([Cravens & Oliver, 2006](#)), encourages repeat business from customers ([Maxham et al., 2008](#)), and enhances the organization's overall profitability ([Judge et al., 2001](#); [Koys, 2001](#)). Because high-performing employees bring considerable value to their organizations ([Becker & Huselid, 2006](#); [O'Boyle & Aguinis, 2012](#)), organizations tend to invest substantial resources into the recruitment, selection, and training of "top talent" ([Gardner, 2005](#)). Additionally, high-performing employees are often considered assets that need to be protected and further cultivated to avoid substantial losses that could come from their voluntary turnover (e.g., [Bedeian & Armenakis, 1998](#); [Trevor & Nyberg, 2008](#)).

Given the utility of high performers to the organization's bottom line ([Motowidlo, 2003](#)), scholars have focused on examining antecedents of high performance (e.g., [Judge et al., 2001](#); [Tett et al., 1991](#); [Vinchur et al., 1998](#)) to understand the factors that promote employees to perform at high levels. However, there may be value in examining consequences of employees' high performance,

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especially with respect to drawbacks. In this regard, Pfeffer (2016) lamented the trend of organizations to allow high performers to do whatever they want because of their abilities to generate high profits (see also Pfeffer, 2013, 2015). To this point, some scholars have begun to suggest that high performers are given more leeway in their misbehaviors because of the value they bring to their organizations (Quade et al., 2017; Quade et al., 2019). For example, Quade et al. (2017) found that unethical, high performers are less likely to be socially rejected by their peers because their unethical behavior is tolerated in light of the benefits of their high performance. Yet, in line with past research on the social drawbacks of high performance (e.g., Campbell et al., 2017; Jensen et al., 2014; Kim & Glomb, 2014), Quade et al.'s research used the perspective of coworkers and did not investigate how high performers react to their own performance. We suggest that to preserve the best that comes from high performance, organizations need to understand the conditions and processes that may propel a high performer to engage in less desirable behaviors (see Back & Vazire, 2015).

Building from this developing theme that high performers are afforded more protection than low performers (e.g., Pfeffer, 2016; Quade et al., 2017), we set out to investigate when and why high performers may view themselves as psychologically entitled (i.e., the belief that one is owed disproportionately higher benefits at work; Harvey & Martinko, 2009; Tomlinson, 2013), and how this affects their subsequent behaviors. We utilize social exchange theory to contend that powerful, high performers experience an imbalance in the exchange relationship they have with their employer, which is captured by feelings of psychological entitlement. Further, these feelings of psychological entitlement eventuate in decreased organizational citizenship behaviors (i.e., OCBs; discretionary behaviors that are not formally prescribed to employees but that help the organization; Organ, 1997). We suggest that power (i.e., an individual's asymmetric control over valuable resources; Smith & Galinsky, 2010) creates a positive relationship between employees' performance and psychological entitlement because high power allows high performers to control the extent to which they share their performance as a valuable commodity that is desired by others. Because those high in power can protect and regulate their high performance, we expect them to have strong feelings of psychological entitlement that prompt them to reduce their OCBs. Thus, our research demonstrates that under the condition of high power, high performing employees feel entitled to refrain from citizenship behaviors, which would normally provide significant benefits to the organization's overall social system (e.g., LePine et al., 2002). See Fig. 1 for our theoretical model.

Through our research, we intend to make several theoretical and practical contributions to the literature. First, we contribute to the literature by examining outcomes, rather than antecedents, of job performance. Although a wealth of research demonstrates antecedents of job performance (e.g., Hunter & Schmidt, 1983; Sturman, 2003), much less research examines how employees react to their own performance. In this respect, we provide a second contribution to the literature by utilizing social exchange theory to provide a theoretical explanation for when and why job performance leads to less OCB. Although previous research typically demonstrates a positive relationship between job performance and OCB (e.g., Cropanzano et al., 2003), we highlight power as a condition under which job performance is indirectly and negatively related to OCB via psychological entitlement. Third, we contribute to the literature by suggesting power as an important variable in the nomological network of psychological entitlement. Research on entitlement within an organizational context is growing, yet limited (Joplin et al., 2019). Thus, research on conditions that may exacerbate perceptions of psychological entitlement is incomplete. While many studies on entitlement typically examine either outcomes or external contextual factors that may affect entitlement perceptions, such as leadership styles (Joplin et al., 2019), socioeconomic status (Côté et al., 2021), or family upbringing (Martin et al., 2016), we highlight self-perceptions of one's power in the workplace as a key contextual variable that influences the relationship between their performance and subsequent perceptions of their own psychological entitlement. Finally, by examining the interactive effects of employees' job performance and power on their psychological entitlement and subsequent citizenship behaviors, we provide organizations with a better understanding of when and why high performing employees may not be motivated to engage in discretionary, valuable workplace behaviors.

2. Theoretical rationale and hypotheses

2.1. Social exchange theory and psychological entitlement

Social exchange theory (Homans, 1961) suggests employees and employers are engaged in interdependent exchange relationships (Moorman et al., 1998). The theory rests on the principle of reciprocity in which an exchange of resources between the two parties instills a sense of obligation that resources are to be reciprocated (Gouldner, 1960), such that if Party A provides a resource to Party B,

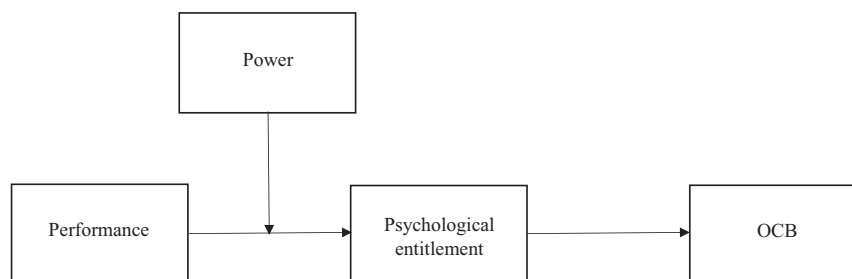


Fig. 1. Theoretical model.

Party B is expected to respond in kind. For example, an employee may provide commitment to their employer in exchange for organizational support (Eisenberger et al., 2001).

From a social exchange perspective (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), research suggests employees provide resources, such as effort or loyalty, to their organization with the expectation that financial and socioemotional benefits will be returned (Aselage & Eisenberger, 2003). Because the resources provided within the exchange relationship often do not have an exact price and are likely subjective in value, it may be difficult for a party to accurately quantify the resources that are exchanged (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Further, within the social exchange context, the “nature of the return cannot be bargained about but must be left to the discretion of the one who makes it” (Blau, 1964, p. 93). Thus, the value placed on resources is subjective and discretionary, and situations may arise where individuals believe their inputs to an exchange relationship outweigh the resources they receive in return.

Within the domain of social exchange theory, past research has suggested that psychological entitlement can be central to the social exchange process such that entitlement perceptions rest on the principle of reciprocity (Naumann et al., 2002) and develop when individuals believe they are more deserving of resources, relative to a given input level (Fisk, 2010). As such, psychological entitlement occurs when individuals believe they are owed disproportionate compensation, or benefits, as a result of their work behaviors (Harvey & Martinko, 2009; Naumann et al., 2002). However, due to the subjective, discretionary nature of the value placed on resources, perceptions of deserved compensation, or of what an employee is “owed,” may not be factually justifiable (Snow et al., 2001) and may be overinflated (Harvey & Martinko, 2009; Joplin et al., 2019). Therefore, psychological entitlement exists on a continuum such that some employees are balanced with respect to what they perceive they deserve from the organization (i.e., low in entitlement), whereas others believe they are owed substantially higher compensation or privileges from the organization than would be judged as reasonable by an external party (Joplin et al., 2019). Additionally, extant research suggests that psychological entitlement can exist as a state-like phenomenon (Yam et al., 2017; Zitek et al., 2010), whereby an employee's particular circumstances can propel them to adopt entitled states (e.g., Joplin et al., 2019), which in turn, can influence subsequent attitudes and behaviors. For example, entitled employees may perceive they are due undeserved resources from their organization (Fisk, 2010; Tomlinson, 2013), may exhibit less engagement in the workplace (Joplin et al., 2019), and may be less likely to believe the organization is appropriately reciprocating resources within the employee-employer relationship (Campbell et al., 2004). In addition, Harvey and Martinko (2009) showed that individuals experiencing high entitlement have attributional biases and tend to attribute positive outcomes to self-efforts, which likely inflates the value they place on the resources they provide to their employer.

2.2. The interactive effect of performance and power onto psychological entitlement

High performance serves as an important resource employees contribute to their organizations within the social exchange relationship (e.g., Cropanzano et al., 2003). Indeed, organizations expect employees to put forth effort toward work responsibilities (Ashforth et al., 2000), and employees perceive it is fair to receive rewards relative to their contributions (André & Baumard, 2011). From the employee's perspective, high performance requires tremendous focus, regularity, and perseverance (Blau, 1993; Gardner et al., 1989) as well as capabilities that may not be held by all employees (e.g., talent, tacit knowledge, novel skills) (Borman & Brush, 1993; Song et al., 2003). Additionally, to perform at high levels, employees often take on multiple tasks that allow them to satisfy a wide range of performance expectations (Katz & Kahn, 1978). In this respect, high performers do much more than simply meet production demands (Rotundo & Sackett, 2002). They also tend to be technically proficient (Borman & Brush, 1993), disciplined (Campbell, 1990), and effective communicators (Murphy, 1989). In sum, in comparison to average or low performers, high performers provide superior skills, capabilities, and production output to their organization, which makes them highly valued by their organization (Groysberg et al., 2008).

Prior research suggests that when people believe they have provided an essential good to another entity, they can exaggerate the significance of their contributions, making them feel entitled (Graffin et al., 2013; Harris & Schaubroeck, 1988). High performers obviously provide a fundamental good to their organization. Their skills, capabilities, and productivity help the organization survive and thrive (Becker & Huselid, 2006; O'Boyle & Aguinis, 2012). Furthermore, because high performers usually possess unique skills, they may overinflate the novelty of their contributions and therefore, feel superior (Sachdeva et al., 2009). They may believe they are in a different, more elite category than average performers.

At the same time, however, high performance is often expected of all employees and is usually considered a primary component of a favorable performance review (MacKenzie et al., 1993; Podsakoff et al., 2009; Rotundo & Sackett, 2002). In addition, given that meritocracy is typically accepted within organizations (Son Hing et al., 2011), high performance alone may not necessarily lead to perceptions of psychological entitlement. Consequently, we suggest that high power serves as a condition under which high-performing employees will feel psychological entitlement. In this respect, although high performers may feel superior to low or average performers, they may not necessarily feel that they are owed “more” by their organization (i.e., psychologically entitled), because they may not have enough organizational clout and control to readily view their performance as a highly valued commodity that is attributable to their own, and not others, skills and capabilities. Therefore, we suggest that high performers also need to have power to feel a sense of psychological entitlement.

Power can arise from an array of sources, such as information (Pfeffer, 1981), network position (Brass, 1984), charisma (House, 1977), or legitimate/positional power (French & Raven, 1968) and is defined as “...asymmetric control over valued resources in social relations” (Magee & Galinsky, 2008, p. 361). Regardless of the source of power, research has demonstrated that those with high power believe they have control over others' thoughts, feelings, behaviors, or outcomes (Fast & Chen, 2009; Galinsky et al., 2008). In addition, in comparison to those with low power, high power individuals often have greater access to and control over resources that are considered valuable to others (Keltner et al., 2003). They also tend to be overconfident in the accuracy of their beliefs (Fast et al.,

2012), have an increased propensity to discount others' advice (See et al., 2011), and have an awareness that they are unlikely to encounter resistance or social consequences from others when pursuing their own goals (Keltner et al., 2003). Thus, past research generally suggests that individuals with high power have control and influence over others as well as inflated self-views characterized by overconfidence.

We contend that when high performers are also in control of desired resources due to their high power, they may conclude that their influential position entitles them to even more in the social exchange relationship. Unlike high performers with low power, those with high power are astutely aware that their powerful position makes their high performance a unique commodity because they have control over the extent to which they withhold or share their talents. They believe they can decide how and when to use their performance as a resource that is needed by others (Lammers & Galinsky, 2009), including the organization. In this vein, more so than those low in power, powerful, high performers will be likely to feel as though their performance entitles them "to more than their share" (Sachdeva et al., 2009, p. 528) in return from their organization. In comparison, high performers with low power do not have the influence and control to dictate whether and when they can withhold or share their effort. Due to their low power, they may feel as though they have no choice but to continue to perform well, such that they are less likely to feel entitled to more from their organization.

Additionally, past research suggests that those with high power attribute their good fortune, such as high performance, to their own abilities more so than those low in power (e.g., Anderson et al., 2012; Fast et al., 2012). This can create a self-serving biasing effect such that high performers with high power attribute their successes to themselves, without adequately considering the role of others in those successes. In turn, powerful, high performers feel as though they are in an elite position of both talent and influence and thus are deserving of more than what is typical in a social exchange. In contrast, high performers with lower power are likely to remain more grounded in recognizing their own and other's contributions to their high performance, which may limit the extent to which they feel they are deserving of more in a social exchange. Taken together, we suggest that high power ultimately leads high performers to view their performance as a highly valued commodity that they can control (e.g., Keltner et al., 2003; Lammers & Galinsky, 2009) and is mostly attributable to their own, unique capabilities (e.g., Anderson et al., 2012; Fast et al., 2012), which leads them to believe they are entitled to more in their exchange with the organization than those low in power.

Hypothesis 1. The interaction of performance and power is positively related to psychological entitlement when power is higher versus lower such that the interactive effect of higher performance and higher power are associated with higher levels of psychological entitlement.

In line with social exchange theory, we also suggest the interactive effects of performance and power on psychological entitlement will eventuate in decreased OCBs. OCBs are not a formal aspect of an employee's job description (Organ, 1988), but they are highly valuable behaviors that contribute to the effective functioning of the organization (Lee & Allen, 2002). OCBs are both discretionary and prosocial in the sense that employees can decide whether to partake in these behaviors, which are mainly intended to benefit the organization and/or its citizens (Bolino & Grant, 2016). Examples include helping coworkers with their work, checking back with the office after normal work hours, and staying late at work when not required to do so (LePine et al., 2002). However, these behaviors can also result in personal drawbacks for employees. Although OCBs can enhance supervisors' perceptions of an employee's overall job performance (Rotundo & Sackett, 2002), they may be time consuming (Methot et al., 2017) and may utilize personal resources that are needed for task performance (Bergeron, 2007). Thus, employees may choose to withhold OCBs (Bergeron, 2007; Thau et al., 2004).

Consistent with research on withholding OCBs, we suggest powerful, high-performing employees will reduce their citizenship behaviors due to psychological entitlement. Those with high power are able to control their high performance as a valuable resource that others desire (Magee & Galinsky, 2008) and tend to view their high performance as mainly attributable to their own capabilities (e.g., Anderson et al., 2012; Fast et al., 2012). Thus, their unique position of having both high performance and high power will contribute to the belief that they are deserving of subsequent privileged benefits. This will materialize as psychological entitlement, which will prevent them from engaging in prosocial acts that benefit others and the organization (Moeller et al., 2009; Yam et al., 2017). From a social exchange perspective, in response to their feelings of entitlement (i.e., their beliefs that they are owed more from their organization), reducing engagement in OCBs may be a way of withholding effort to balance the score. Indeed, feeling that one is owed more in an exchange relationship can affect the extent to which a party reciprocates positive behaviors (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Yam et al., 2017). The high-performing, powerful employee's feelings of psychological entitlement suggest that the organization owes more in the exchange, which can limit the employees' desire to engage in "extra" behaviors (Gouldner, 1960). Thus, we predict:

Hypothesis 2. The interaction of performance and power has a negative indirect effect on organizational citizenship behavior through enhanced entitlement, when power is higher versus lower.

3. Overview of studies

We tested our hypotheses across two studies. First, we employed an experimental study to establish internal validity and to show that performance and power interact to predict levels of psychological entitlement that eventuates in reduced OCBs. Second, we conducted a field study using employ/ees from two universities located in the Southwest U.S. to test our full theoretical model, establish external validity, and complement the results found in Study 1. In addition, in Study 2, we measured, rather than manipulated, performance and power to provide a constructive replication of Study 1. We also used the Study 2 data to examine two alternative mechanisms by which high performance and power may affect OCBs to demonstrate incremental validity.

3.1. Study 1

3.1.1. Method

3.1.1.1. Sample and procedure. We recruited participants via Amazon Mechanical Turk (M-Turk) to participate in an experimental study in exchange for \$1.50. The study was completed by 220 individuals; however, we eliminated eight participants who failed an attention check question and 33 participants who did not complete an anagram task (e.g., did not provide any words), which was a key feature of our experiment. This number of omitted participants is consistent with findings from Aguinis et al. (2021) who suggest that approximately 15% of M-Turk participants fail attention checks and attrition rates can be over 30%. The final usable sample size was 179 (82 female participants, 97 male participants). The average age of the sample was 34.80 years ($SD = 10.17$). Participants identified as 78.7% White, 7.3% Hispanic, 6.7% African American, 3.4% Asian, 2.2% Other, and 1.7% Native American. To determine adequate sample size, we estimated a small-to-medium effect size ($f^2 = 0.08$) with three predictors and power at 0.80 suggesting a sample size of 141.

At the beginning of the study, participants were informed that the researchers were interested in how well they perform on tasks relative to the average person. For this purpose, participants were told they would complete five rounds of an anagram task and their work would be graded. Anagram tasks are a typical way of capturing performance effects in laboratory studies (Peterson et al., 2006; Shah et al., 1998). After reading the instructions for the anagram task (e.g., no proper nouns, can only use each letter once) and completing a practice round, participants completed five 45-s anagram rounds. Each anagram round contained seven unique letters and participants were instructed to form as many complete words as they could using only the seven letters provided. At the end of the fifth round, a screen appeared on the computer that told participants: "Please wait while the system calculates your score and compares it to other Mechanical Turk participants. This will only take 30-45 seconds." Thereafter, participants were randomly assigned to a performance condition, which represented our "performance" manipulation.

3.1.1.1.1. Performance manipulation. After being told that their score was being calculated and compared to other M-Turk participants, participants were randomly assigned to a "low" ($N = 91$) or "high" ($N = 88$) performance condition. The conditions read: "You scored in the 'low' ('high') task performance range compared to other Mechanical Turk participants. You are a low (high) performer on anagram task activities." In addition, a bar graph appeared below the message that showed the participant's anagram performance percentile compared to the fictitious "average participant." The average participant scored in the 50th percentile in each condition while the "low" performance condition showed the participant scored in the 20th percentile and the "high" performance condition showed the participant scored in the 80th percentile.

3.1.1.1.2. Power manipulation. After the performance condition on the anagram task, participants were randomly assigned to a "low" ($N = 92$) or a "high" ($N = 87$) power condition. Power was manipulated in accordance with past research (Galinsky et al., 2003). The low power condition asked participants to:

"Please recall a particular incident in which someone else had power over you. By power, we mean a situation in which someone had control over your ability to get something you wanted, or was in a position to evaluate you. Please describe this situation in which you did not have power—what happened, how you felt, etc. Please write at least three sentences."

The high power condition read:

"Please recall a particular incident in which you had power over another individual or individuals. By power, we mean a situation in which you controlled the ability of another person or persons to get something they wanted, or were in a position to evaluate those individuals. Please describe this situation in which you had power— what happened, how you felt, etc. Please write at least three sentences."

3.1.1.2. Measures

3.1.1.2.1. Manipulation checks. After completing the randomly assigned performance condition, we asked participants to indicate their agreement with four items on a 7-point Likert-type scale regarding their performance on the anagram task. The items included: "I had high performance on the task," "I had good performance completing this task," "My performance was high compared to other participants," and "I am a high performer on this type of task" ($\alpha = 0.97$). A one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed participants in the low performance condition ($M = 2.43$, $SD = 1.44$) identified their performance as being significantly lower than those in the high performance condition ($M = 5.80$, $SD = 0.93$), $F(1, 178) = 342.91$, $p < .05$, $d = -2.78$, thus demonstrating that our performance manipulation was effective.

After writing about their power experience, participants indicated their agreement with four items on a 7-point Likert scale regarding the situation they just described, which was used in past research (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006; Pitesa & Thau, 2013). A sample item is "I had a great deal of power" ($\alpha = 0.95$). In support of the effectiveness of our manipulation, a one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed that participants in the low power condition ($M = 2.81$, $SD = 1.48$) experienced lower power than those in the high power condition ($M = 5.82$, $SD = 0.87$), $F(1, 178) = 273.10$, $p < .05$, $d = -2.48$.

3.1.1.2.2. Psychological entitlement. After experiencing the manipulated conditions, participants were told the researchers were interested in their opinions and feelings *right now*. Participants completed a psychological entitlement scale with four items developed by Campbell et al. (2004) and used as a "state-like" mediator by Yam et al. (2017). A sample item is "I am entitled to more of everything" ($\alpha = 0.84$).

3.1.1.2.3. OCB. After completing the anagram tasks and survey measures, we presented participants with the stem: "We would like to improve the research experience of Mechanical Turk participants. If you are willing to participate in a 5-minute survey to provide feedback, please click 'yes' below." Participants could voluntarily choose whether to participate or not participate. Participants were presented

four open-ended prompts regarding participating in research on M-Turk (example answers provided in parentheses):

1. *Below, please write what you like the most about this research* (e.g., Formatted and functioned well. Long timer is helpful).
2. *Below, please write what you like least about this research* (e.g., Some of the questions seemed redundant).
3. *Below, please write what you like the most about being a Mechanical Turk participant* (e.g., I love being a Mechanical Turk participant because it's fun and interesting and it helps me pay my bills).
4. *Below, please write what you like least about being a Mechanical Turk participant* (e.g., Sometimes surveys are very long for not a lot of pay).

We counted the total number of words provided by participants as our measure of OCB. Participation in this question was a) voluntary and b) intended to benefit other, fellow M-Turk participants, which are two primary aspects of citizenship behaviors (LePine et al., 2002; Organ, 1997). A sum total of the words provided to the four prompts served as the score on this measure ($M = 25.99$, $SD = 41.65$). We used total word count for our measure of OCB as research on Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) suggests word count explains how engaged one is in conversation (Tausczik & Pennebaker, 2010). Moreover, the use of words has been shown to be a marker of individuals who are more involved in their interactions with others (Leshed et al., 2007). Thus, word count serves as a suitable way to gauge how engaged and involved one is in regards to actually helping fellow M-Turk participants as opposed to just indicating that they would help but not taking any action to actually help. A total of 92 participants agreed to provide feedback to the researchers regarding the improvement of the M-Turk experience; 87 chose not to participate in the extra survey. The 87 participants who chose not to participate received a score of "0" on the OCB measure as they did not write any words in response to the four prompts.

3.1.2. Results

The means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of the study variables are presented in Table 1. We tested the conditional indirect effect of performance and power on OCB through psychological entitlement using the SPSS macro created by Hayes (2012). The results are presented in Table 2. Hypothesis 1 predicted that power moderates the positive relationship between performance and psychological entitlement such that this relationship is positive when power is high rather than low. The results demonstrated support for Hypothesis 1 as the interaction of performance and power was positively and significantly related to psychological entitlement ($B = 0.93$, $p < .05$). To demonstrate further support for Hypothesis 1, we examined the interaction by testing the statistical significance of the four conditions. The results depicted in Table 3 show that the mean for the high performance/high power condition was statistically and significantly different from the low performance/high power condition ($p = .039$). Thus, as shown in Fig. 2, when moving from low to high performance, under the condition of high power, there was a positive change in psychological entitlement. Thus, we found support for Hypothesis 1.

To test Hypothesis 2, we examined the conditional indirect effect of performance and power on OCB through psychological entitlement in the low power condition and the high power condition. As presented in Table 2, the conditional indirect effect in the high power condition was negative (-2.34) and the lower and upper 95% confidence intervals did not contain zero (95% CI: -8.24 , -0.04). Further, the index of moderated mediation shows bootstrap confidence intervals that do not contain zero (-11.87 , -0.13). Thus, these results indicate support for Hypothesis 2 in that psychological entitlement mediates the conditional indirect effect of performance and power on OCB at higher (versus lower) levels of power.

3.2. Study 2

3.2.1. Method

3.2.1.1. Sample and procedure. We collected data from employees of two universities located in the southwestern United States. Both universities provided an organizational chart, which allowed us to see each employee and the supervisor to whom they formally reported. To minimize concerns regarding common method bias (e.g., Podsakoff et al., 2003), we obtained responses from two different sources: the focal employee and the focal employee's supervisor. An Internet link was emailed to employees of the universities. To ensure anonymity of all participants, the email provided each employee with a unique ID number to report in the survey before responding to the survey items. The supervisor of the focal employee was given the same ID number to use when responding to questions regarding the focal employee. The ID numbers were used to match the focal employee responses with the supervisor

Table 1
Study 1 means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations among the variables.

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3
1. Performance	–	–			
2. Power	–	–	0.14*		
3. Psychological entitlement	3.40	1.41	0.06	0.04	
4. OCB	25.99	41.65	0.01	0.06	-0.13*

Note. $N = 179$.

* Correlation is statistically significant at $p < .10$ level (2-tailed).

Table 2
Study 1 regression results for overall model.

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>R</i> ²
Mediator variable model: entitlement				
Constant	3.48	0.19	18.07***	0.03
Performance	-0.30	0.30	-1.03	
Power	-0.37	0.30	-1.25	
Performance X Power	0.93	0.42	2.20**	
Dependent variable model: OCB				
Constant	37.95	81.54	4.44***	0.02
Entitlement	-3.71	2.21	-1.68*	
Performance	1.38	6.22	0.22	5.86
Values of power	Boot indirect effect	Boot SE	Boot LCI	
Conditional indirect effects				
Low power	1.13	1.42	-0.51	
High power	-2.34	1.91	-8.24	-0.04
Index of moderated mediation				
Mediator	Index	Boot SE	Boot LCI	Boot UCI
Entitlement	-3.46	2.70	-11.87	-0.13

Note. *N* = 179. Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported. Bootstrap sample size = 5000. 95% confidence levels for confidence intervals.
 * Correlation is statistically significant at *p* < .10 level (2-tailed).
 ** Correlation is statistically significant at *p* < .05 level (2-tailed).
 *** Correlation is statistically significant at *p* < .01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3
Study 1 comparisons among groups accompanying analysis of variance.

Condition	Comparison condition	Mean difference	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i> -Value significance
High performance, high power	Low performance, high power	0.629	0.303	0.039
	Low performance, low power	0.258	0.278	0.353
	High performance, low power	0.562	0.301	0.063

Note. *N* = 179.

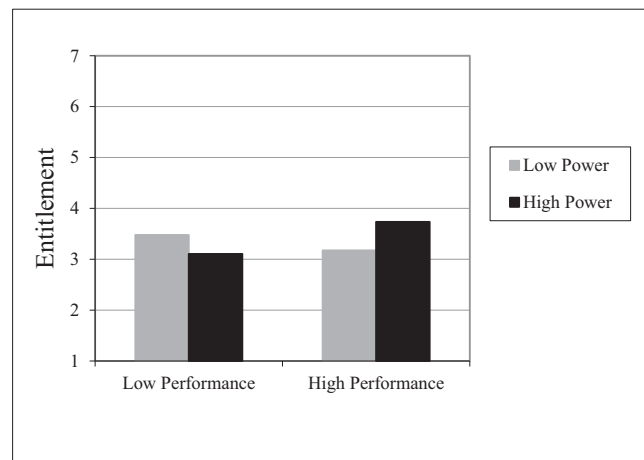


Fig. 2. Study 1 interaction of performance and power on entitlement.

responses. We invited 464 focal employees and 42 supervisors to participate in the study. We received responses from 219 focal employees and 29 supervisors. After matching data across the two sources, we had usable data from 157 focal employees and 29 supervisors for an overall response rate of 34%. To determine adequate sample size, we estimated a small-to-medium effect size (*f*² = 0.08) with three predictors and power at 0.80 suggesting a sample size of 141. The focal employee survey contained measures of their own performance, power, psychological entitlement, and demographic information. The supervisor survey contained measures of the employees' OCBs and the supervisors' demographic information.

Focal employee respondents were 60.5% female and 37.6% male, and 1.9% did not report their sex. Focal employees were

employed in academic departments such as Arts and Humanities, Criminal Justice, and Social Sciences, as well as university staff departments such as Human Resources, Library Services, and Student Housing. The average age of the focal employees was 48.06 years ($SD = 11.15$). Focal employees were 71.9% Caucasian, 16.6% Hispanic, 3.2% African American, 2.5% Other, 1.9% Native American, 1.3% Asian, 1.3% Biracial, and 1.3% did not report their racial/ethnic background. Ninety-three percent of the focal employees indicated they worked full-time while 5.7% of the focal employees indicated they worked part-time (1.3% did not report). The focal employees' average tenure with the organization was 8.44 years ($SD = 7.10$).

Supervisor respondents were 69% male and 31% female. The average age of the supervisors was 53.32 years ($SD = 11.15$). Supervisors were 82.9% Caucasian, 6.9% Hispanic, 3.4% African American, 3.4% Native American, and 3.4% Other. Twenty-eight (96.6%) of the supervisors indicated they worked full-time while one supervisor (3.4%) indicated part-time status. The supervisors' average tenure with the organization was 10.63 years ($SD = 8.35$).

3.2.1.2. Measures. All items were measured using a seven-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*).

3.2.1.2.1. Performance. Performance was assessed by focal employees with six items developed by Williams and Anderson (1991), but only four items were retained. Results of a CFA revealed that reverse-coded items may have been creating method effects (see DiStefano & Motl, 2006) and thus were not included in our analyses. This decision aligns with past research that has also dropped reverse-coded items from this measure of performance (e.g., Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006). A sample item is "I adequately complete assigned duties" ($\alpha = 0.90$).

3.2.1.2.2. Power. Power was assessed by the focal employee with four of the eight items developed by Anderson and Galinsky (2006) to measure one's subjective evaluation of power. Like performance, four reverse-coded items demonstrated potential method effects and thus were removed from our analyses. A sample item is "I can get others to do what I want" ($\alpha = 0.70$).

3.2.1.2.3. Psychological entitlement. Psychological entitlement was measured by the focal employee with the same four item scale used in Study 1 (Campbell et al., 2004) ($\alpha = 0.70$).

3.2.1.2.4. OCB. The focal employees' OCB was assessed by the supervisors with four items developed by Bolino and Turnley (2005). The supervisors indicated their agreement that the employee exhibits the behaviors. A sample item is "Stays at work after normal business hours" ($\alpha = 0.87$).

3.2.1.3. Alternative mediators. Because other mechanisms, beyond psychological entitlement, could potentially explain our theoretical model, we empirically examined self-assertive efficacy and pride as alternative mediators that could theoretically explain the conditional indirect effect of performance and power onto OCBs.

3.2.1.3.1. Self-assertive efficacy. Self-assertive efficacy is one of nine self-efficacy domains conceptualized by Bandura (1990). It reflects one's perceived competence in expressing their opinions and voicing ideas to others. Power has been shown to deter felt pressure to conform to others (Lammers et al., 2015) and increase willingness to express opinions in group settings (Anderson & Berdahl, 2002). Moreover, performance has been shown to predict self-efficacy (Sitzmann & Yeo, 2013). Thus, we suggest that high performers are likely to experience higher levels of self-assertive efficacy such that they feel comfortable and competent in "going against the grain," speaking their mind, and expressing their views to others. In this regard, we suggest that the increase in self-assertive efficacy will eventuate in less OCBs because these employees will feel more comfortable and confident in saying "no" to extra-role tasks. We measured self-assertive efficacy with five items developed by Bandura (1990). Participants responded to the items on a seven-point Likert-type scale (1 = *not well at all*, 7 = *very well*). An example item is "How well can you effectively participate in group discussions?" ($\alpha = 0.87$).

3.2.1.3.2. Pride. Pride is a self-appraisal "that one is responsible for a socially valued outcome or for being a socially valued person" (Mascolo & Fischer, 1995 p. 66). Pride is evoked by self-reflection and self-evaluation such that when individuals perceive they engaged in valued behavior, pride is likely to ensue (Tangney et al., 2007). Thus, individuals who perceive high levels of performance and view themselves as being powerful and influential, both generally positive experiences in the workplace, are likely to experience a sense of pride. In turn, individuals' feelings of pride can propel less OCB because they do not feel the need to engage in altruistic behaviors to reinforce their social value. Rather, their social value likely comes from their high performance and power. Indeed, pride facilitates maintenance of social hierarchies, rank, and positions (Oveis et al., 2010). Pride is associated with increased access to resources (Shiota et al., 2006) and has been described as a "socially disengaged" emotion, elevating the self over others (Kitayama et al., 1995). Thus, individuals who experience pride resulting from high performance and power should feel their status and elevated self precludes them from engaging in behaviors that benefit others. We measured pride using seven items from a scale developed by Tracy and Robins (2007). Participants responded to the items on a seven-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). An example item is "I feel accomplished" ($\alpha = 0.92$).

3.2.2. Control variables

We controlled for the individual supervisors who provided ratings of the employees' OCBs. We assigned a unique "Supervisor ID" number to each supervisor to account for any fixed effects stemming from the individual supervisor that could influence their reporting of OCBs across multiple employees. Given the smaller number of supervisors, past research has found that this is an effective way to account for potential variations in reporting that could be attributed to fixed effects rather than the actor performing the behaviors (e.g., Greenbaum et al., 2015; Odle-Dusseau et al., 2016). Because small sample sizes are insufficient for testing multi-level modeling to account for nested effects (e.g., Maas & Hox, 2005) and our theory does not make predictions regarding supervisor-level effects, we controlled for potential individual supervisor effects.

We also controlled for the potential of *social desirability* bias in responses regarding employees' perceptions of their psychological entitlement, self-assertive efficacy, and pride. We removed reverse-coded items that demonstrated potential method effects. The focal employees responded to 5 items developed by [Strahan and Gerbasi \(1972\)](#). A sample item from the scale is "I always practice what I preach" ($\alpha = 0.71$).

Because our dependent variable is prosocial in nature (i.e., OCB), we also controlled for participants' *prosocial identity* (i.e., the degree to which participants view helping others as part of their self-concept; [Grant et al., 2009](#)). The focal employees responded to a three-item measure developed by [Grant et al. \(2008\)](#). A sample item from the scale is "I see myself as caring." ($\alpha = 0.86$).

3.2.3. Measurement model

To examine the factor structure of the variables, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis using maximum-likelihood estimation in Mplus ([Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2015](#)). The measurement model consisted of eight factors: performance, power, psychological entitlement, OCB, self-assertive efficacy, pride, social desirability, and prosocial identity. To maintain an adequate indicator-to-sample size ratio, we created three empirically equivalent parcels for pride (e.g., [Bagozzi & Edwards, 1998](#); [Little et al., 2013](#)). The results of the eight-factor model provided an adequate fit to the data ($\chi^2 = 660.23$, $df = 436$, RMSEA = 0.057, CFI = 0.904, SRMR = 0.064). The eight-factor model exhibited better fit indices than an alternative seven-factor model that allowed psychological entitlement and pride to load onto the same factor (i.e., 7-factor A), an alternative seven-factor model (i.e., 7-factor B) that allowed OCB and prosocial identity to load onto the same factor, an alternative seven-factor model (i.e., 7-factor C) that allowed psychological entitlement items and self-assertive efficacy items to load onto the same factor. Please see [Table 4](#).

3.2.4. Results

The means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of the variables of interest are presented in [Table 5](#). [Fig. 4](#) provides a depiction of the empirical model. We tested the full moderated-mediation model using path analysis via Mplus 7.4 ([Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2015](#)). Consistent with current practices in mediation analyses ([Hayes, 2009](#); [Shrout & Bolger, 2002](#)), we estimated the conditional indirect effect of performance and power on OCB through the mediating effect of psychological entitlement, the mediating effect of self-assertive efficacy, and the mediating effect of pride. We produced point estimates of the conditional indirect effects and the 95% bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals using a bootstrapping method of 5000 bootstrapped samples ([Preacher & Hayes, 2004](#); [Williams & MacKinnon, 2008](#)). We regressed the dependent variable, OCB, on performance, psychological entitlement, self-assertive efficacy, pride, supervisor ID, and prosocial identity. The mediators, psychological entitlement, self-assertive efficacy, and pride, were regressed on performance, power, the interaction of performance and power, and social desirability. We mean-centered the product term of performance and power. The results for the overall model and all hypotheses are presented in [Table 6](#).

[Hypothesis 1](#) predicted power moderates the relationship between performance and psychological entitlement such that this relationship is positive when power is higher rather than lower. The results showed support for [Hypothesis 1](#) as the interaction of performance and power was positively and significantly related to psychological entitlement ($B = 0.64$, $p < .01$). To demonstrate further support for [Hypothesis 1](#), we conducted simple slopes analysis and presented the interaction plot in [Fig. 3](#). The interaction was plotted at low levels of employee power (i.e., one standard deviation below the mean) and high levels of employee power (i.e., one standard deviation above the mean). The simple slopes test of performance onto psychological entitlement with higher power was positive and statistically significant ($t = 2.38$, $p < .05$). However, the simple slopes test of performance onto entitlement with lower power was not statistically significant ($t = -1.65$, $p = ns$).

To test [Hypothesis 2](#), we examined the conditional indirect effect of the interaction of performance and power on OCB through psychological entitlement at varying levels of power (i.e., values at one standard deviation below the mean, the mean, and one standard deviation above the mean). As presented in [Table 6](#), the conditional indirect effect for the moderator value at 1 SD above the mean was negative (-0.15) and the lower and upper 95% confidence intervals did not contain zero (95% CI: -0.39 , -0.02). Thus, these results indicate support for [Hypothesis 2](#) in that psychological entitlement mediates the conditional indirect effect of performance and power on OCB at higher levels of power. Surprisingly, we should note the conditional indirect effect for the moderator value at 1 SD below the mean was positive (0.12) and the lower and upper 95% confidence intervals did not contain zero (95% CI: 0.01, 0.35). Although the simple slopes test of performance onto entitlement with lower power was not statistically significant ($t = -1.65$, $p = ns$), we believe this is an interesting finding. We elaborate on this notion further in the future directions section of the manuscript.

[Table 6](#) also presents results from the alternative explanatory variables: self-assertive efficacy and pride. The results showed a non-statistically significant interaction for performance and power onto self-assertive efficacy ($B = 0.28$, $p = ns$) and onto pride ($B = 0.19$, $p = ns$).

Table 4

Study 2 results of confirmatory factor analyses of the measurement model and alternative models.

Model	χ^2	df	RMSEA	CFI	SRMR
8-factor	660.23*	436	0.057	0.904	0.064
7-factor A	979.95*	443	0.088	0.770	0.113
7-factor B	918.99*	443	0.083	0.796	0.094
7-factor C	1087.06*	443	0.096	0.724	0.123

Note. RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation. CFI = Comparative Fit Index. SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual. 7-factor A is alternative model A. 7-factor B is alternative model B. 7-factor C is alternative model C.

* $p < .05$.

Table 5
Study 2 means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations among the variables.

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Performance	6.71	0.42								
2. Power	4.82	0.95*	0.02							
3. Entitlement	2.98	1.09	0.03	0.02						
4. Self-assertive efficacy	5.55	1.06	0.05	0.38***	0.00					
5. Pride	5.85	0.79	0.18**	0.44***	-0.02	0.40***				
6. OCB	4.99	1.41	0.00	0.32***	-0.17**	0.02	0.07			
7. Supervisor ID	-	-	0.02	-0.04	-0.01	0.05	-0.05	0.09		
8. Prosocial Identity	6.28	0.68	0.20**	0.09	-0.03	0.13	0.34***	-0.10	-0.08	
9. Social Desirability	5.38	0.86	0.21**	-0.02	-0.08	0.10	0.11	-0.02	0.04	0.18**

Note. N = 157.

* Correlation is statistically significant at $p < .10$ level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is statistically significant at $p < .05$ level (2-tailed).

*** Correlation is statistically significant at $p < .01$ level (2-tailed).

Table 6
Study 2 regression results for overall model.

Mediator variable:	Entitlement B	Entitlement SE	Self-assertive Efficacy B	Self-assertive Efficacy SE	Pride B	Pride SE
Constant	3.44***	0.61	4.85***	0.43	5.38***	0.40
Performance	0.06	0.20	0.03	0.16	0.27*	0.15
Power	0.01	0.09	0.42***	0.07	0.36***	0.06
Performance X Power	0.64***	0.19	0.28*	0.17	0.19	0.15
Social Desirability	-0.09	0.11	0.13	0.08	0.09	0.07
Dependent variable: OCB	B	SE				
Constant	1.86	0.19				
Performance	0.03	0.30				
Entitlement	-0.23**	0.10				
Self-assertive Efficacy	-0.03	0.12				
Pride	0.23	0.17				
Supervisor ID	0.01	0.01				
Prosocial Identity	-0.29*	0.16				

Conditional indirect effects	Entitlement boot indirect effect	Entitlement boot LCI, boot UCI	Self-assertive efficacy boot indirect effect	Self-assertive efficacy boot LCI, boot UCI	Pride boot indirect effect	Pride boot LCI, boot UCI
-1 SD (-0.95)	0.12	0.01, 0.35	0.05	-0.05, 0.23	-0.02	-0.19, 0.06
M (0.00)	-0.01	-0.14, 0.07	-0.01	-0.10, 0.07	-0.06	-0.19, 0.00
+1 SD (0.95)	-0.15	-0.39, -0.02	-0.07	-0.23, 0.01	-0.10	-0.27, -0.01

Note. N = 157. Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported.

Bootstrap sample size = 5000. 95% confidence levels for bias-corrected confidence intervals.

* Correlation is statistically significant at $p < .10$ level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is statistically significant at $p < .05$ level (2-tailed).

*** Correlation is statistically significant at $p < .01$ level (2-tailed).

= ns). Based on these results, we conclude that neither self-assertive efficacy nor pride serves as an alternative explanation for our theoretical model. The results of our model also hold without the alternative mediators and control variables.

4. General discussion

Across an experimental study and a field study, we found that job performance and power interact to predict levels of OCB through the mediating mechanism of psychological entitlement. More specifically, consistent with social exchange theory (Gouldner, 1960; Homans, 1961), our findings suggest that powerful, high performers perceive psychological entitlement, which in turn, paves the way for reductions in OCB. Our findings are robust in that Study 1 used an experimental study design to manipulate our independent variables of interest to show causation, and Study 2 utilized a sample of working adults to test our full theoretical model, replicate our Study 1 findings, and increase external validity. By both manipulating and measuring our independent variables, we confirm the interactive effect of job performance and power on psychological entitlement, which then eventuates in decreased OCB.

4.1. Theoretical implications

We contribute to the nascent body of research examining outcomes, rather than antecedents, of job performance. Although an

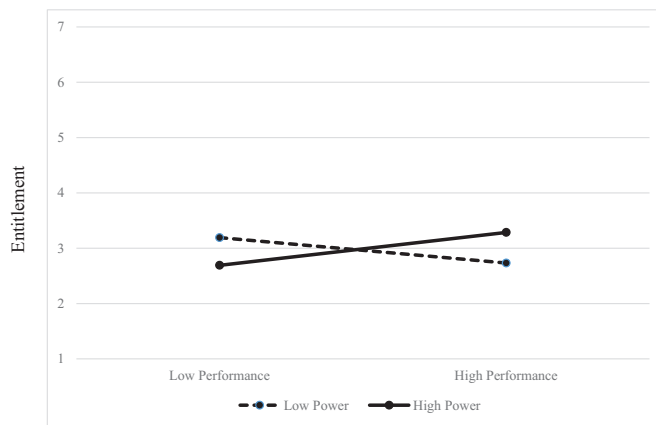


Fig. 3. Study 2 interaction of performance and power on psychological entitlement.

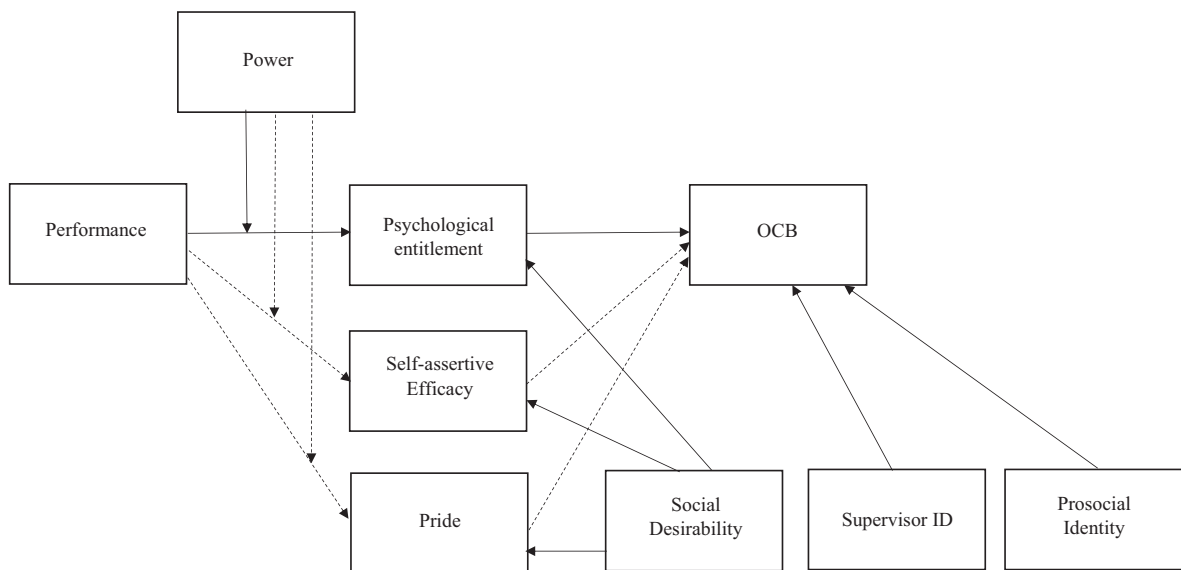


Fig. 4. Empirical model.

Note. Solid lines represent hypothesized relationships. Lines in dashes represent alternative mediators that were not formally hypothesized but tested in Study 2.

important criterion variable, less research investigates the importance of job performance in predicting workplace attitudes and behaviors. In addition, the few studies that have investigated the drawbacks of employees' high performance have done so from the coworkers' perspective (e.g., Campbell et al., 2017; Jensen et al., 2014; Kim & Glomb, 2014; Quade et al., 2017, 2019). However, the limited research on outcomes of high performance does suggest there is value in understanding how employees react to their own performance. As an example, Sitzmann and Yeo (2013) demonstrated job performance serves as a better predictor, rather than outcome, of self-efficacy as past job performance provides information that allows one to evaluate the chances of success in the future. In the present study, we add to research on the effects of high performance by examining an instance in which high job performance can lead to less engagement in OCBs. Identifying that the interactive effect of high job performance and high power leads to psychological entitlement is important because psychological entitlement may lead to reductions in favorable workplace behaviors (Joplin et al., 2019; Wheeler et al., 2013). Although research typically, and understandably, conceptualizes high job performance as desirable (e.g., Pfeffer, 1994), our study is one of the few to demonstrate a drawback to high-performing employees from their own psychological perspective. Thus, we contribute to a developing body of research that acknowledges potential negative implications to high-performing employees (e.g., Groysberg et al., 2008) by specifically investigating when and why employees react to their own performance with increases in their entitlement and subsequent decreases in their citizenship behaviors.

Second, we showed that power is an important contextual variable within the nomological network of psychological entitlement. In the present study, we demonstrated why employees may become entitled. We showed that individual performance and power together

can elicit a sense of entitlement within the individual. Drawing from social exchange theory, we showed that power affects the relationship between high performance and psychological entitlement, likely for two reasons. First, power gives high performers the ability to control the extent to which they share their performance as a valuable commodity. Second, high performers with high power are more likely to attribute their high performance to their own ability in comparison to high performers with low power. Thus, power plays a key role in the formation of individual psychological entitlement perceptions.

In addition, our research contributes more broadly to the literature on entitlement. Although psychological entitlement is a prevalent topic in the popular press (i.e., Stein, 2013), Joplin et al. (2019, p.1) note “management research on employee entitlement remains limited.” Thus, many notions regarding psychological entitlement are speculative rather than theoretically explained and empirically tested. We showed entitled individuals are more likely to refrain from OCBs that help colleagues and promote organizational functioning. These findings are important as it explains why, under certain conditions, employees may become entitled and refuse to “go the extra mile” in the form of OCBs at work. Thus, we believe the present study sheds further light on the important antecedents and consequences of psychological entitlement in the workplace.

4.2. Practical implications

Popular press articles suggest employee entitlement is increasingly prevalent (e.g., Eberstadt, 2012). Further, research highlights negative behaviors associated with entitlement such as deviance (Yam et al., 2017) or coworker abuse (Harvey & Harris, 2010). However, our research suggested that entitlement can also lead to the omission of positive behaviors in the form of decreased OCBs. Thus, managers need to be aware of the variety of ways in which employees may respond to, or manifest, their feelings of psychological entitlement. Refraining from engaging in helping behaviors and the overall promotion of organizational welfare may be a sign that an employee feels a sense of entitlement, which could have overall negative consequences for the organization.

Our research may also apprise organizations of a potential double-edged sword to high performers. Although organizations invest heavily in the recruitment and retention of high performing individuals (Gardner, 2005) and high performers are obviously valuable to the organization (Judge et al., 2001), the present research suggests that those very individuals, when they are also powerful, may be the ones who refrain from “going the extra mile” by helping at work, because they feel entitled. This may prove problematic for organizations as powerful, high performers may be inclined to expect rewards that do not correspond to the organization's views of what is deserved. They may feel entitled to more than their fair share (Sachdeva et al., 2009) and may subsequently reduce their OCBs. Thus, the self-perception of high performance and high power may elicit entitlement within employees, which tends to result in the prioritization of the self over the good of others (Harvey & Martinko, 2009; Hays & Blader, 2017).

4.3. Limitations and future directions

Although the present research contained a number of strengths, our research is not without limitations. One potential limitation may be the use of an experimental design in Study 1. Experimental designs may evoke the perception that the findings have low external validity and generalizability. However, we believe replicating results from an experimental study with a survey study using working adults adds robustness to our findings and helps compensate for the shortcomings related to each methodology (Dipboye, 1990). Nevertheless, future research may benefit from additional experimental studies that manipulate performance and power in different ways or uses field experiments.

Another limitation of our study may be our use of self-report measures in Study 2. Further, with Study 2, we did not temporally separate measures of independent variables, mediators, and control variables which may further mitigate concerns of common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Our decision to use self-report measures of performance, power, and entitlement was predicated on our theoretical arguments, which implied self-assessments of our core study variables (e.g., Spector, 2006). In addition, same-source bias is less of a concern when examining interactions (Evans, 1985). Nevertheless, future research may benefit from examining our model using objective measures, particularly of performance. For example, it would be interesting to see if objective measures of job performance (e.g., sales volume) also prompt feelings of entitlement under conditions of high power. Moreover, objective measures of job performance could be compared to self-assessments of performance to obtain information regarding the “justification” or “accuracy” of one's sense of entitlement. These insights may shed further light on the employee's proclivity to engage in OCBs.

A final limitation of our study may be the use of the entitlement scale (Campbell et al., 2004). Entitlement was originally conceptualized as a trait-like construct. Thus, our positioning of psychological entitlement as a state-like mediator could be of concern. However, we followed extant research that has used the Campbell et al. (2004) scale as a state-like measure (e.g., Yam et al., 2017; Zitek et al., 2010). Additionally, the nature of our experimental design in Study 1 demonstrated that psychological entitlement can, indeed, be activated. Based on random assignment, participants in varying conditions provoked different levels of entitlement. This demonstrates that rather than acting as an individual difference, one's particular circumstances (via the manipulations) can activate state psychological entitlement. Additionally, in Study 1, the stem of the entitlement scale asked participants to respond to the statements based on how they are feeling right now. However, we did not ask participants in Study 2 to respond based on their feelings “right now.” Thus, future research may wish to examine our model using measures of entitlement in a field study that are more state-like in nature.

Despite these limitations, we believe the present study can spur future research. First, our study did not show a main effect for performance onto psychological entitlement. The absence of a main effect may imply there are other moderators, besides power, that can elicit perceptions of psychological entitlement. For example, an anonymous reviewer noted that high achievement orientation may strengthen the extent to which high performance leads one to feel as though they have already contributed their fair share to the

organization (i.e., entitlement) and do not need to engage in OCBs. In addition, variables such as total compensation received, social comparisons, or job satisfaction may alter the extent to which performance can prompt a sense of entitlement. Future research should consider additional boundary conditions that drive the social exchange process between job performance and entitlement.

Next, Study 2 showed the simple slopes test of performance onto entitlement with low power was not statistically significant ($t = -1.65, p = ns$). However, the conditional indirect effect of performance and power onto OCBs through entitlement was positive and significant when power was low ($B = 0.12, 95\% \text{ CI} = 0.01, 0.35$). This begs the question as to the role of low power in lowering psychological entitlement perceptions associated with high performance, and subsequently increasing engagement in OCBs. High performers with low power may feel as though there is little they can do to influence their work outcomes (i.e., making them less entitled to feel as though they deserve “more” from the exchange). Because OCBs have been conceptualized as contextual performance (Werner, 2000), it could be that high performers with low power continue to engage in OCBs simply as a way to further their high levels of performance in the workplace.

Moreover, low performance and low power exhibited the second-highest levels of psychological entitlement in both studies. Some research indicates that feeling wronged leads to entitlement (Zitek et al., 2010). Low performers who cannot extract resources (i.e., low power) may perceive high entitlement because they are more likely to feel wronged. This is similar to a “victim” mentality in that those who have suffered misfortune or negative experiences exhibit entitlement later in life (e.g., Bishop & Lane, 2000; Fetchenhauer & Huang, 2004). If low performance and low power lead one to feel entitled, it could be that refraining from OCBs serves as a means for the individual to make amends for the perceived wrongdoing they suffered. Additionally, an external locus of control has been shown to be positively associated with entitlement perceptions (Carnes & Knotts, 2018). It could be that low performers with low power view themselves as being unable to get out of the situation in which they find themselves because low power indicates they have a low amount of influence and no control over asymmetrical resources. In this regard, one may feel like a victim of one's own situation and/or adopt an external locus of control; both of which should prompt feelings of psychological entitlement. We should note that our suggestions regarding low power are speculative and future research should confirm or refute our speculations.

Lastly, future research may wish to investigate other ways in which employees may choose to behave when feeling entitled, beyond reducing engagement in OCBs. Although Yam et al. (2017) showed deviance can result from entitlement perceptions, our research indicates other, subtler, and perhaps more commonplace, socially-acceptable forms of exercising one's entitlement. Indeed, reducing engagement in OCBs may be “safe” for employees as this tactic does not create immediate harm to others (Jones, 1991). Additionally, engaging in low-grade, unethical actions, such as expedient behaviors at work (e.g., cutting corners to finish assignments, falsifying expense reports to a minor extent; Greenbaum et al., 2018) may be another avenue whereby employees “cash-in” their entitlement. Future research may benefit from further exploring the many possible workplace outcomes of entitlement.

5. Conclusion

With our research, we contributed to a very recently emerging stream of research on the potential drawbacks of one's own high performance. We also contributed to a growing topic in both research and the popular press, namely employee psychological entitlement. We demonstrated how high performance and power work together to elicit a sense of entitlement. Subsequently, entitled employees feel compelled to refrain from engaging in behaviors that help coworkers and promote the overall good of the organization. We believe our study highlights the importance of examining how employees react to perceptions of their own high performance, and we hope future research will continue to investigate this line of inquiry.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Brian D. Webster: writing – original, review, and editing, formal analysis, project administration **Rebecca L. Greenbaum:** conceptualization, writing – original, review, and editing, supervision **Mary B. Mawritz:** writing – original, review, and editing **Robert J. Reid:** conceptualization, data curation.

Declaration of competing interest

There are no conflicts of interests or disclosures in regards to this study. The present study was conducted under the approval and regulations of the Institutional Review Board.

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