

The Pennsylvania State University

The Graduate School

College of the Liberal Arts

**APPRAISING ORGANIZATIONAL SCANDAL AS THREAT OR
OPPORTUNITY: SELF-CONCEPT AND STRAIN OF FRONTLINE
EMPLOYEES**

A Thesis in

Psychology

by

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Science

December 2013

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ABSTRACT

Organizational scandals are unique workplace stressors in that they are more acute, atypical, and public than common workplace stressors, such as heavy workload or role ambiguity. While organizational scandals are often related to negative consequences for employees and the overall organization, it is likely that individual appraisals of a scandal will be especially influential on strain outcomes. Using a sample of 165 university fundraisers, the present study examines the relationship between scandal appraisals (job threat and opportunity) and strain (burnout and turnover intention) following the Penn State sex abuse scandal of November 2011. In addition to basic appraisal ideas that threat appraisals and opportunity appraisals are related to different levels of strain, I draw on identity theory and the conservation of resources (COR) model to examine how two aspects of self-concept serve as potential moderators of these relationships: core self-evaluations (CSE), which were found to play a limited role in the scandal appraisal–strain relationship by enhancing the effect of opportunity appraisals on burnout, and organizational identification, which did not moderate any of the relationships. Additional exploratory analyses revealed that although employees could appraise the scandal as both a threat and an opportunity, such dual appraisals did not have a unique effect on strain above and beyond any direct effects. Implications of these findings and avenues for future research are discussed.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge my advisor, Alicia Grandey, as without her guidance, encouragement, and patience throughout constant revisions this thesis would not have been possible. I am also grateful for the feedback and insights of my committee members, Karen Gasper and Songqi Liu. Additionally, I would like to thank Sherri Gilliland, without whom I would have been overwhelmed by the details and logistics of the thesis process. Finally, I am so appreciative of my friends and family whose love, encouragement, and support kept me motivated (and sane) over the many months of writing, deleting, writing, editing, deleting, reorganizing, deleting, writing, and editing.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

An organizational scandal creates a stressful and difficult environment for members of the organization, especially when the scandal has ethical implications and threatens the integrity of the organization (Sims, 2009). The Penn State sex abuse scandal in 2011 is a recent example of an ethical scandal. When news surfaced that Jerry Sandusky, former University football assistant coach, had sexually assaulted a number of children and that University officials allegedly attempted to cover up the events, the University experienced a number of consequences including the criminal charges of and firing of senior leaders, NCAA sanctions against the University and football program, and a storm of negative media attention (for example, Sports Illustrated's July 30th, 2012 cover story titled "We Were Penn State" by Alexander Wolff). During this time, and in the months following, employees of this organization likely experienced difficulty completing their daily work tasks. One group that may have been particularly affected is University fundraisers, who were expected to continue reaching out to donors and asking for donations in order to meet standing performance goals. Fundraisers were instructed to handle the matter professionally, to refrain from sharing their opinion of unfolding events with potential and ongoing donors, and to stay informed on media reports and University updates.

Fundraisers are considered frontline employees, as it is their job to represent the organization during frequent interactions with the public. Similar to client-based sales

jobs in which one must develop a relationship with a client in order to sell a product, fundraisers must build and develop relationships with potential donors; without these relationships it is unlikely that alumni or community members will donate money to the University. Thus, through phone calls, personal visits, and other forms of communication fundraisers become the ‘face of Penn State’ and rely on their ability to build relationships with outsiders in order to effectively perform their job (Grant & Wrzesniewski, 2010). Given that how the public views the organization affects employees’ ability to sell the product (Meisenbach, 2008) and the pressure of conducting ‘business as usual’ amidst such a tumultuous and unfamiliar series of events, it would seem that some employees may view this experience as a threat to their job, but others may see the potential for learning and better work outcomes. Using the challenge-hindrance occupational stressor model as a foundation, this paper considers the effects of two such appraisals: perceiving the scandal as a threat to one’s job or ability to meet expectations, and perceiving the scandal as an opportunity to build relationships with the public and to grow professionally.

In general, organizational scandals are events that may encapsulate a number of typical stressors, ranging from job insecurity to situational constraints to concerns about the media’s portrayal of the organization. Moreover, how people perceive stressors is influential in the stressor-strain relationship beyond the objective work event or condition (Fang & Baba, 2003; Webster et al., 2011). Thus the extent of perceiving that their job performance is threatened by a scandal may cause employees to experience physical and psychological stress (e.g., burnout) and to opt to distance themselves from the threat by leaving the organization (Fang & Baba, 2003). On the other hand, employees may

appraise the event as an opportunity for growth. As a result, knowing employees' job threat and opportunity appraisals of a scandal provides unique information about well-being and work outcomes. In addition, employees' self-concept is likely to buffer or exacerbate these relationships because it serves an evaluative function in terms of how one views oneself and the surrounding environment. Both core self-evaluations and organizational identification are aspects of self-concept that have been linked to positive work outcomes and greater overall well-being (Judge, Erez, & Bono, 1998; Riketta, 2005).

Though threat and opportunity appraisals of the work context generally show such effects on well-being and work outcomes, it is unclear if scandal appraisals have the same effects, since scandals differ from common workplace stressors (e.g., workload, role ambiguity) in a number of important ways. Furthermore, it is equivocal how self-concept influences scandal appraisal-strain relationships, especially when aspects of self-concept are directly tied to the now stigmatized organization (e.g., organizational identification). Common workplace stressors, characterized as chronic stressors, tend to emerge and build up over time, and employees generally have at least some experience in dealing with these or related stressors (Carayon, 1995; Fuller, Stanton, Fisher, Spitzmuller, Russell, & Smith, 2003). Examples of common, chronic workplace stressors include high workload, low autonomy, role ambiguity and role conflict (Van der Ploeg, Dorresteijn, & Kleber, 2003; Wiesner, Windle, & Freeman, 2005). In contrast, organizational scandals are acute, severe stressors that occur unexpectedly and without warning. A majority of employees likely have no prior experience dealing with and responding to an organizational scandal, so they may feel especially taxed and without any control over the

situation. Within the work literature the focus has tended to be on chronic stressors and their effects while neglecting acute stressors, perhaps because of their low frequency (Day & Livingstone, 2001). So although much is known about the physical and psychological strain that results from chronic work stressors, less is known about the strain from acute work stressors, such as organizational scandals.

Finally, whereas a common workplace stressor affects a single or few individuals at any given time, organizational scandals affect all members of an organization whether or not they played a role in the events. This is largely due to the public nature of scandals, both in terms of the media's involvement and the effect of the scandal on the public (e.g., community members, organizational stakeholders). Thus, it is expected that employees whose jobs require interaction with the public may be particularly affected by an organizational scandal. This is because scandals due to perceived immorality and lack of integrity cast the organization in a negative light and interfere with frontline employees' ability to successfully do their job with the public (Sims, 2009). Moreover, scandals are especially harmful in terms of the damage to an organization's reputation and perceived integrity (Sims, 2009), which may then lead to lost sales and decreased customer loyalty (Eccles, Newquist, & Schatz, 2007).

Given that scandals are acute, atypical, and public, do appraisals have similar consequences when responding to scandals as to those of common workplace stressors? Do the same personal characteristics help buffer the effects of stress, or make them worse? The present study assesses how strain of frontline employees varies by the appraisals of the Penn State scandal as threatening or challenging to their job. To understand these appraisals and their outcomes, both the conservation of resources model

(Hobfoll, 1989) and identity theory (Stryker, 1968) are used to explain relationships and processes. Thus, the first aim of the present study is to examine how threat and opportunity appraisals of scandal relate to strain in terms of burnout and turnover intentions, two indicators of strain for both the individual and the organization. The second aim of this study is to examine the role that self-concept plays in responding to a scandal appraisal. The full study model is depicted in Figure 1.

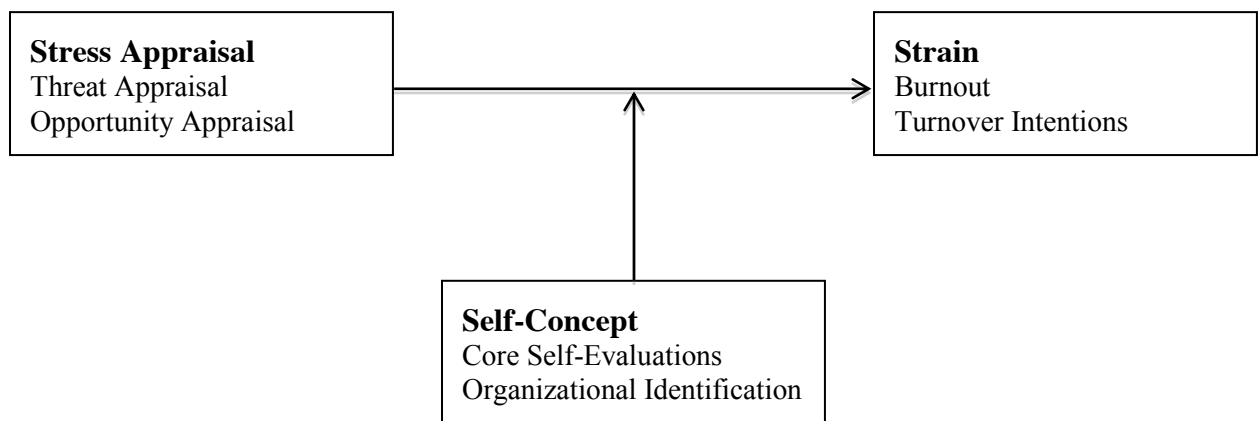


Figure 1. Diagram of the proposed model. In this model, the appraisal of the stressor (scandal) as either a threat to the job or an opportunity leads to strain outcomes (burnout and turnover intention). Core self-evaluations and organizational identification moderate the stress appraisal–strain relationship.

Scandal as Challenge or Hindrance Stressor and Frontline Employee Strain

Researchers have relied on a number of stress theories to understand the effects of stressors on strain and well-being, with one of the earliest theories being the transactional theory of stress developed by Lazarus (1966). According to Lazarus’s theory, the stressor-strain relationship is dictated by one’s initial evaluation of a situation as either challenging or threatening (primary appraisal), followed by an evaluation of one’s abilities to control or cope with the situation (secondary appraisal) (Lazarus & Folkman,

1984). Building on Lazarus's theory and the role of perceptions in the stressor-strain relationship, Hobfoll developed and proposed a new stress model termed the conservation of resources (COR) model (Hobfoll, 1989). In addition to acknowledging the importance of appraisals, the COR model focuses on the role that resources play in appraisal and stress processes. One benefit of this approach is that it considers not only the negative consequences of stressors, but also the potential for positive outcomes such as gain cycles (as in the case of an opportunity appraisal) (Hobfoll, 2002).

Hobfoll's COR model (1989) posits that people are motivated to obtain, protect, and build resources. Resources are defined as "those objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that are valued by the individual or that serve as a means for attainment of these objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies" (Hobfoll, 1989, p. 516). When an individual perceives or experiences a threat to his or her resources, the individual experiences stress and is motivated to cope with the threat, generally through replacing the lost or threatened resource. When one does not feel that resources are threatened or depleted, one will seek out opportunities to acquire and build additional resources. As strain is the long-term consequence of experiencing stressors, this model suggests that strain is particularly likely to occur within a work context when employees believe that resources are threatened or actually lost. Two such indicators of strain are burnout and turnover intention.

Within the COR model, burnout occurs when one has been unable to meet the demands of a stressor, or an attempt to replace or retain a threatened resource has depleted one's energy in the process. Burnout has been heavily studied in the workplace, and is conceptualized in terms of three components: emotional exhaustion,

depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach, 1982). The components of job burnout are related to important job performance and health outcomes, including job withdrawal, decreased job satisfaction, lower productivity, stress-related health outcomes, substance abuse, and depression (Maslach, Schaeufeli, & Leiter, 2001; Toker & Biron, 2012). As a second indicator of strain, turnover is defined as employees' voluntary decision to leave an organization (Price & Mueller, 1981), and therefore turnover intention is the plan or desire to separate from the organization. The relationship between turnover intentions and turnover behavior has been inconsistent, and turnover intentions do not invariably lead to actual turnover behavior (Vandenberg & Barnes-Nelson, 1999); however, turnover intentions are still one of the most valuable predictors of turnover behavior (Steele & Ovalle, 1984). In Tett and Meyer's (1993) meta-analysis comparing various predictors of turnover, the authors found that turnover intention/withdrawal cognitions were the strongest predictor of turnover ($r = .45$).

Thus far I have discussed how workplace stressors affect employees' resources, and how such stressors may lead to strain. However, workplace stressors do not all function alike and therefore may be grouped into various categories. The challenge-hindrance occupational stressor model, for example, classifies types of stressors as either challenge stressors – stressors that promote personal growth and goal attainment – or hindrance stressors – those which obstruct personal growth and goal attainment (Podsakoff, LePine, & LePine, 2007). The challenge-hindrance stressor model argues that challenge stressors are generally associated with positive outcomes because they include demands that produce feelings of accomplishment and pride once they have been successfully overcome. Hindrance stressors, on the other hand, place constraints on the

individual and leave the employee feeling distressed and unable to cope with the situation.

Using these definitions as a guide, Cavanaugh and colleagues (2000) first grouped a list of common workplace stressors by categorizing them as either challenge or hindrance stressors and then had four other individuals do the same to gauge agreement. Next, the researchers tested the two-factor structure with a confirmatory factor analysis, which provided modest support for the model. They concluded that the two-factor model was superior to a one-factor model, and their model became the dominant means of examining challenge and hindrance stressors. Examples of challenge stressors include time demands, workload, and high levels of responsibility (Cavanaugh, Boswell, Roehling, & Boudreau, 2000; McCauley, Ruderman, Ohlott, & Morrow, 1994). Examples of hindrance stressors include organizational politics, job insecurity, role ambiguity, and hassles (Cavanaugh et al., 2000; Rodell & Judge, 2009; Webster et al., 2011).

Although the challenge-hindrance model of stress has been generally accepted and has garnered a good deal of empirical support (Boswell, Olson-Buchanan, & LePine, 2004; Podsakoff et al., 2007), researchers have questioned whether it is appropriate to group stressors into the two categories a priori, without considering an individual's appraisal of the stressor (Webster et al., 2011). For example, although one person may view time demands as motivating and a challenge to overcome (i.e., a challenge stressor), another person may view this demand as debilitating and one which taxes his or her coping resources (i.e., a hindrance stressor).

Furthermore, it is possible that a stressor may be perceived as both a challenge and a hindrance, indicating that the two categories are not mutually exclusive as the challenge-hindrance model suggests (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In a study surveying 479 employees, Webster and colleagues (2011) found that work stressors (e.g., role ambiguity, workload) could be appraised as both a challenge and a hindrance, and that employees' primary appraisals of stressors partially mediated the stressor-strain relationship. Such evidence provides support for the argument that the appraisal of a stressor is just as, if not more, important than the a priori classification of the stressor as either a hindrance or a challenge.

Threat Appraisals of Scandal and Fundraiser Job Strain

The evaluation of a stressor as a hindrance to one's work is indicative of a threat appraisal, defined as appraisals in which "the perception of danger exceeds the perception of abilities or resources to cope with the stressor" (Tomaka, Blascovich, Kelsey, & Leitten, 1993, p. 248). Threat appraisals are positively associated with a number of undesirable outcomes, such as job dissatisfaction and turnover intentions (Tomaka et al., 1993; Webster et al., 2011).

Within the context of the scandal, threat appraisals are likely when fundraisers perceive the situation as a threat to their ability to build relationships and meet performance goals. For example, fundraisers might focus on the scandal as a threat to their ability to get meetings or connect with donors, perhaps feeling that it now takes longer or is impossible to override the negative image. This threat to fundraisers' ability to perform their job will also be likely when fundraisers believe they do not have

sufficient resources or are incapable of overcoming the challenges inherent in dealing with the scandal.

The COR model thus explains the deleterious effect of scandal-as-threat appraisals for employees and organizations. In general, when an employee perceives a threatening situation, the threat is to his or her personal resources. For example, a threatening or demanding job situation may represent the potential loss of *personal characteristics* resources (e.g., self-esteem), *condition* resources (e.g., employment, job experience, status), or *energies* resources (e.g., time, money) (Hobfoll, 1989). An organizational scandal may be strongly perceived as a threat to these resources, resulting in negative outcomes such as burnout, job dissatisfaction, and negative emotions (Podsakoff et al., 2007; Skinner & Brewer, 2002; Webster et al., 2011). Of particular relevance to this study, feelings of threat and anxiety about the scandal should lead to increased burnout and turnover intention.

Meta-analytic findings support that job demands such as workload demands and time pressure, conditions that can threaten resources, are a strong predictor of burnout (Alarcon, 2011; Luchman & Gonzalez-Morales, 2013). More closely related to the current study, Kern and Grandey (2009) found that stress appraisals, not the frequency of the stressor, were positively related to burnout. Thus, past research has consistently demonstrated the relationship between perceptions of resource threat and exhaustion.

An interesting point to note is that studies examining job demands and burnout have conceptualized job demands in fairly general and broad terms. For example, Alarcon (2011) operationalized job demands as role ambiguity, role conflict, and workload, while Luchman and Gonzalez-Morales (2013) examined task-related job

demands (e.g., workload, time pressure, cognitive demands). By not holding constant an actual stressor, it is impossible to differentiate between the perception of a stressor and an objective stressor. The present context provides a unique opportunity to hold a particular stressor constant (that is, the scandal), and to assess how perceptions of that particular stressor relate to employee burnout.

In addition, the COR model suggests that withdrawal behavior (that is, turnover intention) is a coping mechanism used to conserve resources. For example, if an employee views the scandal as stressful and threatening to their valued resources (e.g., job performance, relationships with donors), they may withdraw from the stressful situation to avoid any additional loss of resources (e.g., self-esteem, status). Employees' turnover intentions are of concern to organizations because should the employees follow through and quit their job, the organization may lose valuable human capital, which in turn harms unit-level performance (Kacmar, Andrews, Van Rooy, Steilberg, & Cerrone, 2006).

Although job stressors have been identified as precursors to turnover intention (Chen & Spector, 1992), researchers have begun to focus on appraisals of those stressors as an important mediator of the stressor-turnover intention relationship. For example, Fang and Baba (2003) found that perceptions of stress mediated the relationships between three work stressors (role ambiguity, role conflict, and role overload) and turnover intention. They argued that studying only the direct link between stressors and turnover intention is insufficient because individual perceptions heavily influence subsequent behaviors. This research provides support for the argument that workplace stressors, and specifically the appraisal of those work conditions as threatening, is linked to wanting to

conserve those resources by quitting. Similarly, and specific to the frontline worker context, Grandey and colleagues (2004) found that threat appraisals of customer aggression, not the frequency of it, were linked to withdrawal (i.e., absences) as well as burnout. As a result, it is hypothesized that those who perceive the scandal as more threatening to their job performance should report more burnout and stronger intentions to quit their job.

Hypothesis 1: Scandal-as-threat appraisals are positively related to (a) job burnout and (b) turnover intentions.

Opportunity Appraisals of Scandal and Fundraiser Job Strain

Past research has consistently demonstrated the link between challenge stressors and favorable outcomes, such as the potential for positive incentives and resource gain (Tomaka et al., 1993). To differentiate between challenge stressors, a category of certain types of work conditions, and the appraisal of conditions as a challenge and being an opportunity, the term ‘opportunity appraisals’ is used in this paper. Opportunity appraisals differ from threat appraisals in that, for the former, one does not feel that resources or coping abilities are threatened and instead perceives potential gain from a particular work event or situation (Tomaka et al., 1993). Support for the beneficial nature of opportunity appraisals is evident in Rodell and Judge’s (2009) study of stressors and workplace behaviors; the authors found that stronger perceptions that work conditions were an opportunity for challenge and growth were positively related to citizenship behaviors and negatively related to counterproductive behaviors. In addition, opportunity appraisals are related to greater performance and less subjective stress compared to threat

appraisals (Tomaka et al., 1993), as well as to more confident coping expectancies and positive emotions (e.g., excitement) (Skinner & Brewer, 2002).

For the present context, the strength of an opportunity appraisal indicates the extent to which fundraisers perceive the scandal as having potential for growth and development in their job. For example, fundraisers might view the scandal as an opportunity to connect with new donors due to curiosity about the scandal, a chance to build closer relationships by empathizing with long-time donors, or a time that creates more challenge for raising money and thus builds skills. Additionally, fundraisers might believe that alumni and donors might in fact respond to the scandal by donating greater amounts of money to the University as a sign of support and loyalty, thereby actually creating a stimulating work environment for fundraisers and facilitating their ability to perform their job.

If employees are able to appraise the scandal as an opportunity, then past literature suggests that they should be protected from the negative outcomes associated with threat appraisals. This is because perceiving a stressor as an opportunity may be regarded as an occasion for growth and resource attainment (Cavanaugh et al., 2000; Hobfoll, 1989). Rodell and Judge (2009) argue that these types of experiences may enable employees to acquire new skills and knowledge, a premise consistent with Hobfoll's (1989) claim that individuals actively seek to acquire and maintain such resources. Employees are therefore more likely to take on stressors perceived as opportunities because the benefits are thought to outweigh the costs and they are energized by the prospect of acquiring additional resources. More specifically, because the employee does not feel threatened and is likely to instead seek out opportunities to

build his or her resource pool, the employee is unlikely to experience the strain (i.e., burnout and turnover intention) associated with threat appraisals.

Similarly, those who perceive a stressor as more of an opportunity should be less likely to report intentions to quit because the stressor is primarily perceived as a chance for growth and professional development, and so the employee will wish to remain with the organization to reap these benefits. A recent meta-analysis on challenge and hindrance stressors found support for this notion, reporting that challenge stressors were negatively related to turnover intention (Podsakoff et al., 2007). This evidence would suggest that fundraisers who perceive the scandal as an opportunity will want to make use of this opportunity and thus be less likely to report intentions to quit. However, it may be that the scandal is too acute and negative of a stressor for the appraisal to matter. Fundraisers may try to see the silver lining in the situation, but the severity of the scandal may render the appraisal ineffective. Keeping this in mind but remaining consistent with past literature, it is hypothesized that to the extent that the scandal is viewed as a chance to expand resources (e.g., develop stronger relationships with donors), the more likely it is an employee will stay with the organization in an effort to overcome the stressor and acquire these resources. In summary, employees who perceive the scandal as more of an opportunity will experience less burnout and will be less likely to report intentions to leave their current job.

Hypothesis 2: Scandal-as-opportunity appraisals are negatively related to (a) job burnout and (b) turnover intentions.

Moderators of the Scandal Appraisal-Job Strain Relationship

Thus far I have discussed how an organizational scandal may pose a threat to a fundraiser's personal resources, such as his or her job performance and relationships with donors, and how the perception of this scandal as a threat or an opportunity may affect strain in terms of burnout and turnover intentions. Although a direct link between these perceptions and outcome variables is expected, it is also likely that one's self-concept may moderate these relationships. An individual's self-concept, described as the way in which a person defines him or herself that influences his or her emotions, cognitions, and behaviors (Leary & Tangley, 2003), is an integral part of one's identity and has implications for how one defines oneself personally and professionally.

Identity theory argues that the self is perceived as a collection of diverse "parts," and that these parts are actually discrete identities (Stryker, 1968). Identities have been conceptualized as "the meanings a person attributes to the self as an object in a social situation or social role" (Burke & Tully, 1977, p. 883); examples include familial identities, work identities, and political identities (Burke & Tully, 1977; Dutton, Roberts, & Bednar, 2010). Because self-concept is a multidimensional construct, it is useful to examine specific dimensions within the construct to better understand how one's sense of self influences various outcomes (Marsh, 1990). The present study is therefore concerned with how one's self-concept, in terms of one's personal and professional identities, affects the scandal appraisal-strain relationships. More specifically, personal identity is examined in terms of core self-evaluations, and professional identity is examined in terms of organizational identification.

Both core self-evaluations (CSE) and organizational identification serve an evaluative function because they represent the way one views oneself, which then has implications for one's interpersonal experiences and social environments. In this way, these dimensions of self-concept may be considered motivational resources in that they direct a person's energies and behaviors toward situations in which he or she feels comfortable and capable of attaining success (Wang, 2007). Despite this similarity, core self-evaluations and organizational identification may differentially affect the relationship between stressor appraisals and strain. This is because while core self-evaluations are more general and hold across a variety of situations (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2011), organizational identification is specific to the work context and is therefore more vulnerable to work-related threats (Elsbach & Kramer, 1996). In addition, core self-evaluations represent a level of self-concept (e.g., high or low CSE), while organizational identification represents a source of self-concept, an organization-contingent form of self-concept (Ferris, Brown, Lian, & Keeping, 2009). Thus, the level of positive self-concept (i.e., core self-evaluations) is likely to be a resource in that it always buffers the harmful effects of threat, but the organization-contingent self-concept (i.e., organizational identification) may be a liability when the organization is threatened by a scandal, since the threat to the organization may be perceived as a threat to the self (Elsbach & Kramer, 1996).

It should be noted that while this paper focuses on how self-concept may moderate the stressor appraisal–strain relationship, it is also possible that self-concept and related resources influence threat and/or opportunity appraisals directly. For example, individuals with high CSE may be less likely to perceive a situation as threatening simply

due to their tendency to view themselves and their environments more favorably (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2011). Other conditions resources such as job experience and tenure might also serve a similar function, in that employees with more experience feel more capable of handling stressful and/or unexpected work situations (Hobfoll, 1989). However, in this paper the focus is on the moderating role of self-concept after a stressor has been appraised, because self-concept, as a resource, is expected to be especially influential during this stage of the scandal appraisal–strain process. For example, Sonnenteg and Frese (2002) suggest that “the degree to which a stressful work situation affects the individual might be contingent on the availability of resources” (p. 467), suggesting that threat appraisals may be especially detrimental when the employee feels he or she has relatively limited resources to cope with the stressor, such as in cases when the employee has low CSE.

To explore the relationships between scandal appraisals and self-concept, I will first consider how core self-evaluations may ameliorate the strain that results from stress appraisals. Following this discussion, I will examine how organizational identification may either help or harm employees and organizations within this same context.

Personal Identity: Core Self-Evaluations and Job Strain

Core self-evaluations (CSE), first described by Judge, Locke, and Durham (1997), refer to the way in which people evaluate themselves in relation to their environment. Judge and Kammeyer-Mueller (2011) explain that “people who have positive core self-evaluations see themselves positively across a variety of situations, and approach the world in a confident, self-assured manner” (p. 332). This is because CSE is a higher order construct made up of four lower-order traits: self-efficacy, self-esteem, locus of control,

and emotional stability. These four traits tend to be strongly correlated (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2011), and combining them into an aggregate measure allows for better and more consistent predictions of general work outcomes (Judge, 2009). When people are high on these traits, they tend to view their self-worth and abilities more positively, are more optimistic, and believe they have control over what happens to them. Thus, being high in CSE is evidence of a strong, positive self-concept whereas being low in CSE indicates a negative self-concept. It is not surprising then that those higher in CSE have also been found to be more motivated at work (Judge, Erez, & Bono, 1998) and better able to adjust during periods of organizational change (e.g., downsizing, introduction of new technologies) (Judge, Thoresen, Pucik, & Welbourne, 1999). An employee's core self-evaluation, then, plays a key role in how that employee adaptively responds to various situations.

Although a relatively new construct, a number of studies have looked at correlates of core self-evaluations specifically within the work context (Judge, 2009). In terms of employee well-being, researchers have found that high CSE individuals experience less strain than those lower in CSE (Kammeyer-Mueller, Judge, & Scott, 2009). Likewise, they experience less burnout and more job satisfaction (Best, Stapleton, & Downey, 2005), perhaps because they also tend to rely on more effective coping strategies and are more resilient (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2011; Wanberg, Glomb, Song, & Sorenson, 2005). As a moderator, high CSE not only buffers the negative effects of stressors, but also serves as a motivator that enables employees to persevere during times of stress or uncertainty (Chang, Ferris, Johnson, Rosen, & Tan, 2012; Harris, Harvey, & Kacmar, 2009). This suggests that if employees perceive the scandal as a threat to their job, then

those who are higher in CSE will be better equipped to overcome the threat and to maintain a healthy level of well-being (Sonneteg & Frese, 2002). People with high CSE have a larger resource reservoir than those with low CSE and therefore should be able to draw on their self-concept during the threat, but a threat appraisal may deplete the resources of those with low CSE, causing these individuals to suffer even more detrimental consequences (i.e., a resource loss spiral) than those with high CSE (Hobfoll, 2002).

Another work outcome variable that has been studied in relation to core self-evaluations is turnover intention. Individuals high in CSE tend to be more satisfied with their job and have lower turnover intentions (Chang et al., 2012; Wanberg et al., 2005). In a recent meta-analysis of core self-evaluations and its correlates, Chang and colleagues (2012) found that CSE had a negative correlation with turnover intention ($r = -.26$). Within the context of the COR model, turnover intentions represent the desire to conserve or protect resources by withdrawing from the situation that is depleting, or threatening to deplete, one's current resources. Employees with high CSE have more resources at their disposal, and as a result can draw on these other resources (e.g., self-esteem, self-efficacy) to offset net loss while remaining with the organization, a concept known as resource replacement (Hobfoll, 1989).

For those employees who view the scandal as more of an opportunity, high CSE will have an enhancement effect because they will be more likely to capitalize on the positive appraisal by drawing on their positive self-concept resource. Using an approach/avoidance motivation framework, researchers have found that high CSE is linked to work-related approach motivations while low CSE is linked to work-related

avoidance motivations (Ferris, Johnson, Rosen, Djurdjevic, Chang, & Tan, 2013; Ferris, Rosen, Johnson, Brown, Risavy, & Heller, 2011). This suggests that employees with high CSE not only perceive an opportunity for growth and development, they also have the resources and confidence to set goals enabling them to make use of that opportunity. Employees with low CSE, on the other hand, are less likely to adopt approach goals and so may not have the ability or motivation to make the most of the opportunity appraisal (Ferris et al., 2013).

In summary, it is expected that those higher in CSE will be able to draw on this positive self-concept when they perceive a threatening situation, and therefore will experience less strain because they utilize more effective coping strategies and will be more confident in their own abilities to overcome the threatening situation (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2011). In addition, employees who are high in CSE and appraise the scandal as more of an opportunity will experience even less strain than those who see the scandal as an opportunity but are lower in CSE, due to their tendency to adopt approach-oriented goals (Ferris et al., 2013).

Hypothesis 3: The positive relationship of scandal-as-threat appraisal with burnout (a) and with turnover intention (b) is moderated by CSE in that the relationship is weaker for those who are higher in CSE than for those who are lower in CSE.

Hypothesis 4: The negative relationship of scandal-as-opportunity appraisal with burnout (a) and with turnover intention (b) is moderated by CSE in that the relationship is stronger for those who are higher in CSE than for those who are lower in CSE.

Professional Identity: Organizational Identification and Job Strain

Another type of identity that is particularly relevant to the present article is organizational identification. Organizational identification is one type of work identity, which is defined as an individual's "work-based self-concept...that shapes the roles a person adopts and the corresponding ways he or she behaves when performing his or her work" (Walsh & Gordon, 2008, p. 47). Individuals with strong work identities tend to devote more time to their work, and are expected to have better job performance and lower turnover intentions (Major, Klein, & Ehrhart, 2002; Walsh & Gordon, 2008).

Organizational identification develops when employees define themselves in terms of the attributes that they believe represent the organization to which they belong (Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994; Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Organizational identification can best be understood by considering social identity theory, which focuses on the extent to which an individual identifies with a group or collective, and argues that this identity is related to a sense of "oneness" he or she feels with the group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Van Knippenberg (2000) posits that this feeling of oneness leads individuals to adopt group goals and values, and thus to become motivated to act for the good of the group. As a result, identification is considered a source of motivation for an individual.

In general, organizational identification has been considered a positive characteristic for both the employee and the organization as it is linked to increased work motivation and performance (Van Knippenberg, 2000), and negatively correlated with turnover intentions (Riketta, 2005). De Moura and colleagues (2009) also found that organizational identification was negatively related to turnover intentions, and they concluded that the importance one places on their membership of an organization "clearly

matter[s] for intentions and decisions about continuing membership of and participation in the group” (p. 552). When employees are strongly identified with their organization, they are likely to be more cooperative with others in the organization and to display more citizenship behaviors (Boros, Curseu, & Miclea, 2011; Dutton et al., 1994). When an organization has a positive identity, employees who identify with the organization are also likely to have more positive social identities because they see themselves according to the characteristics and attributes of the organization (Elsbach & Kramer, 1996). Furthermore, when highly identified employees believe that outsiders view the organization positively, they can enhance their self-esteem by “basking in the reflected glory” (BIRGing) of the organization (Cialdini, Borden, Thorne, Walker, Freeman, & Sloan, 1976).

However, in a time of scandal it is less likely that employees will be able to BIRG because the public no longer perceives the organization as superior or of higher status. Similarly, their own view of the organization may be altered because the morality of the organization is called into question. In this case, when the organization with which one identifies becomes threatened by a scandal, organizational identification may no longer serve as a motivational resource because the individual’s identity is closely tied to the organization’s identity. A threat to the organization (e.g., organization is viewed as less distinctive and competent) becomes a threat to the self, which may lead to decreased self-esteem and distress for the employee (Branscombe & Wann, 1994; Elsbach & Kramer, 1996). This suggests that identification may be a liability instead of a benefit under such circumstances.

Within the context of the scandal, a highly identified employee may continue investing personal resources, such as time and energy, because he is motivated to “stick it out” and support his organization (Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1997). In doing so, the employee may maintain a healthy level of well-being to the extent that he has additional resources to invest and the threat is relatively short-lived. However, continuous investment may result in a *loss spiral*, and the employee may end up depleting numerous resources (Hobfoll, 1989). This might be the case when highly identified employees experience more negative mood in response to dealing with the threat, and thus the investment of resources and frequent interactions with the public become increasingly draining. This further investment of resources (e.g., time, energy) by highly identified employees is expected to lead to depletion of personal resources in the form of more burnout. Alternatively, employees who are less identified are not likely to continue investing personal resources during a time of threat because they tend to respond based on individual-level needs rather than group-level needs (i.e., what is good for the self outweighs what is good for the organization) (Ellemers et al., 1997). Low identifiers have less at stake when the group is threatened and will therefore be able to preserve their energy and well-being, resulting in less burnout.

Extending this reasoning, employees who are highly identified with their work should be less likely to withdraw even when they perceive the scandal as threatening, largely because of their strong motivation to remain with the organization. On the other hand, less identified employees will not feel this same sense of attachment and so will be more likely to withdraw to conserve their resources (Hobfoll, 1989), specifically their personal self-concept (Ellemers et al., 1997; Webster et al., 2011). In this case, an

employee's identification with a stigmatized organization may be a resource for the organization (i.e., the employee is less likely to quit), but a liability to the individual employee (i.e., by remaining with the stigmatized organization during a time of threat, the employee experiences more burnout).

Hypothesis 5a: The positive relationship between scandal-as-threat appraisal and burnout is moderated by organizational identification in that the relationship is stronger for those who are highly identified than for those who are not highly identified.

Hypothesis 5b: The positive relationship between scandal-as-threat appraisal and turnover intention is moderated by organizational identification in that the relationship is weaker for those who are highly identified than for those who are not highly identified.

When the scandal is viewed as an opportunity, employees who have strong organizational identification will draw on this motivational resource to reap additional benefits. In this way, organizational identification is expected to serve a similar approach-oriented motivation function as CSE, such that highly identified employees who perceive an opportunity will be motivated and energized to make the most of that opportunity (Ferris et al., 2011). Employees who perceive the scandal as an opportunity but are not highly identified with their work will still have less burnout (compared to those who do not perceive the scandal as such), but this relationship will be weaker compared to those who possess the motivational resource of identification.

Furthermore, organizational identification should be negatively related to turnover intention for scandal-as-opportunity appraisals, again functioning as a beneficial resource

for both the organization and the individual employees. That is, employees who view the scandal as an opportunity *and* mobilize the organizational identification resource should be even more motivated to rise to the occasion and to continue investing resources into either their current job or organization. Employees who are less identified but still perceive the scandal as an opportunity will also report lower turnover intentions than those who perceive the scandal as a threat, but this relationship will not be as strong as it is for the highly identified employees.

Hypothesis 6: The negative relationship of scandal-as-opportunity appraisal with burnout (a) and with turnover intention (b) is moderated by organizational identification in that the relationship is stronger for those highly identified than for those who are not highly identified.

Dual Threat and Opportunity Appraisals and Job Strain

It has been noted that stressors have commonly been designated a priori as either challenges or hindrances, although theoretical and empirical evidence suggests this might be a limited and inaccurate approach (Webster et al., 2011). In reality, the appraisal approach reorganizes these as two independent perceptions; stressors may be perceived differently from one person to the next, and thus may in fact be appraised as neither or both a threat *and* an opportunity by a single individual. Within the context of a scandal, for instance, an employee may perceive that while some aspects of the situation are threatening, other facets of the scandal provide an opportunity for growth. I refer to such appraisals as “dual appraisals” to acknowledge the fact that the perceptions of threat and opportunity are independent, such that people can be high in one, both, or neither.

If such dual appraisals do in fact occur, it is important to consider how these dual appraisals relate to employee strain. If threat appraisals are positively related to burnout and turnover intention, and opportunity appraisals are negatively related to burnout and turnover intention, how might appraising a stressor as both a threat and an opportunity be related to employee strain? Would the effects of one appraisal be more influential than the other, or would the effects of each cancel one another out?

Past research on positive and negative events would suggest that the strain of threat appraisals would override the benefits of opportunity appraisals, as negative events and emotions have longer lasting effects, produce stronger reactions, and have more power over mood than positive events or emotions (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001; David, Green, Martin, & Suls, 1997; Gilbert, Fridlund, & Sabini, 1987). However, the research on dual appraisals and strain is limited, and it is unknown whether appraising a stressor as both a threat and an opportunity (or neither) is related to increased or decreased strain compared to independent appraisals. Thus, I propose and examine the following exploratory questions:

Exploratory Question: How might the combination of scandal-as-threat and scandal-as-opportunity appraisals relate to employee strain in terms of burnout and turnover intention?

Chapter 2

METHOD

Participants and Procedure

To examine frontline employees' reactions to the scandal, data were collected from two samples of University fundraisers: professional development officers and student call-center employees, for a total sample size of 165 employees. Fundraisers rely on communicating with people outside of the university (e.g., alumni, corporations) in order to acquire donations and meet performance goals. Thus, fundraisers are an ideal sample for the present study because (1) the scandal should be especially salient to their line of work as it relates to the public's perception of the University, and (2) fundraisers' ability to perform their job hinges on their ability to develop relationships with the public. In addition, because fundraising is sometimes perceived as a distrustful and questionable occupation, researchers have deemed it an ideal occupation within which to study issues regarding identity (Meisenbach, 2008).

Given the unique nature of this scandal context, a subset of Penn State frontline employees were first interviewed to see how they perceived that their jobs were affected (Grandey & Slezak, 2013). In June of 2012, 40 development officers and fundraisers were e-mailed and invited to participate in interviews about their experience with the scandal and how the scandal has affected them personally and professionally. Of these, 24 agreed to participate in the interviews (60% response rate). Of these 24 interviewees, 20 were full-time development officers and 4 were part-time student call center

fundraisers, 14 were female (58.3%) and 16 were employed on the main campus (66.7%) as opposed to a satellite campus (33.3%). Interview questions included background information (e.g., time working as a fundraiser), customer reactions to the scandal, and personal reactions in terms of coping and social behaviors.

Based on responses in these interviews, a questionnaire was developed and administered in two waves to 165 Penn State employees (52 development officers, 113 student call-center employees). In the first wave, the survey was e-mailed by the administration staff to approximately 110 development officers and development directors (see Appendix for a full list of measures). Data was collected via the web-based survey software Qualtrics. Fundraisers received an e-mail explaining the purpose of the study and were provided with a link to the online survey, with the assurance that all survey responses were anonymous and completely voluntary. Employees had from July 2012 to late August 2012 to complete the survey before it closed, with three reminder emails sent out at 1-week intervals. At the close of the survey, 52 employees (28 women, 24 men) had responded for a response rate of 47%. An overwhelming majority of participants reported being white/Caucasian (98%). Participants had been employed by Penn State for an average of 8.75 years ($SD = 8.85$), and 48% of the sample ($n = 25$) reported being undergraduate alumni of Penn State. Demographics were similar to the full population of development officers and directors.

In the second wave, one hundred and thirteen student employees (72 women, 41 men) of Penn State's calling center completed a similar survey. Approximately 150 student employees work at the calling center, therefore about 75% of the total population was sampled. The majority of participants reported being White/Caucasian ($n = 77$), with

the remaining participants reporting being Black/African-American (n= 16), Hispanic (n = 7), Asian (n = 6) or Other (n = 7). On average, participants had worked at the calling center for 6.89 months ($SD = 8.90$) at the time of the survey.

Paper surveys were distributed and collected in-person at the calling center. Two visits were made to the calling center by the author between late October and early November 2012 during which the purpose of the study was explained by the author and surveys were distributed to all employees present at the center. Student employees were permitted to use 30 minutes of paid work time to complete the survey, and all surveys were immediately collected by the author to prevent concerns that supervisors would see students' responses. To encourage participation, student employees were told that all participants who provided their e-mail address would be entered to win one of three \$25 gift cards to a local restaurant. Participants were assured that e-mail addresses would not be linked to responses, and that participation in the study was completely voluntary.

Measures

Threat and opportunity appraisals. Based on the interviews, it was evident that fundraisers appraised the scandal as a job threat and as a job opportunity (see Table 1 for descriptives and examples of appraisals from the interviews). Thus, a scale was created to assess threat and opportunity appraisals among fundraisers. This measure was based on the existing conceptual definitions and measures of threat and challenge appraisals (e.g., Skinner & Brewer, 2002; Webster et al., 2011), as well as the interviews (Grandey & Slezak, 2013). This new scale was first administered to the development officers of the University. Participants responded to items using a seven-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). Five of the 10 items assessed the extent to which the sex

abuse scandal was viewed as a threat (e.g., “a situation that threatens my relationships with donors”) and the remaining five assessed the extent to which the scandal was viewed as an opportunity (e.g., “an opportunity to learn and grow professionally”). The ten items were factor analyzed using a principal axis factoring analysis with Varimax rotation. The analysis yielded two factors accounting for 47.92% of the total variance. The intended

TABLE 1
Frequency and Examples of Threat and Opportunity Appraisals from Fundraiser Interviews

Appraisal	Number of Interviewees	Number of References	Examples of Appraisals
Threat Appraisal	23	100	<p>“We didn’t have a contingency plan for something like this and it was a crisis. So it was hard to know how to handle things.”</p> <p>“In some cases people are so upset they are not going to meet with us right now.”</p> <p>“[The donor’s] attorney sent a letter saying that the donor was a very ethical person of high integrity and didn’t wish to be associated with a university like Penn State.”</p>
Opportunity Appraisal	16	31	<p>“Most of the donors saw this as an opportunity to face adversity and respond in a positive way.”</p> <p>“A lot of my donors felt that the students needed support more than ever because we all know, regardless of what you feel, the students had nothing to do with this.”</p> <p>“It’s been easier to get visits because people want someone to share their own personal feelings with, someone that’s connected to Penn State.”</p>

Note. Total number of fundraisers interviewed = 24. Number of Interviewees = total number of interviewees who described the scandal as a threat (or as an opportunity); Number of References = total number of times scandal-as-threat (or scandal-as-opportunity) was mentioned across all the interviews.

TABLE 2**Factor Analysis Results for Threat and Opportunity Appraisal Scale: Development Officer Sample Loadings**

	Factor 1: Threat appraisal	Factor 2: Opportunity appraisal	Extracted communalities
A factor that limits my ability to perform my job	.752	-.068	.570
An usually frustrating work condition	.705	-.188	.532
A situation that threatens my relationships with donors	.681	.048	.466
A hindrance to developing new relationships with alumni	.658	-.111	.445
A constraint against obtaining funding for PSU students	.818	.022	.670
A unique work challenge ^a	.414	.106	.183
An opportunity to learn and grow professionally	.013	.559	.312
A chance to build even stronger relationships with donors	-.095	.761	.588
An opportunity to obtain even more donations for PSU students	-.071	.728	.535
An opportunity to develop new relationships with our alumni	.062	.697	.490
Eigenvalue	2.818	1.973	
% of total variance	28.183	19.735	
Total variance		47.917%	

^a Item dropped from further analyses due to poor loading and low communality

threat appraisal items loaded strongly on one factor, but also one of the opportunity appraisal items (“a unique work challenge”), and four opportunity appraisal items loaded on another factor, with minimal cross-loading. Because “a unique work challenge” loaded onto the opposite factor than was intended and had a very low extracted communality (.183), the item was discarded and dropped from further analysis. Table 2 shows the factor loadings for the threat and opportunity appraisal items.

This same scale (5 threat appraisal items, 4 opportunity appraisal items) was then given to the student sample. Because call center employees raise money by making relatively brief, one-time calls to parents and alumni, and rely on service encounters rather than service relationships to perform their job (Gutek, Bhappu, Liao-Troth, & Cherry, 1999), two of the items were adapted to be more relevant to the sample (e.g., “a situation that threatens my relationships with donors” was modified to “a situation that threatens my ability to raise money”). Threat and opportunity appraisal items from both samples were merged and again analyzed using a principal axis factoring analysis with Varimax rotation. The analysis yielded two factors accounting for 50.3% of the total variance. Table 3 shows the factor loadings for the threat and opportunity appraisal items with the combined dataset.

A composite of the remaining scandal-as-opportunity items ($\alpha = .76$) was computed by taking the average, as was a composite for the scandal-as-threat items ($\alpha = .82$).

Burnout. Burnout was assessed using the 6-item physical fatigue burnout subscale from the Shirom-Melamed Burnout Measure (SMBM; Shirom, 1989). An example item is “I feel physically drained.” All responses were on seven-point Likert

TABLE 3
Factor Analysis Results for Threat and Opportunity Appraisal Scale: Full Sample

	Loadings		
	Factor 1: Threat appraisal	Factor 2: Opportunity appraisal	Extracted communalities
A factor that limits my ability to perform my job	.657	-.091	.439
An usually frustrating work condition	.577	.027	.334
A situation that threatens my relationships with donors ^a	.769	-.097	.601
A hindrance to developing new relationships with alumni	.673	-.165	.480
A constraint against obtaining funding for PSU students	.807	-.232	.705
An opportunity to learn and grow professionally	-.056	.462	.217
A chance to build even stronger relationships with donors	-.111	.922	.862
An opportunity to obtain even more donations for PSU students	-.197	.621	.424
An opportunity to develop new relationships with our alumni ^b	-.026	.681	.464
Eigenvalue	2.516	2.012	
% of total variance	27.952	22.352	
Total variance		50.304%	

^a For student sample, item read: A situation that threatens my ability to raise money

^b For student sample, item read: An opportunity to develop stronger relationships with the PSU community

scale (1 = *Always or almost always*, 7 = *Almost never or never*), and were averaged for an overall burnout score ($\alpha = .92$). The overall mean was 3.63 ($SD = 1.27$).

Turnover intention. Employees' turnover intentions were assessed using the 3-item measure developed by Cropanzano, James, and Konovsky (1993). These items were designed to assess employees' intention to voluntarily leave their current job, and were averaged to create the turnover intention construct. An example item is "I often think about quitting my current job." Participants responded to items using a seven-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). Cronbach's alpha for this measure was .88, and the overall mean was 2.90 ($SD = 1.56$).

Organizational identification. Employees' organizational identification was evaluated using an adapted version of Mael and Ashforth's (1992) 6-item scale. Participants responded to items using a seven-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). An example item is "Penn State's successes are my successes." One item from Mael and Ashforth's scale was excluded ("When a story in the media criticizes Penn State, I feel embarrassed or ashamed") because 1) it too closely reflected the current context of the study (i.e., Penn State was portrayed negatively in the news on a nearly daily basis) and 2) dropping this item increased Cronbach's alpha from .76 to .80. The overall mean of the composite was 5.55 ($SD = .98$). It should also be noted that the scale's original 10-item form was comprised of 2 factors, in which the 5 items we retained loaded onto the first factor (the "shared experiences" component of identification) and the deleted item loaded onto the second factor (the "shared characteristics" component of identification) (Mael & Tetrick, 1992), providing further evidence that the deleted item may differ conceptually from the other items.

Core self-evaluations. Participants' core self-evaluations were assessed using Judge, Erez, Bono, and Thoresen's (2003) 12-item scale. A number of studies have demonstrated the construct validity and utility of using this measure (Bono & Judge, 2003; Gardner & Pierce, 2009). An example item is "When I try, I generally succeed." Responses were on a five-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*), and were averaged across the twelve items to create the core self-evaluation construct ($\alpha = .82$). The composite mean was 3.74 ($SD = .52$).

Covariates. To control for the possibility that other sociodemographic factors serve as resources (Hobfoll, 1989) and thus lead to spurious relationships between stressors and strain, the following variables were included as covariates: job type, gender, race, tenure, and status. Because two samples were merged for analyses, job type (development officers vs. student call-center employees) was included as a control. Job type may influence outcomes such that, as a service encounter rather than a service relationship, call center work may be more distressing and thus lead to more burnout and turnover intentions (Gutek et al., 1999). Gender and race have been related to strain (e.g., burnout) in past studies as well (Erickson & Ritter, 2001; Frone, Russell, & Barnes, 1996). In addition, tenure and status often reflect one's job experience, a conditions resource that would likely influence one's responses to stressor appraisals (Hobfoll, 1989, 2002). Tenure was measured according to number of years working in development for the development officers, and number of months working at the call center for the student employees. Development officers' tenure was converted into months prior to merging the samples. Status was assessed according to whether participants reported being a Director of Development (for development officer sample) or a trainer of other employees (for

student sample). Because job type and tenure were highly correlated ($r = .73$), and tenure has a different meaning for the development officers than for the student employees (career vs. part-time job), job type was included as a control for full sample analyses, and replaced with tenure when conducting subgroup analyses.

Analysis

Linear regression was used to test the hypotheses with the full sample. Before running the regressions, both independent variables (threat appraisal and opportunity appraisal) and the proposed moderators (CSE and organizational identification) were mean centered to increase interpretability and reduce the problem of multicollinearity (Aiken & West, 1991). For Hypotheses 1-6, the sociodemographic variables (job type, gender, race, tenure, and status) were entered in Step 1, as well as the self-concept variables (CSE and organizational identification) to be sure results were not due to response biases (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2011), the scandal appraisals in Step 2, and the interactions between scandal appraisals and self-concept variables in Step 3 (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Thus, Step 2 of the analyses tests the main proposed effects, and Step 3 tests the proposed interactions. To support the hypotheses, there should be a significant change in R^2 in step 2 (for the main effects, Hypotheses 1 and 2) and in step 3 (for the moderated effects, Hypotheses 3 – 6), and the beta coefficients for scandal appraisals and the interaction terms should be significant as well ($p < .05$). I also explored the moderating effects of CSE for the individual subsamples, as is discussed in more detail later.

For the exploratory question of how the combination of scandal-as-threat and scandal-as-opportunity appraisals relate to employee strain (burnout and turnover

intention), a linear regression analysis was run. Sociodemographic variables were entered in Step 1, scandal appraisals were entered in Step 2, and the interaction between threat appraisal and opportunity appraisal was entered in Step 3. The strain variables of burnout and turnover intention served as the dependent variables. If dual appraisals have a unique relationship with strain (above and beyond the main effects of threat and opportunity appraisals on burnout and turnover intention), then the interaction term should have significant beta coefficients and there should be a significant change in R^2 in Step 3.

Chapter 3

RESULTS

Table 4 presents means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations among study variables. The alpha coefficients shown on the diagonal range from .76 to .92. To compare means, standard deviations, and correlations across the two samples, an additional table was created presenting information for each variable according to job type (see Table 5).

Descriptive Analyses

Before hypothesis testing, I first describe the way that these fundraisers appraised the scandal and differences between samples using paired and independent-samples t tests. A paired t test between threat and opportunity appraisals revealed that fundraisers were more likely to agree that the scandal was an opportunity ($M = 4.86$, $SD = 1.10$) than a job threat ($M = 4.40$, $SD = 1.17$), $t(163) = 3.30$, $p < .01$. Comparing the two groups using independent-samples t tests, full-time development officers were more likely to perceive an opportunity ($M = 5.20$, $SD = .81$) than were the part-time student fundraisers ($M = 4.70$, $SD = 1.18$), $t(162) = 2.78$, $p < .01$, but the mean for development officers' threat appraisals ($M = 4.58$, $SD = 1.09$) did not differ from the mean for student employees' threat appraisals ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 1.20$), $t(162) = 1.41$, $p > .10$. In addition, the two groups did not differ on burnout, $t(163) = .79$, $p > .10$, turnover intentions, $t(163) = .30$, $p > .10$, organizational identification, $t(163) = 1.04$, $p > .10$, or CSE, $t(162)$

TABLE 4**Means, Standard Deviations, Reliability Estimates and Intercorrelations Among Study Variables**

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Job type	1.68	.47	—										
2. Gender	1.61	.49	-.09	—									
3. Racial minority	1.23	.42	-.31**	.03	—								
4. Tenure	43.95	74.80	.73**	-.12	-.23**	—							
5. Job status	1.22	.42	.48**	-.07	-.05	.57**	—						
6. Threat appraisal	4.40	1.17	.11	.15*	-.20**	.09	-.04	.82					
7. Opportunity appraisal	4.86	1.10	.21**	-.01	.11	.16*	.26**	-.24**	.76				
8. Burnout	3.63	1.27	-.06	.28**	.06	-.11	-.05	.25**	-.19*	.92			
9. Turnover intention	2.90	1.56	.02	.02	.09	.04	.01	.27**	-.32**	.35**	.88		
10. Organizational identification	5.55	.98	-.08	.02	.12	-.06	.06	.05	.15	.07	-.10	.80	
11. CSE	3.74	.52	.00	-.14	.12	-.04	.00	-.06	.10	-.35**	-.18*	.15	.82

Note. $N = 165$. Alpha coefficients for each scale are shown in italics on the diagonal. Job type (Student call center employees = 1, Development officers = 2); gender (men = 1, women = 2); racial minority (white = 1, non-white = 2); tenure was converted into number of months for both groups; job status (non-director/trainer = 1, director/trainer = 2). CSE was measured on a 5-pt Likert scale, all other variables were measured on a 7-pt scale.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

TABLE 5**Means, Standard Deviations, Reliability Estimates and Intercorrelations Among Study Variables Per Job Type**

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>M</i>	—	—	1.64	1.32	6.89	1.09	4.31	4.70	3.69	2.88	5.60	3.74
<i>SD</i>	—	—	.48	.47	8.70	.29	1.20	1.18	1.18	1.51	1.06	.52
1. Gender	1.54	.50	—	.04	-.17	-.02	.12	.13	.25**	-.02	.03	-.17
2. Racial minority	1.04	.19	-.22	—	.02	.12	-.22*	.20*	.05	.10	.10	.15
3. Tenure	124.46	90.40	-.09	-.01	—	.49**	-.03	.07	.07	.05	-.08	-.06
4. Job status	1.52	.50	-.04	.19	.42*	—	-.23*	.20*	.12	-.01	.04	-.06
5. Threat appraisal	4.58	1.09	.27	.04	.03	.04	—	-.31**	.22*	.23*	.01	.05
6. Opportunity appraisal	5.20	.81	-.34*	.04	-.01	.20	-.12	—	-.14	-.35*	.18	.08
7. Burnout	3.52	1.45	.33*	.06	-.15	-.17	.33*	-.32*	—	.24*	.09	-.25**
8. Turnover intention	2.96	1.66	.09	.13	.03	.01	.35*	-.31*	.55*	—	-.18	-.07
9. Organizational identification	5.43	.78	-.05	.12	.01	.28*	.20	.16	.00	.13	—	.20*
10. CSE	3.73	.51	-.09	.02	-.09	.09	-.31*	.15	-.55*	-.42*	.02	—

Note. Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations for development officer sample are shown below the diagonal, and means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations for student employee sample are shown above the diagonal. Gender (men = 1, women = 2); racial minority (white = 1, non-white = 2); tenure was converted into number of months for both groups; job status (non-director/trainer = 1, director/trainer = 2). CSE was measured on a 5-pt Likert scale, all other variables were measured on a 7-pt scale.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

= .04, $p > .10$. Descriptively, CSE and organizational identification were unrelated to the appraisals, minimizing the possibility that those appraisals were due to self-concept.

Test of Main Effects

Hypotheses posited that threat appraisals would be positively related to job burnout (1a) and turnover intentions (1b), while opportunity appraisals would be negatively related to job burnout (2a) and turnover intentions (2b). Table 6 presents the results of these analyses, controlling for demographic and self-concept variables. Both threat appraisal and opportunity appraisal were entered simultaneously in the regression, and these main effects entered in Step 2 explained a significant 6% ($p < .01$) of the variance in burnout, and a significant 16% ($p < .01$) of the variance in turnover intentions, above and beyond the variables entered in the first step. The beta coefficients revealed that scandal-as-threat appraisals were significantly and positively related to both burnout ($\beta = .19, p < .05$) and turnover intention ($\beta = .23, p < .01$). Scandal-as-opportunity appraisals were not significantly related to burnout, though approached the traditional threshold for significance testing, ($\beta = -.14, p < .10$), and were significantly related to turnover intention in the expected direction ($\beta = -.30, p < .01$).¹ This suggests that threat appraisal is more predictive for personal strain (i.e., burnout), while both threat and opportunity appraisals are relevant for explaining a desire to withdraw. Thus, while Hypothesis 2a was not supported, Hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 2b were supported.

¹ Analyses were run with and without self-concept variables. When self-concept variables were excluded in Step 1, opportunity appraisals were significantly and negatively related to burnout ($\beta = -.16, p < .05$). Conclusions for the remaining relationships did not change.

TABLE 6
Results of Moderated Regression Analyses Predicting Strain Using Scandal Appraisals and CSE

Variable	Dependent variable					
	Burnout			Turnover Intention		
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Step 1: Individual Differences						
Job type	.01	.02	.00	.06	.09	.08
Gender	.23**	.21**	.21**	.01	-.03	-.03
Racial minority	.10	.15*	.15	.12	.21*	.21*
Job status	-.04	.00	.00	.00	.07	.07
CSE	-.35**	-.34**	-.34**	-.18*	-.16*	-.16*
Organizational identification	.08	.08	.08	-.08	-.06	-.06
Step 2: Scandal Appraisals						
Threat appraisal		.19*	.17*		.23**	.22**
Opportunity appraisal		-.14 [†]	-.15 [†]		-.30**	-.30**
Step 3: Interactions						
Threat appraisal X CSE			-.10			-.10
Opportunity appraisal X CSE			-.15 [†]			-.07
Overall R^2	.21	.27	.29	.05	.21	.21
Change in R^2		.06**	.02		.16**	.01

Note. $N = 165$. Job type (Student call center employees = 1, Development officers = 2); gender (men = 1, women = 2); racial minority (white = 1, non-white = 2); tenure was converted into number of months for both groups; job status (non-director/trainer = 1, director/trainer = 2). CSE was measured on a 5-pt Likert scale, all other variables were measured on a 7-pt scale.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. [†] $p < .10$.

Moderation Analysis of CSE

Hypothesis 3 stated that CSE moderates the relationship of threat appraisal with burnout (3a) and with turnover intention (3b), and Hypothesis 4 stated that CSE moderates the relationship of opportunity appraisal with burnout (4a) and turnover intention (4b). As shown in Table 6, only the interaction between opportunity appraisal and CSE on burnout was approaching statistical significance ($\beta = -.15, p < .10$). Given the statistical power issues for detecting moderated relationships (Aguinis, 1995), I graphed the relationship to examine if the form of the interaction was in the predicted direction. The interaction is illustrated in Figure 2a, depicting separate appraisal–strain regression lines generated from the overall regression equation at one standard deviation above and below the mean level of the moderator, CSE (Aiken & West, 1991).

To further understand the interaction, a simple slopes analysis was conducted for each group. Results indicated that for high CSE individuals, the relationship between opportunity appraisal and burnout was significantly negative ($B = -.59, p < .01$), but the relationship was not significant among low CSE individuals ($B = -.27, p > .10$). Thus, Hypotheses 3a, 3b, 4a and 4b were not supported using traditional levels of significance, but the results of Hypothesis 4a were suggestive of the predicted ideas. Post hoc comparison of groups suggested that this interaction was primarily driven by the development officer sample, as the relationship was present for this group ($\beta = -.37, p < .05$) and non-existent for the student sample ($\beta = -.06, p > .10$) (see Table 7, and Figures 2b and 2c). Thus, perceiving the scandal as an opportunity is negatively related to burnout, but only for development officers with high CSE.

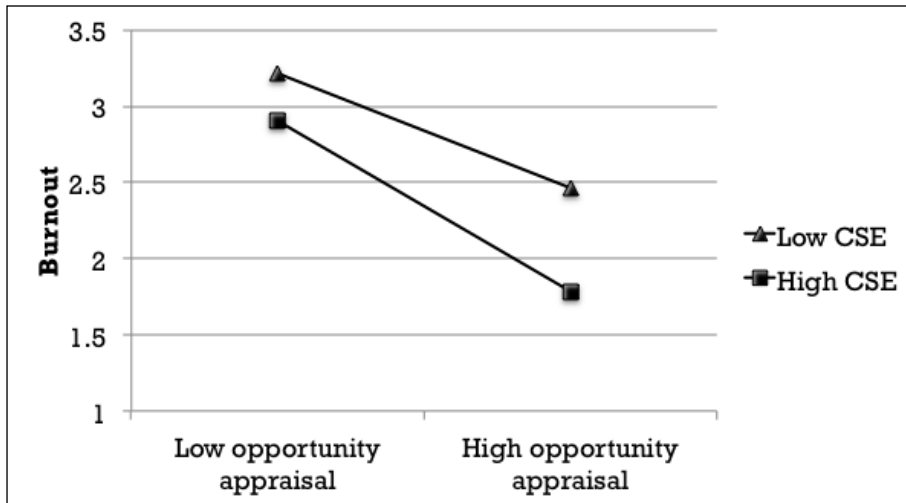


FIGURE 2a. Core self-evaluations (CSE) as a moderator of the relationship between opportunity appraisal and burnout for the full sample (N = 165).

To understand why CSE moderated the relationship between opportunity appraisal and burnout but not threat appraisal and burnout, additional analyses were conducted and are discussed in the exploratory analyses section.

Moderation Analysis of Organizational Identification

Hypotheses 5 and 6 proposed that organizational identification moderates the relationship between scandal appraisals and strain. Specifically, hypotheses posited that organizational identification would moderate the relationship of scandal-as-threat appraisal and scandal-as-opportunity appraisals with burnout (5a, 6a) and with turnover intention (5b, 6b). As shown in Table 8, regression analyses indicated that organizational identification did not moderate the relationship between threat appraisal and burnout ($\beta = -.09, p > .10$) or between threat appraisal and turnover intention ($\beta = .01, p > .10$). In addition, organizational identification did not moderate the relationship between opportunity appraisal and burnout ($\beta = -.05, p > .10$) or between opportunity appraisal and turnover intention ($\beta = .10, p > .10$). It should be noted that even when the two

TABLE 7**Results of Moderated Regression Analyses Predicting Strain Using Scandal Appraisals and CSE by Job Type**

Dependent variable: Burnout

Variable	Development Officers			Student Employees		
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Step 1: Individual Differences						
Gender	.30*	.22	.18	.23*	.21*	.21*
Racial minority	.15	.12	.13	.06	.13	.14
Tenure	-.14	-.16	-.14	.07	.04	.04
Job status	-.09	-.05	-.09	.07	.15	.14
CSE	-.53**	-.49**	-.21	-.24*	-.26**	-.26**
Organizational identification	.04	.03	.04	.10	.11	.11
Step 2: Scandal Appraisals						
Threat appraisal		.10	.10		.22*	.22*
Opportunity appraisal		-.16	-.20		-.15	-.15
Step 3: Interactions						
Threat appraisal X CSE			-.01			-.05
Opportunity appraisal X CSE			-.37*			-.06
Overall R^2	.44	.47	.53	.15	.23	.23
Change in R^2		.03	.06 [†]		.08**	.00

Note. $N = 52$. Gender (men = 1, women = 2); racial minority (white = 1, non-white = 2); tenure was converted into months; job status (non-director/trainer = 1, director/trainer = 2). CSE was measured on a 5-pt Likert scale, all other variables were measured on a 7-pt scale.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. [†] $p < .10$.

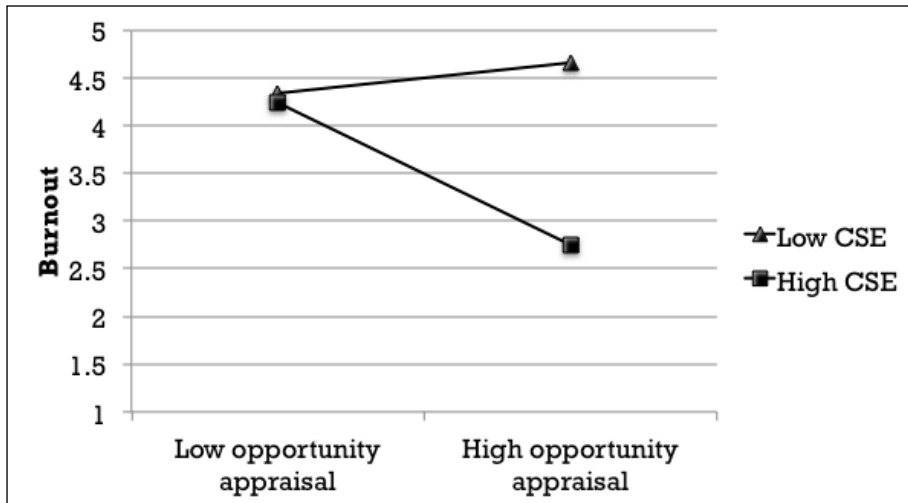


FIGURE 2b. Core self-evaluations (CSE) as a moderator of the relationship between opportunity appraisal and burnout for the development officer subgroup (N = 52).

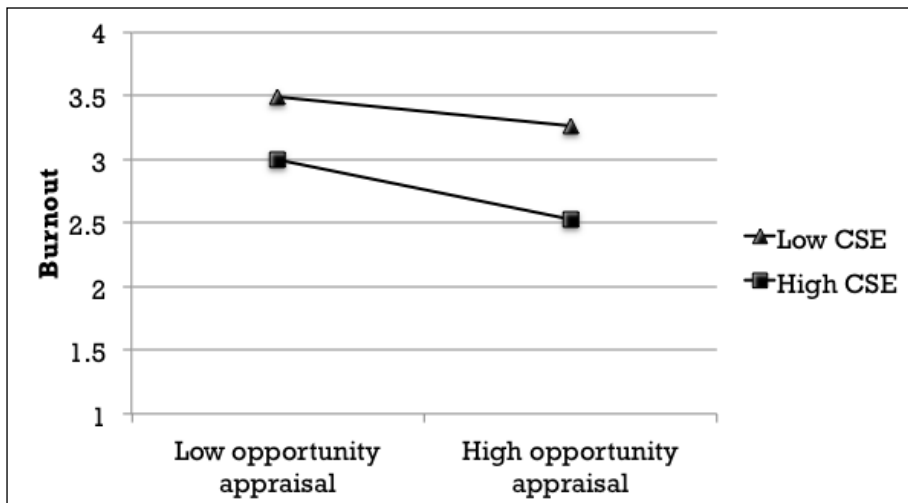


FIGURE 2c. Core self-evaluations (CSE) as a moderator of the relationship between opportunity appraisal and burnout for the student fundraiser subgroup (N = 113).

appraisals were tested separately, organizational identification did not moderate any of the relationships between appraisals and strain. Thus, results did not support Hypotheses 5 and 6.

TABLE 8
Results of Moderated Regression Analyses Predicting Strain Using Scandal Appraisals and Organizational Identification

Variable	Dependent variable					
	Burnout			Turnover Intention		
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Step 1: Individual Differences						
Job type	.01	.02	.02	.06	.09	.12
Gender	.23**	.21**	.20**	.01	-.03	-.02
Racial minority	.10	.15	.15	.12	.21*	.21**
Job status	-.04	.00	-.01	.00	.07	.05
CSE	-.35**	-.34**	-.34**	-.18*	-.16*	-.16*
Organizational identification	.08	.08	.08	-.08	-.06	-.02
Step 2: Scandal Appraisals						
Threat appraisal		.19*	.19*		.23**	.23**
Opportunity appraisal		-.14 [†]	-.14 [†]		-.30**	-.33**
Step 3: Interactions						
Threat appraisal X OI			-.09			.01
Opportunity appraisal X OI			-.05			.10
Overall R^2	.21	.27	.28	.05	.21	.21
Change in R^2		.06**	.01		.16**	.01

Note. $N = 165$. Job type (Student call center employees = 1, Development officers = 2); gender (men = 1, women = 2); racial minority (white = 1, non-white = 2); tenure was converted into number of months for both groups; job status (non-director/trainer = 1, director/trainer = 2). CSE was measured on a 5-pt Likert scale, all other variables were measured on a 7-pt scale. OI = organizational identification.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. [†] $p < .10$.

Exploratory Analysis

The exploratory question was posed as to whether combinations of threat and opportunity appraisals might have unique relationships with strain (i.e., burnout, turnover intention). Table 9 displays the results of the linear regression analyses for dual appraisals and strain. Results indicated that perceiving the scandal as both a threat and an opportunity (as opposed to one or the other) did not differentially affect burnout ($\beta = -.02$, $p > .10$) or turnover intentions ($\beta = .12$, $p > .10$). Thus, since perceptions of the scandal as a threat and opportunity uniquely and independently predict strain outcomes (see Step 2 of Table 9), it can be concluded that the perceptions function additively, not interactively, when predicting strain.

It should also be noted that when self-concept variables (CSE and organizational identification) are removed from analyses, both threat and opportunity appraisals uniquely and independently predict burnout (compare to Table 6 in which self-concept variables are included and only threat appraisal is significantly related to burnout). This suggests that the effect of opportunity appraisal on burnout may be partially driven by a positive sense of self overall, as controlling for self-concept indicates that threat appraisal is clearly the stronger predictor of burnout. Thus, knowing the extent that one sees the scandal as a threat and as an opportunity together explains more variance than knowing just one alone. More specifically, knowing just one's threat appraisal explains a significant 14% ($p < .01$) of the variance in burnout, above and beyond the demographic factors included in Table 8. When opportunity appraisal is included in this analysis, a significant additional 2% ($p < .05$) of the variance in burnout is accounted for.

TABLE 9
Results of Exploratory Moderated Regression Analyses Predicting Strain Outcomes of Dual Appraisals

Variable	Dependent variable					
	Burnout			Turnover Intention		
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Control variables						
Job type	-.01	.00	.00	.07	.10	.08
Gender	.28**	.26**	.26**	.02	-.01	-.01
Racial minority	.06	.12	.12	.10	.19*	.19*
Job status	-.03	.02	.02	-.01	.07	.08
Independent variables						
Threat appraisal		.19*	.20**		.22**	.21**
Opportunity appraisal		-.16*	-.16 [†]		-.33*	-.34**
Interactions						
Threat appraisal X Opportunity appraisal			-.02			.12
Overall R^2	.09	.16	.16	.01	.18	.19
Change in R^2		.07**	.00		.17**	.01

Note. $N = 165$. Job type (Student call center employees = 1, Development officers = 2); gender (men = 1, women = 2); racial minority (white = 1, non-white = 2); tenure was converted into number of months for both groups; job status (non-director/trainer = 1, director/trainer = 2). CSE was measured on a 5-pt Likert scale, all other variables were measured on a 7-pt scale.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. [†] $p < .10$.

Post-Hoc Analyses

Given the lack of hypothesized moderating effects, I explored two possible ways that these same variables may impact strain outcomes. First, I examined whether CSE has a curvilinear relationship with threat appraisal, which would then explain the non-significant results for the linear moderating effects. Second, I examined whether CSE only moderates the relationship between threat appraisals and strain when opportunity appraisals are also considered, and thus tested the 3-way interaction between the two appraisals and CSE on strain outcomes.

Because CSE did not significantly moderate the relationships between scandal appraisal and burnout (although it approached significance for opportunity appraisal and burnout), it was examined whether CSE might have a curvilinear relationship with threat. For example, it is possible that people with very high levels of CSE would be especially vulnerable to a threat because it jeopardizes their inflated sense of self and belief that they can control what happens to them. A similar argument has been made that individuals with high self-esteem are especially likely to engage in aggressive behaviors in response to an ego threat because it challenges the positive view of oneself (Baumeister, Smart, & Boden, 1996). The curvilinear relationship of CSE was tested using linear regression in which sociodemographic variables were entered in the first step, threat appraisal and CSE were entered in the second step, the transformation of CSE into its quadratic form (CSE^2) was entered in the third step, and the interaction between threat appraisal and CSE^2 was entered in the fourth step (see Table 10). As neither CSE^2 nor the interaction term was significant, and there was no significant change in R^2 for

either Step 3 or Step 4, there was no evidence for a curvilinear relationship between CSE and threat appraisal.

Additionally, because CSE interacted with opportunity to reduce strain (burnout), but nothing interacted with threat to reduce strain, a second post-hoc analysis was run to explore the possibility that in order for CSE to reduce strain following a threat appraisal, a combination of characteristics may be necessary. That is, perhaps CSE only moderates the threat appraisal–strain relationship when an opportunity appraisal is also present. To test this idea, linear regression was used to examine the 3-way interaction between threat appraisal, opportunity appraisal, and CSE (see Table 11). Results of the regression analyses failed to support the prediction that a combination of characteristics moderates the threat appraisal–strain relationships, as the beta coefficients for the 3-way interactions were non-significant for both burnout ($\beta = -.05, p > .10$) and turnover intentions ($\beta = -.05, p > .10$).

TABLE 10
Results of Exploratory Moderated Regression Analyses Examining CSE as Curvilinear

Variable	Dependent variable							
	Burnout				Turnover Intention			
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Step 1								
Job type	-.08	-.02	-.02	-.03	.07	.04	.04	.03
Gender	.29**	.20**	.20**	.20**	.03	-.05	-.05	-.05
Racial minority	.06	.15	.15*	.15	.08	.16*	.16	.16
Job status	-.02	-.01	-.01	-.01	-.01	.02	.02	.01
Step 2								
Threat appraisal		.23**	.23**	.23**		.29**	.29**	.29**
CSE		-.34**	.01	.00		-.19*	-.57	-.57
Step 3								
CSE ²			-.35	-.35			.38	.38
Step 4								
Threat x CSE ²				-.01				-.04
Overall <i>R</i> ²	.09	.25	.25	.25	.01	.12	.12	.13
Change in <i>R</i> ²		.16**	.00	.00		.11**	.00	.00

Note. *N* = 165. Job type (Student call center employees = 1, Development officers = 2); gender (men = 1, women = 2); racial minority (white = 1, non-white = 2); tenure was converted into number of months for both groups; job status (non-director/trainer = 1, director/trainer = 2). CSE was measured on a 5-pt Likert scale, all other variables were measured on a 7-pt scale.

* *p* < .05. ** *p* < .01.

TABLE 11
Results of Exploratory Moderated Regression Analyses Examining the Three-Way Interaction Between Appraisals and CSE

Variable	Dependent variable							
	Burnout				Turnover Intention			
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Control variables								
Job type	-.01	.00	-.01	-.01	.07	.10	.08	.08
Gender	.29**	.21**	.21**	.21**	.03	-.03	-.03	-.02
Racial minority	.06	.16*	.16*	.16*	.08	.20*	.20*	.20*
Status	-.02	.01	.01	.01	-.01	.06	.07	.07
Independent variables								
Threat appraisal		.20**	.19*	.19*		.22**	.20**	.21**
Opportunity appraisal		-.13 [†]	-.13 [†]	-.13 [†]		-.31**	-.33**	-.33**
CSE		-.33**	-.34**	-.35**		-.17*	-.16*	-.18*
2-way interactions								
Threat appraisal x CSE			-.10	-.10			-.10	-.09
Opportunity appraisal x CSE			-.15 [†]	-.13			-.07	-.04
Threat appraisal x Opportunity appraisal			-.57	-.04			.11	.11
3-way interaction								
Threat x Opportunity x CSE				-.05				-.05
Overall R^2	.09	.26	.28	.28	.01	.20	.22	.22
Change in R^2		.17**	.02	.00		.19**	.02	.00

Note. $N = 165$. Job type (Student call center employees = 1, Development officers = 2); gender (men = 1, women = 2); racial minority (white = 1, non-white = 2); tenure was converted into number of months for both groups; job status (non-director/trainer = 1, director/trainer = 2). CSE was measured on a 5-pt Likert scale, all other variables were measured on a 7-pt scale.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. [†] $p < .10$.

Chapter 4

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine how appraisals of an organizational scandal relate to individual and organizational strain for frontline workers, and how one's self-concept may influence these relationships. Support was found for three of the four hypothesized direct relationships of scandal appraisals and strain, and although none of the moderated relationships met the traditional levels of significance, the moderated relationship of CSE on opportunity appraisal and burnout was approaching traditional significance levels. Consideration of these results and suggestions for future research is discussed below.

Summary of Results

Consistent with past literature and the hypotheses, scandal-as-threat appraisals were related to more strain while scandal-as-opportunity appraisals were related to less strain. The more that fundraisers appraised the scandal as a threat to their ability to perform their job and to build relationships with alumni/donors, the greater their likelihood to experience burnout and report stronger turnover intentions. At the same time, the more they appraised the scandal as an opportunity to grow and develop professionally, the less they were inclined to leave the organization. Interestingly, opportunity appraisals were not significantly related to less burnout, indicating that while positive appraisals may motivate employees to remain with the stigmatized organization, these employees may not necessarily be protected from exhaustion. So although these

findings are consistent with the existing research on the relationship between threat appraisals and undesirable outcomes (Tomaka et al., 1993; Webster et al., 2011), the results suggest that opportunity appraisals of organizational scandals may not be as effective at reducing personal strain (i.e., burnout) as they are for common or chronic workplace stressors (Tomaka et al., 1993).

More importantly, the present study demonstrates the importance of considering individual appraisals of a stressor rather than the presence or absence of a stressor. All fundraisers in this study experienced the same stressor (i.e., the scandal) at the same point in time, yet there was still variability in how fundraisers appraised the scandal and, as a result, the ensuing strain. This finding is in line with the transactional theory of stress (Lazarus, 1966; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) and the COR model (Hobfoll, 1989) in that it provides support for the argument that it is the appraisal of the stressor, not the stressor per se, that influences strain outcomes and therefore it is inappropriate to study stressors irrespective of taking into account individual perceptions (Fang & Baba, 2003; Webster et al., 2011).

This study also builds on the scandal and stressor appraisal literatures by considering the role of both general and work-specific self-concept. As a multi-dimensional construct, a person's self-concept is composed of a number of characteristics and identities, therefore it makes sense conceptually that different aspects of self-concept will function in different ways (Marsh, 1990). This study examined two aspects of self-concept (CSE and organizational identification) and found that there is, in fact, variation across different components of self-concept. Although others have looked at the role of CSE within the appraisal–strain relationship, this study is unique in that it looked at the

effect of general self-concept (i.e., CSE) beyond the effect of work-contingent self-concept (i.e., organizational identification), and considered a particular acute workplace stressor rather than the more commonly studied chronic workplace stressors.

Threat and Opportunity Appraisals of Scandal

It was noted earlier that organizational scandals differ from common workplace stressors in that they are more acute, atypical, and public. Therefore it is interesting that despite the severe and unfamiliar nature of scandals employees were still able to appraise the scandal as an opportunity and to see the potential for good in the situation. In fact, on average fundraisers appraised the scandal as more of an opportunity than a threat to their job, and development officers had higher opportunity appraisals than student employees. One potential explanation for the higher opportunity appraisals, especially among the development officers, comes from the aforementioned interviews (Grandey & Slezak, 2013). It was learned from the interviews that the development officers' leaders had communicated the opportunity to positively represent Penn State and develop relationships. This instruction to adopt a positive lens may have accounted for their high opportunity appraisals as well as the non-significant relationship between opportunity appraisal and burnout. That is, being told to perceive something (in this case, the scandal) as an opportunity may function differently and have different outcomes than naturally doing so by choice.

It is noteworthy that self-concept was unrelated to scandal appraisals, as this is in opposition to what the COR model would suggest (Hobfoll, 1989), and that different variables were uniquely related to each appraisal. Specifically, gender and race were related to threat appraisals in that women and white employees were more likely to

appraise the scandal as a threat; and job type, tenure, and job status were related to opportunity appraisals in that development officers and those with more job experience (i.e., tenure and status) were more likely to appraise the scandal as an opportunity. This suggests that while social status-related resources are related to threat appraisals, job-related resources (e.g., tenure, job status) may not benefit employees in terms of threat appraisals, perhaps because of the unique context of the scandal as an acute, unfamiliar stressor.

Moreover, it would seem that something as severe and unfamiliar as an organizational scandal would surely be a highly threatening situation for employees, but results suggest that employees were able to see the silver lining even within such a context. Hobfoll (1989) notes that “one way individuals may conserve resources is by reinterpreting threat as challenge” (p. 519); thus focusing on the good that may come from the scandal may have been an effort to conserve valued resources (e.g., employment, self-esteem). The fact that development officers viewed the scandal as more of an opportunity than student employees suggests that certain resources, such as tenure and job experience, may enable employees to see the occasion for positive outcomes during trials via appraisal and coping processes (Hobfoll, 2002; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In addition, development officers may have been more motivated to interpret the scandal as an opportunity due to the fact that fundraising is their career, whereas for student employees fundraising is only their part-time job; thus the students may have perceived less of a need to engage in the reappraisal process in order to maintain positive feelings about their work. Finally, perhaps the relational and sensemaking nature of the

fundraising role makes favorable appraisals easier and more accessible, which is more prevalent for development officers than it is for student employees.

Moderating Role of CSE

Within the COR framework, positive self-concept functions as a personal characteristics resource that should help employees maintain healthy levels of well-being and motivate them to adopt approach-oriented work-related goals (Hobfoll, 1989; Ferris et al., 2011). Indeed, for the present sample of development officers high core self-evaluations enhanced the positive effect of opportunity appraisals on burnout, indicating that employees were able to draw on their positive self-concept resource to retain energy levels while pursuing the opportunity. While effective for burnout, CSE did not have an enhancement effect for turnover intentions for either of the two subsamples. It is possible that CSE did not play a role in the opportunity appraisal–turnover intention relationship because once employees appraised the scandal as having the potential to provide opportunities for growth and development, employees preferred to remain with the organization regardless of whether they had high or low CSE. The strong correlation between opportunity appraisals and turnover intention for the present sample indicates that this may have been the case. The relationship between opportunity appraisal and burnout was weaker, suggesting that other variables are affecting this relationship, such as CSE.

Moreover, the particular context of an organizational scandal may be especially important. Turnover intention reflects a cognition about a potential future behavior (i.e., to remain with or leave the current organization as a way to conserve resources) whereas burnout represents an already present emotional or physical state. Because individuals

with high CSE are more optimistic and respond adaptively to organizational change (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2011; Judge et al., 1999), they may be best equipped to make the most of opportunities and conserve their energy in the process. The COR model recognizes self-esteem as a personal characteristics resource, supporting the notion that high CSE individuals have a larger resource reservoir from which to draw from (Hobfoll, 1989). However, CSE may be less influential on turnover intentions during a time of scandal because other factors are being cognitively taken into account and weighed. For example, an employee may perceive the scandal as an opportunity for growth, but the decision to remain with or leave the organization will ultimately depend on how the organization responds to the scandal, or how long the scandal remains in the public eye. Other factors that may influence whether an employee intends to quit his or her current job after an organizational scandal include overall and occupational unemployment (Hom, Caranikas-Walker, Prussia, & Griffeth, 1992) and social influences, such as the opinion of a significant other (Prestholdt, Lane, & Mathews, 1987). Thus, although withdrawing from the organization may appear to conserve resources, it may actually lead to further resource loss (e.g., if overall and occupational unemployment rates are high and the likelihood of finding a new job is low) or threaten other valued resources (e.g., personal relationships, as with one's spouse).

Although partial support was found for the hypothesis that CSE would moderate the relationship between scandal-as-opportunity appraisals and strain, there was no evidence to support the hypothesis that CSE moderated the relationship between scandal-as-threat appraisals and strain. If high CSE has an enhancement effect for opportunity appraisals, why does it not also buffer the deleterious effect of threat appraisals? Perhaps

there comes a point at which having too high of a core self-evaluation actually becomes harmful to the individual. Just as having too high of self-esteem may lead to negative outcomes in response to an ego threat (Baumeister, Smart, & Boden, 1996), individuals with high CSE may be especially vulnerable to the effects of threat appraisals because the threat contradicts their preconceived notions of superior worth and ability to control their environment (Janoff-Bulman & Brickman, 1982). Based on these arguments, CSE may have a curvilinear relationship with threat such that a moderate level of CSE is optimal for coping with and overcoming a threatening situation, but low and high levels of CSE are maladaptive during a threat. This idea was tested in post hoc analyses, but results failed to support the prediction. Perhaps other aspects of self-concept, such as organization-based self-esteem (Pierce, Gardner, Cummings, & Dunham, 1989), or different traits (e.g., conscientiousness, openness to experience), buffer the strain that accompanies threat appraisals.

It was also examined whether CSE might only reduce strain following a threat appraisal if a combination of characteristics is present, such as both high CSE and high opportunity appraisal. A 3-way interaction between threat appraisal, opportunity appraisal, and CSE was tested in post hoc analyses, but results failed to support this prediction. Because CSE represents a level of self-concept (Ferris et al, 2009), it is possible that the relatively small number of participants combined with participants' tendency to rate highly on the CSE scale (91% of participants fell above the midpoint of the scale) created a lack of variability that is necessary to detect a 3-way interaction. Alternatively, the fact that threat appraisals were more predictive than opportunity appraisals on burnout, especially when accounting for self-concept, may explain

opportunity appraisals' lack of effect within the 3-way interaction. Future research could further explore the possibility of 3-way interactions, pairing CSE and threat appraisals with other generally positive characteristics such as social support and approach-oriented goal orientations.

Moderating Role of Organizational Identification

The present study also considered organizational identification as an aspect of self-concept that may moderate the scandal appraisal–strain relationships. Whereas CSE reflects one's general positive or negative self-concept, organizational identification reflects the extent to which the view of oneself is linked to the organization (Ferris et al., 2009). Because this aspect of self-concept is contingent on the attributes and perceptions of the organization, it was expected that organizational identification would function differently from CSE in that it may serve as both a resource *and* a liability during a scandal. Specifically, it was proposed that for threat appraisals, identification would be both a resource and a liability as highly identified members would experience more burnout but have lower turnover intentions than their less identified counterparts; for opportunity appraisals, identification would function solely as a resource as highly identified members would experience less strain overall. However, results failed to support these predictions. It is interesting that organizational identification was unrelated to any of the other variables in the study, and also did not influence the strength of the relationships between appraisals and strain. Considering the nature of organizational scandals and the complexity of having one's sense of self so closely tied to a threatened organization may provide insights into why results did not support the hypotheses.

First, it is likely that the severity and public nature of an organizational scandal makes organizational identification less relevant for strain outcomes. Even though some employees may identify less with the organization, all are still members of that organization. As Ellemers and colleagues (2002) stipulate, unless people can hide their group membership, “members of stigmatized groups are likely to be chronically treated in terms of their devalued group membership, regardless of their group commitment. Thus, it would be misleading to assume that low group commitment is always sufficient to protect the individual self from negative group identities” (p. 174). That is, during a time of scandal employees who are less identified with the organization are not necessarily protected from the strain that results from threat appraisals (i.e., burnout), because outsiders view and treat all members of the organization in the same way.

In addition, the fact that identification did not influence the relationship between appraisals and strain suggests that identification with a group may not be as relevant to relationships between individual-level variables during a time of scandal. For example, perceiving the scandal as an opportunity for *personal* growth and development conserved one’s *personal* energy, and thus the level of identification with the organization was not relevant to this relationship. Perhaps other individual-level moderators would be more influential, such as perceived social support or goal orientation (Hobfoll, 1989; Naidoo, DeCriscio, Bily, Manipella, Ryan, & Youdim, 2012). The finding that CSE moderated the relationship between opportunity appraisals and burnout supports this proposition. Moreover, perhaps organizational identification would have been more effective for other work-related outcomes, such as performance or job satisfaction. This idea is similar to that of resource-environment fit (French, Caplan, & Van Harrison, 1982; French,

Rodgers, & Cobb, 1974), in which the value of a resource depends on the context.

According to this view, although identification may be a resource in some situations (e.g., daily workplace interactions and performance), it may be ineffective or inconsequential within the context of a scandal, due to the severity and aberrancy of the situation.

It is also possible that highly identifying with a threatened organization may mean different things for different employees. For some employees, being highly identified may also mean increased work motivation and a desire to “stick together” during a time of threat (Ellemers et al., 1997; Van Knippenberg, 2000). Such a reaction would likely also be related to lower turnover intentions in response to a scandal appraisal and perhaps more burnout as they continue to expend energy in their effort to expand resources.

However, other highly identified employees may see the threat to the organization as a threat to their positive self-concept. Where they were once able to bask-in-the-reflected-glory of their organization and enhance their positive sense of self (Cialdini et al., 1976), they are no longer able to draw on this identification to bolster their self-concept. In an effort to maintain their positive self-concept and conserve resources, self-consistency theory (Korman, 1970, 1976) suggests that members may be motivated to distance themselves emotionally and physically from the stigmatized organization. In essence, these individuals would engage in cutting-off-reflected-failure (CORFing) to protect their own ego (Wann & Branscombe, 1990), which would ultimately mean lower burnout and higher turnover. Thus, if reactions to organizational scandal vary between and within low- and high-identified members, then it makes sense that identification does not have a clear relationship with strain outcomes or serve to moderate appraisal–strain relationships.

Finally, it is possible that identification did not have an effect because of the nature of this particular sample. The overall mean for organizational identification was 5.6 on a response scale of 1-7 ($SD = .98$), and responses were negatively skewed (-1.24). Theoretically then, those who were considered low in identification were actually moderate in identification, and those who were truly low were underrepresented. If values had been more variable and normally distributed, identification may have been more influential. Because organizational identification reflects the extent to which one's sense of self is linked to the organization, and is neither positive nor negative in itself (Ferris et al., 2009), the lack of variability in responses limits the ability to determine how strength of identification influences the scandal appraisal–strain relationship. That is, organizational identification's function as a resource (or liability) is dependent on the strength of that identification, not the mere presence or absence of it.

Dual Appraisals

In addition to the hypotheses, the question was explored as to how employees respond differently if the scandal is appraised as both a threat and an opportunity (i.e., a “dual appraisal”) or neither in terms of strain outcomes. However, no relationships were found between dual appraisals and strain outcomes. This is surprising given the extensive findings that negative events or states tend to outweigh positive events or states (Baumeister et al., 2001). Had this effect been present, then employees who appraised the scandal as both a threat and an opportunity should have experienced more strain since the negative effects of the threat appraisal would have superseded the positive effects of the opportunity appraisal. The fact that results failed to support the unique role of dual

appraisals suggests that the individual appraisals function independently of one another, and ultimately have an additive effect on strain.

Implications and Avenues for Future Research

The findings of this study offer both practical and theoretical implications, as well as a number of avenues for future research. In terms of practical implications, the results suggest that employees and managers can make the best of an organizational scandal or threat by focusing on the way they appraise the situation. Because a single stressor can be appraised in more than one way, and the present study demonstrates the unique effects that appraisals have on strain outcomes, managers can encourage employees to engage in sensemaking - the process of organizing and interpreting information in order to take action (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005) – by looking for the silver lining in stressful situations in order to reduce both individual and organizational strain. Since employees differ in how they perceive a scandal or severe threat, additional steps may be taken to ameliorate the deleterious effects of threat appraisals. For example, Webster and colleagues (2011) recommend “employers and practitioners...tailor stress interventions based on individual employee cognitions” (p. 514), thereby more effectively addressing employees’ concerns and reducing strain.

In the present study, threat and opportunity appraisals had unique, non-overlapping correlates. Gender and race correlated with scandal-as-threat appraisals; specifically, women and white employees were more likely to appraise the scandal as a threat than were men and non-whites. In contrast, job type, tenure, and status were related to opportunity appraisals, in that the development officers and those with longer tenure and higher status were more likely to appraise the scandal as an opportunity. Managers

can use such knowledge to identify which employees may be most at risk for perceiving threats in their environment (i.e., women and whites), as well as which employees may be best equipped to help co-workers reappraise stressful situations, such as those with more job experience. In addition, if certain aspects of self-concept enable employees to make the best of a situation or overcome new obstacles (such as CSE's enhancement effect with opportunity appraisals on burnout), then managers can screen and select for such characteristics during the hiring process.

Theoretically, results of the present study support the argument that appraisals of stressors must be considered when studying stressor-strain relationships because they provide unique information above and beyond measuring the mere presence of a workplace stressor (Fang & Baba, 1993; Webster et al., 2011). All participants of the present study experienced the same stressor (i.e., the scandal) at the same point in time; therefore it is noteworthy that they varied both in terms of how they appraised the scandal (threat vs. opportunity vs. a combination) and the extent to which they experienced burnout and reported intentions to leave their current job. It is also interesting that threat appraisals were not related to job experience (i.e., tenure, status), but were related to demographic characteristics (i.e., gender, race). Future research should examine additional correlates of threat and opportunity appraisals (e.g., age, positive/negative affectivity, social support) as well as how stressor appraisals relate to non-strain outcomes, such as in-role and extra-role behaviors.

The fact that organizational identification has been considered a beneficial characteristic for both employees and organizations alike (Riketta, 2005; Van Knippenberg, 2000), but failed to either buffer the negative effects of threat appraisals or

enhance the positive effects of opportunity appraisals suggests that either identification should not be considered a resource or that it may only function as a resource under certain circumstances. In the case of the latter, more attention should be paid to the resource-environment fit model when conceptualizing organizational identification's role within Hobfoll's (1989) COR model (French et al., 1982; French et al., 1974). Just as examining the effects of stressors without considering individual appraisals is too simplistic, classifying a characteristic, trait, or object as a resource without considering its particular context offers at best a superficial understanding, and at worst a misguided and inaccurate understanding of that resource.

Like organizational identification, CSE also did not buffer the effects of threat appraisals on employee strain, although past research has found that individuals with high CSE experience less strain and are more resilient (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2011; Kammeyer-Mueller, Judge, & Scott, 2009). While past studies have concluded that high CSE buffers the negative effects of stressors, the fact that this was not the case in the present study suggests that CSE's buffering effect may depend on the type of stressor. That is, perhaps CSE is more influential for chronic stressors and strain (see Best et al., 2005) than it is for acute stressors – such as scandals – and strain. Thus, future research should continue examining the specific contexts in which aspects of self-concept may improve or harm employee well-being, as well as how best to capitalize on these resources when they are beneficial or suppress their influence when they become detrimental.

Limitations

Like any study, the current study is not without its limitations. There are three primary methodological limitations. First, all data was collected via self-report measures, and therefore common method variance may have impacted the results (Spector, 1987). While this explanation cannot be completely rejected, it is unlikely that common method variance was responsible for the moderated relationship. In addition, the cross-sectional nature of the data does not allow for any causal inferences to be drawn. Although it logically makes sense that scandal appraisals lead to strain outcomes (and past research has used longitudinal designs to establish the causal order of stressor appraisals and strain; e.g., Cavanaugh et al., 2000; Dekker & Schaeufeli, 1995), a longitudinal assessment of scandal appraisals and strain would provide a more rigorous and informational testing of the hypotheses. As a result, researchers wishing to study these and related stress appraisal–strain relationships should consider using both subjective and objective measures (e.g., actual turnover vs. turnover intentions), or collecting data at multiple time points.

A second limitation is the lack of variability of organizational identification, which may also explain why identification did not moderate the scandal appraisal–strain relationships as hypothesized. The mean for identification was relatively high (5.6 on a 7-pt Likert scale), therefore there was not a sufficient range in employees' identification levels (i.e., weakly identified employees were underrepresented, and thus those who were considered 'low' in identification in this sample were actually 'moderate' in identification). The lack of variability is most likely due to the nature of the sample rather than the scale itself. The scale's reliability has been demonstrated in past research (Mael

& Ashforth, 1992; Mael & Tetrick, 1992), with means closer to the middle of the scale indicating a more centered range of responses (Van Knippenberg & Van Schie, 2000). The fact that participants self-selected into frontline jobs at Penn State, a university known for its members' school spirit, pride, and loyalty, creates actual range restriction, not just artifactual. Within such a culture, it is not surprising that development officers and student employees felt a strong sense of identification with the University. However, studies using samples with more variability in identification may be better equipped to detect hypothesized moderated relationships that were not found in the present study.

In addition to a lack of variability in organizational identification, there is also a potential lack of statistical power for detecting relationships in general, especially the moderated relationships. Aguinis et al. (2001) explains that even if an effect exists for a population, having low statistical power may lead researchers to conclude that no such interaction exists. This may have been the case for the present study such that the relatively small number of participants ($N = 165$) precluded the ability to detect significant moderated relationships.

A final limitation is the generalizability of results due to the fact that the sample consisted solely of fundraisers from a single university. Although fundraisers were selected based on their representation of frontline service employees, and have been considered an ideal population for studying issues regarding identity (Meisenbach, 2008), it is unclear how other (i.e., non-fundraiser) frontline employees would have appraised and responded to the organizational scandal, or how fundraisers from other universities may differ in a similar situation. Future research should examine how employees across

different frontline service jobs vary in their experiences with scandal or threat, as well as the individual and contextual factors that influence these experiences.

Conclusion

This study provided support for the prediction that even with the same event occurring to all, scandal appraisals have unique outcomes in terms of personal and organizational strain, and limited support for the prediction that self-concept would influence these relationships. Three of the four hypothesized main effects were significant, but only one of the hypothesized interactions approached traditional significance levels. These findings suggest that appraisals of workplace events (in particular, severe stressors such as scandals) have a unique influence on employees' burnout and turnover intentions above and beyond the actual stressor itself, and that acute workplace stressors differ from chronic workplace stressors in important ways. Thus, how people think about a situation matters for well-being and work outcomes. Additionally, self-concept may serve as a resource (Hobfoll, 1989) by enhancing the benefits of more optimistic appraisals (as was the case for CSE and opportunity appraisals on burnout), but other individual and contextual factors are worth considering to better understand the relationship between appraisals and strain.

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Appendix

Measures

Threat and Opportunity Appraisals (Study 1) (t = threat appraisal, o = opportunity appraisal)

1. A factor that limits my ability to perform my job (t)
2. An opportunity to learn and grow professionally (o)
3. A chance to build even stronger relationships with donors (o)
4. An opportunity to obtain even more donations for PSU students (o)
5. An unusually frustrating work condition (t)
6. An opportunity to develop new relationships with our alumni (o)
7. A situation that threatens my relationships with donors (t)
8. A hindrance to developing new relationships with alumni (t)
9. A constraint against obtaining funding for PSU students (t)

Threat and Opportunity Appraisals (Study 2) (t = threat appraisal, o = opportunity appraisal)

1. A factor that limits my ability to perform my job (t)
2. An opportunity to learn and grow professionally (o)
3. A chance to build even stronger relationships with alumni (o)
4. An opportunity to obtain even more donations for PSU students (o)
5. An unusually frustrating work condition (t)
6. An opportunity to develop stronger relationships with the PSU community (o)
7. A situation that threatens my ability to raise money (t)
8. A hindrance to developing new relationships with alumni (t)
9. A factor that works against my obtaining funds for PSU students (t)

Burnout (Shirom, 1989)

1. I feel tired
2. I have no energy for going to work in the morning
3. I feel physically drained
4. I feel fed up
5. I feel like my “batteries” are “dead”
6. I feel burned out

Turnover intention (Cropanzano, James, & Konovsky, 1993)

1. I will look for a new job in the near future
2. I often think about quitting my current job
3. If possible, I would like to get a new job soon

Organizational identification (modified from Mael & Ashforth, 1992)

1. When someone criticizes Penn State, it feels like a personal insult.
2. I am very interested in what others think about Penn State.
3. When I talk about Penn State, I usually say “we” rather than “they”
4. Penn State’s successes are my successes
5. When someone praises Penn State, it feels like a personal compliment

Core self-evaluations (Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2003)

1. I am confident I get the success I deserve in life
2. Sometimes I feel depressed (R)
3. When I try, I generally succeed
4. Sometimes when I fail I feel worthless (R)
5. I complete tasks successfully
6. Sometimes, I do not feel in control of my work (R)
7. Overall, I am satisfied with myself
8. I am filled with doubts about my competence (R)
9. I determine what will happen in my life
10. I do not feel in control of my success in my career (R)
11. I am capable of coping with most of my problems
12. There are times when things look pretty bleak and hopeless to me (R)