Journal of Applied Psychology
2017, Vol. 102, No. 12, 1658–1672

0021-9010/17/$12.00 http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/apl0000247

Rude Color Glasses: The Contaminating Effects of Witnessed Morning Rudeness on Perceptions and Behaviors Throughout the Workday

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Using an experimental experience sampling design, we investigate how witnessing morning rudeness influences workers' subsequent perceptions and behaviors throughout the workday. We posit that a single exposure to rudeness in the morning can contaminate employees' perceptions of subsequent social interactions leading them to perceive greater workplace rudeness throughout their workday. We expect that these contaminated perceptions will have important ramifications for employees' work behaviors. In a 10-day study of 81 professional and managerial employees, we find that witnessed morning rudeness leads to greater perceptions of workplace rudeness throughout the workday and that those perceptions, in turn, predict lower task performance and goal progress and greater interaction avoidance and psychological withdrawal. We also find that the contaminating effect of morning rudeness depends on core self-evaluations (CSE)—employees high (vs. low) in CSE are affected less by exposure to morning rudeness. We discuss implications for practice and theory.

Keywords: rudeness, ESM, core self-evaluations, perceptions, primary appraisal

Rudeness, defined as "insensitive or disrespectful behavior enacted by a person that displays a lack of regard for others" (Porath & Erez, 2007, p. 1181), seems to be everywhere in the workplace. A recent article suggested that 98% of workers have experienced rudeness while at work, and 50% of workers report experiencing these behaviors at least weekly (Porath & Pearson, 2013). Despite being low in intensity (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Porath & Erez, 2007) rudeness has been shown to be very harmful, having been specifically linked to impaired performance in a variety of organizational contexts (Chen, Ferris, Kwan, Yan, Zhou, & Hong, 2013; Rafaeli, Erez, Ravid, Derfler-Rozin, Treister, & Scheyer, 2012; Sliter, Sliter, & Jex, 2012). Indeed, highlighting the destructive nature of rudeness, recent evidence suggests that even a mild rude incident can severely harm the performance of medical professionals, increasing the probability of fatal consequences for patients (Riskin et al., 2015, 2017).

Recognizing its impact on the lives of organizational actors, scholars have devoted considerable attention to understanding workplace rudeness (see Schilpzand, de Pater, & Erez, 2016 for a review). To date this literature has primarily conceptualized rudeness as an isolated event, studying it in a "snapshot-like" fashion (George & Jones, 2000, p. 666). Although the study of rudeness as an isolated event has uncovered important evidence on how harmful rudeness can be, this perspective suffers from several limitations. First, it assumes that a rude event only affects those who are directly involved in it, primarily the target, ignoring any effects it may have on uninvolved third parties. Second, focusing on rudeness in a "snapshot-like" fashion largely ignores any potential effects beyond the time frame immediately after the event (Cole, Shipp, & Taylor, 2015; Rosen, Koopman, Gabriel, & Johnson, 2016; Taylor, Bedeian, Cole, & Zhang, 2014). Third, exploring rudeness as an isolated event assumes that it is independent from other events, ignoring any potential spillover effects among events. In contrast, considering rudeness not as an isolated event but as a process embedded within the dynamic work environment can help explicate how rudeness may have a much wider impact than previously realized.

Recently Foulk, Woolum, and Erez (2016) studied rudeness as a process embedded within the social fabric of the workplace, and provided evidence that rudeness could be contagious. In showing that rudeness can spread to uninvolved third parties, Foulk et al. (2016) addressed the first limitation mentioned above, that the consequences of rudeness are isolated to those directly involved in the original rude event. In this study we address the second and third limitations by exploring how the effects of rude events unfold over time and how rude experiences affect each other. Addressing these limitations could have important implications for how we understand the impact of rude workplace events. For example, several authors have recently called for studies that consider the

This article was published Online First July 27, 2017.

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An earlier version of this article was presented at the 2016 Academy of Management conference in Anaheim, CA.

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temporal dynamics of events like workplace rudeness (Cole et al., 2015; Rosen et al., 2016; Taylor et al., 2014). Taylor et al. (2014) suggest that ignoring the temporal aspects of dynamic constructs like rudeness "results in biased estimates and equivocal findings" (p. 17). Cole et al. (2015) echoed these concerns, and argued that studying dynamic phenomena in a static fashion risks "ambiguous tests of theory, biased parameter estimates, and quite possibly erroneous inferences" (p. 6). In this article we address these concerns by considering rudeness as a dynamic process embedded in time, and in so doing we show that its effects last much longer than currently understood in the literature.

Furthermore, we argue that the assumption that rude events are isolated from each other is tenuous, and that it violates the assertions of multiple models of social contagion (e.g., Barsade, 2002; Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1993; Rothbard & Wilk, 2011), all of which provide strong evidence that social events do not occur in isolation. To this point, Rosen et al. (2016) suggested that "organizational scholars must consider dynamic models that can account for antecedent- and consequent-based processes that unfold from one episode to the next" (p. 10). Dynamic models of rudeness are informative because a large portion of variance in perceptions of rudeness is within person (Rosen et al., 2016), highlighting the need to better understand both predictors and outcomes of this variance. We suggest that studying how rude events affect each other is a good starting point to explaining this within-person variance and how perceptions of rudeness are formed.

Building on the same cognitive processes identified in the contagion model introduced by Foulk et al. (2016), we suggest that in addition to being contagious, rudeness can also be contaminating. Specifically, whereas Foulk et al. (2016) suggest that rudeness spreads from one person to another, our model suggests that exposure to rude events at the beginning of the workday can contaminate one's own perceptions throughout the workday. Our model integrates associative network theory (Collins & Loftus, 1975; Collins & Quillian, 1969; Wyer & Srull, 1989) with the primary/secondary appraisal framework developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) to suggest that witnessing rudeness at the start of the workday can lead to increased perceptions of rudeness throughout the day. In turn, our model suggests that perceptions of workplace rudeness mediate the relationship between witnessed rudeness and employees' withdrawal and performance-related behaviors throughout the workday. Building on recent applications of the primary/secondary appraisal framework in the rudeness literature (Lim & Tai, 2014), we examine core self-evaluations (CSE) as a moderator of the relationship between witnessing rudeness and subsequent perceptions. We test our predictions in an experience sampling field experiment with a sample of managerial employees from a variety of organizations. We manipulated witnessed rudeness in the morning and tested its effects on employees' perceptions and behaviors throughout the workday.

Our theoretical model and field experimental design allow us to make several important contributions to the rudeness and related literatures. First, most current research does not consider rudeness as a process embedded in time (Cole et al., 2015; Rosen et al., 2016; Taylor et al., 2014). Thus, it is unclear how long the effects of rudeness last, or if it has any effect beyond the immediate interaction. Our findings challenge the view that the effects of rudeness exist only in the moment by adopting a temporal perspective. Second, several recent studies have shown that there is important within-person variance in perceptions of workplace rudeness (Rosen et al., 2016; Zhou, Yan, Che, & Meier, 2015), suggesting that rude events may not be completely objective, but rather that may be somewhat "in the eye of the beholder." By considering the contaminating effects of witnessed morning rudeness on perceptions of rudeness throughout the day, we are among the first to explore a contextual predictor that explains the observed within-person variance in perceptions of workplace rudeness. Third, our model contributes to the understanding of workplace rudeness by focusing on the daily effects of witnessing rudeness, a phenomenon that has received fairly little empirical attention (Schilpzand et al., 2016). Finally, we explore core self-evaluations as a between person moderator of these effects, showing that not all employees react to witnessed rudeness in the same way. Taken together, in this article we extend the literature that focuses on rudeness as a static between-person experience and present a dynamic within-person model that adopts a temporal lens to explore the wide-range impact of workplace rudeness on work outcomes.

Theory and Hypotheses

Though minor in nature and often dismissed as innocuous, rudeness represents a significant social threat (Chen et al., 2013; Cortina, 2008; Porath & Erez, 2009). Numerous psychological and neurophysiological models that deal with how individuals respond to a potential threat (Arnold, 1960; Damasio, 1995; Iversen, Kupfermann, & Kandel, 2000; James, 1884; LeDoux, 1996; Schachter, 1964; Zajonc, 1980) suggest that at first, an automatic evaluation process is engaged that determines *if* a threat exists. This initial automatic evaluation process is followed by a second conscious process aimed at evaluating options for coping (Lazarus, 1991). A framework developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) incorporated these two processes to describe people's responses to threatening events. The first process, which they termed the primary appraisal, is the automatic process, which evaluates whether the event can be classified as bad and as such poses a threat. If the primary appraisal process determines that an event is threatening, individuals then engage in the secondary appraisal process, in which they determine what to do about the threatening event. Thus, according to this framework, employees are likely to make two evaluations when confronted with rudeness: was the event rude, and if so, what should I do about it?

In the Lazarus and Folkman (1984) model as well as other similar models (e.g., Arnold, 1960; Damasio, 1995; Iversen et al., 2000; James, 1884; LeDoux, 1996; Schachter, 1964; Zajonc, 1980) the primary appraisal process plays a prominent role in determining reactions to threat. Yet, the existing body of research on workplace rudeness has predominantly focused on the consequences of the secondary appraisal process—that is, it has assumed that rude events have occurred and explored the consequences of these events. Very little research has focused on the primary appraisal process, which is involved in determining what causes employees to perceive workplace events as rude in the first place, despite evidence that there is substantial within-person variance in perceptions of rudeness (Rosen et al., 2016; Zhou et al., 2015).

Addressing this important limitation in the literature, we focus on the primary appraisal process and integrate associative network theory (Collins & Loftus, 1975; Collins & Quillian, 1969; Wyer &

Srull, 1989) to describe how witnessing rudeness at the beginning of the workday can lead to increased perceptions of rudeness throughout the day. Specifically, we argue that when people witness rudeness in the morning their concept of rudeness is activated and influences their subsequent perceptions and interpretations of interpersonal events. We contend that daily events do not occur in a vacuum and that previous activation of rudeness in employees' cognitive system may influence how they interpret subsequent events. Our expectations are informed by literature suggesting that primary appraisals can be easily influenced by contextual and peripheral information because they are rudimentary and coarse processes evolved to distinguish between good and bad experiences (see Chaiken, Wood, & Eagly, 1996, for review). As Bargh and Pietromonaco noted, "perception consists of the interaction between the cognitive structure of the perceiver and the environmental context" (Bargh & Pietromonaco, 1982, p. 437). In this way, associative network theory is well positioned to help explain within-person perceptions of rudeness, as it describes how an individual's current state of concept activation can influence how subsequent environmental stimuli are perceived. Most social interactions are at least somewhat ambiguous (Bruner, 1958), and rudeness is specifically ambiguous by nature (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Thus, if these naturally ambiguous events are evaluated using the coarse primary appraisal processes they are more likely to be affected by contextual factors such as previous activation of the rudeness concept in the perceiver's associative network.

Although the focus of our article is in explaining how the primary appraisal process affects perceptions of rudeness, we also incorporate the results of the secondary appraisal process into our model. The secondary appraisal process has been investigated in the rudeness literature and has been shown to affect a variety of outcomes (Porath & Erez, 2007; Porath, MacInnis, & Folkes, 2010; Rafaeli et al., 2012; Rosen et al., 2016). Thus, to demonstrate how the results of the primary appraisal process can influence the outcomes associated with the secondary appraisal process, our model integrates employee outcomes to show that perceptions of rudeness mediate the relationship between witnessing rudeness at the beginning of the workday and employee attitudes and behaviors throughout the workday.

Witnessed Morning Rudeness as a Contaminating Source

Associative network theory (Collins & Loftus, 1975; Collins & Quillian, 1969, 1970, 1972) describes how concepts in semantic memory—the representation of general world knowledge—are arranged as a set of interrelated nodes in a structured network. Each node represents a concept, and nodes that are semantically similar are arranged closely together. For example, in the associative network the node for "work" and the node for "desk" will be arranged more closely together than the node for "play" and the node for "desk." One of the most important features of this theory is the notion of spreading activation, which suggests that once a concept node is activated, the activation spreads to nearby nodes in the network (Collins & Quillian, 1972; Neely, 1977; Posner & Snyder, 1975). For example, thinking about an experience at work not only activates the node for work, but also those nodes that are semantically similar to it such as "office," "boss," and "computer."

Concepts can become activated via a variety of stimuli, both at the conscious and the subconscious level. For example, one can actively think about work or alternatively see something in the environment (i.e., a chair similar to one's office chair) that automatically activates the concept of work without the person's awareness. Specifically related to rudeness, Bargh, Chen, and Burrows (1996) found that even minor rudeness primes can influence people's behavior, and Foulk et al. (2016) provided specific evidence that witnessing rudeness can activate the rudeness concept in the associative network. Using the Lexical Decision Task (Meyer, Schvaneveldt, & Ruddy, 1975), these authors found that after participants had witnessed a rude event between two confederates, their rudeness concept was activated. Foulk et al. (2016) found that after witnessing rudeness, participants responded significantly more quickly to words related to rudeness (i.e., interrupt) than to nonrude words (i.e., benign) in the Lexical Decision Task, offering direct evidence that an encounter with rudeness subconsciously activated the rudeness concept in participants' associative network. Thus, this evidence suggests that simply witnessing rudeness, even if it is not directly experienced, can activate the rudeness concept in the associative network.

As this spreading process occurs and nodes become activated, concepts associated with the activated nodes also become more accessible (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Wyer & Srull, 1989). Accessibility refers to the ease with which a concept can be used in a cognitive process (e.g., Strack & Mussweiler, 1997). Concepts that are easily accessed can greatly influence decision making and judgment formation (e.g., Herr, 1986; Strack, Martin, & Schwarz, 1988). For example, Srull and Wyer (1979) subconsciously activated participants' concept of either kindness or hostility, and subsequently asked participants to form judgments of ambiguous behaviors. In their experiment, participants whose concepts of hostility had been activated rated ambiguous behaviors as significantly more hostile, and participants whose concept of kindness had been activated rated the same ambiguous behaviors as significantly more kind. Thus, concept activation has the potential to influence the way individuals form judgments in social situations. Similarly, we propose that when employees witness rudeness in the workplace, activation of the rudeness concept in the associative network can contaminate subsequent perceptions of social interactions, causing employees to perceive more rudeness throughout their workday. That is, they will interpret subsequent interactions in the workplace as more rude than had they not been previously exposed to rudeness (e.g., Foulk et al., 2016; Srull & Wyer, 1979). Therefore, based on associative network theory and empirical evidence related to rudeness, we expect that when individuals witness rudeness in the morning, they will interpret future interactions with other coworkers as rude because of the automatic activation of the rudeness concept.

Because of the temporal nature of rudeness, witnessing rudeness in the morning will be especially important in affecting perceptions of rudeness throughout the workday. This expectation is consistent with arguments by Rothbard and Wilk (2011) who proposed a model suggesting that "the way a person starts the day may frame how she or he perceives and feels about work events" (p. 2011) and showed that start-of-workday moods help shape how employees see events throughout their workday. According to these and other researchers, start-of-workday experiences may represent a daily "resetting" point (Marco & Suls, 1993; Williams,

Suls, Alliger, Learner, & Wan, 1991), which may anchor and frame employees' perceptions for the entire workday. Based on these arguments, we expect that witnessing rudeness at the start of the workday will affect employees' perceptions throughout the day. Thus, we hypothesize:

> *Hypothesis 1:* Witnessing rudeness at the beginning of the workday will be positively related to perceptions of rudeness throughout the workday.

The Moderating Role of Core Self-Evaluations

According to associative network theory (Collins & Quillian, 1972; Neely, 1977; Posner & Snyder, 1975), concept activation is a within-person process—that is, concept activation fluctuates day to day and moment to moment within individuals—and as such this process is well suited to explain within-person variance in perceptions of workplace rudeness. In addition to concept accessibility, Markus (1977) proposed a between-person process called availability that refers to how easily a concept can become activated. Availability develops over time as individuals experience and perceive their environment—greater exposure to concepts in the environment results in increased availability of those concepts. Indeed, Bargh, Bond, Lombardi, and Tota (1986) suggested that "a person develops a somewhat limited framework of constructs out of a history of frequent experience with certain types of social behavior (e.g. kindness, aggressiveness, and selfishness) typically found in his or her environment" (p. 869). Availability can influence both the likelihood of a concept becoming accessible as well as the strength of the accessibility of an activated concept (Bargh, 1984; Bargh & Thein, 1985; Higgins & King, 1981). In other words, environmental stimuli like witnessing rudeness will result in stronger concept activation of concepts like rudeness for some people versus others.

Based on this theorizing, we expect CSE to moderate the association between witnessed rudeness and subsequent perceptions of rudeness throughout the day. CSE is a higher order construct made up of four traits—neuroticism, self-esteem, locus of control, and self-efficacy—all of which have been shown to influence the degree to which individuals experience and react to threat (Folkman, 1984; Gist & Mitchell, 1992; Houston, 1972; Sandler & Lakey, 1982). For example neuroticism, has been shown to make individuals highly vigilant in scanning the environment for social threats such as rudeness (John & Srivastava, 1999). People with low self-esteem are more reactive to external social cues and, therefore, tend to be more susceptible to negative feedback and more accepting of it than high self-esteem individuals (Brockner, 1988). Finally, there is evidence to suggest that those with internal locus of control and those with high self-efficacy deal more effectively with difficulties, stress, and persist well in the face of failure (Folkman, 1984; Gist & Mitchell, 1992; Houston, 1972; Sandler & Lakey, 1982).

Because CSE contains all these four traits, Kammeyer-Mueller, Judge, and Scott (2009) argued that those high in CSE will be less sensitive to stressful social signs than those low in CSE because of *differential exposure*, *differential reactivity*, and *differential coping*. That is, for those high in CSE, threat signs are detected less frequently, when they are detected they are not "taken in" to affect the receiver, and they trigger better coping mechanisms that help the individual to quickly rebound from the experience. Lending support to these arguments, Lim and Tai (2014) found that family incivility—a type of rudeness—was associated with less psychological distress for those high (vs. low) in CSE. In contrast, those with low CSE detect negative stimuli even if they do not exist, they react to them severely, and they do not cope with them efficiently. Supporting these arguments, the meta-analysis by Kammeyer-Mueller et al. (2009) suggests that individuals low in CSE are more reactive to rude events when they perceive them. Given that availability influences the likelihood of concept accessibility related to environmental stimuli, we argue that the effects of morning witnessed rudeness on perceptions of rudeness throughout the day will be weaker for employees high (vs. low) in CSE. Consistent with these arguments, we hypothesize:

> *Hypothesis 2:* CSE will moderate the relationship between witnessing rudeness at the beginning of the workday and perceptions of rudeness throughout the workday, such that this effect will be weaker for those high (vs. low) in CSE.

Perceptions of Rudeness and Workplace Outcomes

Although our principal focus in this study is on the primary appraisal process that explains how witnessing rudeness at the beginning of the workday affects perceptions of rudeness throughout the workday, we also investigate outcomes associated with the secondary appraisal process. Considering the two processes in conjunction can yield novel insights about the implications of daily rudeness on important work outcomes. Prior research suggests that when employees perceive rudeness they engage in secondary appraisal processes to try to make sense of the event and to develop strategies to deal with it, and multiple studies suggest that the strategies associated with processing a rude stimulus can be resource consuming (Porath & Erez, 2007; Porath et al., 2010; Rafaeli et al., 2012; Rosen et al., 2016). In turn, conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobföll, 1989) suggests that when employees' personal resources are consumed, they are likely to (a) exhibit worse performance on resource-intensive activities, and (b) conserve remaining resources (Hobföll, Freedy, Lane, & Geller, 1990; Koopman, Lanaj, & Scott, 2016). Consistent with previous research showing that perceived rudeness consumes resources (Rosen et al., 2016) and with basic tenets of COR, we expect that employees who perceive rudeness will (a) perform worse on key resource-intensive work activities, and (b) withdraw psychologically and socially from others in the workplace to prevent further leakage of personal resources.

Consistent with our first expectation, research on workplace rudeness has uncovered considerable evidence that rudeness is negatively associated with performance (Chen et al., 2013; Giumetti et al., 2013; Meier & Gross, 2015; Gilin Oore, Leiter, & LeBlanc, 2015; Penney & Spector, 2005; Porath & Erez, 2007; Porath & Erez, 2009; Sakurai & Jex, 2012; Sliter, Jex, Wolford, & McInnerney, 2010; Sliter et al., 2012; Wu, Liu, & Liu, 2009). For example, in both field settings (e.g., Chen et al., 2013) and lab settings (Porath & Erez, 2007, 2009) evidence suggests that rudeness can harm employee performance, and can also influence the progress which employees feel they are making toward achieving desired goals (Ali, Ryan, Lyons, Ehrhart, & Wessel, 2016). Therefore, to capture these dimensions of performance, we examine the

simultaneous effects of perceived rudeness on goal progress and task performance (e.g., Koopman et al., 2016). Consistent with our second expectation, there is substantial evidence that rudeness is associated with withdrawal related behaviors (Cortina, Kabat-Farr, Leskinen, Huerta, & Magley, 2013; Cortina et al., 2002; Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001; Lim & Cortina, 2005; Lim, Cortina, & Magley, 2008; Lim & Teo, 2009; Martin & Hine, 2005; Miner-Rubino & Reed, 2010; Nicholson & Griffin, 2015; Taylor et al., 2014; Wilson & Holmvall, 2013). For example, several studies have found that rudeness is associated with both absenteeism and turnover intentions (Giumetti et al., 2013; Lim et al., 2008; Sliter et al., 2012), suggesting that rudeness causes employees to withdraw from both their organizations as well as their coworkers. For this reason, we include two measures of withdrawal related behaviors—psychological withdrawal and interaction avoidance.

Thus, building on existing literature, our model suggests that perceptions of workplace rudeness will influence performance manifested as task performance and goal progress, as well as withdrawal-related behaviors, manifested as psychological withdrawal and interaction avoidance. Considered within the context of our full model, presented in Figure 1, we expect that witnessing rudeness in the morning will have indirect effects on performance and withdrawal, mediated by perceptions of rudeness. Therefore, we hypothesize:

> *Hypothesis 3:* Perceptions of rudeness throughout the workday will mediate the relationship between witnessed rudeness at the beginning of the workday and (a) goal progress, (b) task performance, (c) psychological withdrawal, and (d) interaction avoidance.

Building on Hypothesis 3, which describes the indirect effects that witnessed rudeness will have on our withdrawal and performance related outcomes, and Hypothesis 2 which described the moderating effects of CSE, our model implies a moderated mediation effect, where CSE is expected to moderate the indirect effect of witnessed rudeness on these four outcomes. Therefore, we hypothesize:

> *Hypothesis 4:* CSE will moderate the indirect effect of witnessed rudeness at the beginning of the workday on (a) goal progress, (b) task performance, (c) psychological withdrawal, and (d) interaction avoidance, such that these relationships will be weaker for individuals high (vs. low) in CSE.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Our sample consisted of 81 professional and managerial employees enrolled in executive MBA classes at a large southeastern university in the United States. The sample was comprised of 56 (or 69%) men and 25 women. Average age of participants was 36 years old (SD = 7.1); average work experience was 14 years (SD = 7.5), and 68% (68%) were married. Participants occupied a variety of positions within their organizations such as hospital administrator, security operations branch chief, director of strategy and business development, senior financial analyst, operations manager, and structural engineer.

We used an experimental experience-sampling design (Foulk, Lanaj, Tu, Erez, & Archambeau, 2017) for this study where we surveyed participants twice a day for 10 consecutive workdays. Several weeks before the start of the daily surveys, participants completed a one-time survey that included demographics and the core self-evaluations measure. We sent the morning survey at 7:00 a.m., which included the manipulated rudeness condition (described below) and a measure of positive and negative affect. We sent the afternoon survey at 4:00 p.m. and it included measures of perceived workplace rudeness, goal progress, task performance, psychological withdrawal, and interaction avoidance (this research was approved by the University of Florida's institutional review board, protocol number 13U1484, "Investigation of Daily Behaviors at Work."). To ensure that participants had completed the surveys at the appropriate times, we verified the timestamps on the morning and afternoon surveys. Average time elapsed between completion of morning and afternoon surveys was 8.12 hr (SD = 2.50). In total, we received 600 matched morning and afternoon surveys out of a possible 810 representing a response rate of 74%.

Witnessed Rudeness Manipulation

We included the manipulation of witnessed rudeness in the morning survey. We randomly assigned participants to the neutral

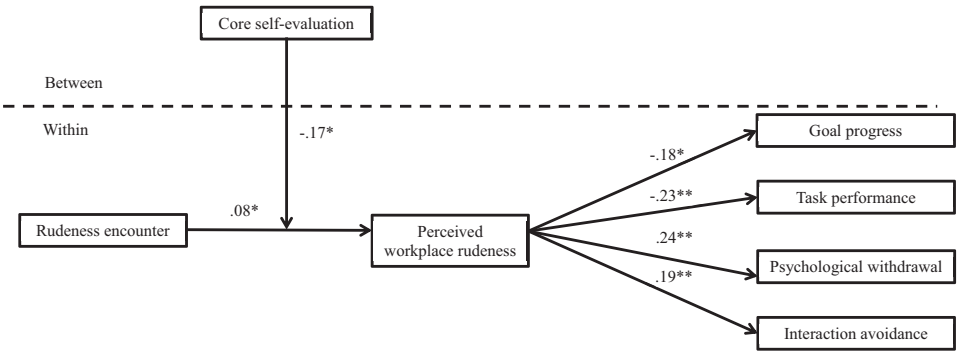

Figure 1. The moderating effects of core self-evaluation on the relationship between witnessed rudeness and workplace outcomes as mediated by perceived workplace rudeness. Unstandardized coefficients are reported. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

or experimental condition using a constrained random matrix with the goal of having participants receive 50% experimental and 50% neutral conditions throughout the 10 workday period. This meant that during the course of the study, each participant received a total of 5 morning surveys, which contained the rudeness manipulation and 5 morning surveys, which contained the neutral condition. The order of these 10 morning surveys varied randomly within and across participants.

We manipulated rudeness in two parts: First, participants watched a video depicting employees interacting at work. Participants were told that the videos represented a critical thinking exercise and that after each video they would be asked several questions about the interaction they had just watched. Across the 10 days participants observed five videos that showed simulated rude interactions between employees and five videos that showed neutral interactions. All the videos featured trained actors from the theater department at the university. For example, one of the rude videos depicted a scenario where one employee was asking another employee to switch shifts for the upcoming weekend. The employee who was asked to switch shifts never stopped what he was doing, did not make eye contact, and responded rudely to the request. An example of a neutral interaction depicted two employees discussing an incorrect shipment item. Foulk et al. (2016) used similar video clips to successfully manipulate rudeness. Average video length was 41.5 s (SD = 10.1).

Second, participants were presented with four sets of scrambled sentences consisting of five words and were instructed to use the five words to create a grammatically correct four-word unscrambled sentence. We adapted this method from Bargh et al. (1996) to automatically activate rudeness. An example of a scrambled sentence in the rude condition was "him was bothered she always." A correct assembling for this sentence would yield the unscrambled sentence "she always bothered him." Example of scrambled sentence in the neutral condition was "us down sit table let" with a correct assembling of "Let us sit down."

Measures

Unless otherwise indicated all measures were rated on a scale of 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*.

Perceived workplace rudeness. We measured perceived rudeness in the afternoon survey by adapting five items from the seven items workplace incivility scale developed by Cortina et al. (2001). Participants indicated their agreement with statements such as: "Today at work, a coworker put me down or was condescending to me" and "Today at work, a coworker excluded me from professional camaraderie" Average coefficient α across the 10 days was α = .92.

Goal progress. Each afternoon, we measured daily goal progress by adapting 6-items from Wanberg, Zhu, and Van Hooft (2010). Participants indicated their agreement with statements such as: "Today at work, I made good progress on my work goals" and "Today at work, I got a lot less done on my work goals than I had hoped [reversed]." Average coefficient α across the 10 days was α = .86.

Task performance. We measured daily task performance in the afternoon survey with four items adapted from Williams and Anderson's (1991). Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements such as "Since arriving at work today, I have adequately completed my assigned duties" and "Since arriving at work today, I have met the formal requirements of my job." Average coefficient α across the 10 days was α = .94.

Psychological withdrawal. Each afternoon, we measured psychological withdrawal using six items adapted from Lehman and Simpson (1992) to indicate day-level withdrawal. Participants were asked to respond to statements such as: "Today at work, I put less effort into the job than should have" and "Today at work, I let others do my work." Average coefficient α estimate across the 10 days was α = .77.

Interaction avoidance. We adapted five items developed by Nifadkar, Tsui, and Ashforth (2012) to measure interaction avoidance each afternoon. Participants indicated their agreement with statements such as: "Today at work, I avoided speaking with my coworkers unless absolutely necessary" and "Today at work, I avoided initiating contact with my coworkers." Average coefficient α across the 10 days was α = .94.

Morning affect. Prior work has demonstrated affect to be related to rudeness (Porath & Erez, 2007, 2009) and several of our outcomes (Miner & Glomb, 2010; Penney & Spector, 2005; Sliter, Withrow, & Jex, 2015). Thus, it is possible that change in mood could be an alternative explanation to our main hypothesis that rudeness leads to selective accessibility. For this reason, we decided to control for affect in our analyses and measured participants' positive and negative affect in the morning with five items each from the short version of the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (MacKinnon et al., 1999). Each morning after the experimental condition (rudeness or neutral), participants indicated how they felt at that moment (response format: 1 = *very slightly or not at all* to 5 = *very much*). Example items for positive affect were: "alert," "enthusiastic," and "determined." Example items for negative affect were: "upset," "nervous," and "distressed." Average coefficient α across the 10 study days were α = .92 for positive affect and α = .93 for negative affect.

Core self-evaluation. We assessed CSE a few weeks before the daily surveys with a 12-item measure developed by Judge, Erez, Bono, and Thoresen (2003). Participants indicated their agreement with statements such as: "I am confident I get the success I deserve in life," and "I am capable of coping with most of my problems." Coefficient α was α = .85.

Analyses

Because of the nested structure of our data (daily observations nested within individuals), we specified a multilevel path model using M*plus* (version 7.31; Muthén & Muthén, 2013) to test all hypotheses. Following recommendations by Hofmann, Griffin, and Gavin (2000), we group mean centered our continuous Level 1 exogenous variables and grand-mean centered our Level 2 variable. The experimental manipulation was operationalized as a daily dummy-variable where 1 represented the rudeness condition and 0 the neutral condition. Following recommendations by Wang, Liu, Liao, Gong, Kammeyer-Mueller, and Shi (2013), we modeled our control variables (positive and negative morning affect) as fixed slopes and controlled for affect for all our endogenous variables. All other within-person slopes were modeled as random. Core self-evaluations was modeled as a cross-level moderator predicting both perceived rudeness (main effect) and the slope

between the rudeness condition and perceived rudeness (moderating effect).

Simple slope tests of the moderating effect of core self-evaluations on the relationship between the rudeness condition and perceived workplace rudeness were conducted in accordance with recommendations by Preacher, Curran, and Bauer (2006). Indirect effects were tested using procedures appropriate for multilevel analysis (Bauer, Preacher, & Gil, 2006) and in accordance with recommendations by Preacher, Zyphur, and Zhang (2010). Confidence intervals (CIs) were constructed using parametric bootstrap procedures and Monte Carlo simulations with 20,0000 replications (see Lanaj, Johnson, & Barnes, 2014; Wang et al., 2013).

Results

Means, *SD*s, and intercorrelations among study variables are reported in Table 1. To verify the distinctiveness of our study variables, we conducted a multilevel confirmatory factor analysis. At the within-level, we included perceived rudeness, goal progress, task performance, psychological withdrawal, interaction avoidance, and morning positive and negative affect. At the between-level, we included core self-evaluation. This model displayed acceptable fit ($\chi^2 = 1215(624)$, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .04, comparative fit index [CFI] = .93, standardized root mean square residual [SRMR] = .06)[1] supporting the distinctiveness of our study variables. We compared the fit of this model to alternative models using the Satorra-Bentler (Satorra & Bentler, 2001) χ^2 difference test incorporating the Maximum-Likelihood Restricted scaled correction factors. The set of alternative models included: (a) a model where goal progress and task performance items loaded on a single factor and the rest of the items loaded on their respective constructs, (b) a second model where psychological withdrawal and interaction avoidance items loaded on a single factor and the rest of the items loaded on their respective constructs, and (c) a third model that included both of the above two factors and the rest of the items loading on their respective constructs. Results indicated that our proposed model fit the data significantly better than these alternative models ($\chi^2 = 575(6), p < .01$; $\chi^2 = 451(6), p < .01$ and $\chi^2 = 1022(11), p < .01$, respectively).

Results of our multilevel path analysis are shown in Figure 1 and Table 2. In support of our Hypothesis 1 we found that the rudeness manipulation was positively associated with perceived rudeness in the workplace ($\beta = .08$, $p < .05$) suggesting that individuals reported more rudeness in the workplace on days when rudeness was manipulated compared with days in the control condition. Hypothesis 2 predicted that CSE would moderate the relationship between witnessed rudeness and perceptions of rudeness. As shown in Table 1, this effect was negative and significant ($\beta = -.17$, $p < .05$), providing support for Hypothesis 2. Following the recommendation of Cohen, Cohen, West, and Aiken (2003), we plotted this interaction at high (1 *SD*) and low (−1 *SD*) levels of CSE, and this plot is presented in Figure 2. As this figure shows, consistent with our expectation the relationship between witnessed rudeness and perceived rudeness was weaker for individuals high in CSE. Following the procedure recommended by Preacher et al. (2006), we estimated simple slopes for this relationship at high (1 *SD*) and low (−1 *SD*) levels of CSE. As expected, at high levels of CSE this relationship was nonsignificant ($\beta = -.01$, *ns*), whereas at low levels of CSE this relationship was positive and significant ($\beta = .17$, $p < .01$). This analysis further supported our hypothesis, suggesting that the relationship between witnessed rudeness at the beginning of the workday and perceptions of rudeness throughout the workday is weaker for individuals high (1 *SD*) in CSE compared with individuals low (−1 *SD*) in CSE.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that perceived workplace rudeness would mediate the relationship between witnessed rudeness and (a) goal progress, (b) task performance, (c) psychological withdrawal, and (d) interaction avoidance. We found support for this hypothesis, as the CIs for the indirect effect of manipulated rudeness on goal progress (−.014, 95% CI [−.034, −.001]), task performance (−.019, 95% CI [−.033, −.004]), psychological withdrawal (019, 95% CI [.003, .038]), and interaction avoidance (.015, 95% CI [.002, .035]) did not contain zero. Hypothesis 4 predicted that CSE would moderate the indirect effect of witnessed rudeness on (a) goal progress, (b) task performance, (c) psychological withdrawal, and (d) interaction avoidance mediated by perceptions of rudeness. To test this, we followed the procedure recommended by Lanaj, Johnson, and Lee (2016) and estimated these indirect effects at high (1 *SD*) and low (−1 *SD*) levels of CSE. Results of these analyses are presented in Table 3. As Table 3 shows, at high levels of CSE, there was no significant indirect effect on goal progress (.002, 95% CI [−.020, .025]), task performance (.003, 95% CI [−.024, .029]), psychological withdrawal (−.002, 95% CI [−.030, .023]), or interaction avoidance (−.002, 95% CI [−.027, .020]), as all four CIs contained zero. However, at low levels of CSE, there was a significant indirect effect on goal progress (−.030, 95% CI [−.068, −.003]), task performance (−.039, 95% CI [−.077, −.012]), psychological withdrawal (.040, 95% CI [.014, .073]), and interaction avoidance (.032, 95% CI [.007, .066]), as none of these CIs contained zero. These results provide support for Hypothesis 4. To further explore these relationships, we calculated point estimates and CIs for the difference in indirect effects at high versus low values of CSE across each of our four outcomes using a Monte Carlo simulation with 20,000 replications (e.g., Lanaj et al., 2016). Specifically, we created a normal random sampling distribution of each path estimate that retained the estimated parameter's mean and distribution. Using formulas by Bauer et al. (2006) for testing moderated mediation in 1–1–1 multilevel models, we used these estimated parameter distributions to calculate the difference in indirect effects at high and low values of CSE across 20,000 simulations. The 95% CIs were obtained from the 2.5 and 97.5 percentile scores from these distributions. Results of this analysis are also presented in Table 3, and show that the indirect effects on goal progress ($\Delta = .032$, 95% CI [.001, .080]), task performance ($\Delta = .042$, 95% CI [.004, .091]), psychological withdrawal ($\Delta = -.043$, 95% CI [−.087, −.004]), and interaction avoidance ($\Delta = -.034$, 95% CI [−.080, −.002]) did not contain zero, providing evidence that all were significantly different at high levels versus low levels of CSE. These results provide further support for Hypothesis 4.

[1] The goal progress measure contained three reverse-coded items. In accordance with recommendations by Schmitt and Stults (1985) and recent research (Koopman et al., 2016), we allowed the error terms for only reverse-coded items to covary freely.

Table 1
Means, SDs, and Intercorrelations Among Study Variables

Variable	Mean	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Rudeness manipulation	.50	.15	—	−.01	−.09	−.10	.09	.26*	−.06	−.05	.06
2. Positive affect (morning)	3.12	.77	.06	(.92)	−.24*	−.42**	.37**	.37**	−.44**	−.44**	.51**
3. Negative affect (morning)	1.24	.40	.05	−.12**	(.93)	.37**	−.39**	−.31**	.26*	.45**	−.40**
4. Perceived rudeness	1.55	.52	.08*	.01	.09*	(.92)	−.50**	−.44**	.38**	.48**	−.41**
5. Goal progress	3.77	.52	.06	.17**	.00	−.03	(.86)	.64**	−.37**	−.37**	.40**
6. Task performance	4.03	.52	.00	.17**	−.03	−.14**	.49**	(.94)	−.31**	−.37**	.34**
7. Psychological withdrawal	2.35	.68	.04	−.17**	.04	.21**	−.35**	−.28**	(.77)	.08	−.34**
8. Interaction avoidance	1.78	.68	.00	−.12**	−.03	.11**	−.24**	−.17**	.17**	(.94)	−.30**
9. CSE	3.80	.52	.06	.51**	−.40**	−.41**	.40**	.34**	−.34**	−.30**	(.85)

Note. N at Level 1 = 600, N at Level 2 = 81. Variables 1–8 are within-individual (Level 1) variables. Their means and *SD*s are based on between-person scores. Intercorrelations below the diagonal are based on within-individual scores; intercorrelations above the diagonal are based on between-individual scores. Core self-evaluation (CSE) is a between-individual variable. The intercorrelations of CSE with variables 1–8 are based on between-individual scores (i.e., we aggregated variables 1–8 at the individual-level). Coefficient αs are presented on the diagonal.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

In studies using experimental designs, it is difficult to interpret raw effects sizes. Rather, effect sizes need to be interpreted relative to the scope of the manipulation as well as the difficulty in observing effects (Prentice & Miller, 1992). In our study we report the effect of a relatively minor manipulation of witnessed rudeness on variables collected on average 8.12 hr later, suggesting that even small effect sizes should be considered meaningful. To facilitate the interpretation of our results, we used the procedure recommended by Snijders and Bosker (1999) to estimate the pseudo R^2 for all endogenous variables in our model. Results of this analysis suggested that our model explained 15% of the variance in perceived rudeness, 20% of the variance in interaction avoidance, 13% of the variance in psychological withdrawal, 18% of the variance in goal progress, and 27% of the variance in task performance.

Discussion

Virtually everybody can relate to the experience of having a coworker interpret something intended to be benign as rude. When this happens all one can do is say "I didn't mean it that way" and hope that the offended coworker understands. The literature on workplace rudeness has assumed that a rude event either occurred or did not, treating rudeness as a relatively objective experience. This view of workplace rudeness likely does not fit most workers' experiences, however, and we provide evidence that exposure to morning rudeness contaminates employees' perceptions. This is important because until now the literature on rudeness has focused almost exclusively on the *outcomes* of perceived rudeness, while paying little attention to what makes workers perceive events as rude.

Our field experiment provides evidence that witnessing rudeness in the morning can contaminate employees' views of subsequent interactions, leading workers to perceive more workplace rudeness throughout their work days. We find that compared with the control condition, on days when participants were in the witnessed rudeness condition they reported greater perceptions of workplace rudeness that, in turn, was associated with lower goal progress and task performance and greater interaction avoidance and psychological withdrawal. In addition, we theorized and found support for the moderating influence of core self-evaluations on the relationship between witnessed rudeness and subsequent perceptions of workplace rudeness, such that individuals with high

Table 2
Relations Between Manipulated Rudeness, Perceived Workplace Rudeness, and Workplace Outcomes

	Perceived rudeness			Goal progress			Task performance			Psychological withdrawal			Interaction avoidance		
Predictor	B	*SE*	*t*	B	*SE*	*t*	B	*SE*	*t*	B	*SE*	*t*	B	*SE*	*t*
Intercept	1.50	.05	28.72**	4.04	.13	30.44**	4.41	.09	46.95**	1.96	.11	18.06**	1.46	.12	11.81**
Within															
Rudeness manipulation	.08	.04	2.21*	.08	.05	1.55	.02	.05	.36	.02	.04	.57	−.01	.05	−.16
Positive affect	.02	.04	.57	.17	.04	3.87**	.14	.04	3.28**	−.13	.04	−3.04**	−.11	.03	−3.46**
Negative affect	−.14	.09	1.61	.06	.12	.50	.00	.07	−.03	−.01	.07	−.08	−.11	.11	−.97
Perceived rudeness				−.18	.08	2.32*	−.23	.06	−3.94**	.24	.04	5.44**	.19	.06	2.98**
Between															
CSE	−.32	.10	−3.26**												
CSE × Manipulation	−.17	.08	−2.23*												

Note. N = 600 observations nested within 81 individuals. Level 1 predictors were group mean centered. Level 2 predictor was grand mean centered. CSE = core self-evaluation. Unstandardized coefficients are reported.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

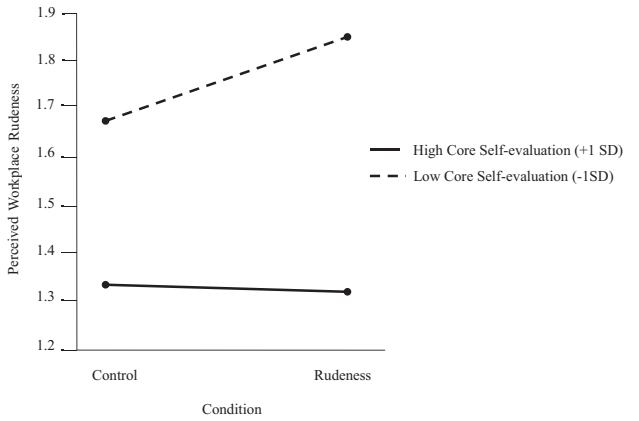

Figure 2. Cross-level moderating effect of core self-evaluation on the relationship between manipulated rudeness. Condition and perceptions of workplace rudeness. Simple slope tests confirm the relationship between the rudeness manipulation and perceptions of rudeness is stronger for individuals low in core self-evaluations (CSE; $\beta = .17$, $p < .01$) than those high in CSE ($\beta = -.02$, *ns*).

levels of core self-evaluation were less affected by witnessed rudeness compared with those with low core self-evaluations. These findings are consistent with theories suggesting that personality may influence individuals' appraisal processes (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) in ways that "color" their subsequent reactions to workplace events.

Theoretical Implications

There are several important theoretical implications of our findings. First, our integrative theoretical framework introduces the concept of primary appraisal into the rudeness literature. The literature on workplace rudeness has focused almost exclusively on the outcomes of the secondary appraisal process, likely because primary appraisals occur at the subconscious level and happen so quickly (LeDoux, 1986; LeDoux & Phelps, 2000; Li, Stutzmann, & LeDoux, 1996) that it may seem as though they do not happen at all. Yet, abundant evidence from the last century (Arnold, 1960; Damasio, 1995; Iversen et al., 2000; James, 1884; LeDoux, 1996; Schachter, 1964; Zajonc, 1980) suggests that one cannot legitimately talk about reactions to threats without taking into account the effects of primary appraisal processes.

Because of the focus on secondary appraisals, the literature on workplace rudeness has largely assumed that rude events are objective and likely to be evaluated similarly by different people at different points in time. Our study joins several recent studies (Rosen et al., 2016; Zhou et al., 2015) in challenging this assumption by providing evidence that there is daily variance in the amount of rudeness employees perceive, suggesting that on some days employees evaluate events as rude that they would not evaluate as rude on other days. Our study builds on this evidence to suggest that whether someone will perceive something as rude is not completely random, but rather can be predicted by contextual factors in the work environment. Building on associative network theory (Collins & Loftus, 1975; Collins & Quillian, 1969, 1970, 1972), we show that witnessing rudeness in the morning can cause increased perceptions of workplace rudeness throughout a worker's day. This is an important theoretical contribution and opens up the opportunity for research on what causes employees to perceive workplace events as rude.

Another theoretical implication that we make in this study concerns the duration of the effects of encounters with rudeness. Studies exploring the effects of rudeness have almost universally measured dependent variables immediately after the encounter with rudeness (e.g., Bargh et al., 1996; Diefendorff & Croyle, 2008; Foulk et al., 2016; Montgomery, Kane, & Vance, 2004; Porath & Erez, 2007, 2009; Rafaeli et al., 2012; Riskin et al., 2015), suggesting that the effects of such encounters are likely short-lived. A recent study that investigated the duration of rudeness effects also suggests that there are no detectable effects of rudeness after only a few hours (Meier & Gross, 2015). Our field experimental design allowed us to explore the effects of single encounters with rudeness on workers' days, and our results suggest that rather than being short-lived, the effects of a rude encounter can linger and affect workers throughout the day. This is consistent with evidence from psychology and neuroscience that suggests that stressful and negative events can have effects lasting beyond the time frame immediately after the event (Kleinsmith & Kaplan, 1963; LeDoux & Phelps, 2000). Yet, these lasting effects are rarely incorporated into management models that investigate the effects of dysfunctional and stressful behaviors in the workplace. We hope that our findings will encourage researchers to investigate the duration of effects of isolated dysfunctional workplace behaviors on workers.

Furthermore, by highlighting the temporal nature of rudeness, our model helps support the recent framework developed by Roth-

Table 3
Conditional Indirect Effects at High and Low Values of CSE

	CSE					
	High		Low		Difference	
Outcome	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper
1. Goal progress	−.020	.025	**−.068**	**−.003**	**.001**	**.080**
2. Task performance	−.024	.029	**−.077**	**−.012**	**.004**	**.091**
3. Psychological withdrawal	−.030	.023	**.014**	**.073**	**−.087**	**−.004**
4. Interaction avoidance	−.027	.020	**.007**	**.066**	**−.080**	**−.002**

Note. Indirect effects of the rudeness condition through perceived rudeness at high (1 *SD*) and low (−1 *SD*) values of CSE. Confidence intervals were calculated using bootstrap procedures with 20,000 replications (see Lanaj et al., 2014). Confidence intervals in boldface exclude zero. CSE = core self-evaluation.

bard and Wilk (2011) that suggests that beginning of workday states and exposures could play out in a dynamic way to influence employees throughout the workday. While Rothbard and Wilk (2011) investigated the effects of morning mood states, our investigation of the effects of witnessing rudeness in the morning shows that like moods, events that occur in the morning can shape behaviors and perceptions of workers throughout the day. Our article also responds to recent calls to incorporate the dynamic temporal nature of constructs like rudeness in models of workplace behavior (Cole et al., 2015; Taylor et al., 2014). George and Jones suggested that "time is intimately bound up with the content of human experience" (2000, p. 659) and that "all constructs occur in and through time" (2000, p. 668). Accordingly, to fully understand a construct such as rudeness it is necessary to consider it as a process embedded in time (Taylor et al., 2014) and our article contributes to understanding of the temporal nature of workplace rudeness. Additionally, by integrating employees' CSE as a between-person moderator of the effects of witnessed morning rudeness on perceptions of rudeness throughout the workday, our model also contributes to the understanding of this framework by showing that not all employees will respond to morning events in the same way.

Finally, while directly experienced rudeness is one type of workplace event in which rudeness can harm employees, this type of encounter with rudeness may not be the most common way workers encounter rudeness. Because rudeness does not take place in a social vacuum, the number of employees who witness rudeness may actually far exceed the number of employees who directly experience it (Glomb, 2002; Schilpzand et al., 2016). In fact, Pearson and Porath (2005) reported that 25% of employees report witnessing rudeness daily. While there is some evidence that witnessing rudeness can be harmful to employees (Miner-Rubino & Cortina, 2004; Porath & Erez, 2009; Totterdell, Hershcovis, Niven, Reich, & Stride, 2012), this phenomenon has not been widely researched (Schilpzand et al., 2016). Thus, our article also contributes to the rudeness literature by demonstrating how even just witnessing rudeness in the morning can contaminate perceptions throughout the workday, even if one does not experience rudeness directly. These findings may also hold implications for other similar negative workplace constructs, such as justice violations. While there is evidence that justice violations can affect observers (De Cremer & Van Hiel, 2006; Kahneman, Knetsch, & Thaler, 1986; O'Reilly, Aquino, & Skarlicki, 2016; Rupp & Bell, 2010; Turillo, Folger, Lavelle, Umphress, & Gee, 2002) this phenomenon is not widely researched, and the findings of our study may also suggest that witnessing justice violations may increase perceptions of justice violations throughout an employee's workday.

Practical Implications

The results of our study have several important practical implications for managers and organizations. While the negative impact of workplace rudeness on workers has been widely documented (see Schilpzand et al., 2016 for review), this focus on outcomes has not made it clear how to help workers experience less rudeness at work. In contrast, the model we explore in this article has several implications in this regard. First, our model suggests that encounters with rudeness can serve as contextual predictors of subsequent rudeness. Thus, organizations will be well-served to limit workers' exposure to rudeness by, for example, stressing a culture of politeness and cordiality. Furthermore, our study suggests that it may be particularly important to limit exposure to rudeness in the morning. Morning exposures would give the effect of rudeness the largest amount of time to affect other important work behaviors such as performance and goal progress. In addition, as Rothbard and Wilk (2011) suggested, the start-of-workday may represent a daily "resetting" point, which may anchor and frame employees' perceptions for the entire workday. Managers likely do not have the resources to prevent all workplace rudeness, but if managers take measures to limit rudeness in the morning (e.g., by being polite and voiding rude remarks) these steps may help lessen perceived workplace rudeness throughout the day.

Additionally, our results suggest that core self-evaluations may offer employees some protection from rude encounters. While it may be difficult for managers to completely remove rudeness from the workplace, understanding that those high in CSE may be resistant to its effects suggests that it may be prudent to hire workers with high CSE for positions where they are most likely to encounter rudeness, such as when working with difficult clients or team members. Doing so may help shield more sensitive employees from the effects of workplace rudeness.

Strengths, Limitations, and Future Directions

This study has several strengths worth noting. Our field experimental design allowed us to observe the effects of a rudeness manipulation on workers in a field setting; thus, combining the two dominant paradigms in the study of workplace rudeness (field studies and experimental manipulations). Additionally, our sample consisted of managerial and professional workers from a variety of organizations, lending generalizability to our findings. Finally, we surveyed workers multiple times per day for 10 consecutive working days, allowing us to observe within person variance in our mediator and outcomes. Despite these strengths, as is the case with most studies, ours has several limitations that ought to be addressed in future research.

One limitation of our study is that both our mediator and dependent variables were self-reported raising concerns about common method bias (Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). We took several steps to mitigate these concerns. First, the presence of an interaction provides some evidence that common method effects are not responsible for our results (Evans, 1985; Siemsen, Roth, & Oliveira, 2010). Additionally, we group mean centered our Level 1 continuous exogenous variables, which removes between-person variance; thus, minimizing concerns of social desirability and other person-level confounds. Finally, while our mediator and outcomes were self-reported, our independent variable was manipulated and, thus, a very significant portion of the data was not self-reported. Nevertheless, we invite future research to replicate our findings using other methods to validate the results reported here.

Beyond common method bias, the self-reported nature of our mediator and outcomes raises the concern of reverse causality—in other words, it could be that when employees perform worse and withdraw from others, others around them treat them more rudely and that is why they perceived more rudeness. To test this possibility, we ran a supplemental analysis where we modeled our

outcomes as mediators such that goal progress, task performance, interaction avoidance, and psychological withdrawal mediated the relationship between witnessed rudeness and perceived rudeness. Because these models were nonnested we used the procedure recommended by Hooper, Coughlan, and Mullen (2008) as well as Wang and Chan (2011) for comparing nonnested models, which suggests comparing the information criteria (Akaike's Information Criterion [AIC], Bayesian Information Criterion [BIC], and sample size-adjusted BIC [SSBIC]) across the two models. The results of comparing each of the three information criteria suggested that the model with the relationships in our hypothesized direction (AIC = 5250.48, BIC = 5474.72, SSBIC = 5312.81) fit the data better than the model with these relationships reversed (AIC = 5442.37, BIC = 5714.88, SSBIC = 5518.05). These results provide evidence supporting the directionality of the relationships we hypothesized; however, these results cannot rule out reverse causality, and future research should explore whether performance and withdrawal at work can result in perceptions of workplace rudeness. Our study also did not test the possibility that the experience of witnessing rudeness in the morning caused participants to become more rude themselves, which in turn, may have caused others to behave more rudely toward the participants. While such a reciprocal loop is not essential to produce the effects observed in our study, it is a possibility and we invite future research to investigate this further.

While we build on prior evidence suggesting that witnessing rudeness activates the rudeness concept (Foulk et al., 2016), there may be other theoretical explanations for our findings. For example, it is possible that when employees witness rudeness they may experience negative affect, which may cause them to treat others poorly resulting in actual rudeness from coworkers. To test this possibility, we ran a supplemental model where we included negative affect as a mediator of the relationship between witnessed rudeness and perceived rudeness. We were not able to uncover any evidence that negative affect mediated this relationship (95% CI [−.01, .03]), but these results do not allow us to completely rule out the role of negative affect as a mediating mechanism. Indeed, Porath and Erez, (2009) found that negative affect mediated the relationship between witnessed rudeness and both performance and creativity. Their measure of negative affect included high arousal negative affect items, which our measure did not, thus it may be that measuring negative affect in another way would result in an observable effect of negative affect. Future research could explore in more detail the role of affective reactions in perceptions of workplace rudeness.

One of the strengths of this study is the within-person randomization with which participants received rudeness/control conditions on a daily basis. This randomization increases the validity of our models by removing confounds such as buildup effects or cross-day effects. However, it does present a limitation in that it does not allow us to study build-up or cross-day effects. Our design allows us to explore the effects of witnessed morning rudeness on a worker's day, but it is possible that over longer time horizons different effects could be observed, or that effects could build up over time if workers witnessed rudeness on multiple mornings in a row. Future studies could elaborate on the findings reported here by deploying models that deliver the manipulated condition in nonrandom order to explore buildup or cross-day effects. Similarly, because our manipulation of witnessed rudeness was always in the morning, the generalizability of our findings are limited to morning encounters with witnessed rudeness. In fact, it is likely that the effects of witnessing rudeness will be weaker if they would occur later in the day because "starting points matter, anchoring and framing employees' perceptions" (Rothbard & Wilk, 2011, p. 973). Moreover, it is possible that the experience of witnessing rudeness in the morning may be particularly impactful because "it precedes employee encounters with work events" (Rothbard & Wilk, 2011, p. 960). In other words, witnessing rudeness in the morning may have a stronger effect than witnessing rudeness later in the day simply because when it occurs in the morning, it can influences the entire days' worth of interactions, whereas when it happens in the afternoon, morning interactions that have already occurred cannot be affected. In this study, we were not able to test whether morning witnessed rudeness has stronger effects than rude encounters that occur later in the day. Thus, we encourage future research to explore whether witnessing rudeness in the morning has stronger effects than witnessing it later in the day.

One of the strengths of our study is that by focusing on witnessed rudeness, we consider rudeness not simply as a dyadic phenomenon that only includes a perpetrator and target, but as a social phenomenon that includes witnesses to the event. This is important because there is substantial evidence to suggest that events like rudeness are frequently witnessed by others in the workplace (Glomb, 2002; Schilpzand et al., 2016). However, our study is limited by assuming that witnesses are observing the rude event separately from others. This is a limitation because in naturalistic workplace settings employees are likely to witness rudeness with a group of other coworkers, and witnessing rudeness with a group of others may not be equivalent to witnessing it in isolation. For example, several theoretical perspectives suggest that social behaviors can be contagious (Barsade, 2002; Hatfield et al., 1993), and rudeness in particular has been shown to be contagious (Foulk et al., 2016). Accordingly, the effects of witnessing rudeness could be exacerbated when in a group context. In contrast, there are also theoretical reasons to suggest that a group context could mitigate the effects of witnessing rudeness. Rudeness has strong negative effects on individuals at least partially because it represents a threat (Porath & Erez, 2009). One of the major characteristics of groups, and perhaps the main reason that groups were evolutionarily adopted, is that groups provide an enhanced sense of security and protection to their members (Pinker, 2002). Therefore, a mild form of aggression such as rudeness may not be perceived as a significant form of threat to individuals in groups, reducing its potential effects on group members. Our study was not designed to investigate the effects of witnessing rudeness in a group context but we believe that this would be an interesting question for future research.

Another limitation is that we only examined CSE as a moderator of the effect of witnessed rudeness on perceptions of rudeness, but it is possible that other traits may moderate this effect. For example, it would be interesting to examine how agreeable people react to the rude encounter. On one hand, they may be more sensitive to rudeness because they strive to maintain harmony in the workplace and a rude encounter would violate their expectations and exacerbate their subsequent reactions. On the other hand, because they strive to get along with others, they may not be as affected by the rude encounter because they are inherently less likely to scan the

environment for negative interactions. The literature on rudeness could benefit from future research that explores personality traits that amplify or reduce the effect of witnessed rudeness on subsequent reactions and behaviors. Furthermore, both theoretical (Hiller & Hambrick, 2005) and empirical (Shantz & Booth, 2014) evidence suggests that CSE may have important boundary conditions and that at very high levels of CSE the well understood benefits may no longer apply. Exploring these effects goes beyond the scope of our study. We are hopeful that this study will encourage future inquiry in this exciting area of research.

Conclusion

In this study, we show that morning witnessed rudeness colors employees' views of subsequent interactions such that they perceive more workplace rudeness, as if they were wearing "rude color glasses" throughout the workday. This increase in perceived rudeness, in turn, negatively impacts important workplace outcomes such as performance and withdrawal behaviors. Furthermore, we demonstrate the buffering effects of CSE, such that the relationship between witnessed rudeness and subsequent perceived rudeness is weaker for individuals high (vs. low) in CSE. We hope that this study will motivate work that simultaneously considers predictors and outcomes of rudeness and will encourage practitioners to limit employees' morning exposure to rude incidents that could "ruin their day."

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Received March 15, 2016
Revision received June 4, 2017
Accepted June 7, 2017 ■