

**IS EVERYONE HAVING A GOOD TIME? THE EFFECTS OF COMPLEX
ORGANIZATIONAL RITUALS ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND BEHAVIOR**

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Abstract

The organizational rituals literature has primarily focused on simple rituals and their positive effects on participants. While generative, this focus has obscured the intricacy and potential downsides of complex rituals, such as workplace celebrations and team-building retreats. In our research, we leverage Interaction Rituals Theory (IRT; Collins, 2004) to broaden the theoretical foundation of the study of organizational rituals by examining the range of experiences that employees have within complex organizational rituals. First, we inductively identify the positive and negative experiences within complex organizational rituals and create scales to measure them. Next, drawing further from IRT, we develop a model explaining how these experiences affect employee engagement and identify the subsequent work behaviors most likely to be affected by ritual-induced changes in engagement (helping, loyal boosterism, and job search behavior). In two field studies in the United States and Germany, we test this model, first in a single complex organizational ritual (i.e., company holiday party) and then across a broader set of common complex organizational rituals. Across both studies, we find that employees' positive experiences during an organizational ritual enhance engagement and predict subsequent work behavior, while their effects can be significantly diminished by negative ritual experiences, challenging the assumption that rituals are uniformly beneficial. By providing evidence for a more balanced perspective on the impact of organizational rituals, our work provides a more nuanced and holistic understanding of the true nature of organizational rituals.

Keywords: workplace rituals; engagement; helping; loyal boosterism; job search behavior

IS EVERYONE HAVING A GOOD TIME? THE EFFECTS OF COMPLEX ORGANIZATIONAL RITUALS ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND BEHAVIOR

A work team starts each day with a group cheer, to motivate and foster a sense of unity and camaraderie. A department gets together whenever a new employee joins, to introduce and welcome them to the group. A firm's workforce dresses up every December and attends the annual holiday party, to celebrate the accomplishments of the prior year. What do these work occurrences have in common? They are all organizational rituals—workplace events in which a group of employees comes together to interact and engage in a planned set of activities (Cayla, Cova, & Maltese, 2013). Such rituals are ubiquitous in modern workplaces (Dumas, Phillips, & Rothbard, 2013; Menges & Kilduff, 2015; Norton, 2024), and for good reason. Research on organizational rituals suggests that ritual participation is generally a positive experience for employees, one that improves participants' subsequent attitudes and behaviors. For example, rituals have been associated with increased feelings of work meaningfulness (Kim, Sezer, Schroeder, Risen, Gino, & Norton, 2021; Lepisto, 2022), a stronger sense of organizational values (Erhardt, Martin-Rios, & Heckscher, 2016), and heightened comradery (Fischer, Callander, Reddish, & Bulbulia, 2013; Rosen, 1988).

Our knowledge of the effects of rituals largely stems from studies that have focused on simple rituals, which involve brief, straightforward interactions among participants (e.g., a morning cheer, or ringing an office bell when a sale has been achieved; Kim et al., 2021; Zakhour & Hadley, 2025). While generative, this focus overlooks the reality that many organizational rituals, such as workplace holiday parties, awards ceremonies, and team-building retreats, are more complex, longer in duration, and comprise a variety of participant interactions and activities (Hobson, Schroeder, Risen, Xygalatas & Inzlicht, 2018; Smith & Stewart, 2011;

Sosis, 2019). This oversight is problematic because *complex rituals*, which involve high levels of social interaction over extended periods of time, may not always yield positive experiences and may elicit negative reactions (Boynes & Luery, 2015). Indeed, anecdotal evidence suggests that employees often have negative reactions to company holiday parties (Rosen, 1988), with many reporting that they would prefer to skip these annual rituals (Randstad, 2017; Spector, 2017) and some disclosing having lied to avoid attending (Liu, 2019). Many workers feel pressure to attend these parties (Furlan, 2019; Schweitzer, 2018), and report that instances of awkward or inappropriate interactions are common at them (Ryan, 2018; Page, 2020; Salemi, 2016).

The anecdotal evidence that complex organizational rituals are experienced by participants in both positive and negative ways (Collins, 2004) suggests that the literature's predominant focus on simple rituals may have led to an overly positive view of ritual effects that do not fully align with how many organizational rituals actually operate. Specifically, the nature and dynamics of more complex rituals, with their potential mix of positive and negative experiences, are underrecognized. Correspondingly, our understanding of the full range of effects of ritual experiences on employees is constrained. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to examine how employees experience complex organizational rituals and the implications of these experiences for their subsequent engagement and behavior at work. In doing so, we seek to provide a more balanced perspective of the nature and impact of ritual experiences.

To guide our research, we draw on Interaction Ritual Theory (IRT; Collins, 1990; 2004), which provides a framework for understanding the dynamics and complexity of organizational rituals. Specifically, as rituals become more complex (Hobson et al., 2018; Smith & Stewart, 2011; Sosis, 2019), they carry greater potential for eliciting negative experiences among participants (Boynes & Luery, 2015; Collins, 2004). In this paper, we elucidate how positive and

negative ritual experiences collectively shape important employee behaviors that extend beyond the duration of the ritual itself. Specifically, we draw on Stein and colleagues' (2021) framework, which posits that rituals affect participants' subsequent behaviors by orienting them toward the welfare of the collective, facilitating their internalization of the collective's values, and imbuing them with a desire to remain part of the collective. Applying this framework to the organizational context, we propose that participating in complex rituals shapes employees' subsequent helping, loyal boosterism, and job search behavior, as operationalizations corresponding to each of Stein et al.'s (2021) three noted influences, respectively.

To shed light on the mechanisms through which ritual experiences affect these three employee behaviors, we turn to the concept of emotional energy—the “drive that individuals feel for engaging in action” (Maoret, Marchesini, & Ertug, 2023, p. 930)—as theorized in IRT (Collins, 1993; 204). We propose that in organizational settings, the most meaningful manifestation of emotional energy is employee engagement, which represents the expression of personal resources that are directed toward organizational goals (Macey, Schneider, Barbera & Young, 2009). Furthermore, Collins (2014) emphasized the importance of understanding “the conditions under which rituals succeed or fail” (p.308), suggesting that examining employee experiences within organizational rituals can illuminate the factors that catalyze their effects on employee engagement and subsequent behaviors. To this end, we inductively identify the positive and negative ways employees experience rituals and demonstrate how the interaction of these experiences ultimately determines organizational rituals' ability to elicit employee engagement and subsequent behaviors. Our full model is shown in Figure 1.

In developing and testing this model, our work makes several meaningful theoretical contributions to the rituals literature by shifting the focus from simple to complex rituals. First,

we inductively identify the positive and negative experiences that employees have when participating in complex organizational rituals. Specifically, our work explains that while rituals often foster positive experiences, such as enhancing social bonds and creating an energetic and positive atmosphere, they can also result in unintended negative experiences, including feelings of underappreciation and being required to make personal sacrifices to attend. While prior work focused on simple organizational rituals has primarily conceptualized ritual participation as unidimensional (i.e., participant or nonparticipant), our work takes a more nuanced view by exploring and illuminating the different ways that participants experience and react to organizational rituals that are more complex.

Second, by shedding light on the positive and negative aspects of organizational rituals, we respond to calls for researchers to discern what makes complex organizational rituals more or less effective (Collins, 2004). Leveraging insights from IRT (Collins, 2004), we theorize that the contrasting positive and negative experiences interact to shape employee engagement, with positive experiences contributing to engagement and negative experiences mitigating these effects, thereby diminishing the overall impact of rituals. By highlighting both the benefits and unintended negative consequences of rituals, we provide a more balanced understanding of ritual experiences, one that challenges the prevailing assumption that rituals are inherently beneficial.

Finally, by considering the behavioral outcomes of ritual-induced engagement, our research extends IRT (Collins, 2004) and deepens our understanding of organizational rituals more broadly. Indeed, one theoretical challenge in this literature is *opaqueness* (Hobson et al., 2018; Kapitány & Nielsen, 2015; Stein, Hobson & Schroeder, 2021)—that “it is often difficult for observers to detect any practical effect the ritual might be having” (Rossano, 2020, p. 3). In this paper, we identify theoretically grounded behavioral outcomes that reflect employee

prioritization of the collective's interests (e.g., helping, loyal boosterism, and job search behavior), as influenced via engagement catalyzed by employee experiences during organizational rituals. Thus, our research helps to resolve the opaqueness in our understanding of the effects of rituals by showing how employee engagement operates as a proximal outcome of organizational ritual experiences that subsequently influences employees' work behaviors.

Below, we introduce IRT and conceptually describe organizational rituals through this theoretical lens. We then quantify the types of complex organizational rituals that employees most commonly experience, inductively identify the positive and negative experiences associated with one representative complex ritual (i.e., workplace holiday party), and develop scales for measuring these experiences. Returning to theory development, we formulate testable hypotheses concerning how these positive and negative experiences are related to ritual participants' subsequent engagement and enactment of behaviors that benefit the collective. Finally, we test these hypotheses in two studies and discuss our findings.

Interactional Ritual Theory and Complex Organizational Rituals

IRT conceptualizes rituals as having four dimensions: physical density (participants are located together), boundedness (participants primarily interact with other participants), focus of attention (all participants are focused on the same thing), and commonality of emotional mood (Collins, 1993). Organizational rituals tend to be pre-planned and characterized by at least partially scripted behavioral expectations (Cayla et al., 2013) that involve interpersonal interactions with social consequences (Smith & Stewart, 2011). Finally, rituals often recur in a predictable manner (Dandridge, 1986), being held periodically and involving repeated scripted components like the announcements of awards and speeches from leaders.

Organizational rituals vary in their complexity (Islam & Zyphur, 2009; Smith & Stewart, 2011; Sosis, 2019). Simple rituals involve limited social interaction among employees, are short in duration, and require minimal focus from employees. Conversely, complex organizational rituals tend to involve extensive social interaction, are long in duration, and require focused attention from participants. As an example, a workplace holiday party requires multiple social interactions (e.g., conversations with various coworkers across the organization often including their significant others), takes up substantial time (e.g., an agenda of activities spread over an afternoon or an evening), and demands attention from attendees (e.g., participating in congratulatory behaviors, and learning about organizational accomplishments or goals), especially relative to simple rituals such as engaging in a team cheer at the start of a work shift.

Participating in simple organizational rituals can have positive psychological and behavioral effects on employees, including higher emotional energy and productivity (Maoret et al., 2023), increases in the perceived meaningfulness of work (Kim et al., 2021), and strengthened commitment towards one's group (Stein et al., 2021). Put simply, participating in simple rituals (compared to not participating) tends to benefit employees and their work groups (Maoret et al., 2023). This focus on mere participation (i.e., whether or not an employee was part of a ritual) to study the effects of organizational rituals (Kim et al., 2021; Lepisto, 2022) is appropriate for understanding the effects of simple rituals. However, IRT proposes that to understand employees' experiences within complex rituals, it is necessary to take a more granular approach (Collins, 2004). This theory posits that the intricate and interactional nature of complex rituals requires a focus not just on *ritual participation* but also on participants' detailed *ritual experiences*. IRT adopts a situational or experiential perspective of rituals grounded in the notion that a full understanding of complex rituals and their effects can be gained by explicitly

considering individuals' experiences within the ritual (Collins, 2004). By considering the diverse experiences that occur within rituals, it becomes possible to identify the various ways that rituals affect participants, as these experiences combine and interact to shape how employees are affected by their involvement in the event (Hill, Canniford, & Eckhardt, 2022).

An Exploration of Employee Experiences in Complex Organizational Rituals

A granular understanding of work events can be gained by studying both the positive *and* negative experiences of those present at the events (Herzberg, Maunser, & Snyderman, 1959). Recent work in the engagement literature supports this notion, suggesting that within particular work events, positive and negative work experiences influence subsequent employee engagement (Allen & Rogelberg, 2013; Allen, Lehmann-Willenbrock, & Rogelberg, 2018; Lehmann-Willenbrock, Allen, & Belyeu, 2016). Thus, as a first step in shedding light on employees' experiences within complex organizational rituals, we sought to identify the most prevalent forms that these rituals take in organizations. Specifically, we conducted a Pilot Study that explores the prevalence and types of organizational rituals in contemporary workplaces.

Pilot Study: Forms and Prevalence of Complex Organizational Rituals

We conducted a pilot survey to identify commonly experienced complex organizational rituals among 200 working adults in the U.K., recruited through Prolific. Participants were not self-employed and were fluent in English. They were, on average, 38.15 years old ($SD = 10.67$), and 50.5% were female. 77.5% were White, 9.5% were Black or African American, 9% were Asian, 4% were Other. We provided participants with the definitions and descriptions of complex organizational rituals and asked them to describe up to three such rituals they had recently attended. They reported 425 rituals. Among these, we identified six prevalent complex organizational ritual types: holiday parties (25%), team-building retreats (23%), annual meetings

(20%), award ceremonies (9%), onboarding or leaving events (7%), and company-specific celebration events (6%).¹ Based on these findings, we viewed workplace parties/celebrations as a prototypical complex organizational ritual, one that could serve as a suitable starting point for examining the impact of rituals on employee engagement and behaviors. That is, the workplace party represents a widely experienced and easily recognizable form of complex organizational ritual, making it an accessible and prevalent context for studying employee experiences within rituals (e.g., Gorman, 2020; Hancock, 2016; Hancock & Rehn, 2011; Trice & Beyer, 1984; Zacher, 2023). Thus, we proceeded to inductively identify the positive and negative ways that employees experience workplace parties during the holiday season, following the procedure described by Basch and Fisher (2000).

Study 1: An Inductive Study of Organizational Ritual Experiences

Sample and Procedures

We invited working adults in an MBA program at a large university in the Western U.S. to participate in the study in exchange for extra credit in their business course. Thirty-seven of the 68 students invited to participate did so (54.4% response rate). Almost half (48.6%) of the participants were female. On average, respondents were 33.35 years old ($SD = 8.85$), had 11.29 years of work experience ($SD = 8.66$), and had worked for their current employer for 3.84 years ($SD = 4.01$). Among the 37 participants, 65% were White, 27% were Asian, 5% were Hispanic or Latino, and 3% were Pacific Islander. The survey included open-ended questions to collect accounts of how respondents experienced a recent workplace party. Respondents were provided with the following definition: “A workplace celebration is a company-wide, work-sponsored, social event where employees are invited to enjoy a happy and special occasion (e.g., a company

¹ 43 events (10%) provided by participants did not fit the definition of complex organizational rituals (e.g., leaving early on a Friday).

holiday party).” Respondents were asked to think about the most recent time they attended such an event, and identify three (or more) positive and three (or more) negative experiences, and explain why they felt each was positive and negative, respectively.

Analyses and Results

The responses were inductively coded by two of the authors without an a priori scheme, following the guidelines of grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss 2008; Gioia, Corley & Hamilton, 2013; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Walsh, Holton, Bailyn, Fernandez, Levina & Glaser, 2015). First, one author used open and in vivo coding to create initial categories of similar answers and similar terms found in the data (i.e., first-order themes; Gioia et al., 2013). This process was iterative; during the data analysis, the author frequently returned to previously coded responses to check for consistency or to recode them based on a new, higher-order code. Then, a second author went through this initial coding, making refinements and discussing disagreements in coding along the way. In this way, the coding process moved from open and in vivo coding to focused coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Toward the end of this coding, a saturation point was reached and nearly all new data could be categorized within existing codes (Murphy, Klotz, & Kreiner, 2017). The results of this analysis identified six dimensions that captured employees’ positive experiences within complex organizational rituals and seven dimensions that captured negative experiences within complex organizational rituals.

Of the 37 respondents, most provided three positive experiences within their most recent workplace party, but some provided up to five experiences. In total, these respondents generated 120 unique responses (3.24 per respondent). The six distinct positive experiences that emerged from the analysis, their frequency, and examples of each, were as follows: *strengthen social fabric* (41) (e.g., “we had some newer people on the team, so it was great to get to know them

better”), *perquisites* (40) (e.g., “Free food - showed that the company are willing to spend money for employees”), *energetic environment* (23) (e.g., “It motivated everyone to do their best”), *positive atmosphere* (12) (e.g., “It was a very positive and happy event”), *positive leadership* (3) (e.g., “Everyone was hearing from the director - clarity and transparency of message was universal”), and *facilitate work* (1) (e.g., “Quite a few good ideas came out of the various events”). Regarding negative experiences, respondents provided 105 unique responses (2.84 per respondent). The seven distinct negative experiences, and their frequency, were as follows: *require personal sacrifices* (36) (e.g., “having to be at a work event on Friday night”), *exclusion* (20) (e.g., “some employees invited, and some were not, thus creating a feeling of disparity”), *hinder organizational functioning* (16) (e.g., “I could have spent that time working”), *underappreciation* (13) (e.g., “Many felt unappreciated”), *encourage inauthenticity* (13) (e.g., “Had to act sad that people were leaving when I did not really care”), *attendance pressure* (5) (e.g., “Attendance was pressured”), and *facilitate unprofessionalism* (2) (e.g., “Coworkers were gossiping about team members who were not present”).

Study 1 Discussion

Six positive and seven negative experiences within complex organizational rituals emerged from Study 1’s inductive analysis. The initial validity of these experiences is supported by the alignment of the positive experiences with themes described in the rituals literature (Cayla et al., 2013; Trice & Beyer, 1984), and the alignment of the negative experiences with those described in anecdotal accounts of negative workplace holiday party experiences described earlier. By identifying a broad range of both positive and negative experiences, this study provides initial evidence of the multifaceted experiences within complex organizational rituals. We proceeded to develop measures for these positive and negative experiences.

Study 2a: Developing a Scale of Complex Organizational Ritual Experiences

The goal of Study 2a was to develop psychometrically sound measures of the positive and negative experiences within complex organizational rituals. Because we were interested in prevalent positive and negative experiences within these events, we focused only on those that had been reported more than five times in our Study 1 results. We chose five instances as the threshold to capture the most relevant experiences at organizational rituals (Hollensbe, Khazanchi, & Masterson, 2008). Using this cutoff resulted in four positive experiences (strengthen social fabric, perquisites, energetic environment, and positive atmosphere) and five negative experiences (require personal sacrifices, exclusion, hinder organizational functioning, underappreciation, and encourage inauthenticity). Per Hinkin's (1995, 1998) guidelines, and as reported in Table 1, we developed definitions and six items for each experience.²

Sample and procedures

We recruited 461 working adults in the U.K. from Prolific to test the extent to which each item for a given organizational ritual experience corresponded with the definition of that experience (i.e., definitional correspondence) and whether each item was distinct from other experiences (i.e., definitional distinctiveness; Colquitt, Sabey, Rodell, & Hill, 2019). Of the 461

² The exclusion theme initially comprised six items, similar to other themes; however, during the scale development process, we discovered that two of these items had relatively low content validity. The four retained items captured whether certain individuals were excluded from attending a ritual: "Not all employees could attend this event," "There were some people who I thought should be at this event who were not invited," "Not everyone was able to participate in this event," and "The activities or timing of this event left some people out." In contrast, the other two items addressed the presence of ingroups and outgroups within the event: "There were definitely in-groups and outgroups at this event" and "The same cliques who spend time together at work spent time together at this event." Because these two items introduced different nuances related to social dynamics and cliques rather than the broader theme of exclusion from attendance, we dropped the two items and used the remaining four items that specifically captured the intended exclusion theme. To support this decision, we conducted Confirmatory Factor Analysis to assess the fit of the exclusion theme. We tested two models: a one-factor model including all six items, and a one-factor model including only the four items focused on exclusion from attendance. The fit statistics indicated a poor fit for a one-factor model that includes all six items (CFI = .72, RMSEA = .27, SRMR = .10), while a one-factor that includes the four items showed an acceptable fit (CFI = .91, RMSEA = .26, SRMR = .07). These results further supported our decision to exclude the two items that did not capture the content of the exclusion theme.

participants, 441 passed three attention checks that asked them to click on a certain value. Of these, the average age was 39.53 years ($SD = 13.06$), 48.1% of participants were female, 80.1% were White, 10.2% were Asian, 5.7% were Black or African American, 0.5 % were Hispanic or Latino, and 3.6% other. Each participant first read the definition of one organizational ritual experience and then assessed the extent to which each of the developed items was representative of the corresponding definition of the experience using a seven-point scale (1 = Extremely bad representation of the concept above to 7 = Extremely good representation of the concept above). Then, we computed the Hinkin Tracey correspondence (htc) index, which indicates whether the items have a high level of correspondence with the associated construct definition (Colquitt et al., 2019), and the Hinkin Tracey distinctiveness (htd) index, which indicates whether the items are distinct from orbiting constructs, for each experience.

Results

The htc values for the positive experiences were .90, .82, .87, and .76 for strengthen social fabric, perquisites, energetic environment, and positive atmosphere, respectively. The htc values for the negative experiences were .81, .81, .81, .79, and .83 for requiring personal sacrifice, exclusion, hindering organizational functioning, underappreciation, and encouraging inauthenticity, respectively. These values generally indicate moderate to very strong correspondence of the items with their associated constructs, suggesting that the items accurately represent the corresponding ritual experiences (Colquitt et al., 2019). Moreover, the htd values for the positive experiences were .47, .29, .35, and .21, and those for the negative experiences were .46, .56, .54, .42, .55, respectively. These htd values suggest that most items exhibit strong to very strong distinctiveness from other related constructs, indicating that each item is sufficiently distinct from other positive or negative experiences (Colquitt et al., 2019). Overall,

these results suggest that each item strongly represents the corresponding ritual experience and is distinct from other related (i.e., positive or negative) experiences.

Study 2b: Identifying the Factor Structure of Complex Organizational Ritual Experiences

IRT scholars argue that understanding complex rituals requires both focusing on specific experiences and recognizing that these experiences may combine to inform overall positive and negative experiences of rituals (Collins, 2004; Herzberg et al., 1959). This approach aligns with other research that suggests employees generally perceive events as broadly positive or negative (Berntsen, Rubin, & Siegler, 2011). Thus, we examined whether experiences within complex organizational rituals load onto two higher-order factors—positive and negative experiences.

Sample and procedures

We recruited 300 participants in the U.S. who had a minimum of three years of work experience, from Amazon MTurk. Of the 284 participants who passed both attention checks, the average job tenure was 6.10 years ($SD = 4.46$), and the average age was 34.1 years ($SD = 9.34$). Additionally, 32.4% of participants were female, 64.4% were White, 15.9% were Asian, 10.6% were African American, 7.4 % Hispanic, and 1.8% other. Participants were asked to recall a recent workplace celebration (e.g., holiday party) they had attended and to provide details about the event (e.g., venue, the number of participants, the percentage of employees invited, duration) to bring the event vividly to mind. Then, they were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with statements that described each experience within the recent celebration on a scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree), using the scales developed in Study 2a.

Results

We conducted a confirmatory factor analysis using MPlus 8.7 (Muthén & Muthén, 2017). Positive and negative experiences were treated as higher-order latent variables, with four and

five experiences, respectively. The average standardized factor loading was .90 for positive experiences and .79 for negative experiences. However, the standardized factor loading of the *exclusion* theme on the higher-order negative experience factor was below .40, suggesting poor fit with other negative experiences (Hinkin, 1998). Following methodological recommendations (Hinkin & Schriesheim, 1989), we removed the *exclusion* theme from the higher-order negative experience factor. As a result, four positive experiences (strengthen social fabric, perquisites, energetic environment, and positive atmosphere) and four negative experiences (require personal sacrifices, hinder organizational functioning, underappreciation, and encourage inauthenticity) remained. The average standardized factor loading was .90 for positive experiences and .89 for negative experiences. This model demonstrated adequate fit to the data ($\chi^2 = 2084.22$, $df = 1071$, CFI = .92, SRMR = .06, RMSEA = .06).

Study 2 Discussion

In Study 2, we developed items for each complex organizational ritual experience and examined the overall factor structure of positive and negative ritual experiences. Our results indicated that the items had acceptable content validity and that one negative ritual experience (exclusion) was not seen by employees as similar to the other four negative experiences. After removing exclusion, we found that a factor structure with a single higher-order factor for positive experiences and a single higher-order factor for negative experiences provided acceptable fit to the data. With a set of complex organizational ritual experiences identified and scales created to measure them, we sought to develop a theoretical model that explains the effects of complex organizational rituals on employee engagement and subsequent behavior.

The Effects of Organizational Ritual Experiences on Employee Engagement and Behavior

Guided by IRT (Collins, 1990; 1993; 2004), we propose that the positive and negative experiences employees have within complex organizational rituals will affect their behavior. This focus on behavioral manifestations of ritual participation is theoretically important, as scholars have lamented that the rituals literature paints an unclear picture of whether rituals influence behaviors (Hobson et al., 2018; Kapitány & Nielsen, 2015; Rossano, 2020). To clarify this picture, we draw from Stein et al. (2021), who theorized that rituals will affect participants in three key ways—(a) by orienting members toward the welfare of the collective (helping behavior), (b) by facilitating the internalization of the collective’s values (loyal boosterism), and (c) by imbuing members with a desire to be in the collective (job search behaviors). Moreover, we propose that employee engagement, which is theorized in IRT to be the proximal outcome of rituals (Collins, 2004), mediates the relationship between ritual experiences and work behaviors. The tenets of IRT provide a robust theoretical underpinning for this prediction. First, IRT argues that the key indicator of a successful ritual is emotional energy, which is described as a “feeling of confidence, courage to action, [and] boldness in taking initiative” (Collins, 2004, p. 39). This conceptualization of emotional energy aligns closely with employee engagement, which is characterized by enthusiasm, focus, and dedication (Sonnentag, 2003). Second, similar to employee engagement (Kahn, 1990), IRT posits that emotional energy can manifest physically as well as psychologically in employees (Collins, 2004), further highlighting the conceptual overlap between emotional energy and employee engagement. Finally, advancements in IRT emphasize the importance of considering emotional energy as an organizationally situated phenomenon (Collins, 2014), explicitly acknowledging that work situations can catalyze emotional energy

among employees (Collins, 1993). Together, IRT recognizes employee-specific psychological states like engagement as organizationally embedded manifestations of emotional energy.

The Effects of Positive Ritual Experiences on Employee Engagement

Integrating insights from IRT (Collins, 2004) and the engagement literature (Crawford et al., 2010; Kahn, 1990; Macey et al., 2009), we argue that positive experiences within complex organizational rituals will positively associate with a sense of engagement among participating employees. IRT recognizes the importance of positive and meaningful social interactions when participating in rituals, and argues that such interactions positively relate to emotional energy (Collins, 2004). This prediction is consistent with the engagement literature, which indicates that positive and deep interactions with coworkers drive employee engagement (Andrew & Sofian 2012; Anitha, 2014; Avery, McKay & Wilson, 2007; Kang & Sung, 2017). IRT also suggests that a generally positive environment will be associated with increases in emotional energy (Collins, 2004); in other words, IRT suggests that a positive environment should elicit increases in emotional energy among ritual participants (Collins, 2008). As identified in Study 1, a positive atmosphere and an energetic environment represent positive experiences for employees at complex organizational rituals, and IRT suggests that these experiences should facilitate engagement. As also revealed in Study 1, these events often involve benefits for those who attend, in the form of company-sponsored food and beverages, as well as entertainment. Receiving benefits from one's organization as part of a workplace ritual should be seen as a reward from the leadership of the organization, which is associated with increases in employee engagement (Breevaart et al., 2014). Together, we suggest that positive experiences among employees at organizational rituals should spur higher levels of engagement.

Hypothesis 1: Positive experiences within organizational rituals will positively relate to employee engagement.

The Effects of Negative Ritual Experiences on Employee Engagement

While prior work exploring the implications of organizational rituals has focused on positive outcomes (e.g., Kim et al., 2021; Lepisto, 2022; Rosen, 1988), IRT explicitly recognizes that some rituals may fail, or feel empty or forced, in the eyes of participants (Collins, 2004). These negative experiences may thwart, rather than facilitate, employee engagement (Metiu & Rothbard, 2013). For example, in complex rituals, some participants may find it difficult to form bonds with other participants (e.g., awkward social encounters; Study 1; Collins, 2004), and such difficulty in social interaction will likely reduce employee engagement (Ryan, 2018; Salemi, 2016). Additionally, complex organizational rituals can include formal recognition of employee accomplishments. While such recognition can spur higher employee engagement (Kaufman, Chapman, & Allen, 2013; Shuck, Reio, & Rocco, 2011), it can also cause negative social comparisons. Celebrating certain individual employees can cause others to feel underappreciated, leading to reduced engagement (Leung, Wu, Chen, & Young, 2011).

IRT recognizes that complex rituals often contain distractions that take participants' attention away from the ritual's core activities (Collins, 2004). For example, as found in Study 1, employees perceive inconveniences related to the time or place of organizational events as negative ritual experiences. As a result, some employees express a preference for taking time off rather than having to forfeit non-work time (i.e., a weekend or evening) to attend workplace rituals (e.g., Marks, 2018). When these negative experiences are present, complex organizational rituals will likely drain, rather than catalyze, employee engagement. Finally, IRT (Collins, 2004, 2008) argues that a necessary ingredient in the positive relationship between ritual participation

and emotional energy is that individuals participate of their own accord. However, employees often report feeling forced to participate in work rituals (Furlan, 2019; Schweitzer, 2018); in such situations, the perceived mandatory nature of organizational rituals has the potential to decrease employee engagement. Combined, we suggest that negative experiences at complex organizational rituals will diminish engagement (Collins, 2004).

Hypothesis 2: Negative experiences within organizational rituals will negatively relate to employee engagement.

The Interactive Effects of Positive and Negative Ritual Experiences

We have argued that the positive and negative experiences of complex organizational rituals will independently facilitate and thwart employees' engagement, respectively; however, such rituals typically contain a mix of both positive and negative experiences. For example, a certain event may have elaborate catering, which employees interpret as a positive experience, but it may also be held at an inconvenient time or place that is experienced negatively by employees. Therefore, in addition to the independent effects that positive and negative ritual experiences may have on employee engagement, it is theoretically and practically important to consider how these experiences interact to influence engagement.

To understand the interactive effects of positive and negative experiences of organizational rituals on employees, we turned to literature suggesting that negative experiences have stronger effects on individuals than positive experiences (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001). Negative experiences are given more intense cognitive processing priority (Pratto & John, 1991) and they have stronger psychological impact than positive experiences (Wells, Hobfoll, & Lavin, 1999), even for subtle everyday experiences (David, Green, Martin, & Suls, 1997; Nezlek & Gable, 2001). These findings extend to the work domain,

where employees have stronger psychological reactions to negative workplace events than to positive workplace events (Bono, Glomb, Shen, Kim, & Koch, 2013). Collectively, this line of research indicates that employees will likely react strongly to negative experiences at complex organizational rituals, such that negative experiences will weaken the effect of rituals' positive experiences on employee engagement. Scholars have found consistent support for the positive-negative asymmetry effect (Anderson, 1965; Peeters & Czapinski, 1990; Skowronski & Carlston, 1989), which indicates that negative information “contributes more strongly to *the final impression* than does positive information” (Baumeister et al., 2001, p. 324). Therefore, when complex organizational rituals contain positive experiences alongside negative experiences, the negative experiences will weaken the effects of positive experiences on employee engagement.

Hypothesis 3: The positive effect of positive experiences within organizational rituals on employee engagement will be weakened by negative experiences within organizational rituals.

The Indirect Effects of Ritual Experiences on Employee Behavior

IRT proposes that changes in employee engagement catalyzed by complex rituals are not likely to be momentary (Collins, 1993), but rather that this change in engagement is “a longer-lasting feeling that individuals take with them” (Collins, 2014, p. 300). Extending this view, the experiences employees have at complex organizational rituals should affect their subsequent behaviors via engagement. As described next, by applying Stein et al.'s (2021) framework, we identify three workplace behaviors especially likely to be affected by employees' experiences within complex organizational rituals: helping, loyal boosterism, and job search behavior.

Helping. Stein et al. (2021) proposed that engagement stemming from experiences in complex rituals orients participants toward acts of altruism within the collective. This means that when employees feel more engaged as a result of experiencing complex organizational rituals,

they should be primed to perform altruistic deeds that benefit the collective. In organizations, helping is a prototypical form of prosocial behavior (Bolino & Grant, 2016). In describing the character of this behavior, De Clercq et al. (2020, p. 271) stated that helping “can benefit the professional well-being of other organizational members and enhance the organization’s competitive advantage.” Based on this conceptualization, we argue that helping is an important manifestation of the orientation toward altruistic behavior that Stein et al. (2021) described as an outcome of ritual participation. In line with this prediction, prior research has noted a positive relationship between employee engagement and helping (De Clercq, Haq, & Azeem, 2020; Handayani, Anggraeni, Suharnomo, & Rahardja, 2017).

Hypothesis 4: Employee engagement will mediate the conditional indirect effect of positive and negative organizational ritual experiences on employee helping.

Loyal boosterism. According to Stein et al. (2021), committed behavior reflects an employee's dedication to the collective. We propose that engagement facilitated by experiencing a complex organizational ritual should deepen participants’ committed behavior by enhancing their connection to the collective’s core values. Prior research has shown that when individuals are engaged and thus identify with a collective, they become more likely to advocate on its behalf. For instance, Mael and Ashforth (1992) found that alumni identification with their college enhanced loyalty-based behavior toward the college. Similarly, when employee engagement is boosted by experiences within a complex organizational ritual, such as a team-building retreat or an awards ceremony, they should identify more deeply with the organization's values. Loyal boosterism, which involves actively promoting and defending the collective, enhancing its reputation, and contributing to its cohesion and morale, is a behavioral manifestation of such identification (Moorman & Blakely, 1995). Thus, engagement facilitated

by experiences within organizational rituals should lead to loyal boosterism, a form of committed behavior that demonstrates members' dedication to defending and supporting the collective.

Hypothesis 5: Employee engagement will mediate the conditional indirect effect of positive and negative organizational ritual experiences on loyal boosterism.

Job search behavior. “Collective rituals provide the fundamental mechanism of keeping groups intact” (Stein et al., 2021, p. 114), such that by making employees feel engaged, they should be less likely to leave the organization. In organizations, a behavioral manifestation of ritual-induced work engagement should therefore involve the reduction of job search behaviors by employees. Employee engagement is accompanied by enhanced perceptions of meaningfulness of one's contributions to the work unit and organization (Kahn, 1990) and by elevated resources and energy levels that are devoted to workplace activities (Kanfer, 1990; Rich, LePine, & Crawford, 2010), lessening both the desire and ability for employees to undertake job search activities. Thus, if employees have enhanced engagement due to participation in an organizational ritual, any desires they may have to leave the collective (via job search) should be diminished. In support of this assertion, prior research indicates that employee engagement negatively relates to employees' intentions to seek out career opportunities beyond their current organization (Jones & Harter, 2005; Timms et al., 2015). These findings converge with the theory advanced by Stein et al. (2021) to suggest that employee engagement stemming from participating in organizational rituals should be associated with lower job search activity.

Hypothesis 6: Employee engagement will mediate the conditional indirect effect of positive and negative organizational ritual experiences on job search behavior.

Overview of Model Testing

To test our theoretical model (see Figure 1), we conducted two complementary studies of employee experiences within complex organizational rituals. Study 3 focuses specifically on workplace holiday parties, and examines how employees' experiences at workplace holiday parties influence their engagement and subsequent behaviors. Study 4 includes the broader set of complex organizational rituals—holiday parties, team-building retreats, annual meetings, award ceremonies, onboarding or leaving events, and company-specific celebration events—identified in our pilot study. This study uses a recall methodology to study the effects of ritual experiences on employee engagement and subsequent behaviors, using a sample of employees in Germany. Together, these two studies provide both specific and generalizable insights into how complex organizational rituals shape employee engagement and behaviors.

Study 3: A Full Model Test with Workplace Holiday Parties

Participants and procedures

We surveyed professional (i.e., part-time) MBA students at two universities in the Southern and Eastern US. After receiving contact information from the schools' MBA offices, we contacted the students in early November and invited them to participate. Those who agreed were asked to complete an initial survey with their demographic information and the date of their workplace holiday party. The day after that party, they received the Time 1 survey, which assessed their positive and negative experiences at the holiday party. One week later, a Time 2 survey was sent, which assessed their employee engagement. The Time 3 survey, which assessed helping, loyal boosterism, and job search behavior, was sent a week after they completed the Time 2 survey. Respondents were paid \$3 per survey and an extra \$8 if they completed surveys at all three time points. Of 115 MBA students who agreed to participate, 25 did not and were

excluded. Thus, the final sample was 90 individuals (response rate = 78.26%). Their average organizational tenure was 3.64 years ($SD = 3.51$), their average age was 33.71 years ($SD = 8.34$), and 61.1% were female. Moreover, 64.4% were White, 16.7% were Black or African American, 8.9% were Hispanic or Latino, 6.7% were Asian, and 3.3% were other. Participants held a variety of jobs (e.g., investment analyst, account manager, and communication specialist).

Measures

Organizational ritual experiences (Time 1). We measured the four positive ritual experiences—*strengthen social fabric*, *perquisites*, *energetic environment*, and *positive atmosphere*—and four negative experiences—*requiring personal sacrifices*, *hindering organizational functioning*, *underappreciation*, and *encouraging inauthenticity*—using scales from Study 2. Participants indicated their agreement with each statement about their workplace holiday party using a 5-point scale (1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree).

Employee engagement (Time 2). We measured employee engagement with Rich, LePine, and Crawford's (2010) 18-item measure, using a 5-point scale (1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree). A sample item was "In the past week or so, since the holiday celebration, I have exerted my full effort to my job."

Helping (Time 3). We measured helping with Dalal, Lam, Weiss, Welch, and Hulin's (2009) 8-item measure using a 5-point scale (1 = Never to 5 = Always). Sample items included "In the past week, I have gone out of my way to be a good employee;" and "In the past week, I volunteered to do something that was not required."

Loyal boosterism (Time 3). We measured loyal boosterism with five items (Moorman, Blakely, & Niehoff, 1998) using a 5-point scale (1 = Never to 5 = Always). A sample item was "In the past week, I have defended the organization when outsiders criticized it."

Job search behavior (Time 3). Job search behavior was measured with eight items (Bretz, Boudreau, & Judge, 1994) using a 5-point scale (1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree). A sample item was “In the past week, I have searched for information about getting a job.”

Control variables (Time 1). We controlled for respondent demographic characteristics to ensure the robustness and validity of our findings. First, we controlled for age and gender (0 = male, 1 = female), as past research indicates that individuals with different ages and genders may experience workplace parties differently (Dumas et al., 2013). We also controlled for race by including race dummy variables. Following Dumas et al. (2013), we coded underrepresented minority categories (1 = Black or African American, Native American, Hispanic or Latino, and other race, 0 = others) and Asian respondents (1 = Asian, 0 = others) separately, while White was the omitted category. We followed this approach as prior studies show that different racial groups experience the workplace differently (Phillips, Rothbard, & Dumas, 2009). The results remained substantively consistent without control variables (see Appendix A).

Analyses

We tested our theoretical model using full-information maximum likelihood (FIML) in Mplus, which handles missing data effectively by using all available data to estimate model parameters and generate more accurate and unbiased results (McClellan, Courtright, Yim, & Smith, 2021; Newman, 2014). We used the latent moderated structural equation (LMS) approach suggested by Sardeshmukh and Vandenberg (2017) using Mplus 8.7 (Muthén & Muthén, 2017). Positive and negative experiences were treated as higher-order latent variables, each with four indicators.³ The average standardized factor loading was .75 for positive and .69 for negative

³ We ran models with four positive and negative experiences separately predicting engagement and found that each experience predicts engagement in the expected direction. Specifically the relationship between each experience and

experiences within organizational rituals. We modeled latent interactions within structural equation modeling (SEM) using the XWITH command (Sardeshmukh & Vandenberg, 2017). The LMS approach generates results using robust standard errors that are normally distributed, reliable, and unbiased (Kelava et al., 2011). The LMS approach does not provide traditional fit indices such as CFI, RMSEA, and SRMR when latent interaction terms are included. Instead, Sardeshmukh and Vandenberg (2017) suggested that researchers compare the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) value between the baseline model excluding the interaction term and the full model including that term. In comparing the AIC value between the model with and without the interaction term (Loi et al., 2020), we found that the AIC decreased when the interaction term was added ($AIC = 2328.44$, $\Delta AIC = -2.69$), suggesting that the full model with the latent interaction term in the model is a better fitting model. In order to test our conditional indirect effects, we followed procedures suggested by Preacher et al. (2007) by calculating the value of indirect effects at higher (+1SD) and lower (-1SD) levels of the moderator and by using Monte Carlo simulations with 20,000 repetitions to construct 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals (CI) around each effect.⁴

Results

Table 2 displays descriptive statistics and correlations. Hypothesis 1 proposed that positive experiences within complex organizational rituals positively relate to employee

employee engagement was as follows: Strengthen social fabric ($B = .49$, $p < .01$); Perquisites ($B = .43$, $p < .01$); Energetic environment ($B = .40$, $p < .01$); Positive atmosphere ($B = .49$, $p < .01$); Require personal sacrifices ($B = -.36$, $p < .01$); Hinder organizational functioning ($B = -.27$, $p < .01$); Underappreciation ($B = -.32$, $p < .01$); Encourage inauthenticity ($B = -.25$, $p < .05$).

⁴ We encountered issues in running CFA on our measurement model due to model complexity and insufficient sample size. Specifically, Mplus indicated the number of parameters was greater than the sample size, and the chi-square test and sample statistics could not be computed because this prevented the model to converge. These limitations prevented us from obtaining reliable fit indices or chi-square statistics, which are crucial for reporting CFA results accurately. We acknowledge this limitation of Study 3, and to address this issue, we tested the model with a larger sample size in Study 4, including the CFA results of our measurement model.

engagement. As shown in Table 3, the effect of positive experiences on engagement was positive and significant ($B = .60, SE = .26, p = .020$), offering support for Hypothesis 1. However, negative experiences did not negatively relate to engagement ($B = -.38, SE = .30, p = .202$), failing to support Hypothesis 2. Hypothesis 3 predicted that negative experiences within organizational rituals weaken the positive effect of positive experiences on engagement. The interaction term between positive and negative experiences on engagement was negative and significant ($B = -.63, \beta = -.22, SE = .31, p = .044$). This result suggested that the positive relationship between positive experiences within organizational rituals and engagement decreases by .22 as negative experiences within organizational rituals increase by one standard deviation. Moreover, as shown in Figure 2, the effect of positive experiences on engagement was more positive and significant when negative experiences were lower (simple slope = .95, $p = .005$) than when negative experiences were higher (simple slope = .26, $p = .339$). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was supported.

Hypotheses 4 proposed that employee engagement mediates the conditional indirect effect of positive and negative organizational ritual experiences on helping. As shown in Table 3, engagement positively related to helping ($B = .31, SE = .09, p < .001$). As shown in Table 4, the indirect effect of positive experiences on helping via engagement was stronger when negative experiences were lower (indirect effect = .296, 95% CI [.087, .649]) than when they were higher (indirect effect = .080, 95% CI [-.069, .291]). The CI of the difference between the two indirect effects excluded zero (indirect effect difference = -.217, 95% CI [-.519, -.033]). Thus, Hypothesis 4 was supported.

Hypothesis 5 predicted that employee engagement mediates the conditional indirect effect of positive and negative organizational ritual experiences on loyal boosterism. In Table 3,

results show that engagement positively related to loyal boosterism ($B = .60, SE = .12, p < .001$). As shown in Table 4, the indirect effect of positive experiences on loyal boosterism through engagement was stronger when negative experiences were lower (indirect effect = .568, 95% CI [.183, 1.133]) compared to when these experiences were higher (indirect effect = .152, 95% CI [-.150, .517]). Moreover, the difference in CI between the two indirect effects excluded zero (indirect effect difference = -.415, 95% CI [-.920, -.051]), supporting Hypothesis 5.

Hypothesis 6 proposed that employee engagement mediates the conditional indirect effect of positive and negative organizational ritual experiences on job search behavior. As shown in Table 3, engagement negatively related to job search behavior ($B = -.33, SE = .12, p = .007$). Table 4 further reports that the indirect effect of positive experiences on employee job search behavior was more negative when negative experiences were lower (indirect effect = -.315, 95% CI [-.766, -.071]) than when negative experiences were higher (indirect effect = -.085, 95% CI [-.349, .063]). Moreover, the CI of the indirect effect difference excluded zero (indirect effect difference = .230, 95% CI [.027, .628]). Thus, Hypothesis 6 was supported.

Study 3 Discussion

The results of Study 3 indicated that positive experiences within complex organizational rituals enhance employee engagement and that this effect weakens when negative experiences are higher (vs. lower). These findings suggest that negative experiences within complex organizational rituals have an important influence on the effects of these rituals. Tests of the indirect effects of the interaction of positive and negative experiences on employee behaviors showed that experiences within organizational rituals shape employees' subsequent behaviors toward their coworkers (i.e., helping), their organization (i.e., loyal boosterism), and their jobs (i.e., job search behavior), via engagement. While this study supported our theorized model, it

focused on workplace holiday parties, which occur during a festive time of year that could (on its own) increase employee engagement. It also did not control for meaningful contextual or individual factors that might affect our outcomes. Finally, the study's sample size was relatively small, limiting our ability to test factor structures and the robustness of our findings.

To address these limitations, we conducted a constructive replication study that included a more complete set of complex organizational rituals and a larger sample size (Köhler & Cortina, 2021). Furthermore, we included control variables such as individual characteristics (i.e., extraversion) and contextual factors (e.g., perceived organizational support, frequency of rituals, scope of ritual, and number of people attending the ritual) to allow us to conduct more robust analyses. By strengthening our study design in these ways, the goal of Study 4 was to provide a second, and more complete and rigorous, test of our theoretical model.

Study 4: A Full Model Test with Multiple Types of Complex Organizational Rituals

Participants and procedures

We surveyed working employees in Germany using Prolific Academic. Using Prolific's prescreen function, we selected full-time working adults who were not self-employed and were fluent in English. In the Time 1 survey, we provided a definition of organizational rituals ("events in which a group of employees come together to interact and engage in a planned set of activities, focused on a common theme or goal") and listed the six complex rituals identified in the pilot study: holiday parties, team-building retreats, onboarding or leaving events, annual meetings, company-specific celebration events, and award ceremonies. We also listed simple rituals that do not meet our study criteria; rituals that do not involve social interaction with other employees or are not planned by an organization (e.g., informal social gatherings such as a happy hour, morning cheers, end-of-day self-reflection). Participants were then asked to indicate which

of these complex rituals they had attended in the past few months. Participants who indicated attendance at any of the six complex rituals continued with the survey. Participants then reported the details of the ritual they attended, including the date of the event, how often the ritual was held, the scope of the ritual, and the number of people who attended. Participants rated their positive and negative experiences at the ritual, and their engagement level since participating in the ritual. One week later (Time 2), participants were invited to rate their helping, loyal boosterism, and job search behavior since completing the Time 1 survey.

Among 550 participants who were prescreened, we excluded 22 participants who reported a different organizational ritual in the Time 1 and Time 2 surveys and 31 participants who described events not fitting the focus of our study, such as informal social gatherings or happy hours, or had missing information. Of the remaining 497 participants, 42% attended holiday parties, 30% attended team-building retreats, 14% attended onboarding or leaving events, 6% attended annual meetings, 5% attended company-specific celebrations, and 2% attended award ceremonies. The final sample had an average age of 32.3 years ($SD = 7.56$) and an average organizational tenure of 3.56 years ($SD = 3.90$). Moreover, 35.2% were female, 80.3% were White, 7.9 % were Asian, 2.4 % were Black, and 9.2% were other. Participants held a variety of jobs (e.g., engineer, computer scientist, police officer, and product manager).

Measures

Organizational ritual experiences (Time 1). We used scales from Study 3 to measure positive and negative experiences within complex organizational rituals.

Employee engagement (Time 1). We measured employee engagement with the same 18-item measure used in Study 3 (Rich et al., 2010).

Helping (Time 2). We measured helping with the same eight items used in Study 3 (Dalal et al., 2009).

Loyal boosterism (Time 2). We used the same five items from Study 3 to measure loyal boosterism (Moorman et al., 1998).

Job search behavior (Time 2). We measured job search behavior with the same eight-item scale used in Study 3 (Bretz et al., 1994).

Control variables (Time 1). We tested our model with and without a comprehensive set of control variables to ensure the robustness and validity of our findings. Consistent with Study 3, we controlled for gender (0 = male, 1 = female), age, and race [(underrepresented minority: 1 = Black/African American, Native American, Hispanic/Latino, and other race; 0 = others, and Asian respondents: 1 = Asian, 0 = others), while White was the omitted category]. We also included organizational tenure and extraversion (Costa & McCrae, 1992) as individual-level control variables, given that organizational tenure and extraversion may impact how employees interact with their coworkers and engage in organizational activities. Furthermore, to account for context-level factors, we included perceived organizational support (POS) as previous studies have shown that POS is a significant predictor of employee engagement (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). Finally, we controlled for several characteristics of the rituals that participants attended. Specifically, we controlled for the frequency of the ritual (daily = 1, weekly = 2, monthly = 3, annually = 4), the scope of the ritual (whether the event occurred at the workgroup level = 1, department level = 2, organizational level = 3, or other = 4), and the number of attendees. The results remained largely consistent with and without these control variables (see Appendix A2 for these analyses).

Analysis

We conducted a CFA on our measurement model to test the fit of the data to our model, using Mplus 8.7. We evaluated a higher-order six-factor model in which four positive experiences and four negative experiences were loaded onto their respective higher-order factors, three dimensions of engagement were parceled and then loaded onto a higher-order factor (Little, Cunningham, Shahar, & Widaman, 2002), and helping, loyal boosterism, and job search behaviors were included. The higher-order six-factor model showed adequate fit ($\chi^2 = 6598.18$, $df = 3628$, CFI = .90, RMSEA = .04, SRMR = .07), and demonstrated significantly better fit than several alternative models, including a model where positive and negative experiences were each loaded onto a higher-order factor without parceling, with the other factors remaining the same ($\chi^2 = 11345.68$, $df = 3636$, CFI = .73, RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .08, $\Delta\chi^2 = 4747.50$, $p < .05$), a five-factor model that loaded all experiences together, engagement, and the three outcomes ($\chi^2 = 13082.26$, $df = 3641$, CFI = .67, RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .09, $\Delta\chi^2 = 6484.08$, $p < .05$), and a two-factor model that loaded all factors measured at Time 1 and Time 2 separately ($\chi^2 = 20206.99$, $df = 3653$, CFI = .42, RMSEA = .10, SRMR = .13, $\Delta\chi^2 = 13608.80$, $p < .05$).

Similar to Study 3, we treated positive and negative experiences within complex organizational rituals as higher-order latent variables.⁵ The average standardized factor loading was .80 for positive and .71 for negative experiences within organizational rituals. We tested the model using FIML and the LMS approach using the XWITH command (Sardeshmukh & Vandenberg, 2017). We compared the AIC value between the baseline model, excluding the interaction term, and the full model including that term. The AIC decreased when the interaction

⁵ We ran models with four positive and negative experiences separately predicting engagement. Similar to Study 3, these relationships were in the expected direction: Strengthen social fabric ($B = .20$, $p < .01$); Perquisites ($B = .13$, $p < .01$); Energetic environment ($B = .23$, $p < .01$); Positive atmosphere ($B = .18$, $p < .01$); Require personal sacrifices ($B = -.07$, $p < .05$); Hinder organizational functioning ($B = -.11$, $p < .01$); Underappreciation ($B = -.15$, $p < .01$); Encourage inauthenticity ($B = -.09$, $p < .01$).

term was added ($AIC = 12023.74$, $\Delta AIC = -9.13$), indicating that the full model with the latent interaction term fits better than the model without the interaction term. In order to test our hypothesized conditional indirect effects, we used the same procedures described in Study 3.

Results

Table 5 reports descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations, while Table 6 presents path-analytic model results. Hypotheses 1 and 2 proposed that positive and negative experiences within organizational rituals positively and negatively relate to employee engagement, respectively. Results showed that positive experiences positively related to engagement ($B = .30$, $SE = .08$, $p < .001$), supporting Hypothesis 1. Consistent with findings from Study 3, the relationship between negative experiences and engagement was negative but not significant ($B = -.06$, $SE = .10$, $p = .572$). Thus, Hypothesis 2 was not supported. Hypothesis 3 proposed an interaction between positive and negative experiences within organizational rituals on employee engagement such that negative experiences weaken the positive relationship between positive ritual experiences and engagement. Findings indicated a significant interactive effect between positive and negative experiences on engagement ($B = -.18$, $\beta = -.12$, $SE = .06$, $p = .001$). This meant the positive relationship between positive experiences within organizational rituals and employee engagement decreases by .12 as negative experiences within organizational rituals increases by one standard deviation. Moreover, as shown in Figure 3, the relationship between positive experiences within rituals and engagement was more positive and significant when negative experiences were lower (simple slope = .41, $p < .001$) compared to when negative experiences were higher (simple slope = .19, $p = .018$). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was supported.

Hypotheses 4 predicted that employee engagement mediates the conditional indirect effect of positive and negative organizational ritual experiences on helping. As shown in Tables

6 and 7, engagement positively related to helping ($B = .28, SE = .04, p < .001$), and the indirect effect of positive experiences on helping through engagement was stronger when negative experiences were lower (indirect effect = .114, 95% CI [.064, .179]) than when negative experiences were higher (indirect effect = .052, 95% CI [.012, .103]). Moreover, the CI of the difference between the two indirect effects did not include zero (indirect effect difference = -.062, 95% CI [-.109, -.025]). Thus, Hypothesis 4 was supported.

Hypothesis 5 proposed that employee engagement mediates the conditional indirect effect of positive and negative organizational ritual experiences on loyal boosterism. As shown in Tables 6 and 7, employee engagement positively related to loyal boosterism ($B = .26, SE = .07, p < .001$), and the indirect effect of positive experiences on loyal boosterism via engagement was stronger when negative experiences were lower (indirect effect = .107, 95% CI [.049, .192]) compared to when they were higher (indirect effect = .049, 95% CI [.012, .108]). The CI of the two indirect effects difference excluded zero (indirect effect difference = -.058, 95% CI [-.120, -.020]), supporting Hypothesis 5.

Hypothesis 6 predicted that employee engagement mediates the conditional indirect effect of positive and negative organizational ritual experiences on job search behavior. As shown in Tables 6 and 7, engagement negatively related to job search behavior ($B = -.23, SE = .09, p = .008$), and the indirect effect of positive experiences on employee job search behavior was more negative when negative experiences were lower (indirect effect = -.094, 95% CI [-.194, -.025]) compared to when they were higher (indirect effect = -.043, 95% CI [-.115, -.006]). The CI of the indirect effect difference did not include zero (indirect effect difference = .051, 95% CI [.013, .115]). Thus, Hypothesis 6 was supported.⁶

⁶ We conducted additional analyses to gain a more comprehensive understanding of our findings. First, while our primary focus was on loyal boosterism as a behavioral manifestation of ritual-induced organizational engagement,

Study 4 Discussion

Study 4 tested our theoretical model with employees in Germany who had recently attended an array of complex organizational rituals, expanding beyond the holiday parties that were the focus of Study 3. The results of Study 4 support the positive effect of positive experiences within organizational rituals on employee engagement, and their subsequent positive effect on helping behavior, loyal boosterism, and job search behavior. Employees who reported more positive experiences within organizational rituals showed higher levels of engagement, which related to increased helping and loyal boosterism and reduced job search behavior. Negative experiences within complex organizational rituals did not have a direct effect on employee engagement; however, the indirect effects of positive experiences within organizational rituals on employee behavior, via employee engagement, were weaker to the extent that employees had negative experiences within organizational rituals.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

While the rituals literature has typically focused on simple organizational rituals (Kim et al., 2021; Maoret et al., 2023; Rosen, 1988; Stein et al., 2021), our work extends this perspective

prior research suggests rituals may enhance organizational identification and belongingness. Thus, we tested whether engagement predicts these two outcomes. The relationship between employee engagement and organizational identification was positive and significant ($B = .20, p < .05$), whereas the relationship between engagement and belongingness was not significant ($B = .08, p = .17$). We did not include these results in our main model because our primary focus was on behavioral outcomes; however, these results hint that ritual experiences may also shape organizational identification. Second, while our theoretical model was replicated in two studies, the relatively high correlation between positive and negative ritual experiences in Study 4 raised concerns about the robustness of our findings. To account for this, we included quadratic terms in our supplemental analysis, as suggested by Cortina (1993), to partition the shared variance between the correlated predictors and their product terms. Here, the interaction term between positive and negative ritual experiences on engagement was significant ($B = -1.63, SE = .48, p < .01$), even when controlling for the quadratic term of positive ($B = -.53, SE = .19, p < .01$) and negative ($B = -1.04, SE = .34, p < .01$) experiences within organizational rituals. The simple slope tests showed that the relationship between positive experiences within rituals and engagement was positive and significant when negative experiences were lower (simple slope = 1.38, $p < .01$) while such relationship was negative and significant when negative experiences were higher (simple slope = $-.62, p = .02$). This additional analysis helps to address the issue of multicollinearity and provides a more accurate picture of the relationships between organizational ritual experiences and employee engagement.

by considering how the intricate experiences employees have in complex rituals can influence their subsequent work behaviors, via engagement. While the effects of simple rituals tend to be positive, assuming that all rituals elicit positive reactions is at odds with anecdotal accounts of experiences within complex organizational rituals (Furlan, 2019; Liu, 2019; Randstad, 2017; Ryan, 2018; Salemi, 2016; Schweitzer, 2018; Spector, 2017), suggesting that our theoretical understanding of organizational rituals is underdeveloped. By exploring the nature and effects of complex organizational rituals through the lens of IRT (Collins, 2004), we sought to develop a more nuanced and complete understanding of rituals by recognizing that they may not always realize their intended benefits, and elucidating the conditions under which these rituals are likely to catalyze engagement within participating employees. Furthermore, recognizing that the rituals literature has lamented that the existing body of work often fails to consider the behavioral implications of ritual participation (Hobson et al., 2018; Rossano, 2020), we examined how rituals affect employee behavior via their effect on engagement. Our findings underscore that complex organizational rituals include both positive (strengthening of the social fabric, providing valued perquisites, offering an energetic environment, and enhancing the work atmosphere) and negative (personal sacrifice, hindrances to organizational functioning, attendee feelings of inauthenticity, and underappreciation) experiences for participants. We also found support for our prediction that positive ritual experiences facilitated employee engagement, and that positive and negative experiences within organizational rituals interact, such that negative ritual experiences weaken the positive effect of positive experiences on engagement. Finally, we found that engagement stemming from participation in organizational rituals related to employees' subsequent helping, loyal boosterism, and job search behavior.

Theoretical contributions

Our work makes several important theoretical contributions. First, our work responds to recent calls to better understand the dynamics involved in the positive and negative ritual experiences of complex organizational rituals (Maoret et al., 2023). By exploring complex organizational rituals, our work extends our understanding of the ways employees experience these common workplace events and highlights why ritual participation is not universally positive for employees. Our research lends credence to the notion that workplace rituals comprise a variety of experiences that shape the ways that employees experience these rituals, both positively and negatively. The multifaceted nature of organizational rituals may be obscured when we only focus on simple rituals, which are likely to be characterized by positive experiences. For example, complex organizational rituals, such as team-building retreats, award ceremonies, and onboarding or leaving events, likely possess a unique mix of experiences that may fall along positive and negative dimensions. Our work demonstrates that to the extent that negative experiences are present in a ritual, they can undercut the effects of its positive experiences. In extending our knowledge of the dynamics of organizational rituals in this way, our work highlights the importance of considering the varied and mixed-valence experiences that employees have in organizational rituals.

Second, our work leverages IRT (Collins, 2004) to challenge the predominantly positive perspective of organizational rituals in the existing literature. By expanding our focus to complex organizational rituals, which require substantial social interaction and extend over longer periods, we show that complex organizational rituals may not necessarily bring the intended benefits, and we identify specific conditions under which these rituals may not be effective in catalyzing engagement. In doing so, we add meaningful theoretical nuance to our understanding of complex organizational rituals. Specifically, because of its focus on the positive side of ritual

participation, prior literature has largely studied the effects of participating (vs. not participating) in simple workplace rituals. Our research shows that to fully understand the effects of organizational rituals on participants, it is necessary to develop a more granular understanding by exploring employees' positive and negative experiences while participating in these rituals. This theoretical distinction between experiences versus simple participation represents an advancement in current knowledge pertaining to the implications of organizational rituals.

Third, we extend IRT (Collins, 2004) by linking ritual experiences to behavioral outcomes through employee engagement. Prior work has generally lamented the dearth of knowledge regarding the tangible outputs of rituals, a problem labeled *opaqueness* (Hobson et al., 2018, Kapitány & Nielsen, 2015; Rossano, 2020; Stein et al., 2021). Leveraging Stein et al.'s (2021) framework which argues that ritual experiences motivate behaviors that advance and safeguard the welfare of the collective, our model translates these motivations into employee behaviors, thereby providing a rich theoretical account of the way employees are likely to act in response to ritual experiences. By selecting helping, loyal boosterism, and job search behaviors as our distinct yet interrelated outcomes, we provide a comprehensive yet nuanced understanding of how complex rituals influence employees' contributions to the collective and their intentions to remain part of it. In sum, our research shines light on some of the consequences of such positive and negative experiences, thereby reducing the opaqueness in this literature.

Practical Implications

Our theorizing and the results of our studies have meaningful implications for organizational leaders and employees. Most directly, we provide insights for leaders who currently invest time and effort into complex organizational rituals. Despite the prevalence of rituals in contemporary organizations, there is limited evidence to inform organizational leaders

about the elements and activities comprising rituals that impact employee engagement and work behaviors. Our results indicate which experiences within complex organizational rituals matter to employees, providing practical guidance to help leaders decide how to plan and organize these rituals. Furthermore, our findings provide direction regarding which experiences to avoid in order to mitigate the extent to which the positive effects of organizational rituals on employees' subsequent engagement and organizationally beneficial behaviors are diminished by negative experiences within the ritual.

Importantly, organizational leaders should recognize that complex rituals are different from simple rituals and, as a result, should be given more attention. Complex rituals have the potential to evoke a broader array of both positive (e.g., engagement, collective orientation) and negative (e.g., feelings of exclusion or inauthenticity) experiences compared to simpler, more scripted rituals. This duality underscores the importance of thoughtful ritual planning and execution in organizational settings. Moreover, our work also highlights the risks to organizational leaders who focus predominantly on including positive ritual experiences while overlooking the importance of mitigating negative ritual experiences. By showing that negative ritual experiences can weaken the relationship between positive organizational ritual experiences and engagement, our findings shed light on how critical it is to minimize negative ritual experiences. Indeed, it may be tempting for managers and organizations to believe that elaborate rituals in lavish locations with expensive catering should drive employee engagement, yet our work demonstrates that is not necessarily the case. Holding ritual events at an inconvenient time or place or not sufficiently expressing gratitude to employees during the ritual may prevent expensive positive experiences from facilitating engagement in the way the organization hopes.

Therefore, managers and organizations should broaden their planning to include minimizing the negative experiences of rituals while retaining a focus on maximizing positive ritual experiences.

Limitations and Future Directions

Although our research has notable strengths, including a rigorous construct validation process, the use of a three-wave design informed by qualitative data, and a constructive replication test of our theoretical model, several limitations warrant acknowledgment. First, the use of self-reported measures in Studies 3 and 4 may introduce common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). However, given that the focus of the study is on how employees experienced organizational rituals, we believe they are in the best position to report their perceptions of the ritual. Moreover, engagement is an internal psychological state (Bakker, Demerouti & Sanz-Vergel, 2014) for which others would be unable to provide an accurate assessment. Similarly, coworkers may not observe one another consistently enough to accurately report their helping, loyal boosterism, and job search following rituals (e.g., Courtright, Gardner, Smith, McCormick & Colbert, 2016; Klotz & Zimmerman, 2015). Nonetheless, we encourage scholars to replicate our findings using separate or objective sources of data.

One limitation of Study 4 is that it measured ritual experiences and engagement at the same time point, which could introduce concerns about common-method bias. However, the consistency of effect sizes between Studies 3 and 4 suggests that this bias did not significantly affect the results. Furthermore, variables in these studies were assessed one or two weeks apart, reducing same-source bias and enhancing the validity of lagged effects (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Yet, our research did not capture the impact of ritual participation several weeks or months afterwards. Thus, we cannot speak to the longevity of the effects of ritual participation on employee engagement. We encourage future scholarship to explore whether ritual experiences

have longer-term impacts, and identify inflection points where effects begin to wane. These insights are of practical importance as well, revealing when a “booster-ritual” event might have merit.

We did not find support for our prediction of a direct effect of negative ritual experiences on engagement. This may reflect a positivity bias, where employees tend to perceive rituals favorably (e.g., Erhardt et al., 2016; Fischer et al., 2013; Kim et al., 2021; Lepisto, 2022; Rosen, 1988), masking the detrimental effects of negative experiences. Still, anecdotal accounts suggest that it is possible for rituals to not simply catalyze engagement but also to actually reduce it; thus, a better understanding of this process would advance our understanding of organizational rituals. With this in mind, we encourage future research to further explore the way employees react to negative experiences within complex organizational rituals. Moreover, although the exclusion factor was removed from our study in Study 2, qualitative insights from Study 1 indicated that exclusion emerged as a salient theme for ritual participants, such as instances of certain groups being left out or the presence of fault lines within rituals. Future research may examine how exclusion in rituals influences employees’ engagement and behaviors.

We also observed that complex organizational rituals occur at different levels, with 21.5% of rituals confined to workgroups, 35.4% at the departmental level, and over 40% spanning the entire organization. These different levels represent potential sources of insight regarding the dynamics and effects of complex organizational rituals. That is, examining rituals within a single organization across various departments and divisions could provide deeper insights into how contextual factors influence the effectiveness and perception of these rituals. Moreover, we acknowledge that there may be some rituals that inherently serve evaluative or compliance-oriented purposes, such as annual audits or performance reviews. These types of

rituals might primarily generate stress, anxiety, or feelings of underappreciation, potentially hindering social cohesion and collective functioning. Future research could explore how these less overtly positive rituals influence employee psychological states and behaviors.

Another limitation is the focus on collective-oriented outcomes, such as helping and loyal boosterism, rather than non-collective employee outcomes, such as task performance. While our primary focus was on collective-oriented behaviors, task performance is a critical dimension of job performance that could offer additional insights into the broader implications of ritual participation. Moreover, it is possible that mechanisms beyond employee engagement might play a significant role in mediating ritual experiences and behavioral outcomes. For example, organizational identification, psychological safety, or group cohesion may provide alternative or complementary pathways through which employees' ritual experiences influence behavioral outcomes. Future research should explore other potential mediators, thereby advancing a richer understanding of the processes underlying the effects of organizational ritual experiences.

Finally, while the external validity of our findings was strengthened by our data spanning several countries (US, UK, and Germany), we cannot rule out potential cultural effects of complex organizational rituals. For example, the role and perception of holiday parties and team-building retreats in more collectivistic cultures may differ significantly due to different cultural norms and values. Future studies should aim to include a more diverse range of cultural contexts to comprehensively understand how cultural differences influence the effectiveness and impact of workplace rituals. Moreover, even though we controlled for race, we could not test how this demographic difference may shape how employees experience organizational rituals, due to the lack of racial diversity in our sample (Dumas et al., 2013). We encourage researchers to examine

complex organizational ritual experiences among workers of different racial backgrounds, with larger and more diverse samples than those in our research.

CONCLUSION

Scholars have studied organizational rituals for over 50 years. While generating substantial knowledge concerning the dynamics and effects of rituals on organizations, this body of work's overwhelming focus on the positive effects of simple rituals is at odds with the reality that more complex rituals may not bring the same benefits. By providing a theoretical account for, and empirical evidence of, the negative aspects of complex organizational rituals, our work provides a more holistic account of the nature and outcomes of experiences within organizational rituals, which sharpens our understanding of these ubiquitous organizational events.

Furthermore, by identifying employee engagement as a mediator for the individual-level effects of organizational ritual participation on work behaviors that benefit the collective, our work sheds light on the opaqueness regarding how complex organizational rituals impact participants.

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Table 1
Description of Positive and Negative Experiences within Workplace Holiday Parties

Experiences	Definition	Survey Items
Positive experiences within workplace holiday parties		
Strengthen social fabric	The workplace celebration strengthened the social connections between employees who attended.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This event strengthened the social fabric of my group. 2. This event was a good opportunity to make or build connections with my co-workers. 3. I felt closer to my co-workers after attending this event. 4. This event enhanced the comradery among employees within the organization. 5. I strengthened my relationships with others as a result of attending this event. 6. I believe this event improved the social bonds within my workgroup.
Perquisites	The workplace celebration provided perks and other tangible benefits for employees who attended.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I was impressed with the food and drinks that my company provided at this event. 2. The company made going to this event worth my while. 3. I felt rewarded in some way (by the food, music/program/entertainment, etc.) for attending this event. 4. I felt rewarded by time away from my work that I spent at this event. 5. I thought that I benefitted from the things this event gave me (party, location, event, food, etc.) 6. I felt rewarded by the organization through this event.
Energetic environment	The workplace celebration was energizing and motivating.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I felt energized after attending this event 2. This event made me excited to work at this company 3. I felt more excited about the work I do after attending this event. 4. Overall, I found this event to be energizing. 5. I became energized about working for this company after attending this event. 6. I became motivated about my work and my role in the company after attending this event.
Positive atmosphere	The overall atmosphere of the workplace celebration was comfortable and/or relaxing.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This event was more festive than work normally is. 2. I had fun at this event. 3. I enjoyed attending this event. 4. I had a good time at this event. 5. The ambiance at this event was pleasant. 6. This event felt like a celebration.

Negative experiences within workplace holiday parties		
Require personal sacrifices	Employees had to sacrifice their personal time and energy to participate in the workplace celebration.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I had to sacrifice in some way (travel, personal time, bring item, etc.) to attend this event. 2. Attending this event took too much away from my work, private, or family time. 3. Attending this event was a burden on me (e.g., travel, bring things, the timing etc.). 4. The benefits of the event did not outweigh the troubles it caused me. 5. Attending this event was costly to me in some way (time, money, etc.) 6. I had to put too much into this event compared to what I got out of it.
Hinder organizational functioning	The workplace celebration was costly to the organization, in terms of time, money, and energy.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This event was not worth the company's time or money. 2. This event was a waste of organizational money and effort. 3. The effort that went into this event could have been better spent elsewhere. 4. This event used up resources that could have been better used elsewhere. 5. The Organ. costs of this event outweighed the benefits 6. This event cost the company too much money.
Underappreciation	The workplace celebration made employees feel underappreciated	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This event demonstrated how little the company cares for its employees. 2. This event made me feel like the company does not value me. 3. I felt disrespected by the company at this event. 4. I felt underappreciated by the company at this event. 5. Employees at this event felt like the company did not appreciate them. 6. There was not enough recognition for employee accomplishments at this event.
Encourage inauthenticity	Employees felt they had to act in inauthentic ways at the workplace celebration.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I felt compelled to behave a certain way at this event. 2. I felt like I had to behave like I was still at work while at this event. 3. I felt forced to behave in ways that felt inauthentic while at this event. 4. I did not act like myself at this event. 5. I had to fake my emotions when I interacted with others at this event. 6. I felt awkward and fake at this event.
Feeling excluded	Some employees were excluded from the workplace celebration.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not all employees could attend this event. 2. There were some people who I thought should be at this event who were not invited. 3. Not everyone was able to participate in this event 4. The activities or timing of this event left some people out.

Table 2
Study 3: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among Study Variables

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	5a	5b	5c	5d	6	6a	6b	6c	6d	7	8	9	10
1. Gender (1 = female)	.61	.49	(-)																	
2. Age	33.71	8.29	.06	(-)																
3. Asian (1 = Asian)	.07	.25	-.06	-.02	(-)															
4. Underrepresented minority ^a	.27	.44	-.03	-.09	-.16	(-)														
5. Positive experiences	3.87	.59	.10	-.13	.00	.12	(-)													
a. Social fabric	4.01	.64	.15	.03	.02	.04	.75*	(.89)												
b. Perquisites	3.73	.76	.08	-.10	-.09	.21*	.82*	.45*	(.84)											
c. Energetic environment	3.42	.83	.04	-.20	.05	.09	.87*	.51*	.63*	(.92)										
d. Positive atmosphere	4.31	.65	.06	-.12	.03	.04	.84*	.55*	.58*	.65*	(.89)									
6. Negative experiences	2.03	.73	-.09	.02	.04	-.09	-.52*	-.43*	-.51*	-.32*	-.47*	(-)								
a. Sacrifice	2.22	1.00	-.03	.11	.13	-.08	-.24*	-.30*	-.26*	-.08	-.17	.78*	(.89)							
b. Hinder org. function	1.89	.98	-.17	.00	.07	-.01	-.59*	-.41*	-.57*	-.44*	-.52*	.78*	.46*	(.97)						
c. Underappreciation	1.74	.82	-.08	-.03	-.02	-.08	-.52*	-.36*	-.50*	-.38*	-.47*	.81*	.43*	.60*	(.88)					
d. Inauthenticity	2.26	.93	.00	-.01	-.08	-.12	-.30*	-.28*	-.27*	-.14	-.32*	.77*	.49*	.36*	.56*	(.87)				
7. Employee engagement	3.63	.95	.12	.10	-.08	.09	.39*	.33*	.33*	.31*	.32*	-.39*	-.36*	-.30*	-.30*	-.25*	(.97)			
8. Helping	4.05	.70	.00	.18	-.17	.00	.06	.08	.00	.06	.06	-.12	-.23*	-.10	-.06	.01	.40*	(.88)		
9. Loyal boosterism	3.07	1.08	-.07	.19	-.07	-.05	.20	.25*	.12	.22*	.04	-.16	-.27*	-.05	-.13	-.06	.51*	.66*	(.90)	
10. Job search behavior	2.07	1.17	-.41*	-.06	-.05	.30*	-.23*	-.14	-.15	-.25*	-.22*	.23*	.05	.30*	.29*	.09	-.37*	-.12	-.14	(.93)

Note. N = 90. ^aUnderrepresented minority is coded as 1 for Black/African American, Native American, Hispanic/Latino, and other races.

* $p < .05$

Table 3
Study 3: Path Analytic Results

	Employee engagement		Helping		Loyal boosterism		Job search behavior	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Gender (1 = female)	.17	.19	-.09	.14	-.30	.21	-.84*	.21
Age	.02	.01	.01	.01	.02	.01	.01	.01
Asian (1 = Asian)	-.27	.36	-.43	.27	-.22	.39	-.22	.39
Underrepresented minority	.01	.22	-.07	.17	-.15	.25	.81*	.25
Positive experiences (within workplace holiday parties)	.60*	.26	-.08	.19	.09	.28	-.04	.28
Negative experiences (within workplace holiday parties)	-.38	.30	.01	.22	.14	.33	.37	.34
Positive experiences X Negative experiences	-.63*	.31						
Employee engagement			.31*	.09	.60*	.12	-.33*	.12
R ²	.40		.24		.36		.41	

Note. N = 90. Unstandardized coefficients are reported. ^a Underrepresented minority is coded as 1 for Black/African American, Native American, Hispanic/Latino, and other races. * $p < .05$

Table 4
Study 3: Summary of Hypothesized Indirect Effects

	Indirect Effect	Conditional Indirect Effect
Positive experiences within workplace holiday parties → Employee engagement → Helping	.188 [.036, .437]	
<i>Negative experiences within workplace holiday parties</i>		
Higher (+1 SD)		.080 [-.069, .291]
Lower (-1 SD)		.296 [.087, .649]
Difference		-.217 [-.519, -.033]
Positive experiences within workplace holiday parties → Employee engagement → Loyal boosterism	.360 [.076, .763]	
<i>Negative experiences within workplace holiday parties</i>		
Higher (+1 SD)		.152 [-.150, .517]
Lower (-1 SD)		.568 [.183, 1.133]
Difference		-.415 [-.920, -.051]
Positive experiences within workplace holiday parties → Employee engagement → Job search behavior	-.200 [-.577, -.006]	
<i>Negative experiences within workplace holiday parties</i>		
Higher (+1 SD)		-.085 [-.349, .063]
Lower (-1 SD)		-.315 [-.766, -.071]
Difference		.230 [.027, .628]

Notes: Unstandardized coefficients are reported. 95% bias-corrected CI is shown.

Table 5
Study 4: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among Study Variables

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	11a	11b	11c	11d	12	12a	12b	12c	12d	13	14	15	16
1. Gender (1 = female)	.36	.48	(-)																							
2. Age	32.3	7.71	-.08	(-)																						
3. Asian (1 = Asian)	.08	.28	.16*	-.08	(-)																					
4. Underrepresented minority	.12	.32	.00	.06	-.11*	(-)																				
5. Organizational tenure	3.56	3.90	-.13*	.30*	-.11*	-.10*	(-)																			
6. Positive org. support	3.22	.74	-.09*	.11*	.09*	.00	.01	(.74)																		
7. Extraversion	3.21	.95	.00	.08	.02	.10*	.01	.20*	(.89)																	
8. Frequency of ritual	3.91	.31	.11*	.03	-.03	.05	.13*	-.04	-.01	(-)																
9. Scope of ritual	2.25	.81	.02	-.03	-.01	.06	-.05	.01	-.01	.08	(-)															
10. Number of attendees	106.7	281.1	-.01	-.05	.03	-.01	-.05	.01	.04	-.06	.25*	(-)														
11. Positive experiences	3.74	.75	-.05	.00	.10*	.05	.03	.47*	.22*	.03	.01	.00	(-)													
a. Social fabric	3.94	.81	-.04	-.02	.05	.03	.06	.33*	.18*	.02	-.11*	-.04	.82*	(.93)												
b. Perquisites	3.57	.93	-.06	-.03	.10*	.03	-.02	.42*	.13*	.01	.07	.03	.85*	.54*	(.91)											
c. Energetic environment	3.39	.98	-.02	.06	.11*	.05	.00	.50*	.27*	.00	-.03	-.04	.88*	.64*	.66*	(.93)										
d. Positive atmosphere	4.06	.77	-.03	-.03	.09	.08	.06	.35*	.18*	.08	.09*	.05	.87*	.67*	.68*	.66*	(.88)									
12. Negative experiences	2.02	.74	.05	-.02	-.07	-.07	-.04	-.33*	-.10*	-.02	.01	.06	-.65*	-.55*	-.54*	-.56*	-.60*	(-)								
a. Sacrifice	2.19	.93	.05	-.02	-.05	-.03	-.03	-.22*	-.10*	.01	-.02	.05	-.44*	-.38*	-.38*	-.37*	-.37*	.80*	(.86)							
b. Hinder org. function	1.78	.93	-.02	.00	-.06	-.05	.01	-.23*	-.03	-.01	.05	.07	-.54*	-.46*	-.42*	-.45*	-.52*	.83*	.55*	(.93)						
c. Underappreciation	1.68	.87	.05	.01	.00	-.07	.00	-.34*	-.01	-.06	-.05	.02	-.55*	-.38*	-.50*	-.49*	-.50*	.73*	.43*	.53*	(.92)					
d. Inauthenticity	2.40	1.01	.07	-.05	-.09	-.08	-.09*	-.26*	-.16*	.00	.04	.05	-.55*	-.50*	-.41*	-.48*	-.49*	.80*	.54*	.54*	.41*	(.91)				
13. Employee engagement	3.73	.74	-.02	.09	.01	.08	.09	.45*	.32*	-.06	.03	.03	.45*	.36*	.33*	.48*	.35*	-.31*	-.19*	-.23*	-.29*	-.26*	(.95)			
14. Helping	3.70	.62	.01	.15*	.12*	.17*	.07	.38*	.32*	-.07	.03	.09	.41*	.37*	.27*	.44*	.33*	-.24*	-.16*	-.20*	-.18*	-.22*	.53*	(.82)		
15. Loyal boosterism	2.74	1.06	-.08	.15*	.12*	.04	.05	.52*	.31*	-.11*	-.01	.09	.39*	.32*	.29*	.47*	.25*	-.16*	-.06	-.11*	-.10*	-.21*	.44*	.56*	(.92)	
16. Job search behavior	2.04	1.09	.02	.07	.06	.09	-.09*	-.25*	.03	-.10*	.06	.15*	-.27*	-.24*	-.21*	-.25*	-.23*	.37*	.22*	.22*	.36*	.36*	-.24*	-.13*	-.13*	(.92)

Note. N = 497. ^aUnderrepresented minority is coded as 1 for Black/African American, Native American, Hispanic/Latino, and other races. * $p < .05$

Table 6
Study 4: Path Analytic Results

	Employee engagement		Helping		Loyal boosterism		Job search behavior	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Gender (1 = female)	.06	.06	.04	.06	-.08	.09	-.03	.11
Age	.00	.00	.01*	.00	.01	.01	-.01	.01
Asian (1 = Asian)	-.10	.10	.23*	.10	.35*	.17	.30	.20
Underrepresented minority	.10	.09	.27*	.08	.08	.14	.42*	.16
Organizational tenure	.02*	.01	.01	.01	.00	.01	-.01	.01
Positive organizational support	.28*	.04	.09*	.04	.48*	.07	-.18*	.08
Extraversion	.15*	.03	.08*	.03	.15*	.05	.14*	.06
Frequency of ritual	-.18*	.09	-.13	.10	-.22	.17	-.29	.20
Scope of ritual	.01	.04	-.00	.03	-.04	.06	.03	.07
Number of attendees	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00*	.00
Positive experiences (within complex organizational rituals)	.30*	.08	.24*	.07	.46*	.12	.18	.15
Negative experiences (within complex organizational rituals)	-.06	.10	.14	.09	.50*	.16	.75*	.20
Positive experiences X Negative experiences	-.18*	.06						
Employee engagement			.28*	.04	.26*	.07	-.23*	.09
R ²		.33		.36		.37		.23

Note. N = 497. Unstandardized coefficients are reported. ^aUnderrepresented minority is coded as 1 for Black/African American, Native American, Hispanic/Latino, and other races. * $p < .05$

Table 7
Study 4: Summary of Hypothesized Indirect Effects

	Indirect Effect	Conditional Indirect Effect
Positive experiences within complex organizational rituals → Employee engagement → Helping	.083 [.042, .138]	
<i>Negative experiences within complex organizational rituals</i>		
Higher (+1 SD)		.052 [.012, .103]
Lower (-1 SD)		.114 [.064, .179]
Difference		-.062 [-.109, -.025]
Positive experiences within complex organizational rituals → Employee engagement → Loyal boosterism	.078 [.034, .144]	
<i>Negative experiences within complex organizational rituals</i>		
Higher (+1 SD)		.049 [.012, .108]
Lower (-1 SD)		.107 [.049, .192]
Difference		-.058 [-.120, -.020]
Positive experiences within complex organizational rituals → Employee engagement → Job search behavior	-.069 [-.151, -.017]	
<i>Negative experiences within complex organizational rituals</i>		
Higher (+1 SD)		-.043 [-.115, -.006]
Lower (-1 SD)		-.094 [-.194, -.025]
Difference		.051 [.013, .115]

Notes: Unstandardized coefficients are reported. 95% bias-corrected CI is shown.

Figure 1
Conceptual Model

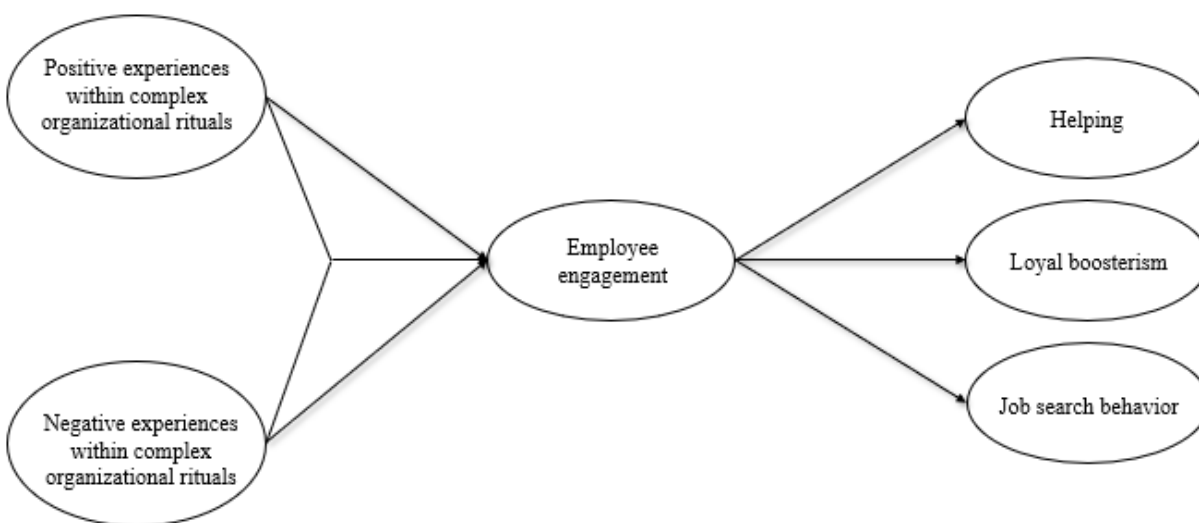


Figure 2

Study 3: The Moderating Effect of Negative Experiences within Workplace Holiday Parties on the Relationship between Positive Experiences within Workplace Holiday Parties and Employee Engagement

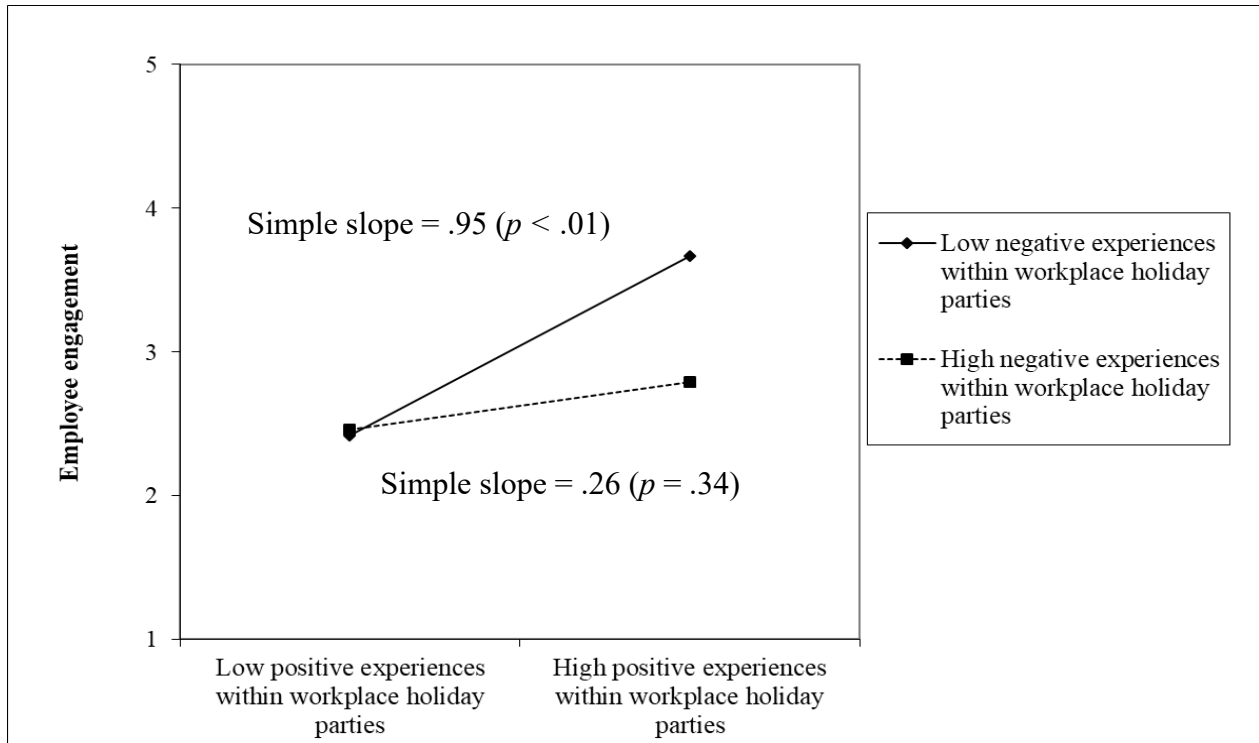
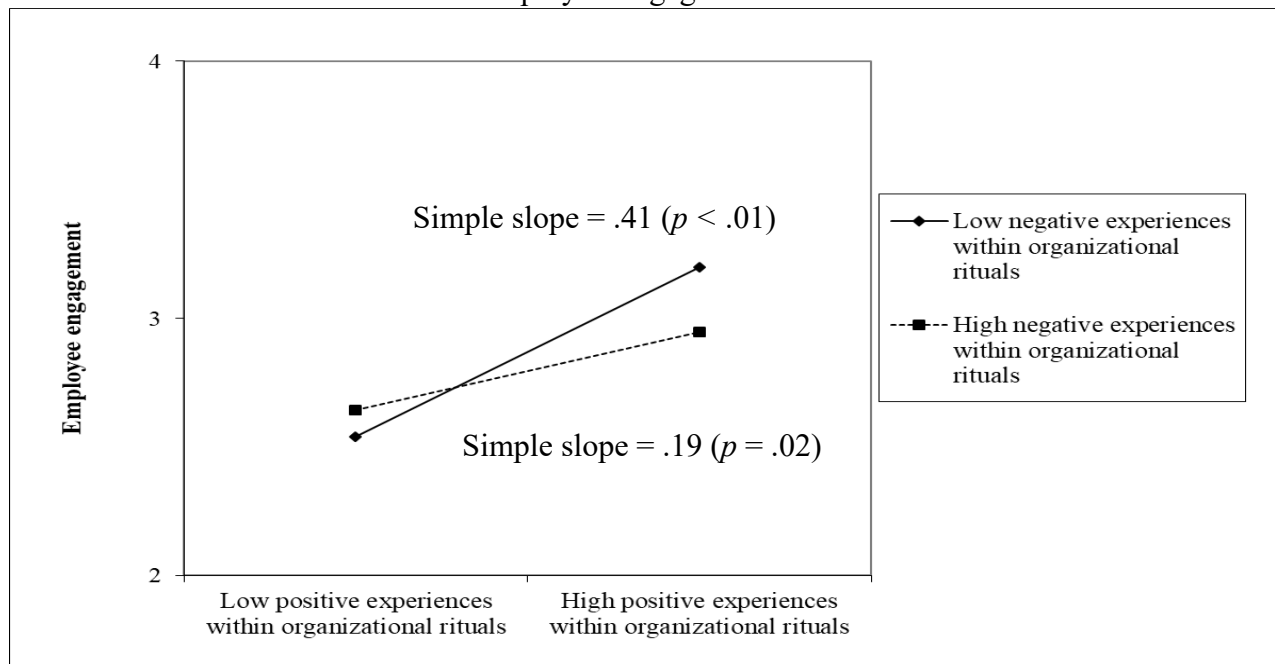


Figure 3

Study 4: The Moderating Effect of Negative Experiences within Complex Organizational Rituals on the Relationship between Positive Experiences within Complex Organizational Rituals and Employee Engagement



Appendix A1
Study 3: Path Analytic Results Without Controls

	Employee engagement		Helping		Loyal boosterism		Job search behavior	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Positive experiences (within workplace holiday parties)	.53*	.26	-.15	.19	-.02	.28	.07	.33
Negative experiences (within workplace holiday parties)	-.41	.31	-.02	.23	.09	.34	.43	.41
Positive experiences X Negative experiences	-.57 ⁺	.30						
Employee engagement			.33*	.09	.61*	.12	-.37*	.14
R ²	.34		.18		.29		.18	

Note. N = 90. Unstandardized coefficients are reported. * $p < .05$, ⁺ $p < .10$

Appendix A2
Study 4: Path Analytic Results Without Controls

	Employee engagement		Helping		Loyal boosterism		Job search behavior	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Positive experiences (within complex organizational rituals)	.51*	.08	.29*	.08	.69*	.13	.18	.15
Negative experiences (within complex organizational rituals)	.01	.11	.16	.10	.56*	.17	.80*	.21
Positive experiences X Negative experiences	-.21*	.06						
Employee engagement			.35*	.04	.45*	.07	-.21*	.08
R ²	.32		.36		.32		.19	

Note. N = 497. Unstandardized coefficients are reported. * $p < .05$, ⁺ $p < .10$