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Leader Prototypicality Moderates the Relation between Access to Flexible Work Options and Employee Feelings of Respect and Leader Endorsement

Abstract

Organizations are increasingly offering flexible work arrangements (FWA), which are associated with a variety of individual and organizational outcomes. Supervisors may support, discourage, or prohibit employees' access to and use of such programs. These actions and decisions can affect employees' feelings of being respected, and their endorsement of their supervisor, which can in turn affect employees' motivation to work in pursuit of group and organizational goals. We propose, in line with social identity theory, that these relationships are moderated by leader in-group prototypicality. Results from two large-sample surveys a year apart at one organization show that employees with supervisors who allow more FWA feel more respected as well as express stronger endorsement of their leaders. Importantly, both of those relationships are moderated by the degree of the supervisor's in-group prototypicality, but in opposite ways. The association of FWA allowance with respect increases slightly under conditions of higher prototypicality. However, the association of FWA allowance with endorsement of leaders increases more strongly under conditions of lower prototypicality. The discussion considers theoretical, practical, and research implications.

Keywords: Flexible work arrangements (FWA), social identity theory, Social identity model of organizational leadership (SIMOL), leader in-group prototypicality, respect, leader endorsement

Leader Prototypicality Moderates the Relation between Access to Flexible Work Options and Employee Feelings of Respect and Leader Endorsement

Considerable Human Resources Management literature explores the role of supervisors in general on shaping HRM activities, as well in mediating between organizational policies and employees (Batt & Valcour, 2003; Thatcher & Bagger, 2011). The fundamental argument is that supervisors shape the implementation of, and employees' ability, motivation, opportunities, and reactions to, HR policies (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007). The supervisor's mediating role constitutes the "'black box' linking HRM and performance" (Knies & Leisink, 2014, p. 58). Supervisors act as agents in implementing HRM practices, communicating organizational support (or lack of it) for policies, and thus influence how employees interpret and respond to organizational HRM policies and programs.

This study is part of that broad research issue. We consider how a supervisor's allowance of organizational flexible work arrangements (FWA) to subordinates relates to employees' feelings of respect and leader endorsement. Stavrou (2005) argues that HRM programs need to

match industry, market, and societal changes by fostering more organizational flexibility, especially FWA. De Menezes and Kelliher (2011) note that FWA can be considered as part of HRM practices in the general stream of research on HRM and performance.

Our main contribution is viewing the relationship between leader's FWA decisions and the two selected outcomes from the social identity approach (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), in particular the social identity model of leadership (Hogg, 2001; van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003), and examining whether those relationships are moderated by leader in-group prototypicality. We begin by reviewing research on flexible work arrangements and particularly supervisors' role in them, then introduce the social identity approach, and then turn to the study.

Flexible Work Arrangements and Supervisory Influence

Flexible Work Arrangements

Recent years have witnessed a substantial increase in the use of flexible work arrangements, which "permit employees some level of control over when and where they work outside of the standard workday" (Lambert, Marler, & Gueutal, 2008, p. 107). These arrangements include part-time work, flextime, compressed work week, telework, and telecommuting, among others (Kossek & Michel, 2010).

FWA can provide many positive as well as negative implications for health, work-family balance, worker engagement, job satisfaction, performance, commitment, turnover intentions, and absenteeism (Baltes et al., 1999; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Stavrou's (2005) analysis of responses from the top HRM manager in over 2000 companies from 14 EU member states looked at how four "bundles" of FWA were associated with three organizational performance measures. The "non-standard work patterns" bundle was related to decreased turnover in the private sector; the "work away from the office" cluster was related to improved performance and reduced absenteeism; the "non-standard work hours" group was related to increased staff turnover; and the "work outsourced" category was associated with increased staff turnover (but only in the public sector). De Menezes and Kelliher (2011) reviewed 148 publications from 1970 – 2009, assessing the "business case" for FWAs. The most frequent supporting results were for improvements in absenteeism (61% of the relevant studies supportive), job satisfaction, turnover or retention, financial indicators or productivity, organizational commitment, health or well-being, and individual performance or productivity (31%). Almost all the remaining studies found no support, although only three reported negative associations. The review discussed results within each FWA category, and identified contingent relationships, such as worker or organization characteristics. However, it did not report any contingencies related to supervisory allowance of FWA.

More employees are using more FWA. A 2008 survey of U.S. organizations with at least 50 employees found a range of flexible work arrangements, from flexible schedules (79%) to job shares (29%) (Galinsky, Bond, & Sakai, 2008). In that same year, nearly half of working American adults engaged in at least some supplemental (i.e., not substituting for office work and not contracted telework) work at home using ICT tools (Madden & Jones, 2008). Generally, employees view access to FWA as something desirable (Solnet, Kralj, & Kandampully, 2012). One study revealed that gratitude to employers for accommodating flexible working arrangements was a dominant discourse among people using FWA (Kelliher & Anderson, 2010). According to the Flexible Work Arrangements factsheet (2010), 80% of US workers indicated preferences for more flexible work options, particularly if they weren't associated with negative implications at work.

However, these figures also reveal that many employees do not have access to FWA, or do not use available FWA, due to policy, organizational, and (our primary concern) supervisory factors. A 2014 web survey of 400,000 US Federal employees (46.8% response) (United States Office of Personnel Management, 2014) revealed that 29% of the sample participated in telework, while 57% did not because of barriers. A third of the sample used alternative work schedules, with 22% reporting that the option was not available to them. Golden (2001) noted the large inequality in access to FWA, as 73% of US workforce did not have access, due to demographic, work and job characteristics (see also Swanberg, Pitt-Catsouphes, & Drescher-Burke, 2005). FWA policy use is often determined by business needs and supervisor choice, criteria such as organizational tenure or full-time work, organizational stratification and norms, and legal and economic “opportunity structures,” leading to considerable variation or inequality in adoption within even one organization (Kossek, Lewis, & Hammer, 2010; Lambort & Haley-Lock, 2004; Swanberg et al., 2005). As a specific example, scheduling control may be available through formal flexwork policies, employee-supervisor negotiation, or informal supervisor practices (Henly, Shaefer, & Waxman, 2006). Inconsistencies in results about outcomes of FWA may thus be partially explained by variations in implementation and support, which can reduce, reinforce, or create barriers (Ryan & Kossek, 2008). We consider supervisors’ influence on FWA use.

Supervisors’ Influence on FWA Use

The effectiveness and efficiency of FWA-policies depends somewhat on whether or not the immediate supervisor supports them (Batt & Valcour, 2003; Eaton, 2003; Leslie, Park, & Mehng, 2012). For example, supervisors who support FWA promote employees’ work-life balance (Batt & Valcour, 2003). Supervisors in particular have considerable influence on work-family policies by having final approval, deciding how to allocate training and other employees to balance workload, publicizing policies, shaping norms about them, affecting ease of policy use, clarifying roles, monitoring workload, and preventing co-worker jealousy (Golden, 2001; Ryan & Kossek, 2008). Implementation of FWA is often made on a case-by-case, idiosyncratic, and informal basis (Hornung, Rousseau, & Glaser, 2008). These discretionary decisions may be based on the supervisor’s prior experiences with and personal beliefs about work-family balance.

Supervisory “discretion” may consist more of implicit biases and discrimination than an informal but still objective evaluation of the employee or task needs. Supervisors make different kinds of attributions for the reasons why employees want to utilize FWA (Leslie, Park, & Mehng, 2012). Whether they think that an employee wishes to work flexibly to increase productivity (e.g., having international calls during non-standard work hours) or for personal reasons (e.g., structuring work around childcare), that FWA will disrupt work and create more effort for the supervisor, or that requesting FWA implies less dedication to one’s job/career or organization (Powell & Mainiero, 1999; Rodgers, 1992) influences supervisors’ willingness to allow an individual to use FWA. However, supervisors may also mitigate unsupportive organizational norms by making it clear that the use of FWA will not cause negative consequences for employees (Batt & Valcour, 2003), or by providing access to FWA beyond formal organizational policies.

Even when available, FWA may be underused, partially due to supervisor-related factors, such as lack of support (Batt & Valcour, 2003). Supervisors may discourage employees from using formal FWA by implementing penalties on their use (e.g., hampering flexible workers’ career success or cutting out pay raises; Batt & Valcour, 2003; Leslie et al., 2012). Supervisors may be reluctant to allow their subordinates to work remotely or during non-formal work hours

(e.g., Thatcher & Bagger, 2011), because they fear losing control (Clear & Dickson, 2005), or have doubts about subordinates' abilities to work away from the office. Overall, these incongruences between official FWA policies, supervisory behavior, and employee use represent another instance of the more general gaps between intended, implemented, and used HR practices (Khilji & Wang, 2006), mediated by supervisors.

Contributions of This Study

We suggest that a supervisor's decisions on employees' access to FWA may have implications for both employee- and leader-related identity issues – a sense of being respected, and leader endorsement. Further, beyond these direct effects, there may be subtle moderating effects of supervisory prototypicality. Theoretically, this study extends and tests the social identity model of leadership (see below) in the new context of FWA. Practically, the study provides some insight into the social contexts of supervisory decisions about FWA.

Theoretical Foundations:

Subordinate and Supervisor Social Identity and Leader In-group Prototypicality

Social Identity Model of Organizational Leadership

We ground our work in the social identity approach (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987), particularly the social identity model of organizational leadership (SIMOL; Haslam, Reicher, & Platow, 2013; Hogg, 2001; van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). This theoretical approach focuses on factors that give supervisors authority in the eyes of their followers, particularly as it concerns subordinate- and leader-related identity issues. The social identity approach integrates social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and self-categorization theory (Turner et al., 1987). Its core presumption is that salient group membership and in-group prototypes shape attitudes, feelings, behavior, and social identity. An in-group prototype is a constructed and subjective representation of characteristics (e.g., attitudes, values, norms, beliefs, manners, goals, and behavior) that describe and prescribe what the group is and what it is not (Haslam et al., 2013). Organizational members actively monitor their group in its context and notice even subtle signs in how prototypical their supervisor is (Hogg, 2001).

Supervisor's Decisions on Employees' FWA Use and Group Members' Feelings of Respect: Moderating Role of Leader In-Group Prototypicality

A central prediction from the social identity approach is that people strive for favorable self-definitions and want to feel that they are valued members of their groups (Tyler & Blader, 2000). They use interactions and dealings with other group members as sources of identity-related information such as their self-worth and standing (respect) within the group (Lind & Tyler, 1988). Group members also assess treatment and outcomes received from their supervisor to make inferences about their own standing (Blader & Tyler, 2009; Tyler & Lind, 1992). When a supervisor rewards an employee with desired outcomes, he/she likely attributes the treatment received to one's own behavior, and infers oneself to be a respected member of the group. When the treatment by a group authority does not seem fair and/or favorable to an individual, he/she is likely to conclude that he/she is not a particularly respected member of the group (Tyler & Blader, 2000; Tyler & Lind, 1992). From this perspective, a supervisor's FWA allowance can signal that the group member is worthy of using the desired benefit of FWA, and that his/her standing within the group is secured.

H1a: A supervisor's allowance of a subordinates' access to FWA is positively related to subordinates' feelings of being respected.

SIMOL proposes that the extent to which the supervisor's decisions influence group members' identity-related inferences is to some extent contingent upon the supervisor's in-group

prototypicality, and group salience. Supervisors who are able to represent what is common to the group are likely to have more influence than non-prototypical leaders over group members' identity-related attitudes, emotions, and behaviors (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). This is because, in salient groups, prototypicality is the basis of perception and evaluation of self and other group members (Hogg, 2001). An in-group prototypical supervisor's behavior informs an individual not only about supervisor's, but also about other group members', opinions, and attitudes towards him/her (Tyler & Lind, 1992). Thus, if a prototypical leader allows a certain member access to FWA, this member can consider himself/herself to be valued by the whole group. On the other hand, if the in-group prototypical leader limits access to FWA, the member can see himself/herself as devalued by the entire group (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Lind, 1992). A non-prototypical leader's FWA-decision should not have as a prominent effect, as the leader does not represent the views of the group that is important for one's social identity.

H1b: The relationship between supervisory allowance of FWA and one's sense of being respected is stronger when the supervisor is perceived to be more prototypical.

Supervisor's Decisions on Employees' FWA Use and Leader Endorsement: Moderating Role of Leader In-Group Prototypicality

A supervisor's allowance of subordinates' FWA use is also likely to affect subordinates' attitudes towards the leader. Generally, leaders who perform well are evaluated more positively by subordinates on a variety of attributes that may not be related to the performance (Giessner, van Knippenberg, & Sleebos, 2009). These associated evaluations reflect what Meindl and Ehrlich (1987) called the "romance of leadership." Further, according to leader-member exchange (LMX) theory, social, attitudinal and material resources are exchanged in leader-employee relationships to maintain equity (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). For example, in high quality LMX relations, the leader provides more resources – above formal or contractual levels – to favored subordinates, increasing their sense of autonomy, responsibility, well-being, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, organizational citizenship and work performance (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003; Schreisheim, Castro, & Coglisier, 1999). Thus, as part of the LMX process, employees may express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the leader's decision by increasing or decreasing their endorsement (Wit & Wilke, 1988).

H2a: A supervisor's allowance of subordinates' access to FWA is positively related to subordinates' leader endorsement.

Van Knippenberg and Hogg (2003) note that LMX theory emphasizes the leader-subordinate dyadic relationship, ignoring broader social influence factors such as leader prototypicality or group identification. Instead, SIMOL proposes that prototypical leaders are at least somewhat endorsed by in-group members simply on the basis of that in-group prototypicality (Hogg, 2001). SIMOL then predicts that supervisor in-group prototypicality likely moderates members' interpretations of and reactions to the supervisor's decisions (Haslam et al., 2013).

SIMOL further proposes that prototypical leaders are less stringently evaluated than non-prototypical leaders; i.e., they get more leeway in making unfavorable decisions. This fundamental presumption of SIMOL builds on two classical notions. The first is Hollander's (1964) idiosyncrasy credit theory, which proposes that highly normative leaders who have earned credit within the group are allowed to behave non-normatively without negative consequences (up to a point). However, instead of credits being earned through social exchange relationships, SIMOL presumes such credits result from the leader's being representative

(prototypical) of the group (Giessner et al., 2009). The second is Sherif and Sherif's (1964) demonstration that leaders who are respected, legitimate, and group-oriented receive more leeway within their groups (Hogg, 2001; Geissner et al., 2009). They thus have more leverage in influencing group members' inferences, attitudes and behavior (Haslam et al., 2013; van Quaquebeke & Eckloff, 2013). They are trusted to make decisions that in the end benefit the group and its individual members, even if their decisions and behavior would seem unfavorable, counter-normative, against subordinate preferences (Platow & van Knippenberg, 2001), or ineffective (Giessner et al., 2009) (up to a point).

H2b: The relationship between supervisory allowance of FWA and leader endorsement is weaker when the group leader is perceived to be more prototypical.

Method

Sampling and Procedures

We conducted a survey in the spring of 2013 and again in the spring of 2014 in a Finnish telecommunication company. We chose this setting because of the known flexible work programs offered by the company and its long history of utilizing FWA. The entire organizational membership working at the company headquarters ($N=1538$ at T1, $N=1447$ at T2) was emailed an invitation with a short introduction of the online survey, a link to the company's intranet site explaining the study in detail, and the link to the survey on a university server. 837 usable responses were received at T1 (54%), and 735 at T2 (50.1%). We focus on the T1 responses, using T2 as a replication to assess the reliability of the results. The T1 and T2 samples are not, however, completely independent, as nearly half of the respondents were the same.

Measures

All of the scales below exhibited unidimensionality (via principal components analysis; table available from the author) and good reliability (from .80 to .94; see Table 1 below).

Supervisor's allowance of subordinates' access to FWA was measured with four items derived from a study by McNamara, Pitt-Catsouphes, Brown and Matz-Costa (2012): 'My supervisor allows me to' 'change starting and quitting times', 'choose a work schedule that varies from the typical schedule at our worksite', 'compress the work week by working longer hours on fewer days for at least part of the year', and 'work from an off-site location (such as home) for part of the regular work week'.

Leader in-group prototypicality was measured using three items from Platow and van Knippenberg's (2001) scale: 'Overall, I would say that my supervisor' 'is a good example of the kind of people who work at (name of the organization)', 'represents what is characteristic about employees of (name of the organization)', and 'stands for what people who work at (name of the organization) have in common'.

Respect was measured with three items from Tyler and Blader's (2002) scale: 'Other members of (name of the organization) react well to me', 'I have made a good impression on others in (name of the organization)', and 'Most members of (name of the organization) respect me'.

Leader endorsement was measured with Colquitt (2001)'s scale: 'I speak favorably about my supervisor to my friends', 'I think that my supervisor is a good one', and 'I really like my supervisor'.

As noted, variations in preferences for FWA might affect assessments of supervisor's decisions about FWA. Thus *Desire for FWA use* was measured with the same items used for *Supervisor's allowance of subordinates' access to FWA*, except that respondents were asked to

rate how important it is / would be for them to have each of the four FWA opportunities. Control variables included *age*, *sex*, *tenure*, and *education*.

Results

– Table 1 here –

Table 1 provides the descriptive statistics, alpha reliabilities, response choices, and correlations for the measures. At T1, 60.5% of the respondents were men. Most of the respondents worked full-time (99%) and had a regular working contract (97%). On average, respondents were 41-50 years old (under 30, 4.4%; 31-40, 29.0%; 41-50, 38.4%; over 60 yrs, 4.2%). Over 70% had university education (elementary school, 2.4%; upper secondary school or vocational school, 27.5%; university of applied sciences, 35.9%; university 34.3%). They had been working at the organization for 16.6 ($SD=9.6$) years. Most of the respondents reported having children (55%) but only 20% had elder care responsibilities. The following percentage of respondents reported engaging in these FWA once a week, a few times a week, or every day: change starting and quitting times (71.0%), choose a work schedule that varies (41.2%), compressed workweek (11.4%), or work at home (51.1%). They participated in another nine FWA at least once a week from 15.7% (work in your own car) to .4% (work at a library).

Moderated Regression Analysis

As Table 2 shows, none of the demographic control measures correlated significantly with leader in-group prototypicality or with leader endorsement, and only two were correlated with respect: age (T1) and education (T1 and T2). Those were entered in the initial regression explaining respect, but neither was a significant influence, so no demographics are included in the results.

-- Table 2 here --

We used moderated multiple regression analysis. Following Aiken and West (1991), supervisor's FWA decision, and supervisor's in-group prototypicality, were mean-centered, and then multiplied to create the interaction term. At the first step in two separate regressions, *respect* or *leader endorsement* was regressed on *supervisor's allowance of subordinates' access to FWA*, *leader prototypicality*, and *employees' desire for FWA*. The interaction term was entered in the second step of each regression.

Respect. Results of the first step of the T1 regression, for *respect*, without interaction, indicated that if the *supervisor offered more FWA*, and if the supervisor was *more in-group prototypical*, the employee had a slightly greater sense of being *respected* (7% variance explained). However, the *desire for FWA* to the employee was unrelated to respect. In the second step, the interaction term was significant, and contributed an additional 1% explained variance. The T2 results were similar (7% variance, 1% additional).

Leader endorsement. Results in the first step of the T1 regression for *leader endorsement* were much stronger than for *respect* (27% variance explained). A supervisor's offering of FWA and leader prototypicality were both positively related to leader endorsement. However, desire for FWA was, intriguingly, significantly *negatively* related to leader endorsement. It may be that employees who do not strongly endorse their supervisor feel it is preferable to spend more time away from the office, or be more in control of their work context. Alternatively, as some prior research suggests, working away from the office creates social distance between the flexworker and co-workers and supervisor. Here, too, the interaction term was significant, adding 3% explained variance. Results from the T2 data were again very similar (27%, 2% additional), except for the slightly smaller and non-significant, yet still negative, influence of desire for FWA.

Slopes Analysis

We used the Process SPSS macro (Hayes, 2013) to compute interaction effect sizes at one standard deviation below and above the mean for leader prototypicality. At T1, the slope between supervisor's FWA allowance and feelings of *respect* was $\beta = .08$ ($p < .01$) for low prototypical supervisors, and $\beta = .16$ ($p < .001$) for high prototypical supervisors. For *leader endorsement*, the slopes were $\beta = .47$ and $\beta = .21$, respectively (both $p < .001$). The results for T2 were quite similar. The slope for *respect* was $\beta = .02$ (ns) for low, and $\beta = .13$ ($p < .001$) for high, supervisor prototypicality. For *leader endorsement*, the slopes were $\beta = .45$ and $\beta = .23$, respectively (both $p < .001$). Figures 1a and 1b display the two sets of T1 slopes.

-- Figure 1a and 1b here --

Discussion

Basic Results

The results supported both the direct (H1a, H2a) and moderation hypotheses (H1b, H2b). A group leader's decision to allow group members' access to organizational FWA was related to subordinates' higher feelings of respect and higher leader endorsement. In line with SIMOL propositions, these effects were asymmetrically moderated by leader in-group prototypicality: An in-group prototypical leader's FWA-decisions had a stronger influence on group members' feelings of respect but weaker influence on leader endorsement. These results were quite consistent at T1 and T2.

Theoretical Implications

These findings make theoretical contributions to the research on SIMOL and FWA. First, they broaden the research done within SIMOL by examining identity- and leader-related effects of a supervisor's FWA allocation decisions. Previous work has mainly considered identity-related effects as a consequence of procedural and interactional justice (Koivisto & Lipponen, 2015; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Blader, 2000). It has only recently been proposed that allocation decisions (or some economic outcomes) could also provide symbolic value for assessing one's self-worth and standing within a group (Blader & Tyler, 2009). Our research contributes to this new aspect by showing that leader in-group prototypicality moderates the impact of supervisor's allocation decisions on employees' attitudes about oneself and towards the leader. As far as we know, this is the first empirical study finding this moderation effect, central to SIMOL.

Second, the study supports the straightforward LMX proposition that a supervisor's decision to favor a subordinate result in increased support for the leader (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), but in the specific FWA context. It extends this proposition through SIMOL by indicating that characteristics of a leader, specifically the extent the leader represents the shared group identity, or in-group prototypicality, moderate that relationship.

Third, the finding that the relationships between a supervisor's FWA-related decision and employees' feelings of respect and leader endorsement are *asymmetrically* moderated by leader in-group prototypicality provides interesting input into the current theoretical discussions in SIMOL. Recently, there has been an active debate on the moderating role of leader in-group prototypicality in the relationship between leader behavior and leader-related outcomes on the one hand, and employee-related outcomes on the other hand (see De Cremer, van Dijke, Brebels, & Hoogervorst, 2008). The debate has noted that leader in-group prototypicality may have different moderating effects on different kinds of outcomes. It may substitute for the undesired behavior when the dependent variable is associated with the source of the behavior (i.e., the leader) (Giessner et al., 2009; Ullrich, Christ, & van Dick, 2009). Alternatively, it may reinforce

the influence of a leader's behavior when the dependent variable is associated with the self or the group (Koivisto & Lipponen, 2015). Prior empirical research had not examined both employee- and leader-related effects (from the perspective of the employee), as moderated by leader in-group prototypicality, in a single study. Our results support De Cremer et al. (2008)'s suggestion that the moderation effects of leader in-group prototypicality depend to some extent on whether the outcome is follower- or leader-related. Prototypicality matters more for the individuals' sense of being respected (self-identity), while non-prototypicality matters more for their leader endorsement.

Practical Implications

In addition to developing organization-wide policies for FWA, organizations should note that employees view their immediate supervisors as active and consequential actors in the process, as intermediaries between HR policy and the employee. Effective partnership between HRM practitioners and immediate supervisors may help in eliciting positive, and avoiding negative, outcomes of leaders' FWA decisions. It is particularly important to find ways to avoid supervisors' inappropriate negative FWA-allowance decisions (based on factors such as supervisor's fear of losing control, insufficient knowledge, or suspicion towards FWA). Thus, HRM practitioners should ensure that supervisors at all organizational levels have sufficient information on the organizational FWA, the positive and negative effects of their utilization, and boundary conditions for reaching successful outcomes.

This is important because an immediate supervisor's decisions on FWA can have profound effects (Knies & Leisink, 2014) for both the employees and the supervisors themselves, as well as personnel and performance outcomes. Employees' perceptions on their standing can affect leadership as well as functioning of work groups and organizations (Haslam et al., 2013; Tyler & Blader, 2000), for both individual and social identity reasons.

First, it is important for organizational and team-level viability and success (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000) for employees to preserve positive self-identities. Positive self-evaluation and experience of being a respected group member facilitates adopting group goals, proactively striving towards these goals, and even going beyond role requirements in carrying out tasks (as well as other extra-role behaviors), or avoiding negative and abusive behaviors that produce physical, economic, psychological, or emotional harm towards other employees or the organization (Aquino & Douglas, 2003; Blader & Tyler, 2009; Knies & Leisink, 2014; Koivisto & Lipponen, 2015). Second, employees' attitudes towards the leader affect the extent that group members internalize a group's goals, as well as the vigor and motivation that they devote to pursuing these goals (Haslam et al., 2013). Positive attitude towards the leader promotes the leader's ability to exercise power in the group (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). Endorsed supervisors are likely to get more compliance and support for their requests, suggestions and orders (Giessner et al., 2009; Hogg, 2001).

Future Research

Not all leaders' decisions can be favorable to employees; leaders often need to make decisions that are unfavorable to at least someone. In that situation, leaders can find ways to lessen the negative effects of their undesired decisions. One interesting avenue for future research, then, would be examining these factors and their possible moderating role in relation to leaders' FWA allocation decisions, leader in-group prototypicality, and leader- and follower-related outcomes. For instance, it could be argued that an employee's perception of their leader's interactional or procedural fairness in decision making situations might compensate for the negativity aroused by unfavorable decisions (e.g., Ullrich et al., 2009).

Another avenue for future research would be examining other effects of organizational FWA policies and supervisor's FWA-related decisions. For example, how do identity-level and leader-related consequences differ when the levels of organizational provision of FWA, supervisor's support for FWA, and members' use of FWA are more, or less, congruent? Over time, does repeated incongruence increase or decrease supervisor prototypicality? To the extent that, as in this organization, supervisor allowance of FWA strongly converges with organizational provision of FWA, supervisory allowance is less likely to represent a "favored" exchange of resources from leader to subordinate. In this case, LMX theory would argue that there would be less of an influence on leader endorsement; leaders are just implementing policy. Further, SIMOL argues that in very salient groups or when members experience strong group identification, the group relations and norms would cause members to devalue substantial favoritism in FWA allowance (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). Thus future studies should assess the contextual effects of FWA policy-support divergence, and of group salience and identification.

Research in this area could also extend the causal chain, by assessing behavioral outcomes (especially other extra-role behaviors; Blader & Tyler, 2009) of increased subordinate respect or leader endorsement associated with offering FWA. Those also may be moderated by leader in-group prototypicality (Koivisto & Lipponen, 2015). Furthermore, to what extent and how do employees appeal unfavorable FWA decisions, and are they more likely to do so with prototypical or non-prototypical supervisors, and in convergent or divergent contexts?

Limitations

While the results are based on cross-sectional survey data collected from a single organization, results at two time periods show highly similar results, increasing reliability. Common method variance is possible when using survey data. However, the direction of this kind of bias in a moderation analysis is an underestimation of interaction effects (Siemens, Roth, & Oliveira, 2010). In addition, correlational analysis cannot test the causal relationships in question. For example, one could argue that feelings of respect or leader endorsement influence the perceived favorability of a leader's decisions. However, from a theoretical standpoint, there is no rationale behind this kind of causal relationship. Additionally, were the results across T1 and T2 noticeably different, were this a true panel study, or were there theoretical reasons to assess changes in the relationships across time, it would be appropriate to test for such differences and changes using latent variable modeling (McArdle, 2009).

The fact that the evidence comes from a telecommunication company that has a long history of offering FWA options to its employees may be seen as reducing the broader relevance of our key findings. It could be argued that in organizations where work flexibility is not a viable or desired organizational option, FWA may have different significance to employees. In that context, a supervisor's FWA-related decisions then may be related neither to employees' feelings of respect nor their leader endorsement; or alternatively, such decisions may be much more influential. Organizations involving collective and cooperative work may be less satisfactory contexts for FWA; employees in those contexts may even avoid FWA due to its possible fragmentation of team cohesion and interaction. However, as work flexibility becomes more common (Galisky et al., 2008; Madden & Jones, 2008), and increasingly important for younger generations entering the workforce (Smith, 2010; Solnet, Kralj, & Kandampully, 2012), the findings of our research become more relevant.

De Menezes and Kelliher (2011) emphasize the many possible contingent results about FWA due to different kinds or combinations of FWA, convergence between availability and

employee preferences and use, extent of employee choice, change in working arrangements over time, frequency of use, length of availability of policy, etc. Further, studies vary by methodologies, data, and research designs (most typically single-level and cross-sectional), with wide variation in types of occupation, sample size of individuals or organizations.

Conclusion

This study provides new insights to the research on FWA, supervisory mediation of FWA, and SIMOL by demonstrating that (1) immediate group supervisors' decisions on their subordinates' access to FWA are associated with subordinates' identity and leader endorsement, and (2) that a leader's in-group prototypicality moderates these relationships. More in-group prototypical leaders' FWA-decisions have a stronger influence on group members' self-evaluation, but a smaller influence on group members' leader endorsement. These findings emphasize one of many immediate supervisors' active roles in implementing, or mediating between, organizational policies. When implementing policies for FWA, organizations need to consider ways to help immediate supervisors communicate these to their subordinates, and to underscore implications for employee and leader identity.

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Table 1.
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Between Variables, T1 and T2

Variable	M	SD	α	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
T1 (N = 827-833)												
1. Supervisor's allowance of FWA use (a)	5.3	1.3	.82	--								
2. Leader in-group prototypicality (a)	4.8	1.3	.94	.21 ***	--							
3. Respect (a)	5.4	.80	.91	.21 ***	.22 ***	--						
4. Leader endorsement (a)	5.5	1.2	.93	.43 ***	.36 ***	.34 ***	--					
5. Desire for FWA use (b)	4.9	1.3	.80	.20 ***	.00	.07 *	-.04	--				
6. Interaction centered 1 & 2	0.3	1.8	--	-.20 ***	-.07 *	.03	-.30 ***	.07 *	--			
7. Age < 30 4.4%; 31-40 29.0%; 41-50 38.4%; 51-60 24.0%; > 60 4.2	2.9	.94	--	-.06	-.01	-.08 *	.04	-.22 **	-.02	--		
8. Sex m 60.5%; f 39.5	.40	.49	--	-.11 **	.05	.05	.03	-.08 *	.02	.08 *	--	
9. Tenure	15.6	9.6	--	-.09 *	.01	-.07	.05	-.22 **	-.04	.70 **	.08 *	--
10. Education elementary 2.4%; upper secondary or vocational 27.5%; university applied sciences 35.9%; university 34.3	3.0	.85	--	.14 **	-.03	.08 *	.01	.06	-.02	-.12 **	-.12 **	-.29 ***

FLEXIBLE WORK AS A SOURCE OF RESPECT AND LEADER ENDORSEMENT, p-17

Variable	M	SD	α	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
T2 (N = 716-732)												
1. Supervisor's allowance of FWA use (a)	5.1	1.2	.81	--								
2. Leader in-group prototypicality (a)	5.0	1.2	.94	.15 ***	--							
3. Respect (a)	5.4	.83	.88	.13 ***	.17 ***	--						
4. Leader endorsement (a)	5.6	1.1	.91	.41 ***	.37 ***	.21 ***	--					
5. Desire for FWA use (b)	5.1	1.4	.80	.32 ***	-.09 **	.04	.03	--				
6. Interaction centered 1 & 2	.21	1.6	--	-.14 ***	.02	.08 *	-.18 **	-.01	--			
7. Age < 30 3.3%; 31-40 23.7%; 41-50 41.5%; 51-60 25.5%; > 60 6.0	3.1	.93	--	-.11 **	.05	-.03	.00	-.31 ***	.05	--		
8. Sex m 58.8%; f 41.2	.41	.49	--	-.08 *	.00	.05	.06	.00	-.02	.04	--	
9. Tenure	17.6	9.7	--	-.13 ***	.03	-.03	-.01	-.32 ***	.01	.68 ***	.03	--
10. Education elementary 2.1%; upper secondary or vocational 27.9%; university applied sciences 37.5%; university 32.7	3.0	.83	--	.14 ***	.01	.08 *	.02	.09 **	.02	-.10 **	-.17 ***	-.30 ***

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$. Correlations among 1-6 are one-tailed; correlations with 7-10 are two-tailed.

(a) 1 strongly disagree to 7 strongly agree; (b) 1 not at all important to 7 extremely important

Table 2.
Regression Analyses for Respect and for Leader Endorsement

	T1	T2
Respect explanatory variables		
<i>Step 1</i>		
Supervisor's allowance of FWA use (1)	.17 ***	.10 **
Leader in-group prototypicality (2)	.18 ***	.16 ***
Desire for FWA use	.04	.03
R ²	.08	.04
Adjusted R ²	.07	.04
F	(3,823)=23.1 ***	(3,726)=10.1 ***
<i>Step 2</i>		
Supervisor's allowance of FWA use (1)	.18 ***	.11 **
Leader in-group prototypicality (2)	.19 ***	.15 ***
Desire for FWA use	.05	.02
Interaction 1 x 2 (both centered)	.08 *	.09 *
R ²	.08	.05
Adjusted R ²	.08	.04
R ² change	.01	.01
F	(4,822)=18.7 ***	(4,725)=9.0 ***
F change	(1,822) =5.2 *	(1,725) =5.7 *

Leader endorsement explanatory variables

Step 1

Supervisor's allowance of FWA use (1)	.39 ***	.38 ***
Leader in-group prototypicality (2)	.28 ***	.21 ***
Desire for FWA use	-.12 ***	-.06
	R ² .27	.27
	Adjusted R ² .27	.27
	F (3,829)=104.0 ***	(3,725)=8.7 ***

Step 2

Supervisor's allowance of FWA use (1)	.36 ***	.36 ***
Leader in-group prototypicality (2)	.28 ***	.32 ***
Desire for FWA use	-.10 ***	-.06
Interaction 1 x 2 (both centered)	-.17 ***	-.14 ***
	R ² .30	.29
	Adjusted R ² .30	.28
	R ² change .03	.02
	F (4,828)=88.0 ***	(4,724)=72.9 ***
	F change (1,828)=29.3 ***	(1,724)=18.8 ***

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Note: Full entry method within blocks. Values are standardized beta coefficients.

Interaction term is the product of the mean-centered Supervisor's allowance of FWA use and mean-centered Leader in-group prototypicality.

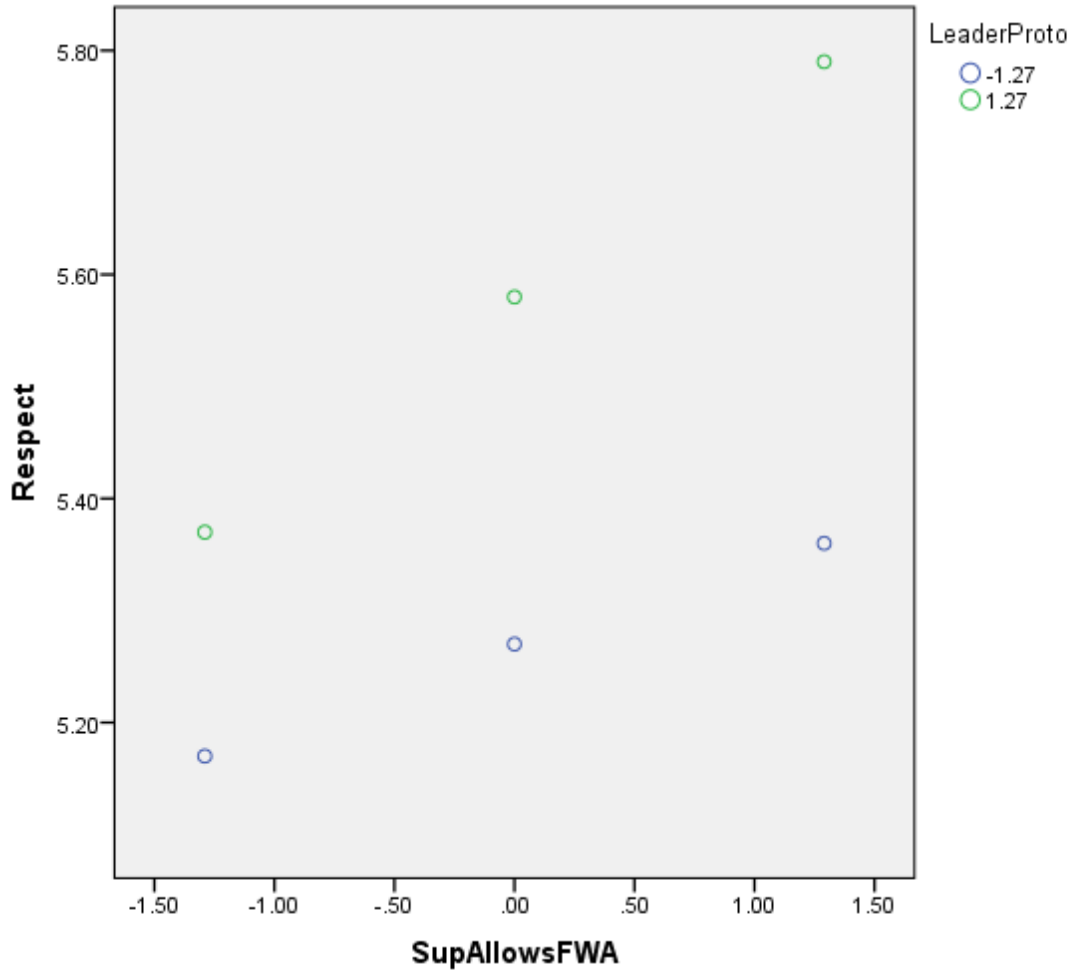


Figure 1a. *T1 Respect as a function of supervisor's allowance of subordinates' FWA use, by supervisor prototypicality.*

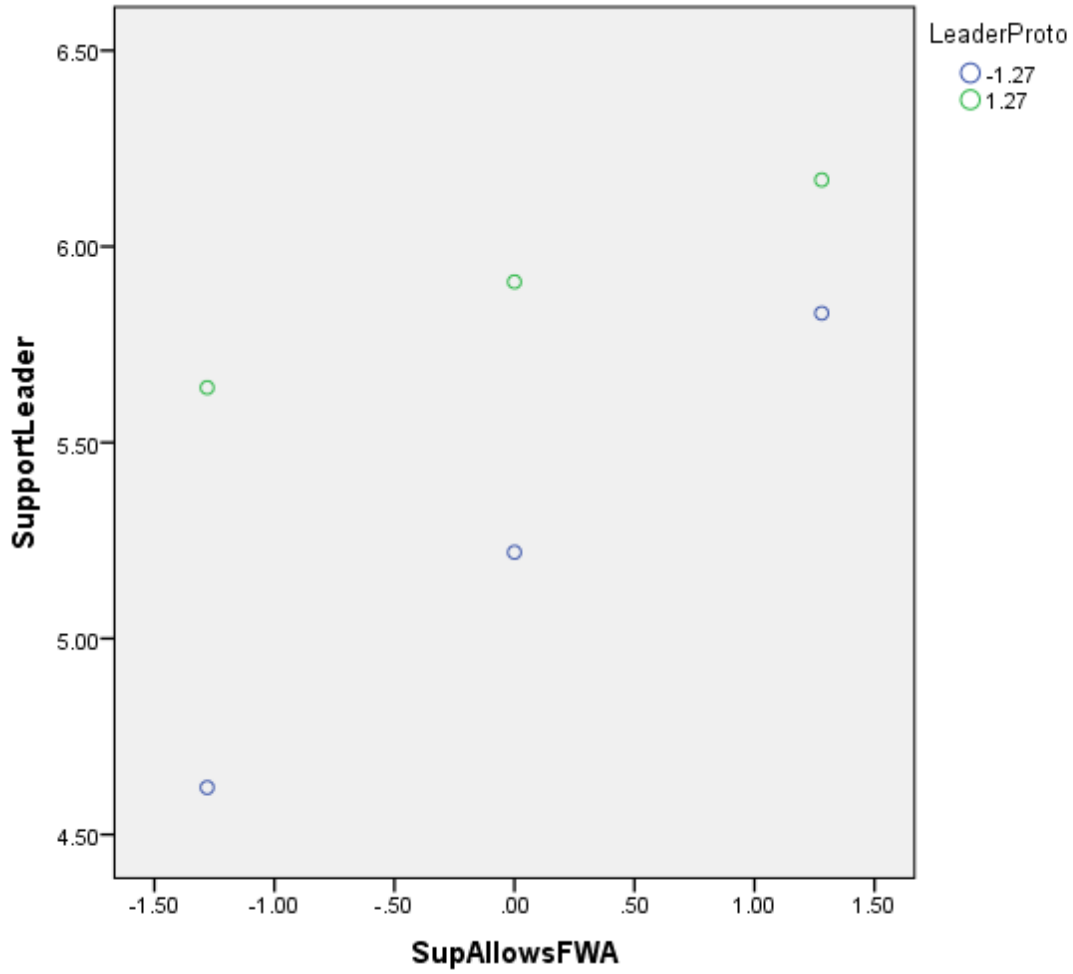


Figure 1b. *T1 Leader endorsement as a function of supervisor's allowance of subordinates' FWA use, by supervisor prototypicality.*