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Why follow? The interplay of leader categorization, identification, and feeling respected

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Abstract

Guided by both social cognitive and identity-based perspectives of leadership, the present study investigated how and when the process of leader categorization results in greater leader effectiveness. Specifically, we propose that the relationship between leader categorization and subordinates' openness toward leadership should be partially mediated by subordinates' identification with their leaders. Furthermore, seeking to corroborate that the issue of self-esteem is the central ingredient in the identification process, we argue that the mediation should become weaker the more subordinates feel that they are being treated disrespectfully by their leaders, and thus are explicitly undermined in their efforts toward self-enhancement. The proposed mediating effect was tested and supported in two field studies (N_1 = 244, N_2 = 645). In the second study, we also tested and found support for the proposed moderated mediation model. The theoretical and managerial consequences are discussed.

Keywords

identification, influence, leadership, relationship, respect

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Leadership only ever comes into effect if subordinates are open to the influence exerted by their superiors. Force, pressure, or manipulation may create a temporary opening of this nature, but leadership is only truly sustainable and effective if subordinates voluntarily follow their leaders (Hollander, 1964; van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003a; Yukl, 2010). Although many leadership studies have investigated the critical issue of leadership effectiveness, recently two prominent lines of psychological research have substantially enriched the debate.

The first line of research stems from the cognitive (or more precisely, the social cognition) literature (Nye & Brower, 1996), which posits that the extent to which subordinates are open to the influence of their leaders is highly dependent on how subordinates perceive these leaders. The more actual leaders resemble subordinates' leader stereotype, the more likely it is that they are not only appointed as leaders but also perceived as such by their subordinates (Brown & Lord, 2001;

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Lord & Brown, 2004; Lord & Maher, 1993) which ultimately translates into more positive responses by their subordinates (for overviews, see: Chhokar, Brodbeck, & House, 2007; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004; Lord & Maher, 1993; Schyns & Meindl, 2005; Shamir, Pillai, Bligh, & Uhl-Bien, 2006)

The other prominent line of research stems from the social psychology literature on identity (e.g., Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Lord & Brown, 2004; Sedikides & Brewer, 2001). This perspective argues that subordinates' degree of identification with their leaders can explain when and why a subordinate follows his or her leader (cf. Hogg, 2001; Lord & Brown, 2004; Lord, Brown, & Freiberg, 1999; van Knippenberg, van Knippenberg, De Cremer, & Hogg, 2004). Essentially, it is suggested that true leaders are entrepreneurs of identity in that they can wield their followers' identities in the service of the broader agenda (Haslam, Reicher, & Platow, 2011). Moreover, this perspective reflects the notion that leaders appeal not only to the part of their subordinates' identity that is individually construed but also to the socially construed part, in other words, to the part of the subordinates' identity that is defined by their group membership. To successfully appeal to the latter, leaders need to embody what the group stands for, i.e., be group prototypical (Hogg, 2001).[1]

Although previous studies have examined both perspectives on leader effectiveness in concert, they have tended to pit one theoretical approach against the other (Hains, Hogg, & Duck, 1997; Hogg, Hains, & Mason, 1998). That is, it has been proposed that subordinates either support their leader because he or she represents a cognitive leader stereotype and is thus "easier" to follow (Lord & Maher, 1993) or because the leader represents an in-group prototype and is thus in a good position to appeal to the group members' identity (van Knippenberg et al., 2004). In the present study, we revisit the cognitive and identity-based perspectives, yet we view these two theoretical approaches as complementary, and seek to bridge the two perspectives on a relational level of leadership effectiveness.[2] Specifically, we argue that cognitively categorizing someone as a leader may also stimulate subordinates to identify with the leader if the categorization is positive because of anticipated benefits for subordinates' self-esteem in affiliating with the leader (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). Hence, subordinates' identification with their leaders should be able to partly explain why subordinates are open to a leader's influence (cf. Eckloff & Van Quaquebeke, 2008). It is important to note that if our reasoning is correct, any process that would prevent subordinates from affiliating themselves with the leader, such as disrespectful treatment, should disrupt the identification process and thus render it insignificant as a mediator.

In testing the complete moderated mediation model, we seek to extend the integration of cognitive and identity-based perspectives on leadership effectiveness to a relational level. Moreover, we address two issues that were explicitly noted by van Knippenberg et al. (2004) in their comprehensive review on "leadership, self, and identity" to be underexplored in the literature. Namely, that different aspects of leadership may interact to explain followers' identification with their leader and that the identification with a leader represents an important mediator that partly explains the process of effective leadership. Additionally, contrary to studies focusing solely on social identity, we seek to illustrate how leaders can appeal to their subordinates' identities irrespective of the degree to which these subordinates identify with their teams. More generally, however, we hope to add to the understanding of the interplay between cognitive and identity processes in the realm of leadership. Having briefly outlined the aims of the present study, we next discuss in more detail the core elements of the cognitive and identity-based perspectives on leadership effectiveness, and then integrate key aspects of these theories to derive our hypotheses.

The cognitive perspective on leadership effectiveness

Given that leadership is a natural phenomenon in most human groups and thus a part of everyone's

socialization (cf. Van Vugt, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2008), people develop implicit concepts of good leadership over the course of their lives (Lord & Maher, 1993). These concepts can be understood as cognitive knowledge structures or so-called Implicit Leadership Theories (ILTs), which not only encompass notions of the workings of leadership (Meindl, Ehrlich, & Dukerich, 1985) but also a notion of an ideal leader, i.e., the leader prototype or leader stereotype (Lord, de Vader, & Alliger, 1986; Schyns & Meindl, 2005; Shamir et al., 2006). Although these ILTs were initially regarded as a source of measurement error (Eden & Leviatan, 1975), today they are understood as a cognitive background that enables followers to process observed leadership behavior and react appropriately to it (Taylor & Crocker, 1981; Weick, 1995). Based on this perspective, good leadership lies in the eye of the beholder, and followers need ILTs to make sense of the leadership that they encounter (Lord & Brown, 2004; Shamir et al., 2006). Two fundamental processes are essential to this sense-making process: 1) to recognize and categorize; and 2) to infer further information about leaders and the leadership process.

With regard to recognition-based information processing, prior studies have argued that people will follow a person more easily if they feel that he or she matches their leader stereotype (Kenney, Schwartz-Kenney, & Blascovich, 1996; Lord & Maher, 1993; Nye, 2005; Nye & Forsynth, 1991). In other words, the leader stereotype in the subordinates' minds acts as an implicit benchmark against which the behavior or qualities of real persons are compared. This process is referred to as leader categorization (Lord, Foti, & de Vader, 1984). The better the match, the more likely it becomes that the person in question is categorized as a leader, which subsequently leads to influence and authority (Brown & Lord, 2001; Kenney et al., 1996; Maurer & Lord, 1991). Signs of such influence can be found in studies showing that leader categorization affects Leader-Member Exchange (Epitropaki & Martin, 2005), perceptions of worthiness of influence (Kenney et al., 1996), and subordinates' openness to influence, i.e., their vertical respect for their leaders (Van Quaquebeke, van Knippenberg, & Brodbeck, 2011; Van Quaquebeke, van Knippenberg, & Eckloff, 2011). With regard to inference-base processing, it is argued that ILTs also help to fill in gaps in perception, i.e., help people infer what else is true about the target individual. Meindl et al. (1985) thus aptly coined the term "romance of leadership" for this type of information processing as people allow an initial impression (such as a categorization or effectiveness perceptions) to dominate further reasoning (cf. Nye, 2005).

Generally, however, in this perspective, leadership is still generally viewed as a product of individuals' information processing and not as a structural property of real groups. In contrast, the identity-based perspective on leadership effectiveness focuses on the latter issue.

The identity-based perspective on leadership effectiveness

The way we define ourselves (i.e., our self-concept or identity) guides the way we feel, think, and behave (for an overview, see Leary & Tangney, 2003; Turner et al., 1987). In other words, identities govern people's definitions of, and their coordination with, their environment (Kihlstrom, Beer, & Klein, 2003; Lord & Brown, 2004; Sedikides & Gregg, 2003). Therefore, if leadership can change how subordinates define themselves to be more in line with the group goals, it can be considered effective (van Knippenberg et al., 2004).

Significantly, the self is not one-dimensional. A person's self usually comprises a set of generally distinct concepts, each of which are typically tied to a specific social context. In other words, one's identity or self-concept is not only construed on a personal level ("I") but can also involve identities that are relational or social in nature, i.e., identities that are defined by the felt unity with other individuals or by the felt unity with larger social collectives ("we"). Depending on situational saliences, the respective parts of one's identity become salient—a phenomenon referred to as the "working self" (Markus & Wurf, 1987)—and

consequently govern one's emotions, thoughts, and actions. In other words, people might at times define themselves as unique individuals, at other times by their union with someone else (e.g., their leader), and at yet other times by their union with small groups (e.g., teams) or larger groups (e.g., organizations) (Hogg, 2001; Sedikides & Brewer, 2001). Given that salient identities become the lens through which the world is perceived and acted upon, each of these foci carries different consequences. From a leadership point of view, the types of self-construals that are relational or social in nature are particularly interesting because it becomes possible to tie an individual's identity to those of others and thereby coordinate motivation and action through these self-construals.

One of the most influential frameworks in this arena is the social identity model of organizational leadership (SIMOL) proposed by van Knippenberg and Hogg (2003b, built on previous work by Hogg, 2001). In this model, the authors argue that prior research has underemphasized the fact that leaders not only lead groups of people but are also themselves members of these groups. Thus, leadership has to be understood as one group member (i.e., the leader) asking other group members (i.e., the team) to exert themselves on behalf of the collective. We cannot provide a complete review of van Knippenberg and Hogg's comprehensive overview here, but the researchers essentially argue that leaders must be group prototypical and behave in a group-oriented manner to create trust and to ultimately be able to speak to the group's identity (see Hogg, 2001, for an in-depth explanation of the notion that group prototypicality also creates an initial appearance of influence that ultimately becomes reality). Significantly, however, van Knippenberg and Hogg found that group prototypicality matters more if subordinates identify with the collective and less so if the collective is not salient or if the subordinates do not identify with it (see, for instance, a lab study by Hains et al., 1997 or two mixed design studies by Hogg et al., 1998). Although there is a good deal of empirical evidence showing how leaders can be more effective by fostering subordinates' social identities (e.g., Giessner & van Knippenberg, 2008; Giessner, van Knippenberg, & Sleebos, 2009; Ullrich, Christ, & van Dick, 2009; for general overview see Hogg, 2001; van Knippenberg et al. 2004), there is comparatively little research on when and how leaders influence subordinates' relational identity (van Knippenberg et al., 2004).

From a leadership perspective, this relational level of analysis is equally interesting because previous studies on the identification with other individuals have demonstrated that such identification gives more weight to matters related to mutual benefits, loyalty, or shared interests (Aron, 2003; Hogg, 2001; Lord & Brown, 2004; Sedikides & Brewer, 2001). As a result, and relevant to the present study, researchers have argued that subordinates' identification with their leaders, along with their level of group identification, should ultimately be related to the leaders' levels of influence and thus, leadership effectiveness (for an overview, see van Knippenberg et al., 2004).

The central question then is: When and why do people identify with leaders on a personal level? According to self-categorization theory (Turner et al., 1987), this identification process depends on many factors, such as actual circumstances that represent the boundary conditions to categorization (e.g., same profession, age, or gender), situational saliencies (i.e., being aware that a criterion is important to unity or that the unity itself is meaningful), or whether the target can serve as a means to improving one's self-esteem. In our integration of the cognitive and the identity perspectives on leadership effectiveness, we will focus on the last point.

Integrating the cognitive and identity perspectives on leadership effectiveness

Identification as the mediator between leader categorization and openness to influence

Given that there is evidence that subordinates who identify more with their leaders are subsequently more open to the leaders' influence (for an

overview, see van Knippenberg et al., 2004), and that leader categorization also leads to such openness to influence (Lord & Maher, 1993; Van Quaquebeke, et al. 2011), it seems reasonable to theorize that these two streams of research could be integrated. Based on this reasoning, and preliminary empirical evidence from Eckloff & Van Quaquebeke (2008), we argue that the more closely leaders embody what their subordinates regard as ideal leadership (i.e., the more closely leaders match the leader stereotype), the more attractive leaders are as an object of identification (cf. Hogg, 2001; Turner et al., 1987). If subordinates identify with such leaders, the positive appraisal of the leader will partially extend to the subordinates themselves and could thus strengthen the subordinates' self-esteem (van Knippenberg et al., 2004). In turn, according to the identity perspective on leadership, the resultant identification with the leader will explain the subordinates' openness to leadership (cf. referent power in French & Raven, 1959). Consequently, there is good reason to assume that identification with the leader functions as a mediator between leader categorization and the subordinates' openness to the leader's influence (cf. Epitropaki & Martin, 2005, who argue for Leader-Member-Exchange as a mediator). Yet, it needs to be noted that research on power suggests that other mediators, such as the leader's expertise (cf. expert power, French & Raven, 1959; Podsakoff & Schriesheim, 1985; Yukl & Falbe, 1990), may operate in this dynamic in much the same way. Therefore, we should assume that only a partial mediation effect exists.

> Hypothesis 1: The relationship between subordinates' categorization of their leaders against a leader stereotype and subordinates' openness to their leaders' influence is partially mediated by followers' identification with their leaders.

Feeling respected as the moderator to identification

Although the rationale presented above is rather straightforward, one may subsequently ask under which circumstances the mediation will unfold the strongest or not unfold at all. Testing such moderation should provide greater insight into the inner workings of the mediation mechanism and thereby lend more weight to its validity. In this respect, if we can assume that the need for positive self-esteem is a basic motive behind a person's identification with others (Hogg, 2001; Turner et al., 1987), then the same factors that undermine such positive self-perceptions can also be expected to lead to a decrease in a person's interest in identifying with others. A similar notion has been raised in SIMOL (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003b) and in the work of Haslam and colleagues (2011). Both argue that an endorsement of a leader may result not only from being "one of us" (i.e., being prototypical) but also from "doing it for us" (i.e., displaying group-oriented behavior and showing commitment toward the group). If a leader's commitment toward the group is low, even a leader's group prototypicality is unlikely to translate into an endorsement of the leader. In a similar vein, we suggest that disrespectful treatment is not only a sign of low commitment toward the disrespected individual but an open form of disregard.

At its core, the degree of respect with which other people are treated conveys a general message indicating whether these people are "OK" as they are (cf. Dillon, 2007; Miller, 2001; Van Quaquebeke & Eckloff, 2010; Van Quaquebeke, Henrich, & Eckloff, 2007). Treating people disrespectfully fundamentally signals to the targets that the sender does not care much about the target's dignity (or more specifically, devalues the target's status) (Barreto & Ellemers, 2002; de Cremer & Tyler, 2005). In light of our present study, disrespectful treatment should thus override any self-esteem benefits that subordinates may implicitly receive from identifying with the leader. Hence, because maintaining a positive sense of self-esteem is always imperative for non-pathological humans, we argue that disrespectful treatment should hinder any process of identification, even if the leader otherwise generally matches the leader stereotype. This argument leads us to assume that the indirect effect proposed in Hypothesis 1 (i.e., the effect of leader categorization on

subordinates' openness to influence as mediated by the subordinates' identification with the leader) is moderated by the degree to which subordinates perceive that they are treated respectfully by their leaders. More specifically, we can state this argument, which is presented together with Hypothesis 1 in Figure 1, as follows:

> Hypothesis 2: The mediating effect of subordinates' identification with their leaders in the process of leader categorization (H1) becomes weaker as the leaders treat their subordinates with increasing levels of disrespect.

Study 1

Method

Procedure To obtain a broad sample of the working population, we collected the data for the first study online. Participants were recruited by using a multi-site, multi-entry strategy that utilizes a variety of recruitment methods (e.g., teaser text boxes, banners, and short articles about the study) through a variety of online news portals in Germany. The advantages and possible disadvantages of these web-based surveys over traditional survey methods have already been discussed in detail (Birnbaum, 2004; Gosling, Vazire, Srivastava, & John, 2004; Reips, 2002). The results of similar studies show that online results are at least equal in quality to their traditional counterparts if certain precautionary measures are applied. Additionally, web-based samples generally produce more varied demographics in the survey population than traditional surveys in psychological research (Gosling et al., 2004).

To prevent potential participants from being excluded from the survey because of specific system requirements (e.g., JavaScript), we scripted the survey to use server-side code exclusively. The survey's layout was then tested on a range of browsers and screen resolutions to ensure that the study was displayed in a similar format on all common operating systems. Using unique cookie session IDs stopped the participants from repeating the survey on the same computer. To improve the rate of returns and to diversify any self-selection bias, we offered a lottery that allowed the participants to win online shopping vouchers. Likewise, we also provided an option that allowed participants to receive feedback regarding the study results. Participants could sign up for this option in a different database such that their anonymity would be maintained.[3]

Participants A total of 244 participants who had direct superiors completed the survey. Of these participants, 62% were female, and the average age for the sample as a whole was 34 years (SD = 11.10 years). Approximately two-thirds of the participants had higher education qualifications. The average participant had worked 14 years of his or her life (SD = 11.55 years) and had a total of seven different superiors (SD = 5.82), with an average of two female superiors among them.

Measures To measure the predictor (leader categorization), we used a version of the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness ILT scale (GLOBE; Chhokar et al., 2007; House et al., 2004) which was adapted specifically for German-speaking countries. The scale was

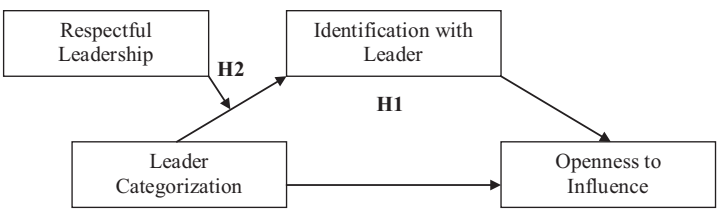

Figure 1. Overview of the hypotheses

derived by identifying those GLOBE attribute items (out of the original 112 items) that were agreed upon by 95% of the original German GLOBE sample to be either very important for outstanding leadership or a hindrance to the same (Van Quaquebeke & Brodbeck, 2008; cf. the procedure used in Dorfman, Hanges, & Brodbeck, 2004). The scale comprises 31 leadership attributes through which one can assess how closely a target individual resembles the ideal leader stereotype in Germany. The attributes include positive aspects, such as team builder, dependable, intelligent, and effective bargainer, as well as negative aspects such as non-delegater, vindictive, non-cooperative, and cynical. Answers to all 31 items were made on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*)to 5 (*very much*). The leader's stereotype representation is calculated as a one-dimensional score by averaging all 31 attributes and reverse scoring the negative attributes. In this way, the score reflects on average the degree to which a leader is perceived to possess the stereotypically positive leadership attributes (cf. Van Quaquebeke & Brodbeck, 2008, who argued for the scale to be used this way, and Van Quaquebeke, van Knippenberg, & Brodbeck, 2011, who employed it in a similar manner).

To assess subordinates' identification with their leaders (i.e., the mediator variable), we used a version of the 6-item organizational identification scale by Mael and Ashforth (1992) which uses the current superior of the participant as the target of identification (cf. van Dick, Wagner, Stellmacher, & Christ, 2004). The scale included items such as "If somebody criticizes my leader, it feels like a personal insult to me" and "I am very interested to hear what other people think about my leader." The responses were made on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much*).

Openness to influence (i.e., the outcome) was surveyed with the 6-item appraisal respect (i.e., vertical respect) for leader scale (Van Quaquebeke, van Knippenberg, & Brodbeck, 2011; Van Quaquebeke, van Knippenberg, & Eckloff, 2011). The scale focuses on the extent to which subordinates voluntarily allow and seek the influence of their leaders. The scale consists of items such as: "I trust the judgment of my leader in work issues" and "In many matters concerning work I gladly seek advice from my leader". Responses were made on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much*).

We used the factor analysis procedure proposed by Anderson and Gerbing (1988) to check the empirical distinctiveness of the three constructs at the core of this first study. This approach establishes the discriminant validity of the constructs by comparing the model that forms the basis of this study (which assumes that the items for the three constructs load onto their respective latent factors) with more restrictive models in which the correlation between the pairs of the latent constructs equals 1. When testing our model against these restrictive models, a significantly lower Chi-square value would indicate the discriminant validity of our constructs. Our results show that the assumed 3-factor model offers the significantly best fit for the data (χ^2-difference > 11.75, $df = 1$, $p < .001$) in comparison with all of the other models.

Results

The means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of the variables are shown in Table 1, and the internal consistencies are represented in the same table in the diagonal in brackets. As assumed in leader categorization theory, the results reveal a strong and significant positive correlation between participants' openness to influence and the extent to which they perceive their respective leaders to match the leader stereotype in Germany ($r = .80$; cf. Van Quaquebeke, van Knippenberg, & Brodbeck, 2011, who obtain a similar value). Likewise, as assumed by the identity perspective on leadership, we find a positive and significant relationship between participants' identification with their leaders and participants' openness to their leaders' influence ($r = .52$). Thus, both perspectives on leadership effectiveness were supported.

We then tested the partial mediation stated in our Hypothesis 1. As can be gathered from Table 2, the obtained results fulfill Baron and Kenny's

Table 1. Mean scores, standard deviations, intercorrelations, and internal consistencies of the variables in Study 1 (N = 244)

	M	*SD*	1	2	3
Leader categorization	*3.77*	*0.77*	*(.97)*		
Openness to influence	*3.22*	*1.11*	*.80****	*(.92)*	
Identification with leader	*2.30*	*0.86*	*.36****	*.52****	*(.82)*

Note: Values in brackets represent Cronbach's alpha. ***p < .001, two-sided.

Table 2. Test of the mediation model in Study 1 (N = 244)

	Immediate and total effects						
	Path[a]	*B*	*SE*	β	*t*		
b (YX)	c	1.16	.05	.80***	21.01		
b (MX)	a	0.40	.07	.36***	5.97		
b (YM.X)	b	0.34	.05	.27***	7.19		
b (YX.M)	c'	1.02	.05	.71***	19.00		
	Indirect effects, assuming normal distribution						
	Path[a]	*B*	*SE*	*β*	*Z*	95% CI-l	95% CI-u
Sobel[b]	ab	0.14	.03	.10***	4.61	.09	.20
	Indirect effects estimated by bootstrapping						
	Path[a]	*B*	*SE*			95% CI-l	95% CI-u
Effect[b]	ab	0.14	.03			.09	.20

Note: Number of bootstrap resamples = 5000. [a]M = Identification with Leader; X = Leader Categorization; Y = Openness to Influence. Mediation criteria according to Baron and Kenny (1986), cf. Ill. 2. [b]Test of the indirect effect (mediation) according to Preacher and Hayes (2004) via the Sobel test and bootstrapping. CI-l = lower limit of the confidence interval for the indirect effect ab. CI-u = upper limit of the confidence interval. ***p < .001, two-sided.

(1986) criteria for partial mediation (indirect effect). Apart from a significant correlation between leader categorization and openness to influence (path c), the prediction of identification with the leader by leader categorization (path a) is significant. The same is true of the prediction of openness to influence by the mediator (identification) when the impact of leader categorization is controlled for (path b).

The fourth criterion states that the impact of the correlation between the predictor and the criterion should decrease by a nontrivial degree when the mediator is controlled for. The strength of the correlation between leader categorization and receptiveness to influence weakens from β = .80 (total effect c) to β = .71 (immediate effect c') when identification with the leader is controlled for. To verify the statistical significance of the indirect effect, i.e., the mediation, we conducted a so-called Sobel test (MacKinnon, Fairchild, & Fritz, 2007). As shown in the lower part of Table 2, the indirect effect is significant. However, the test demands a normal distribution in the test statistics. A requirement that cannot normally be adhered to. It is therefore recommended estimating the confidence interval (CI) of the indirect effect via bootstrapping because this procedure does not require a normal distribution (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). Bootstrapping confirms that the confidence interval does not include zero (see Table 2). Moreover, given that the predictor still has an immediate effect on the outcome, the mediation should be considered as partial or be referred to as a partial indirect effect, which supports our hypothesis (and corroborates Eckloff & Van Quaquebeke, 2008).

Study 2

Study 2 expands on the mediation model proposed in Hypothesis 1 by including the moderating effect of respectful leadership on the mediation, as stated in Hypothesis 2. Moreover, we sought to provide more room for an idiosyncratic definition of the leader stereotype to capture the leader categorization process as a whole and not only the part that is attributable to the socially shared aspects of the leader stereotype (as is the case with the GLOBE measure in Study 1; cf. Van Quaquebeke, van Knippenberg, & Brodbeck, 2011; Van Quaquebeke & Brodbeck, 2008).

Method

Procedure The second study employed the same means used in Study 1 to counter the potential drawbacks of online surveys. In this study, we turned to a German survey panel (Sozioland) to recruit a diverse workforce sample. Similar to Study 1, we invited only the participants with immediate superiors at the time of the survey.

Participants A total of 645 participants with direct superiors completed the survey. Of these respondents, 38% were female, with an average age of 36 years for the participants as a whole (SD = 10.31 years). Approximately half of the participants had a degree in higher education. The average participant had spent 15 years of his or her life (SD = 10.08 years) under a total of six different superiors (SD = 4.74), two of whom were female.

Measures The second study assessed leader categorization (predictor) by utilizing a pictorial Venn diagram (Van Quaquebeke & Brodbeck, 2008; Van Quaquebeke, van Knippenberg, & Brodbeck, 2011; cf. Shamir & Kark, 2004). To do so, we first asked participants to imagine their personal image of an ideal leader. On the subsequent page, we then asked the participants to indicate through seven increasingly overlapping circles to what degree their current leaders reflect their personal image of an ideal leader (for a depiction, see, for example, Van Quaquebeke, van Knippenberg, & Brodbeck, 2011). When one is interested only in the categorization process against a leader stereotype and not in the content of the stereotype itself, this approach not only provides a feasible measurement but has also been shown to have convergent validity with more extensive scales of leader categorization, such as the previously used GLOBE measure (Van Quaquebeke & Brodbeck, 2008). Thus, this approach is considered an intuitive but valid measure of leader categorization. Moreover, because it provides a pictorial response scale, this approach also serves as a "cognitive speed bump" in the response process, which is likely to reduce common-item variance (Podsakoff, Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Lee, 2003).

Identification with the leader (mediator) and followers' openness to the leader's influence (outcome) were again assessed with the same scales used in Study 1. We measured identification with the adaptation of Mael and Ashforth's (1992) identification scale and openness to influence with the appraisal respect for leaders scale (Van Quaquebeke, van Knippenberg, & Brodbeck, 2011).

The extent to which subordinates feel that they are being treated respectfully by their leaders (moderator to the mediator, H2) was assessed with the respectful leadership scale (Van Quaquebeke & Eckloff, 2010). The scale was derived from numerous employee reports that described personal accounts of respectful and disrespectful leadership. These reports were subsequently standardized, clustered, and reduced through various means of quantitative analyses. The respectful leadership scale is a one-dimensional scale that includes 12 items, including "My leader expresses criticism in an objective and constructive way", "My leader recognizes me as a full-fledged counterpart", and "My leader shows a genuine interest in my opinions and assessments".

To ascertain the empirical distinctiveness of the constructs in this second study, we again chose to pursue Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) procedure. A confirmatory factor analysis showed that the non-restrictive model (which assumes

that the items load into their respective factors) achieves a significantly higher match with the data than all of the other, more restrictive models that assumed a correlation of 1 for all latent construct pairs. Again, the Chi-square score for the proposed measuring model is significantly lower than those of all of the alternative models (χ^2-difference > 4.46, $df = 1$, $p < .05$). Similar to the findings of Study 1, these results suggest that the surveyed constructs are discriminant from each other.

Results

The means, standard deviations, intercorrelations, and internal consistencies of the variables in Study 2 are presented in Table 3. The results of Study 1 were replicated. As predicted by leader categorization theory, a strong and significant correlation between leader categorization and openness to influence was observed ($r = .84$; cf. Van Quaquebeke, van Knippenberg, & Brodbeck, 2011, who obtained a similarly high correlation). Likewise, subordinates' identification with their leader is significantly and positively related to subordinates' openness to influence ($r = .57$), as predicted by the identity-based perspective on leadership effectiveness.

It is important to note that our analysis of the mediation model (Table 4) again supports Hypothesis 1. The correlation between leader categorization and openness to influence is partially mediated by subordinates' identification with their leaders. All of Baron and Kenny's

Table 3. Mean scores, standard deviations, intercorrelations, and internal consistencies of variables in Study 2 ($N = 645$)

	M	*SD*	1	2	3	4
Leader categorization	4.56	1.89	(-)			
Openness to influence	3.08	1.12	.84***	(.92)		
Identification with leader	2.14	0.89	.48***	.57***	(.85)	
Respectful leadership	3.63	0.99	.80***	.78***	.46***	(.95)

Note: Values in brackets represent Cronbach's alpha. ***$p < .001$, two-sided.

Table 4. Testing the mediation model in Study 2 ($N = 645$)

	Immediate and total effects						
	Path[a]	*B*	*SE*	β	*t*		
b (YX)	c	0.50	.01	.84***	39.43		
b (MX)	a	0.23	.02	.48***	13.97		
b (YM.X)	b	0.27	.03	.22***	9.57		
b (YX.M)	c'	0.44	.01	.74***	32.27		
	Indirect effect, assuming normal distribution						
	Path[a]	*B*	*SE*	β	*Z*	95% CI-l	95% CI-u
Sobel[b]	ab	0.06	.01	.11***	6.12	.05	.08
	Indirect effect estimated by bootstrapping						
	Path[a]	*B*	SE			95% CI-l	95% CI-u
Effect[b]	ab	.06	.01			.05	.08

Note: Number of bootstrap resamples = 5000. [a]M = Identification with Leader; X = Leader Categorization; Y = Openness to Influence. Mediation criteria according to Baron and Kenny (1986), cf. Ill. 2. [b]Test of the indirect effect (mediation) according to Preacher and Hayes (2004) via the Sobel test and bootstrapping. CI-l = lower limit of the confidence interval for the indirect effect ab. CI-u = upper limit of the confidence interval. ***$p < .001$, two-sided.

(1986) criteria for partial mediation are present, the Sobel test of the indirect effect is significant, and bootstrapping (Preacher & Hayes, 2004) yields identical results (cf. Study 1).

Our second hypothesis states that the mediation will be weaker if leaders behave disrespectfully in the eyes of their subordinates. To verify this moderated mediation hypothesis (also called a contingent indirect effect), we used the procedure proposed by Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes (2007). This procedure allows us to test specific moderated mediation models and to define the contingent indirect effect based on different values of the moderator. However, because this test also demands a normal distribution in the statistical data, we again conducted the specific indirect effects analysis using an additional bootstrapping test. Using the SPSS modmed macro offered on Hayes' website (2007), we tested the extent to which the indirect effect is moderated by perceived respectful leadership (Hypothesis 2). The results of this test are presented in Table 5.[4] They show that subordinates' identification with their leaders as the mediator in the relationship between leader categorization and openness to influence (indirect effect) is moderated by subordinates' experience of respectful leadership. The delta *R*2 between the model with the interaction term and the model without the interaction term is .014 (F =12.02, $p < .001$). We also followed the recommendations of Edwards (2008) and Ganzach (1997), who argue that interaction analyses should always include the quadratic terms of the predictors to ensure that curvilinear relationships are not falsely identified as interactions. It is important to note that the interaction remains significant even if the quadratic terms of the predictors and other controls that might be assumed to influence cognitive categorization processes, such as gender, education, or age, are accounted for (see the second model in Table 5). The algebraic signs support the direction of our hypothesis in that the indirect effect becomes weaker as the perception of respectful leadership decreases. A visual depiction of the interaction is shown in Figure 2. More specifically, as one can observe in Table 6, the indirect effect becomes significant (p = .05) at a value of 2.44 on respectful leadership (on a scale from 1–5). This finding suggests that at least a medium level of respectfulness is necessary to profit from any effect that leader categorization might have on the part of subordinates' identification with their leader that translates into their openness to leadership. Furthermore, similar to Study 1, we were able to replicate the results when we tested the contingent indirect effect with bootstrapping.

Table 5. Testing the indirect effect[a] with and without controls in Study 2 (N = 645), i.e., the impact of leader categorization (moderated by respectful leadership) on subordinates' openness to influence (mediated by identification with the leader)

	β	*SE*	*t*	β	*SE*	*t*
Leader's gender				.07	0.05	1.43
Leader's age				.00	0.00	0.88
Follower's gender				.09	0.05	1.95
Follower's age				–.00	0.01	–0.65
Follower's level of education				.01	0.01	1.23
Follower's years of work experience				–.01	0.01	–1.14
Quadratic effects of leader categorization (LC^2)				–.03	0.04	–0.61
Quadratic effects of respectful leadership (RL^2)				–.09*	0.04	–2.29
Identification with leader	.23***	0.03	8.30	.23***	0.03	8.44
Leader categorization (LC)	.18***	0.05	3.78	–.02	0.13	–0.13
Respectful leadership (RF)	.14*	0.06	2.40	–.15	0.17	–0.86
LC x RF	.04***	0.01	3.35	.10**	0.04	2.73

Note: [a]Calculated according to Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes (2007). *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

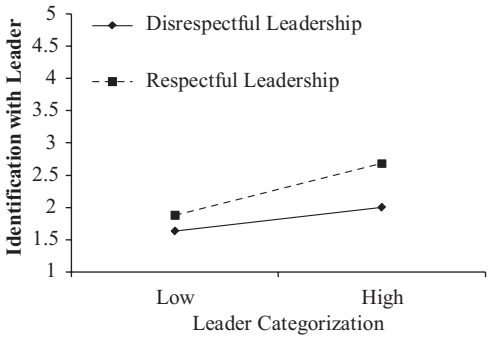

Figure 2. Diagram showing the effect of the interaction of leader categorization and respectful leadership (at +/- 1 SD of M) on subordinates' identification with leader

Discussion

In recent years, the literature has witnessed a flourishing of interest in follower-centric approaches to leadership research. In this respect, the proponents of a cognitive perspective on leadership have emphasized that leadership effectiveness is strongly dependent on how leaders are perceived by their followers. This perspective argues that leaders are most effective if they resemble the leader stereotype (Lord & Maher, 1993; Schyns & Meindl, 2005; Shamir et al., 2006). By contrast, the identity perspective stresses the issue of identification to explain whether followers will be open to someone's leadership (Lord & Brown, 2004; van Knippenberg et al., 2004). The present study attempted to integrate these prominent lines of inquiry by utilizing a mediation model (see also Eckloff & Van Quaquebeke, 2008), which argues that a positive leader categorization might motivate subordinates to affiliate with the categorized leader. The results support our reasoning in that the effect of leader categorization on subordinates' openness to leadership can be partly explained by subordinates' identification with their leaders (cf. Eckloff & Van Quaquebeke; or the related LMX rationale in Epitropaki & Martin, 2005). Significantly, this mediation was supported by two field studies with two different methods of measuring leader categorization.

The present study also sought to corroborate the underlying rationale. We argued that it is only under the condition that subordinates feel treated respectfully by their leaders (Van Quaquebeke & Eckloff, 2010) that they should be able to benefit in their self-esteem from affiliating with the leaders. Hence, disrespectful treatment should hinder any motivation to identify with the leader. Thus, showing in the moderated mediation model (with and without controls and quadratic terms) that respectful leadership presents a key boundary condition lends some credence to our argument. In this respect, it is important to note that disrespectful leadership not only rendered identification with the leader directly weaker (see correlations in Table 3) but also indirectly hindered any degree of identification that might arise from the leader categorization process. We would, however, advise that future studies should

Table 6. Testing the indirect effects in Study 2 (N = 645), i.e., the impact of leader categorization by selected values of respectful leadership on subordinates' openness to influence (mediated by identification with the leader)

Respectful leadership	Conditional indirect effects (CIE) by selected values of the moderating variable				
	CIE	*SE*	*Z*	CI-l[a]	CI-u[b]
2.24 (at p = .05)	.02*	.01	1.96	.00	.03
2.65 (Mean - 1 *SD*)	.02**	.01	2.90	.01	.04
3.63 (Mean)	.04***	.01	4.76	.02	.05
4.61 (Mean + 1 *SD*)	.05***	.01	5.14	.03	.07

Note: [a]Scores represent the bias-corrected bootstrap confidence interval for the conditional indirect effect at the specified values of the moderator. According to Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes (2007), bootstrap confidence intervals are the preferred inferential method because the sampling distribution of the indirect effect is rarely symmetrical. Number of *bootstrap* resamples = 2000.
*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.

more directly examine the underlying effect on self-esteem.

Testing the complete moderated mediation model not only presents another step to integrating the cognitive and the identity-based perspectives on leadership effectiveness but also directly responds to two issues that van Knippenberg and colleagues (2004) found to be underexplored in the identity-based perspective on leadership effectiveness: 1) the interactive effect of different leadership aspects on identity processes; and 2) subordinates' relational self-construal with their leaders.

Despite its many merits, the current study is not without limitations. In the following, we will first discuss the limitations and (mainly methodologically driven) suggestions for further research before focusing on more general and content-related issues. In doing so, we hope to pave the way for future research on the interplay between cognitive and identity processes in the realm of leadership.

Within our study, investigating leadership processes from a follower-centric point of view and, consequently, surveying follower-centric constructs is a reasonable approach. This approach has often been used by other researchers trying to capture the social cognition of participants and outcomes that capture endorsements of leadership (e.g., Giessner et al., 2009; Hains et al., 1997; Ullrich et al., 2009; or Van Quaquebeke, van Knippenberg, & Brodbeck, 2011). Nevertheless, this approach raises the possibility of common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Here it should be noted though that common method bias is not an issue regarding the moderation of the indirect effect because a common method bias works (if at all) against finding support for the interactions (cf. McClelland & Judd, 1993). Regarding the mediation, we tried to counter this challenge by using a graphical measure of leader categorization that was intended to at least reduce common item variance. Moreover, because we found evidence for the proposed moderated mediation, our overall model cannot be explained away by common method variance. Nonetheless, future research should include external effectiveness indicators not only to counter the potential criticism of a common source bias but also to complement subordinates' openness to influence with assessments of actual leadership influence. For example, this goal could be realized by a multi-source design in which colleagues of the target employees indicate the level of the employees' responsiveness toward the respective leaders' requests (for a similar design see van Dijke, de Cremer, Mayer & Van Quaquebeke, 2012).

A final issue that warrants discussion from a methodological point of view is the relatively high intercorrelations between leader categorization and subordinates' openness toward influence found in both studies. The size of the effect is not unusual, as similar studies have reported similar values (cf. Van Quaquebeke & Brodbeck, 2008; Van Quaquebeke, van Knippenberg, & Brodbeck, 2011). However, in line with good statistical practice, we made sure that the measured constructs were distinguishable in CFAs, as reported in the measurement sections in both studies, before proceeding with our analyses. Furthermore, from a statistical standpoint, these high intercorrelations should actually prevent us from confirming our interaction hypothesis. Additionally, from a conceptual viewpoint, confirming an interaction lends credence to the argument that the predictor and the outcome cannot be the same. Finally, it is likely that the strongest argument that the surveyed constructs are indeed distinct lies in their measurement: One construct explicitly focuses on the leader's attributes, and the other focuses on each participant's attitudes towards that leader (i.e., respect). Thus, even though the romance of leadership effect (Meindl, Ehrlich, & Dukerich, 1985) might blur the two constructs to some extent, we perceive the two constructs to be distinct and view their high correlation as an indication of their high interrelatedness on a process level, as the cognitive perspective on leadership effectiveness would argue.

Regarding more conceptual issues, the research on power suggests that identification is not the only possible source of power that may result in voluntary openness to influence (French & Raven, 1959). Another source is the expertise stemming

from job-specific know-how (Podsakoff & Schriesheim, 1985; Yukl & Falbe, 1990). In this respect, future studies may include perceived leaders' expertise as another potential mediator and check whether this variable can explain further variance beyond the identification with the leader. Contrary to the present rationale, we, however, do not see any reason why expertise as a mediator should be affected by respectful treatment as a moderator.

A more general issue for future research is whether the results obtained here are generalizable beyond the country of data collection, i.e., Germany. As described in the introduction, leader stereotypes differ across cultures. Therefore, the adapted GLOBE instrument employed in Study 1 should not be used to collect data in other countries because it does not capture other countries' socially shared leader stereotypes. However, the idiosyncratic Venn diagram from Study 2 can be considered largely free of cultural bias and should thus yield the same results in other countries. More generally, beyond the measurements, we do not see many reasons why the fundamental processes described here should be any different in other cultures. Such a scenario would need a culture in which identifying with a leader that agrees with one's leader stereotype would not be appropriate or would not yield any positive effects for one's self-esteem. At this point, we can only speculate that male subordinates in highly gender-aware (i.e., macho) cultures are sensitive about not affiliating with female leaders. However, at least in our study, we could not detect any such interaction effect, likely because the leader stereotype already accounts to some extent for the gender component (Schein & Davidson, 1993). Another cultural issue might be that for individuals in high-power distance cultures (Carl, Gupta, & Javidan, 2004), harsh leader behavior does not undermine their affiliation with the leader as much as it would for individuals in low-power distance cultures. Indeed, individuals in low-power distance cultures might also not perceive such behavior as disrespectful because they may represent a common form of interaction and might even be considered appropriate (see Giessner & Van Quaquebeke, 2010, for a discussion of the issue regarding ethical leadership). In summary, although we do not believe that the fundamental aspects radically change across cultures, future studies should test these aspects by, for example, incorporating power distance as a second moderator to examine whether it strengthens or weakens the moderating effect of respectful leadership.

Abstracting from the concrete research suggestions that arise from the limitations of the present study, we also want to emphasize that the cognitive and the identity-based perspective on leadership effectiveness hold more potential for integration than we, given our data, felt safe to assume. Although we sought to tie the two perspectives together via the general concept of self-enhancement (cf. Turner, 1982) and, more specifically via the notion of self-esteem enhancement (cf. Abrams & Hogg, 1988), other aspects may also be linked across both perspectives. Hogg (2001), for instance, proposed that prototypicality breeds stereotypicality. He theorized that once a person is seen as group prototypical, he or she appears to have influence, which ultimately not only translates into reality but also prompts additional inference processes through which other ideal leader attributes beyond mere group prototypicality are attributed to the target person. That argument may also be summarized as an implicitly motivational one: "If he/she embodies the best of our group, then it follows that he/she must also be the best leader". Our proposition focused on the inverse process. If the present result are taken from the relational level to the group level, one may argue that the resultant identification attributable to leader categorization may also prompt a perception of group representativeness, i.e., group prototypically. That argument could then be summarized as follows: "If he/she is a great leader, then it follows that he/she shows us the best of what we as a group should embody". Given that our data were not designed to address this issue, future research must determine whether these propositions can be supported. Essentially, further integration between the two perspectives on leadership effectiveness appears to be a promising avenue for research.

Managerial implications

Our results suggest that two central factors should be considered when attempting to optimize the influence processes in an organization: 1) the match between the actual leader and followers' cognitive representation of an ideal leader; and 2) a respectful attitude toward the followers to ensure that any identification processes are not hindered.

In practice, the selection of leaders should thus be guided not only by criteria defined by HR departments but also by the implicit leadership theories that exist among employees. Even trainings of leaders could focus on how to meet subordinates' implicit standards (cf. van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003b; Van Quaquebeke, van Knippenberg, & Brodbeck, 2011). Doing so would, in particular, allow both newcomers and leaders who are changing departments to adjust more quickly to predominant stereotypes and to become effective more quickly.

Likewise leadership training also promises to be useful in terms of training respectful behavior toward subordinates. Past examination of work values has revealed that respectful leadership diverges the most between what employees want (i.e., work values) and what they receive (i.e., work practices) (Van Quaquebeke, Zenker, & Eckloff, 2009). Such diagnoses are troubling for two reasons: 1) it is hardly disputable that respectful treatment is preferable to disrespectful treatment; and 2) the present study has provided empirical evidence that disrespectful treatment indirectly harms the leadership process by blocking otherwise fruitful identification processes.

Conclusion

The identity and the cognitive perspective represent two of the most interesting research approaches to explain leadership effectiveness. The present study links the two perspectives by showing that being cognitively categorized as a leader makes leaders effective because it prompts subordinates relational identification with their leaders, and, consistent with the self-esteem hypothesis in identity theorizing, that this mediation can only occur when subordinates feel respected in the relationship. In that sense, we extended the literature firstly by showing both when and how leader categorization has an impact on leadership effectiveness, and secondly by emphasizing the importance of relational identification in leadership processes. Indeed, even under conditions when group identification is less salient, leaders may still draw upon and foster relational identification in order to be more effective.

Notes

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1. Admittedly, both lines of research use the term "leader prototypicality". However, in the cognitive tradition, the term refers to the degree of representation of a schematic leader prototype, whereas in the identity tradition, it refers to the degree of representation of a group prototype. Thus, Hogg and colleagues (e.g., Hains et al., 1997; Hogg et al., 1998) have used the term "leader stereotypicality" for the former perspective and "leader group prototypically" for the latter. We will also follow this terminology in the present paper. It is important to note that in both traditions, prototypicality is not defined as representing an average (i.e., a central tendency) but rather as representing an ideal (cf. the perspectives of Rosch, 1978, with Barsalou, 1985; also see Van Quaquebeke, Graf, & Brodbeck, 2007, for first empirical evidence).
2. Please note that there is some ambiguity regarding the term relational identification. While Sluss and Ashforth (2007) emphasize relational identification to be about a given role-relationship. Others (Van Knippenberg et al., 2004) highlight that relational identification instead refers to what Aron (2003) refers to as self-expansion. That is, when the association with someone else is salient, that individual's qualities extend one's sense of self. In the present paper we follow the latter understanding.
3. Participants who did not have a direct superior at the time of the survey were asked to base their answers on previous superiors or similarly important persons in their lives (e.g., teacher and coach). This specification was designed to ensure that this group of participants would not be excluded or that the data would not be skewed by wrong or

imprecise answers. However, in the eventual analysis, we used only data from the participants who had direct superiors at the time of the survey.

4. Leader categorization and respectful leadership also interact significantly and in a similar pattern when predicting subordinates' openness to influence. These additional analyses are available from the first author on request. They were omitted here because the moderated indirect effect is central to our reasoning instead.

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