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Recommended Citation

Ho, Violet T. and Tekleab, Amanuel G., "A Model of Idiosyncratic Deal-Making and Attitudinal Outcomes" (2016). *Management Faculty Publications*. 57.

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A Model of Idiosyncratic Deal-Making and Attitudinal Outcomes

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To cite:

Ho, V. T., & Tekleab, A. (2016). A model of idiosyncratic deal-making and attitudinal outcomes.

Journal of Managerial Psychology, 31: 642-656. doi: 10.1108/JMP-12-2014-0369

Abstract

Purpose: We disentangle the relationship between the request of idiosyncratic deals (i-deals) and the receipt of such deals, and investigate the moderating roles of human capital (gender and industry experience) and social capital (LMX) in this relationship. Attitudinal outcomes of i-deals receipt are also examined.

Design: Data were collected from 244 alumni of a Midwestern public university.

Findings: The positive relationship between i-deals request and receipt was stronger at higher than at lower levels of LMX. Receiving i-deals was related positively to job satisfaction and affective commitment, and negatively to turnover intention.

Research implications: We provide a nuanced perspective of i-deals by separating employees' *request* from their *receipt* of i-deals, and identifying contingent factors that determine whether i-deal requests are successful.

Practical implications: For employees, cultivating a strong relationship with one's supervisor can yield benefits that extend to i-deals negotiation. Providing i-deals to deserving workers can boost employees' work attitudes.

Originality/value: Previous studies have operationalized the i-deals construct as requesting *and* receiving the deal, thereby excluding the possibility that employees may have *requested but did not receive* the i-deal. This is one of the first studies to disentangle these two concepts, thereby providing a more balanced and representative view of i-deal-making in organizations.

Keywords: idiosyncratic deals (i-deals); i-deals request; i-deals receipt; human capital; social capital; leader-member exchange

Introduction

Idiosyncratic deals (i-deals) are voluntary, personalized agreements of a nonstandard nature, negotiated between employees and employers regarding terms that benefit each party (Rousseau, Ho, & Greenberg, 2006). I-deals are increasingly used by employers to hire and retain valued individuals (Rousseau, 2005). In turn, these employees report greater organizational commitment (Ng & Feldman, 2010), work engagement (Hornung, Rousseau, Glaser, Angerer, & Weigel, 2010), and citizenship behavior (Anand, Vidyarthi, Liden, & Rousseau, 2010). Moreover, research has investigated the predictors of i-deals, including organizations' work structures, employees' personal initiative, and the quality of leader-member exchange (e.g., Hornung et al., 2010).

Despite these efforts, several issues in i-deals research need further investigation. One pertains to the measurement of i-deals. Prior research notes that negotiation is a key element underlying i-deal-making (Rousseau, 2005), involving separate processes of requesting and receiving resources. However, studies have operationalized the i-deals construct as requesting *and* receiving i-deals, thereby excluding the possibility that employees may *request but not receive* i-deals, and implicitly assuming that the two occur jointly. This underscores the need to differentiate i-deals request from receipt so as to understand the i-deal-making process. Further, avoiding the confound of i-deals request and receipt is not only theoretically important but also of practical value in providing guidance to employees and employers on how to manage the deal-making process. Thus, our first objective is to examine the deal-making process by separating *request* from *receipt* of i-deals. We focus on *ex-post* i-deals (i.e., i-deals negotiated after the employee has joined the firm) as opportunities to negotiate i-deals, together with the spectrum of

i-deals that one may negotiate for, are higher and more varied for *ex-post* i-deals than for those negotiated during the hiring process (Rousseau et al., 2006).

Separating i-deals request from receipt also allows us to examine the conditions under which employers grant a request. Negotiations research shows that people do not necessarily receive what they want simply because they request it. Similarly, in the i-deals context, employees may not receive what they request, and moderating conditions can enhance or decrease employees' likelihood of getting i-deals requests fulfilled. Because i-deals research has yet to examine such conditions, we redress this by adopting a social exchange and power perspective to investigate three moderating factors that each reflects a source of power or capital employees may have, and contend that those with more capital are more likely to have their requests fulfilled. While the social exchange perspective has dominated i-deals research and the implicit role of worker power in i-deals negotiation has been alluded to (Rousseau, 2001), scholars have yet to empirically investigate the sources of power that workers have in facilitating their ability to have i-deals requests fulfilled. Thus, our research examines employees' power in relation to two other critical constituents in the i-deals making process: the organization that ultimately confers i-deals and supervisors who typically negotiate i-deals with employees (Greenberg, Roberge, Ho, & Rousseau, 2004).

The literature in human capital and social capital provides a coherent, systematic foundation on which to map employees' sources of power and capital. Human capital, reflecting one's skills and characteristics that contribute to productivity, is valued by organizations because individual productivity enhances firms' profits (Coleman, 1988), thereby representing a source of employee power relative to the organization. Additionally, social capital, defined as aspects of one's social structure that create value and facilitate individual action (Coleman, 1988), captures

individuals' resources deriving from relationships (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998), and is particularly suited to reflect one's relationship with and power in relation to supervisors. Thus, we depict human and social capital as representations of employees' power in relation to the organization and the supervisor respectively, and draw on social exchange and power-based arguments to examine our second objective: how each of these sources of capital moderates the relationship between i-deals request and receipt.

Finally, this study addresses the "so what?" question by linking i-deals to critical work outcomes, namely job satisfaction, affective commitment, and turnover intention. While i-deals research has examined the first two outcomes, we attempt to replicate prior findings to provide strong evidence for meta-analytic studies. We also include a new outcome, turnover intention, to demonstrate the reach of i-deals, especially given the proximal link between turnover intention and actual turnover.

Theory Development and Hypotheses

Moderators in the I-Deals Request and Receipt Relationship: A Social Exchange and Power Perspective

A social exchange perspective is suited for our study because the employment relationship in which i-deals are negotiated represents a social exchange, defined as "a joint activity of two or more actors in which each actor has something the other values" (Lawler, 2001, p. 322). Implicit in such exchanges is the value that each party can offer the other – the greater the value, the more power that the incumbent has over the other. Consequently, "exchange relations are simply subsets of power relations" (Baldwin, 1978, p. 1230), and employees who possess resources that increase the employer's dependence on them wield more power and can more successfully negotiate for i-deals.

Human capital, sometimes referred to as labor power or productive power of labor, reflects a source of employee power in that those who possess such capital are more productive and depended on by the organization to contribute to its functioning. The role of human capital in facilitating i-deal negotiation has been recognized in i-deals theory, with Rousseau and colleagues (2006) noting that human capital that is critical to the firm's competitive position adds to employees' power when bargaining for i-deals. Social capital, on the other hand, derives not from individuals' personal characteristics but from their relationships with others, which can nonetheless confer on them resources that facilitate action. Because both forms of capital encompass resources that aid employees' productive activity, they constitute sources of employee power (where power is the ability to get things done). We next articulate how representations of such capital moderate the relationship between i-deal request and receipt.

Human capital (Employee's industry experience and gender). One conventional measure of human capital is industry experience (Becker, 1975), capturing the length of time an individual has worked in a specific industry or field. Individuals with such experience are likely to accumulate general knowledge about the field as well as skills-based competencies, which they can apply toward analyzing and solving work problems, thereby being more productive than less experienced counterparts. Accordingly, they bring more value to the firm and are expected to be more successful in having i-deals requests granted.

H1: The relationship between request and receipt of i-deals is more positive at higher levels of industry experience.

Another individual attribute that confers status value in society is gender (Ridgeway, 1991), although this attribute has not been conventionally examined as a source of human capital. Nonetheless, studies in labor economics, sociology, and other fields show that women,

compared to men, are less likely to be promoted to leadership positions, receive lower starting salaries, earn less when performing similar jobs in the same organization, and have less advancement opportunities (e.g., Greig, 2008), because of gender stereotyping, gender preferences, and organizational and structural constraints. These factors confer on men status and power that may be implicit and covert, but nonetheless useful in enhancing their ability to get things done. Thus, we expect that status by virtue of one's gender represents another form of power that extends to i-deals negotiations, such that women who ask for i-deals will be less successful than men in getting their requests fulfilled.

Research on status beliefs about gender shows that people attach greater social significance, competence, and skills to men than to women. While such gender stereotypes have decreased and evaluations of women have improved over time, men are still evaluated as more competent and productive, thereby possessing more power to successfully ask for i-deals. In comparison, organizations tend to be reluctant to invest in women because of the assumption that they have shorter and/or more intermittent work lives which diminish their productivity (Blau & Kahn, 2007). Further, women who negotiate are seen as violating traditional gender status hierarchy and expectations of feminine niceness, because negotiation is commonly associated with a dominant, masculine image (Bowles, Babcock, & Lai, 2007). Women who negotiate for i-deals may also be less successful because they possess less tactical knowledge of negotiations, use fewer negotiation tactics than men, choose more indirect tactics, and are less able to match the other party's negotiation style (Stevens, Bavetta, & Gist, 1993). Thus, we propose the following:

H2: The relationship between request and receipt of i-deals is more positive for men than for women.

Social capital (LMX relationship). We focus on employees' social capital in reference to their supervisors, given that they are typically the key agents who negotiate with employees on the organization's behalf (Greenberg et al., 2004). Further, supervisors have detailed knowledge of employees' contributions and deservingness to receive i-deals and the formal authority to decide whether to grant i-deal requests. In the context of the supervisor-subordinate relationship, leader-member exchange (LMX) has been advanced as a form of social capital between the two parties (Uhl-Bien, Graen, & Scandura, 2000). LMX captures the degree of social exchange in the supervisor-subordinate relationship, and employees with higher LMX are more trusted and valued by the supervisor, with both parties enjoying greater loyalty, reciprocation, and support from each other. Because high-LMX relationships take on a social exchange, employees in such relationships can more easily access the supervisor who, in turn, is more inclined to give them greater latitude over their work and respond more positively to their needs and demands. In contrast, low-LMX relationships are characterized as transactional exchanges where both parties fulfill their duties on a formally agreed, quid pro quo basis, often with a discrete, financially-oriented focus (Shore, Tetrick, Lynch, & Barksdale, 2006). Consequently, employees who have high-LMX relationships with their supervisors have been found to enjoy more i-deals than those with low-LMX relationships (Hornung et al., 2010).

We expect that LMX will moderate the relationship between i-deals request and i-deals receipt for three reasons. First, because high-LMX employees are valued by the supervisor, they are perceived as deserving of individualized treatments. Second, social exchanges are characterized by mutual investment in the relationship (Shore et al., 2006). Because granting i-deals requests serves as a form of investment in subordinates, supervisors are more inclined to make such investments in those with whom they have a social exchange relationship. Third,

granting i-deals involves an element of risk in that employees may not subsequently reciprocate such individualized treatment or may abuse it. However, the existence of a high-LMX relationship, together with the trust that the supervisor has in the employee, serves to mitigate this risk. Together, these reasons suggest LMX will enhance an employee's success in getting i-deals requests granted.

H3: The relationship between request and receipt of i-deals is more positive at higher levels of LMX.

Attitudinal Outcomes

Granting employees' i-deals is an organizational strategy to motivate employees to repay the organization's investment, such as by displaying positive work attitudes and behaviors. These outcomes are explained using social exchange and reciprocity arguments, where the positive attitudes and behaviors are outlets through which employees repay employers' investment. We not only attempt to replicate the relationships that i-deals receipt have with employees' job satisfaction and commitment, but also include turnover intention as an outcome. This is a natural extension from prior findings in that employees who are happier with their jobs and feel greater attachment to the organization would be less inclined to consider leaving the firm. Applying similar arguments from social exchange theory, we expect that recipients of i-deals will feel a sense of obligation to the firm and stay with it to reciprocate its investment in them (Gouldner, 1960).

We also expect that i-deals recipients are disinclined to leave the firm for self-serving reasons. Individuals tend to be averse to options that are perceived as risky (Weber & Milliman, 1997), and leaving the current employer presents a risky move because while i-deals recipients are assured of receiving an i-deal in the existing firm, it is uncertain that they will get a similar

treatment at another firm. Research on status quo bias, demonstrating individuals' preference for the status quo because the disadvantages of leaving it loom larger than the advantages (Kahneman, Knetsch, & Thaler, 1991), also supports our contention. To the extent that the loss of i-deals at the current firm is perceived as undesirable, i-deal recipients will be disinclined to give up these i-deals for the potential gain they may have in another firm.

H4: Receipt of i-deals is positively related to (i) job satisfaction and (ii) affective commitment, but negatively related to (iii) turnover intention.

Figure 1 summarizes the hypothesized relationships.

 Insert Figure 1 about here

Method

Sample

Data for the study were collected from alumni who graduated from the undergraduate and graduate programs of a Midwestern public university between 2001 and 2011. Using an online survey, email requests (with a link to the survey) were sent to 6328 alumni, with 446 accessing the survey. Of these, 244 (54.7%) respondents provided complete data.

While collecting data from a single source could introduce common method bias, this data collection strategy is appropriate. First, since i-deals may be granted by different organizational representatives (e.g., supervisor, human resource manager) and each may not be fully cognizant of the i-deals an employee has received, using employee self-reports is advantageous in obtaining complete information about the employee's i-deals (Liao, Wayne, & Rousseau, in press). Second, three of the four hypotheses pertain to moderating relationships;

thus, common method variance (CMV) is not a significant threat (Siemsen, Roth, & Oliveira, 2010).

Majority of the respondents (54 percent) were male; 60 percent were White/Caucasian; 93 percent were employed; and 90 percent were full-time employees. The modal age group was between 31 to 40 years old (44% of respondents), modal organizational tenure was between 2 to 5 years (39%), and modal annual income range was less than \$60,000 (48%). The respondents came from diverse industries, including accounting/finance, marketing and information technology.

Measures

To measure i-deals, respondents were asked to think about items relating to four common i-deals dimensions (developmental, flexibility, task, and financial i-deals). Developmental i-deals relate to training and career development; flexibility i-deals refer to arrangements on the place and time of work; task i-deals relate to one's job content; and financial i-deals pertain to financial compensation. The developmental i-deals scale (4 items) was adopted from Hornung et al. (2008), and asked about training opportunities, skill development opportunities, on-the-job activities, and career development opportunities. The flexibility i-deals scale (2 items) was taken from the same source and referenced flexibility in starting and ending the workday, and individually customized work schedules. Task i-deals scale (3 items) was adopted from Hornung et al. (2010), and asked about personally challenging work tasks, special job duties or assignments, and tasks that suit one's personal interest. The financial i-deals scale (2 items) was

developed for this study,¹ and asked about (1) compensation (e.g., pay, bonuses); and (2) benefits (e.g., health benefits; vacation time).

Respondents' *request* for i-deals was measured with the question "After you started working at your organization, how often did you ask for individual arrangements different from your colleagues in terms of..." that referenced each of the i-deal items described above. Respondents indicated their answers on a scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). For *receipt* variables, respondents who did ask for i-deals were asked to indicate, on a scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (to a great extent), "to what extent did you successfully obtain the arrangements in terms of ...", where each of the specific i-deal items was again specified.² *LMX* was measured with the 7-item scale developed by Scandura and Graen (1984) (e.g., "My working relationship with my supervisor is extremely effective"). *Gender* was measured as 0 (female) and 1 (male). *Industry experience* was measured as the number of years respondents have worked in their specific industry.

Job satisfaction was assessed using Hackman and Oldham's (1976) 4-item scale (e.g., "As a whole, I am satisfied with my job"). *Affective commitment* was assessed using Meyer and Allen's (1997) 6-item scale (e.g., "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organization"). *Turnover intention* was assessed using Seashore and colleagues' (1982) 3-item scale (e.g., "I will actively look for a new job outside my organization in three months"). All scales demonstrated good reliability.

We included *demographic variables* (age, race, and employment status) as controls in the preliminary analyses, but because none of these was significantly related to the study variables,

¹ The financial i-deals scale developed by Rosen and colleagues (2013) was not yet published at the time of data collection, but their items are similar in assessing idiosyncrasies in pay, compensation plan, and compensation arrangements.

² As suggested by a reviewer, we also conducted the subsequent analyses using a dichotomized measure for receipt variables; the results did not change substantially.

we excluded them from subsequent analyses so as to conserve statistical power. Because participants answered questions relating to i-deals receipt only if they had made requests for such items, those who did not make such requests had missing values on the corresponding receipt variables. These missing values would have resulted in a significantly decreased sample size and statistical power. Thus, we substituted the missing values in the receipt items with a value of 1 (“not at all” rating). Further, to account for the possibility that the substitution of these missing data may skew the results, we created dummy-coded items based on the original receipt items, such that those items that had missing data were recoded as 1 in the new dummy-coded variable, and items without missing data were coded as 0. The relevant dummy-coded items for each i-deal dimension were then averaged to create control variables reflecting the degree of missing data substitution in the original receipt variables. This control variable [labeled receipt missing data (MD)] was included in hypothesis-testing (see Figure 1).

To address common method bias, we included a scale that served as a marker variable. Siemsen et al. (2010) recommended that marker variables should be theoretically unrelated to the substantive variable but address some component of CMV. We developed a two-item “sensitivity to others” scale (“I turn my back on others” and “I take no time for others”) as a marker variable.

Results

Assessing Common Method Variance

In addition to using the marker variable to test for CMV, we addressed this threat by including multiple predictor variables, which reduces the likelihood of CMV (Siemsen et al., 2010). We followed Williams and colleagues’ (2010) confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) approach with marker variable to assess method bias. Due to the large number of estimated

parameters compared to the sample size, we conducted the CMV test for i-deals request and i-deals receipt separately while adding the attitudinal outcomes and the marker variable in all analyses. We used the four i-deals dimensions as indicators in the CMV test. The CFA approach involved running a series of unconstrained and restricted models to detect the presence of CMV.³ Results showed non-significant differences between the baseline model and Method-C ($\Delta\chi^2 = 0.26$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p > .10$ for i-deals request; $\Delta\chi^2 = 0.66$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p > .10$ for i-deals receipt). Moreover, there was no significant difference between Method-C and Method-R ($\Delta\chi^2 = 0.00$, $\Delta df = 3$, $p > .10$ for i-deals request; $\Delta\chi^2 = 0.00$, $\Delta df = 3$, $p > .10$ for i-deals receipt). These results provide strong evidence that CMV did not have any effect in the current study. Thus, we did not include the marker variable in testing Hypothesis 4.

Hypotheses-Testing

We first conducted a series of CFAs to examine the factor structures of the request and receipt variables. Results for i-deals request showed that the four-factor model had a good fit with the data (Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .955; Standardized Root Mean-Square Residual (SRMR) = .046; Root Mean-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = .092) and was superior to three-factor (combining developmental and task i-deals; $\Delta\chi^2 = 131.20$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p < .01$), two-factor (combining developmental, flexibility, and task i-deals; $\Delta\chi^2 = 317.67$, $\Delta df = 3$, $p < .01$), and one-factor (combining all four i-deals into one factor; $\Delta\chi^2 = 571.80$, $\Delta df = 6$, $p < .01$) alternative models. We also tested a second-order factor of “I-deals Request”, and it had comparable fit (CFI = .947; SRMR = .062; RMSEA = .097) to that of the four-factor model. Although the four-factor model was statistically better than the second-order factor model ($\Delta\chi^2 =$

³ A full description of the models and procedures in CMV with CFA approach is provided in Williams et al. (2010).

13.62, $\Delta df = 2$, $p < .01$), we use the second-order factor for this study given that our focus is at the second-order level.⁴

We also ran similar CFAs for i-deals receipt. The results showed that the four-factor model had a good fit with the data (CFI = .941; SRMR = .055; RMSEA = .098). This model also had superior fit to a three-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2 = 119.10$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p < .01$), two-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2 = 258.68$, $\Delta df = 3$, $p < .01$), and a one-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2 = 368.89$, $\Delta df = 6$, $p < .01$). Moreover, a second-order factor model also demonstrated good fit to the data (CFI = .938; SRMR = .058; RMSEA = .098). Again, we retained the second-order factor model for i-deals receipt since it was not statistically different from the four-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2 = 6.59$, $\Delta df = 2$, $p > .05$) and was consistent with our focus on the general construct of i-deals.

We also tested a two-factor model of i-deals where we treated the four dimensions of request as indicators of an overall request factor, and the four dimensions of receipt as indicators of a receipt factor.⁵ The results show that the two-factor model had excellent fit to the data (CFI = .994; SRMR = .053; RMSEA = .042). Moreover, it had superior fit compared to a one-factor model where all request and receipt dimensions loaded on one factor ($\Delta\chi^2 = 231.34$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p < .01$). Thus, we retained the two-factor model and created two variables corresponding to i-deals request and receipt by taking the average of the corresponding four i-deals dimensions. The descriptive statistics of the study variables are presented in Table 1.

To test the hypotheses, we conducted a path analysis by adding all direct and interactive effects in one model. In view of prior research demonstrating the effect of LMX on employee attitudes, we also included its direct effect on all three dependent variables. The model (see Figure 2) fit the data well (CFI = .969; SRMR = .082; RMSEA = .059). For Hypothesis 1, the

⁴ We thank a reviewer for his/her suggestion.

⁵ The sample size was too small to conduct a full higher-order factor model for all request and receipt items.

results in Figure 2 show that the interaction between industry experience and i-deals request was not significant ($\beta = -.04, p > .05$). Thus, Hypothesis 1 was not supported. For Hypothesis 2, the results in Figure 2 again reveal that the interaction between gender and i-deals request was not significant ($\beta = -.04, p > .05$), failing to support hypothesis 2. For Hypothesis 3, the results indicate a significant interaction between LMX and i-deals request ($\beta = .17, p < .01$). Figure 3 shows that the relationship between the request and receipt of i-deals was more positive at high (+1 SD) LMX ($b = .61, s.e. = .11, p < .01$) than low LMX (-1 SD) ($b = .36, s.e. = .09, p > .05$). Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was supported.

Figure 2 also presents the results for Hypothesis 4 on the outcomes of i-deals receipt. I-deals receipt was positively related to job satisfaction ($\beta = .19, p < .05$) and affective commitment ($\beta = .22, p < .01$), and negatively related to turnover intention ($\beta = -.23, p < .05$), thereby supporting Hypothesis 4.

 Insert Table 1 and Figure 2 about here

Supplementary Analyses

To test whether these results will vary across different i-deal dimensions, we repeated the analyses with individual dimensions. Industry experience was a moderator in the request-to-receipt link only for financial i-deals, and the interaction was contrary to the expected direction in that the positive relationship was stronger for less experienced employees. Similarly, gender was a moderator only for financial i-deals, such that the request-to-receipt link for this i-deal was more positive for men than for women. Finally, LMX was a significant moderator for all i-deal dimensions except financial i-deals, such that the request-to-receipt link was more positive when

LMX was higher. As predictors, we found that all i-deal dimensions except flexibility i-deals positively predicted job satisfaction and affective commitment, while only developmental and task i-deals negatively predicted turnover intention.

Discussion

Research in i-deals has primarily focused on attitudinal and behavioral outcomes of successful i-deal making, with fewer studies investigating factors contributing to successful i-deal making. Further, prior research has not explicitly acknowledged that asking for i-deals may not always translate into receiving such i-deals, nor examined contingent factors that enhance employees' success in getting requests fulfilled. Our study addresses this gap by isolating request from receipt, and showing that *not all* requests are responded to positively; in fact, i-deals request explained as little as 1% (developmental i-deals) and as much as 11% (financial i-deals) in i-deals receipt. These results raise two significant issues. First, underscoring the complexities in the i-deals negotiation process, the findings show that prior research capturing i-deals that employees "asked for and successfully negotiated" may, in fact, provide only a partial picture of i-deal-making. Second, the findings emphasize the need to explore factors that explain why some (but not other) employees receive i-deals. Building on the capital-based perspective and social exchange theory, we examined two explanatory factors relating to human capital and social capital.

Human Capital as Moderators

The human capital perspective argues that individuals' attributes play a role in their success. While the path analyses revealed that industry experience did not moderate the link between i-deals request and receipt when i-deals were examined as a whole, the supplementary analyses showed that experience was a moderator for financial i-deals, but in a direction opposite

to our prediction. While unexpected, this result suggests that less experienced employees are more successful in getting their requests for financial i-deals granted, perhaps because they are younger (as evidenced by a high correlation between age and experience; $r = .76$) and less concerned about how their employment relationship ends. Consequently, employers are more inclined to grant their financial i-deals request in order to retain them. However, given that this finding was demonstrated only for financial i-deal, it should be interpreted with caution.

We also found that gender did not moderate the link between overall i-deals request and receipt, but instead played a moderating role for financial i-deals, such that men were more likely than women to get their financial i-deals requests fulfilled. Taken together, these findings suggest that employers' gender stereotypes and role orientation may apply only to more economic- or financial-based i-deals, as such deals are more consistent with, and important to, men's gender roles. Thus, being a male provides a human capital advantage to employees negotiating for financial i-deals, and to the extent that women's requests for financial i-deals violate employers' gender stereotype and are perceived as inappropriately demanding, they are less successful in obtaining such i-deals. The finding relating to the non-significant gender differences for overall i-deals also suggests that women may be more selective in their requests by asking only for i-deals that they know will be granted. Bowles and colleagues' (2007) experiment provides tangential evidence, in that women initiated negotiations only when they anticipated little backlash from their request. Thus, given women's selectivity in requesting for i-deals that presumably do not violate gender stereotypes and status hierarchy, such requests may be more likely to be granted. We offer this as a tentative explanation because we did not assess employees' anticipated backlash or gender stereotypes.

Social Capital as Moderator

Our findings showed that LMX, a form of social capital, moderated the request-to-receipt relationship for overall i-deals. Consistent with social exchange theory, supervisors may view these deals as an investment in subordinates with whom they have high quality relationships, and believe that they are more deserving of such deals and more likely to reciprocate such treatment. However, our supplementary analyses indicate that LMX did not play a moderating role for financial i-deals. One reason is that it may be easier for supervisors to justify why a valued employee deserves other forms of i-deals than financial deals, given the economic and more quantifiable nature of the latter. Further, the social exchange nature of high-LMX relationships is inconsistent with the economic exchange nature of financial i-deals. The monetary resources underlying financial i-deals are concrete and universal, and are characteristic of an economic exchange relationship. In a high-LMX relationship, an employee's request for such financial i-deals runs counter to the social exchange nature of such relationship, and may in fact violate the manager's expectations of how a high-LMX employee should behave. A third reason could be that factors other than one's social capital with supervisors become more important when negotiating for financial i-deals. For example, experience and gender were found to be key moderators, and organizational factors such as budgetary issues may dominate when financial resources are involved.

Outcomes of I-deals

The last objective was to examine the impact of i-deal receipt on work attitudes. While receiving overall i-deals yielded positive attitudinal outcomes, a more nuanced pattern of results was also revealed, in that flexibility i-deals did not predict these attitudes. While this contradicts prior findings where flexibility i-deals enhanced employees' organizational trust and voice and decreased work-family conflict (e.g., Ng & Feldman, 2015), a possible explanation is that after

joining the organization, employees may realize that flexibility i-deal is commonly provided to employees, thereby decreasing the impact of this i-deal. Notwithstanding this, the results are mostly consistent with social exchange theory, and extend previous studies by incorporating turnover intention as an outcome.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

The current study is not without limitations. First, the study is based on employee recall, and some of our results may be influenced by recall bias. However, recall bias may affect the absolute extent or quantity reported but not the relative response pattern (Hornung, Rousseau, & Glaser, 2009), and is unlikely to skew the *strength* of the observed relationships here. Second, data were collected from a single source at one time period, introducing the risk of common-method bias. We mitigated this risk by focusing on and finding evidence for moderating relationships, which cannot be attributed to such bias. While this bias could explain the relationships between i-deals receipt and outcomes, the statistical remedies as well as the CMV test reduced this risk. The fact that our results are consistent with prior studies adopting a longitudinal approach further suggests that these results are not solely attributable to this bias. Nonetheless, future research should adopt a longitudinal design and data from multiple sources in order to make causal claims and rule out reverse causality.

Third, our study examined three moderators that represent employees' human and social capital. While we sought to include critical factors from each type of capital, these factors are not fully representative of all forms of capital. Finally, while the moderation results lend support to some hypotheses, our data preclude us from ruling out other explanations, such as respondents with high-LMX relationships artificially inflating their reports of obtaining i-deals. However, the fact that the moderating effects were not consistently found across all four i-deals dimensions

suggests that these alternative effects are not systematic in nature. Notwithstanding, future research should explore these and other alternative explanations, as well as other contextual factors that may facilitate or hinder the request for and receipt of i-deals, and other forms of i-deals.

Implications

This study offers important theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, we explicate the importance of distinguishing the *request* from *receipt* of i-deals, and provide a nuanced perspective by separating these two aspects of the process and showing that prior assumptions that these two occur jointly is not warranted. Second, we argue for and empirically demonstrate the moderating role of worker power, specifically social capital (LMX), in enhancing one's ability to have i-deals request fulfilled. While i-deals theory has acknowledged the role of power and interdependence in i-deals negotiation, the various bases of power that employees possess in relation to the organization and their supervisor have not been documented or explored. This study identified the role of LMX in determining whether employees' i-deals requests are ultimately successful, as well as the moderating roles of gender and industry experience in the particular context of financial i-deals. Third, this study not only replicated findings on the enhanced satisfaction and commitment resulting from i-deals, but is also the first to examine turnover intentions as an outcome, underscoring the reach of i-deals.

This study also offers a different way to integrate social exchange theory with research in human and social capital. Prior research combining these perspectives has predominantly examined human and social capital as antecedents of individual success, using social exchange-based explanations on obligation, mutuality, and reciprocity to explicate how these sources of individual capital translate into outcomes (e.g., Reiche, 2012). This study, on the other hand,

emphasizes the notion of power and interdependence in social exchange to explain how human and social capital can play *moderating* roles among parties embedded within an exchange relationship. In particular, it recognized that negotiation is an integral aspect of such relationships, and that one's power relative to the other can enhance one's ability to negotiate for benefits. While the fundamental arguments of social exchange theory are the same here as in prior studies, the different framing (individual capital as moderators rather than predictors) and emphasis (power and dependence, rather than obligations and reciprocity) provides future research with another way to integrate research in social exchange and human and social capital.

The study also offers practical implications. For organizations, the findings suggest that i-deals can be an effective human resource management strategy, and providing i-deals to deserving workers can boost their work attitudes and retain them. Further, the findings on the moderating role of gender in relation to financial i-deals suggest the possibility of gender biases and stereotypes at play. Thus, organizations should pay attention to the possibility of such biases when distributing financial or economic rewards, and institute procedures to minimize the differential treatment of employees based on gender. For employees, this study provides several guidelines on i-deals negotiation. The findings on the moderating role of LMX suggest that cultivating a strong relationship with one's supervisor can yield benefits that extend to i-deals negotiation, and LMX research offers multiple ideas for doing so, such as by displaying certain characteristics (e.g., agreeableness) and enacting certain behaviors (e.g., ingratiation). Additionally, to the extent that differences in gender and experience determine success in receiving financial i-deals, the findings suggest that men and younger employees may be more successful at negotiating for financial i-deals, but these advantages do not extend to other forms of i-deals.

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Table 1

Descriptive Statistics, Correlations, and Reliabilities

| No. | Variables | Mean | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
|-----|----------------------|-------|------|------|------|--------|--------|-------|-------|--------|--------|-------|
| 1 | Gender | .54 | .50 | - | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Industry experience | 10.85 | 8.13 | -.07 | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | LMX | 3.54 | .97 | -.07 | -.05 | (.94) | | | | | | |
| 4 | I-deals receipt (MD) | .48 | .37 | -.10 | .00 | .00 | (.84) | | | | | |
| 5 | I-deals request | 2.15 | .81 | .02 | -.04 | .04 | -.65** | (.75) | | | | |
| 6 | I-deals receipt | 2.10 | .94 | .05 | .02 | .18* | -.74** | .66** | (.74) | | | |
| 7 | Job satisfaction | 3.48 | .97 | -.08 | .02 | .49** | .04 | -.05 | .17* | (.91) | | |
| 8 | Affective commitment | 3.10 | .82 | -.06 | -.04 | .55** | .07 | -.05 | .14* | .60** | (.83) | |
| 9 | Turnover intention | 2.93 | 1.15 | .05 | .02 | -.41** | -.09 | .04 | -.12 | -.56** | -.65** | (.72) |

Note: Reliability coefficients are presented in the diagonals.

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

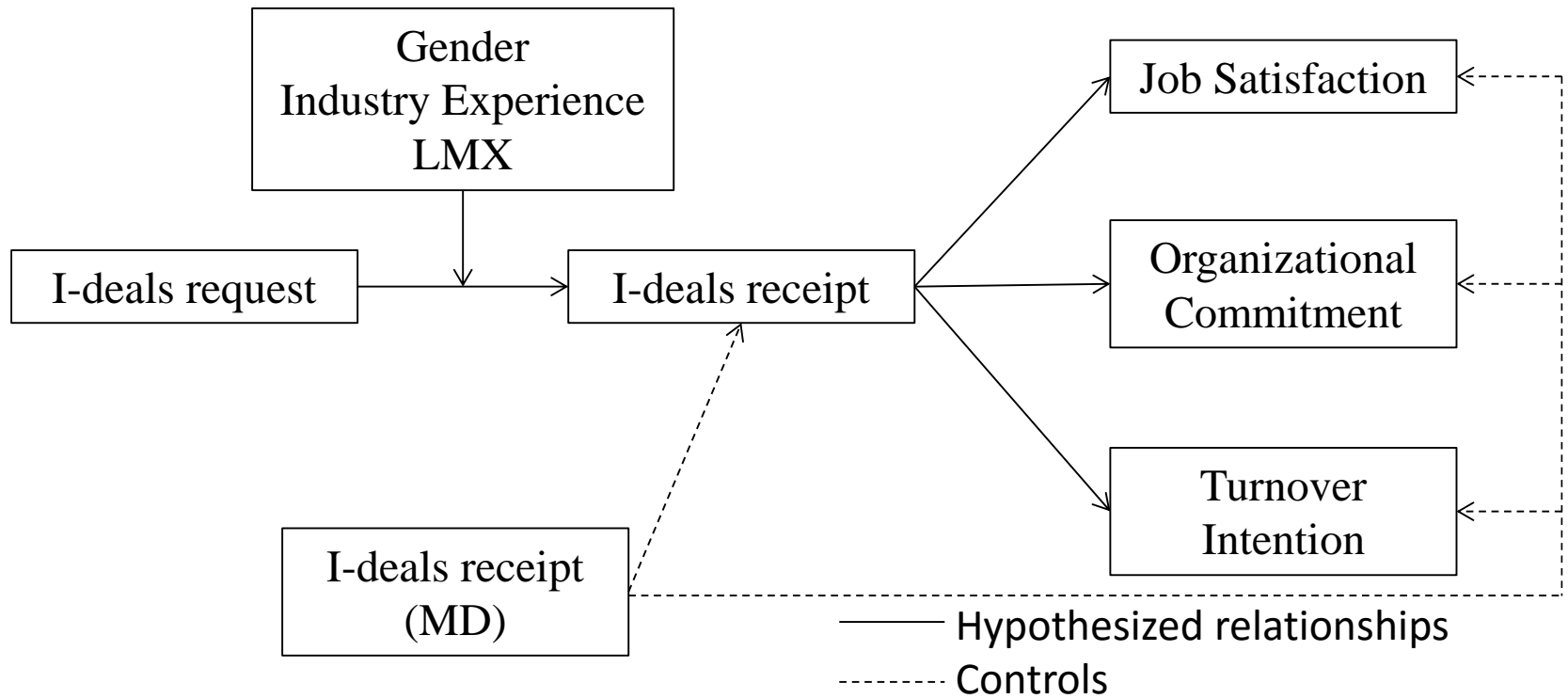


Figure 1. Hypothesized model.

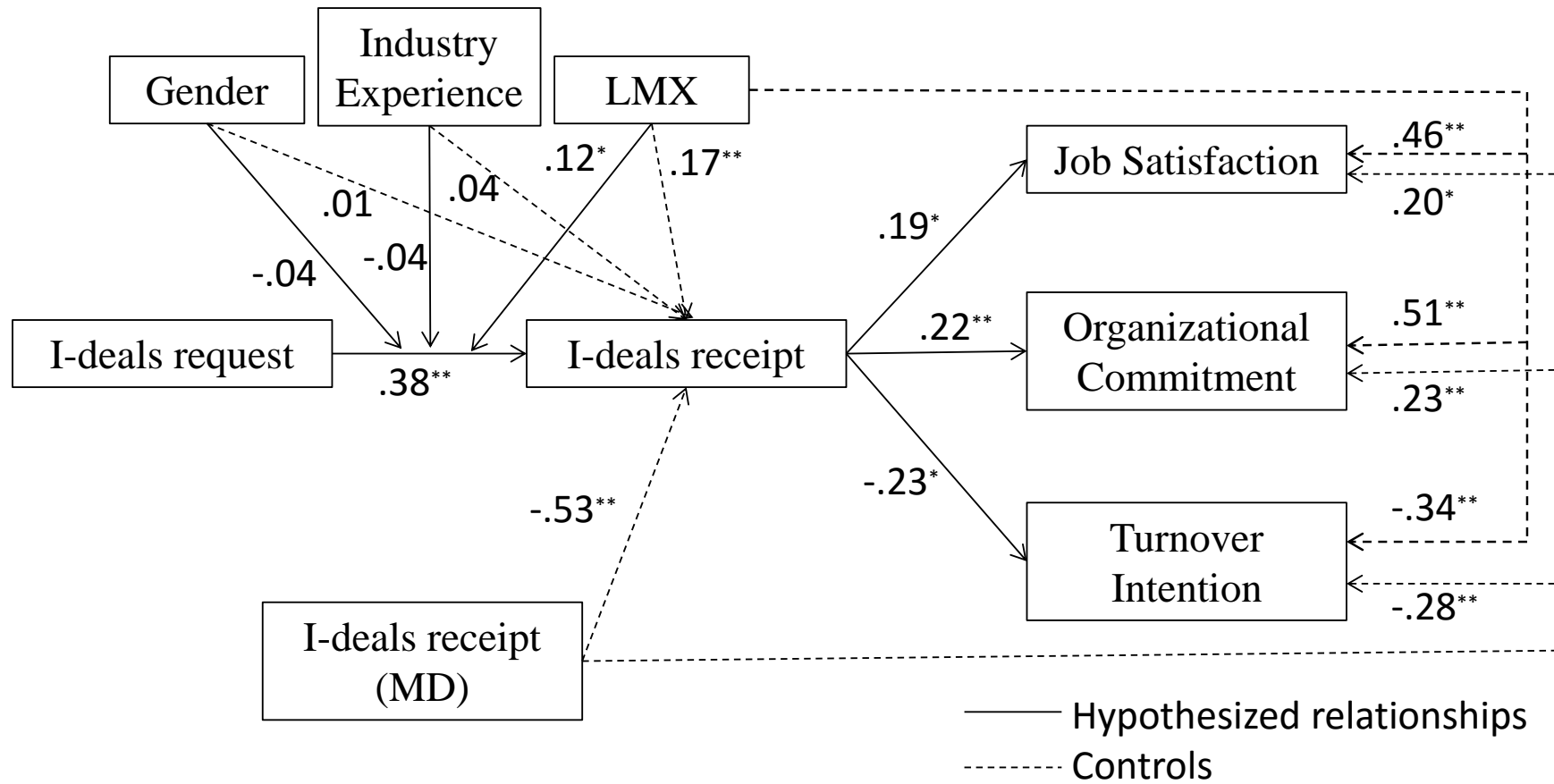


Figure 2. Results from path analyses.

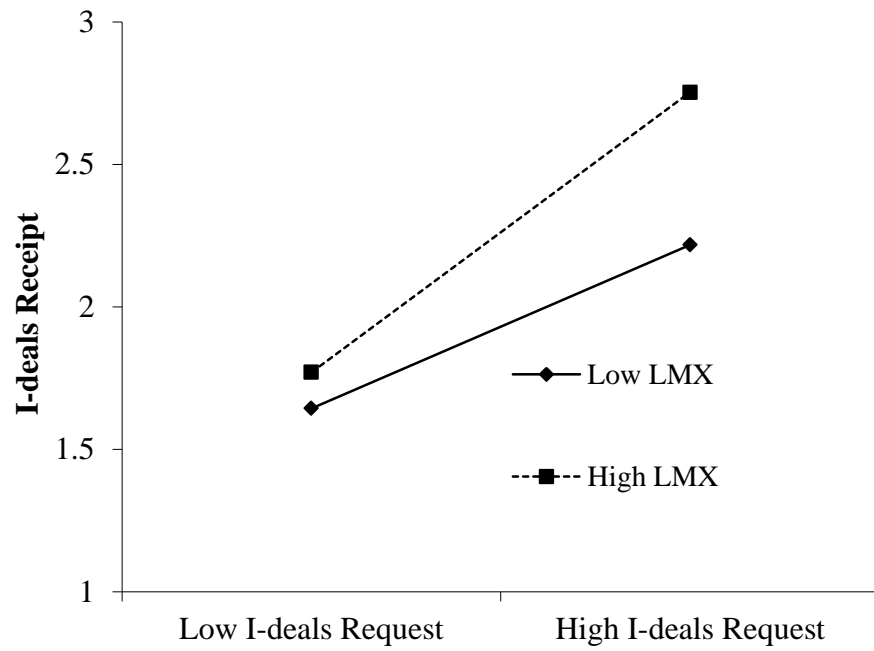


Figure 3. I-deals request and LMX interaction predicting i-deals receipt.