

# Hurry up! The role of supervisors' time urgency and self-perceived status for autocratic leadership and subordinates' well-being

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## Abstract

This study examines the connections among supervisors' time urgency, their leadership behavior, and subordinate outcomes. Integrating cognitive perspectives on time urgency with contemporary thinking on the psychological experience of status, we reason that supervisors' time-urgent personality relates positively with their autocratic leadership behavior, and we cast supervisors' self-perceived status as a moderator of this linkage. Moreover, we enrich this leader-centric perspective with a complementary, more follower-centric view, recognizing that the consequences of supervisors' time urgency likely extend beyond their own behavior to indirectly affect their subordinates' well-being at work. We tested our hypotheses using a field sample of 60 supervisors and 277 of their subordinates. Results indicate that (a) supervisors with higher time urgency are more likely to exhibit autocratic leadership behavior when they also perceive themselves as having relatively high status among subordinates, but not when perceiving lower status, and (b) supervisors' time urgency exhibits a conditional indirect effect (via autocratic leadership) on subordinates' work stress and time pressure experiences. Hence, this study illustrates an important boundary condition for the consequences of supervisors' time urgency, and it demonstrates that this personality characteristic not only shapes supervisors' leadership behavior but also affects the subordinates they are charged with leading.

## KEY WORDS

authoritarian leadership, autocratic leadership, status, time pressure, time urgency

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Individuals differ markedly in their subjective perceptions of and orientations toward time (Mohammed & Harrison, 2013), with scholars suggesting that such time-based personality characteristics can critically influence one's own behavior (Shipp & Cole, 2015; Tang, Richter, & Nadkarni, 2020). In particular, research has found that individuals scoring high on time urgency (defined as the chronic, trait-like tendency to feel hurried and short on time; Landy, Rastegary, Thayer, & Colvin, 1991) are often highly engaged at work, exhibiting superior job involvement, work speed, and job performance (e.g., Conte, Schwenneker, Dew, & Romano, 2001; Lee, Ashford, & Bobko, 1990). Clearly, these characteristics are beneficial from an organizational perspective, and it is therefore not surprising that highly time-urgent individuals are frequently selected for formal supervisory positions (Leroy, Shipp, Blount, & Licht, 2015; Sanders & Malkis, 1982). And indeed, time-urgent supervisors are generally perceived as acting in an energetic and proactive manner, thus delivering efficient results and effectively synchronizing their subordinates' efforts (Chen & Nadkarni, 2017; Mohammed & Alipour, 2014).

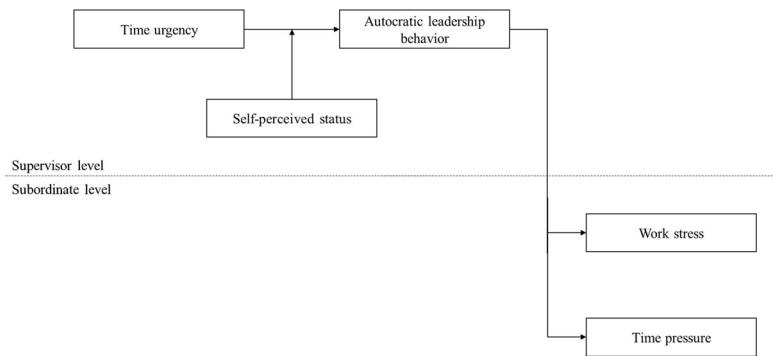
Importantly, however, cognitive perspectives on time urgency (Kahneman, 2011; Kruglanski, 1989) suggest that supervisors' time-urgent personality may also have a more negative side. This stream of research holds that high time urgency may evoke a tendency toward autocratic behavior, such that time-urgent individuals tend to favor fast solutions, ignore divergent ideas, and discount alternative points of view to accommodate their need for quick task accomplishment (Waller, Giambatista, & Zellmer-Bruhn, 1999). On this basis, it seems possible that highly time-urgent supervisors may lean toward an autocratic style of leadership and, indirectly, may undermine subordinates' well-being. To meet their desire for efficiency and fast-paced work, these supervisors may centralize decision-making, and they may pressure subordinates toward increased effort and higher working speed through dominant and authoritarian behavior (Harms, Wood, Landay, Lester, & Lester, 2018; Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939).<sup>1</sup> The present research aims to shed new light on these potentially undesirable consequences of supervisors' time urgency. Hence, we examine how this time-based personality characteristic may promote supervisors' autocratic leadership behavior and, as a consequence, may create increased experiences of work stress and time pressure for subordinates.

In this regard, research on time-based personality characteristics suggests that associated behavioral consequences often hinge on relevant boundary conditions (e.g., Greenberg, 2002; Zhang, Wang, & Pearce, 2014). This observation seems particularly important when considering the role of time urgency for autocratic leadership. After all, autocratic supervisors' bossy, domineering, and sometimes even dictatorial behaviors (De Hoogh, Greer, & Den Hartog, 2015; Harms et al., 2018) are inconsistent with the norms for civility, empowerment, and participation that are prevalent in many of today's organizations (Parker, Morgeson, & Johns, 2017).<sup>2</sup> For time urgency to translate into autocratic leadership behaviors, supervisors must therefore defy common social and organizational norms—and it seems unlikely that all time-urgent supervisors will feel at liberty to do so. Hence, it remains an open question under which circumstances a supervisor's time-urgent personality traits will trigger his or her autocratic behavior toward subordinates.

We draw from theory on the psychological experience of status (Anderson, Kraus, Galinsky, & Keltner, 2012; Lount & Pettit, 2012) to address this question. This perspective suggests that perceptions of high status (i.e., one's self-perceived prestige, respect, and esteem within a relevant group; Anderson, Srivastava, Beer, Spataro, & Chatman, 2006) reduce feelings of interpersonal and normative pressure, thereby encouraging individuals to more freely follow their intentions (Janssen & Gao, 2015; Yu, Hays, & Zhao, 2019) even when their actions violate established norms of conduct (Bowles & Gelfand, 2010; Fast & Joshi, 2014). Directly pertaining to the present study's focus, scholars have argued that "with status, comes the control of time" (Chen, Blount, & Sanchez-Burks, 2004, p. 129), such that high status liberates individuals to follow their temporal preferences (Blount & Janicik, 2002). We thus cast a supervisor's

<sup>1</sup>In the available literature, the terms "autocratic leadership" and "authoritarian leadership" are used interchangeably (Schaubroeck, Shen, & Chong, 2017). Following Harms, Wood, Landay, Lester, and Lester (2018), we use the term "autocratic leadership" throughout the present paper (see also De Hoogh, Greer, & Den Hartog, 2015).

<sup>2</sup>It is possible that autocratic leadership is more normative in strictly hierarchical, discipline-based organizations (e.g., law enforcement, military) than in others. Importantly, however, research has shown that such leadership often holds negative connotations even in this type of organization, such that subordinates generally dislike their supervisor's highly autocratic behaviors and organizational policies encourage (or even demand) the use of more participative leadership styles (Harms et al., 2018).



**FIGURE 1** Conceptual model

self-perceived status among subordinates as a key boundary condition on the relationship between the supervisor's time urgency and autocratic leadership behavior.

Finally, research has shown that the consequences associated with time-based personality characteristics may extend beyond the focal individuals themselves to also affect these individuals' social interaction partners—with particularly pronounced consequences for partners' well-being (Holman & Zimbardo, 2009; Jansen & Kristof-Brown, 2005). Transferring this notion to a leadership context, we suggest that a more complete understanding of supervisors' time urgency requires taking into account relevant downstream implications for subordinates. Hence, we integrate our previous rationale with insights from the literature on job demands and resources (JD-R; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001) to suggest that, beyond shaping a supervisor's leadership behavior, his or her time urgency may crucially influence subordinates' work-related well-being. In doing so, we cast autocratic leadership as a conditional mediating mechanism (depending on a supervisor's self-perceived status) in the indirect linkage between a supervisor's time urgency and individual subordinates' experiences of work stress and time pressure (see Figure 1).

By empirically testing this model, we make several conceptual contributions. Although scholars have suggested that time-based personality characteristics may influence supervisors' leadership behavior (e.g., Alipour, Mohammed, & Martinez, 2017; Thoms, 2004), empirical examinations of this notion have been "scarce and scattered" (Bluedorn & Jaussi, 2008, p. 657; see also Shipp & Cole, 2015). Hence, the present investigation sheds new light on the leadership consequences of supervisors' temporal personality. We challenge the prevalent notion that time urgency is beneficial for individuals in formal supervisory positions (Chen & Nadkarni, 2017; Mohammed & Alipour, 2014), providing a more critical perspective that links supervisors' time urgency with leadership behaviors and subordinate outcomes that are generally seen as undesirable. Moreover, we extend theoretical understanding of the autocratic tendencies associated with time urgency (e.g., Kruglanski, Pierro, Mannetti, & de Grada, 2006; Streufert, Streufert, & Gorson, 1981) by introducing self-perceived status as an important, heretofore unexplored boundary condition for the time urgency-autocratic leadership linkage. And finally, we supplement the 'leader-centric' perspective that is prevalent in much of the existing research on supervisors' time-based personality (e.g., Chen & Nadkarni, 2017; Gamache & McNamara, 2019) with a more 'follower-centric' view, illustrating how the consequences associated with a supervisor's time-based traits may extend to individual subordinates' well-being at work.

## 1 | THEORY AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

### 1.1 | Supervisors' time urgency and autocratic leadership

We draw from theory and research on the cognitive and psychological consequences of time urgency (Kahneman, 2011; Kruglanski et al., 2006) to explain why supervisors with higher (rather than lower) time urgency may favor

autocratic leadership behaviors. Time urgency is a dispositional trait that forms an important part of the Type A personality pattern (Friedman & Rosenman, 1974) and is known to shape an individual's cognitions, decision-making, and actions (Waller, Conte, Gibson, & Carpenter, 2001). Highly time-urgent individuals are preoccupied with the passage of time and consider time to be a precious resource (Landy et al., 1991). Accordingly, they feel chronically hurried, strive for timely and efficient task completion, and emphasize punctuality (Dishon-Berkovits & Koslowsky, 2002). These individuals prefer to act quickly, without much pause for deliberation, and they impose strict deadlines on themselves (Rastegary & Landy, 1993). Individuals with relatively low time urgency, by contrast, pay less attention to time or deadlines. They tend to be more relaxed, often underestimating the passage of time and acting in a slow, unhurried manner (Conte, Landy, & Mathieu, 1995). Hence, these individuals are more patient and attentive in interpersonal interactions than those with higher time urgency, and they are more willing to listen to others' concerns and ideas (Glass, Snyder, & Hollis, 1974). By extension, evidence suggests that individuals with lower time urgency are more likely to integrate others' suggestions into their own decision-making (De Grada, Kruglanski, Mannetti, & Pierro, 1999; Kruglanski et al., 2006) and more easily develop considerate relationships (Baron, Neuman, & Geddes, 1999).

With the above in mind, we expect supervisors with relatively high time urgency to more frequently adopt autocratic leadership behaviors. Because time-urgent individuals experience a chronic sense of hurriedness, they eschew slow and deliberate thinking, instead basing their decisions on fast, intuitive insights (Ben-Zur & Wardi, 1994). It follows that supervisors with relatively pronounced time urgency should be more reluctant to process deviant information, and they may exhibit a rather rigid thinking style that focuses on initial ideas and solutions as opposed to careful consideration of alternatives (Streufert et al., 1981). Given their chronic perception of excessive temporal demands, these supervisors are more likely to feel that they have little time to consider subordinates' opinions, explain managerial decisions in detail, or act in a fair and respectful manner (Sherf, Venkataramani, & Gajendran, 2019). Based on this logic, it seems reasonable to assume that highly time-urgent supervisors will perceive subordinates' inputs as time-consuming distractions without much value and, thus, will disregard subordinates' perspectives, ideas, and needs. Rather than accepting (or even soliciting) subordinates' contributions, we therefore argue that these supervisors are more likely to dictate task assignments and push subordinates toward uniformity and compliance, setting aggressive targets and deadlines and closely monitoring subordinates' progress.

Supervisors with relatively low time urgency, by contrast, are less likely to exhibit autocratic leadership behaviors. These supervisors are less concerned with temporal demands and schedules (Chen & Nadkarni, 2017; Kunisch, Bartunek, Mueller, & Huy, 2017) and, thus, they prefer more careful decision-making procedures and tend to mull over available alternatives before committing to a specific course of action (Streufert et al., 1981). Compared with their more time-urgent counterparts, these supervisors are more likely to feel that they have sufficient time to listen to and consider their subordinates' opinions. Recent research has demonstrated, accordingly, that supervisors who perceive adequate temporal resources are more likely to seek employees' inputs when making important decisions and to treat employees in a just and respectful manner (Sherf et al., 2019). On this basis, we expect supervisors with lower (rather than higher) time urgency to be more open to their subordinates' views and contributions, rather than using autocratic behaviors to propel subordinates toward quick task accomplishment in a bossy and domineering manner. We therefore propose:

**Hypothesis 1:** Supervisors' time urgency is positively related with their autocratic leadership behavior.

## 1.2 | The moderating role of supervisors' self-perceived status

Although our above logic suggests that highly time-urgent supervisors will exhibit autocratic leadership behavior more frequently than supervisors with lower time urgency, we believe it is crucial to consider this relationship's boundary conditions. After all, research on time-based personality characteristics has long established that situational and/or personal constraints shape the extent to which individuals openly display their temporal preferences and inclinations (Blount & Leroy, 2007; Greenberg, 2002). Regarding the role of time urgency for autocratic leadership, in particular,

one should keep in mind that this leadership style includes behaviors that are typically considered counternormative (or even destructive) in most organizations (Schaubroeck, Shen, & Chong, 2017; Van Vugt, Jepson, Hart, & De Cremer, 2004). This is because autocratic leadership entails ordering subordinates around in a bossy manner, neglecting subordinates' needs, and rejecting subordinates' participation in decisions that affect them (Harms et al., 2018). Hence, it is important to examine contingency factors that may encourage or hinder supervisors' time urgency to translate into autocratic leadership despite the undesirable features associated with such behavior.

The present study draws from theory on the psychological experience of status (Anderson et al., 2012; Lount & Pettit, 2012) to cast a supervisor's *self-perceived status* among subordinates as a key moderating variable. This stream of research has found that an individual's perceptions of his or her respect, prestige, and esteem within a focal group have pronounced consequences for this individual's cognitions, attitudes, and behaviors, as directed toward members of this group (e.g., Huo, Binning, & Molina, 2010; Yu et al., 2019). Scholars have argued, in particular, that the psychological experience of status provides an individual with a set of internalized beliefs and expectations about how others will evaluate his or her actions (Lount & Pettit, 2012; Pettit & Sivanathan, 2012). More precisely, high self-perceived status "is likely to strongly influence ... feelings of social acceptance," such that individuals innately assume that others view their behaviors, choices, and decisions in a positive light (Anderson et al., 2012, p. 765). As a consequence, "perceptions of higher status make individuals less vulnerable to ... situational and interpersonal pressure" (Janssen & Gao, 2015, p. 1858) and, thus, liberate individuals from social and normative constraints (see also Fast & Joshi, 2014). Prior research has shown, accordingly, that when self-perceived status is relatively high, individuals more freely voice their thoughts and follow their intentions, as compared with individuals who perceive a relative lack of status (Janssen & Gao, 2015; Yu et al., 2019). Taken together, this literature suggests that individuals with higher self-perceived status experience more behavioral discretion than their lower status counterparts, giving them the freedom to actively and assertively follow their preferred course of action without fearing repercussions (Fast & Joshi, 2014; Li, Chen, & Blader, 2016).

Building on this conceptual backdrop, we argue that supervisors' self-perceived status will moderate the proposed linkage between time urgency and autocratic leadership behavior. With relatively high status perceptions, on the one hand, supervisors feel that they enjoy considerable respect and esteem among subordinates (Fast & Joshi, 2014). In this situation, theory on the psychological experience of status indicates that supervisors are likely to believe that subordinates broadly approve of their actions and accept (or even appreciate) their decisions, even if the respective behaviors conflict with general normative expectations (Bowles & Gelfand, 2010; Pettit & Sivanathan, 2012). As such, we anticipate that, when experiencing relatively high status, supervisors will feel at liberty to follow the inclinations toward assertive, dominant, and nonparticipative behaviors associated with high time urgency, without being concerned about possible disapproval or even resistance from subordinates. Along similar lines, scholars have demonstrated that feelings of control make it more likely that supervisors follow inclinations toward counternormative behaviors in interactions with subordinates (e.g., Courtright, Gardner, Smith, McCormick, & Colbert, 2016). Consequently, we propose that highly time-urgent supervisors will openly express their tendencies toward autocratic leadership behavior when they perceive themselves as holding relatively high status among subordinates. Hence, the positive association between time urgency and autocratic leadership should be particularly pronounced in this situation.

For supervisors with lower status perceptions, by contrast, we anticipate the positive time urgency-autocratic leadership linkage to be attenuated. In this situation, a supervisor feels that subordinates have little respect, hold him or her in low esteem, and see him or her as relatively incompetent (Anicich, Fast, Halevy, & Galinsky, 2016; Fast, Halevy, & Galinsky, 2012). Consequently, research on psychological status experiences suggests that low-status supervisors will anticipate their subordinates to critically monitor their actions and view their decisions with suspicion (Lount & Pettit, 2012). Hence, supervisors that perceive a lack of status may shy away from behaviors that contradict social norms and expectations, because they find it unlikely that their subordinates will accept such behavior (Bowles & Gelfand, 2010; Janssen & Gao, 2015). Consequently, we suggest that these supervisors will not feel at liberty to behaviorally express the bossy, pushy, and domineering tendencies that go along with high time urgency. To avoid rejection and resistance,

even a highly time-urgent supervisor may therefore refrain from exhibiting an overly assertive, autocratic style of leadership. Taken together, we therefore propose:

**Hypothesis 2:** Supervisors' self-perceived status moderates the relationship between supervisors' time urgency and their autocratic leadership behavior, such that this relationship will be positive and significant only among supervisors with higher self-perceived status but not among supervisors with lower self-perceived status.

### 1.3 | Downstream consequences of supervisors' time urgency for subordinates' well-being

Our previous reasoning focused on the role of time urgency and self-perceived status for supervisors' own behaviors. Importantly, however, research suggests that the consequences of individuals' time-based personality characteristics can extend beyond focal individuals themselves to also affect the well-being of others in their social environment (Holman & Zimbardo, 2009; Jansen & Kristof-Brown, 2005). This notion is likely to generalize to a leadership context, in which supervisors typically interact closely with, and try to yield influence over, their direct subordinates (Yukl, 2013). In fact, the leadership literature suggests that a formal supervisor's traits may fundamentally shape his or her leadership behaviors toward subordinates and, in turn, these behaviors subsequently affect subordinates' well-being (DeRue, Nahrgang, Wellmann, & Humphrey, 2011; Tuncdogan, Acar, & Stam, 2017). On this basis, it is plausible to expect that a supervisor's time urgency may not only influence his or her autocratic leadership behavior but, in doing so, may also have downstream consequences for subordinates' well-being in the workplace. To more fully understand these consequences for subordinates, we complement our previous, leader-centric theorizing (i.e., on the role of time urgency and status perceptions for a supervisor's autocratic leadership behavior) with a more follower-centric perspective (i.e., on the role of autocratic leadership for individual subordinates' experiences at work). Hence, we integrate our prior arguments with theory on the antecedents of employees' work-related well-being to develop an overall conditional indirect effects model that casts autocratic leadership as a generative mechanism linking supervisors' time urgency and self-perceived status with outcomes related to subordinate well-being (i.e., work stress and time pressure; as depicted in Figure 1).

To inform our predictions on how supervisors' autocratic leadership behavior may affect their subordinates, we draw from theory and research that has emphasized the relevance of job demands and resources for employees' well-being (e.g., Alarcon, 2011; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). This literature suggests that employees are likely to feel stressed and overwhelmed when faced with high job demands (e.g., intense workload or performance pressure) and lacking relevant job resources (e.g., low supervisory support or autonomy; Bakker, Demerouti, & Euwema, 2005; Bakker, Demerouti, & Sanz-Vergel, 2014). Employees' work experiences should be more positive, by contrast, when they experience fewer demands on the job and/or when they have adequate resources at their disposal (Häusser, Mojzisch, Niesel, & Schulz-Hardt, 2010; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Building on this foundation, we suggest that a supervisor's autocratic leadership behavior—as triggered, for example, by his or her time urgency and high status perceptions—will create experiences of work stress (i.e., job requirements subjectively exceeding one's capabilities; McGrath, 1976) among subordinates. Autocratic supervisors are likely to impose intense work demands on subordinates by acting in a dominant and forceful manner, pushing subordinates toward efficient task accomplishment, and forcefully maintaining high-performance expectations (De Cremer, 2006; Harms, Credé, Tynan, Leon, & Jeung, 2017). At the same time, autocratic leadership constrains subordinates' access to important job-related resources, limiting subordinates' opportunities for participation and involvement and, thus, diminishing their feelings of autonomy (De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2009; Van Vugt et al., 2004). As noted before, the literature on job demands and resources suggests that such a combination of high demands and limited resources can be particularly damaging to individuals (e.g., Häusser et al., 2010; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). By the same token, supervisors who largely refrain from autocratic leadership behaviors impose fewer job demands on their subordinates, are more attentive to subordinates' needs, and encourage greater autonomy and participation

(Harms et al., 2018; Van Vugt et al., 2004). This situation of relatively low work demands and increased resource availability should decrease individual subordinates' work stress (Bakker et al. 2014; Demerouti et al., 2001). Consistent with this reasoning, research has demonstrated that subordinates working for autocratic supervisors more frequently suffer from burnout (De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2009) and negative emotionality on the job (De Cremer, 2007), as compared with subordinates working for a less autocratic supervisor.

Integrating our previous theorizing on the behavioral consequences of supervisors' time urgency with the present rationale, we suggest that the ramifications of this time-based personality characteristic will extend beyond supervisors themselves to also affect their subordinates. Highly time-urgent supervisors with pronounced self-perceptions of status, in particular, may trigger intense experiences of work stress among their subordinates by exhibiting autocratic leadership behaviors to a greater extent. Overall, we therefore propose a pattern of first-stage moderated mediation (Edwards & Lambert, 2007):

**Hypothesis 3a:** Supervisors' self-perceived status moderates the indirect relationship between supervisors' time urgency and individual subordinates' experiences of work stress, through their autocratic leadership behavior. This indirect relationship will be positive and significant only among supervisors with higher self-perceived status, but not among supervisors with lower self-perceived status.

Akin to the above rationale, we further cast subordinates' perceptions of time pressure (i.e., insufficient time to complete one's tasks; Kinicki & Vecchio, 1994) as a second potential downstream consequence of a supervisor's time urgency. In this regard, Lewin et al. (1939, p. 284) described autocratic supervisors as individuals who want their subordinates to get things "done in a hurry." For example, autocratic supervisors impose strict deadlines, insist that subordinates adopt a fast-paced working style, and place a strong emphasis on timely goal achievement (Huang, Xu, Chiu, Lam, & Farh, 2015; Muczyk & Reimann, 1987). These supervisors therefore impose substantive *temporal* demands on subordinates, while leaving them with little freedom and autonomy in how to cope with these demands. Thus, subordinates will likely experience such supervisors as setting a relentless and ambitious pace for task accomplishment, with an intense focus on deadlines and work speed. Accordingly, prior research has cast similar supervisory behaviors (e.g., supervisorial pressure) as important predictors of subordinates' time pressure experiences (Dietz & Scheel, 2017). Again integrating our theorizing on time urgency and status as joint predictors of autocratic leadership (i.e., Hypotheses 1 and 2) with this conceptual logic, as drawn from the JD-R literature, we therefore hypothesize:

**Hypothesis 3b:** Supervisors' self-perceived status moderates the indirect relationship between supervisors' time urgency and individual subordinates' experiences of time pressure, through their autocratic leadership behavior. This indirect relationship will be positive and significant only among supervisors with higher self-perceived status, but not among supervisors with lower self-perceived status.

## 2 | METHOD

### 2.1 | Sample and procedures

We collected data from a sample of supervisors and their subordinates representing various organizations and industries, to increase the generalizability of our findings. We approached the potential participants through personal and university contacts (for similar procedures, see Breevaart & de Vries, 2017; Bunderson, van der Vegt, Cantimur, & Rink, 2016). Potential participants received general information about the study (without revealing our hypotheses) and, depending on organizational constraints, they received either web-based or (otherwise identical) paper-and-pencil surveys for data collection. We used separate survey versions for supervisors and subordinates to help alleviate same source concerns (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012). The supervisor survey assessed their time urgency and self-perceived status, whereas the subordinate survey requested participants to rate their immediate supervisor's

autocratic leadership behavior and to provide self-ratings of perceived work stress and time pressure.<sup>3</sup> The online surveys were hosted on a third-party provider's secured servers, and the paper-and-pencil surveys were returned directly to the researchers. Participation was voluntary for both supervisors and subordinates, and all participants were assured of confidentiality; moreover, we note that our data collection procedures complied with the American Psychological Association's ethical standards.

Altogether, we collected data from supervisors and their direct subordinates from 43 organizations located across Germany, representing a variety of industry sectors (i.e., manufacturing: 37%, services: 23%, health care: 20%, finance: 8%, sales: 7%, and public service: 5%). Our sample did not include organizations with a strong focus on behavioral discipline (e.g., police and military), in which autocratic leadership may be more acceptable (Harms et al., 2018). We also note that the German culture endorses relatively low power distance values (although actual behavioral practices are characterized by somewhat higher power distance; Hofstede, 1980), with individuals generally preferring participative rather than autocratic types of leadership (Brodtbeck & Frese, 2007; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004). We will return to these issues in the Discussion Section.

To be included in the present study, a supervisor was required to (a) complete his or her own survey and (b) have at least two subordinates complete the subordinate survey (Rubin, Munz, & Bommer, 2005). To help ensure that subordinates could reliably assess their supervisor's leadership behavior, inclusion in the subordinate sample required that a subordinate interacted with the supervisor on a regular basis (i.e., at least 1 day a week) and their tenure with this supervisor equaled or exceeded 3 months at the time of data collection. In sum, we excluded one supervisor and 15 subordinates based on these criteria. Our final sample therefore comprised 60 supervisors and 277 of their direct subordinates. The number of subordinate responses per supervisor ranged from two to 12 ( $M = 4.6$ ,  $SD = 2.3$ ). Supervisors were 47.2 years old ( $SD = 9.9$ ), on average, and 67.8% were male. Their average organizational tenure was 13.8 years ( $SD = 9.4$ ). Subordinates were 38.7 years old ( $SD = 12.0$ ), on average, and 51.6% were male. Subordinates' mean organizational tenure was 9.3 years ( $SD = 9.2$ ).

## 2.2 | Measures

We translated all measurement instruments to German following a back-translation procedure (Brislin, 1980). Unless otherwise indicated, all measures were assessed using a five-point response scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

### 2.2.1 | Time urgency

Following prior empirical work on time urgency in organizations (Chen & Nadkarni, 2017; Mohammed & Nadkarni, 2011), our supervisor survey used a six-item measure derived from Landy et al.'s (1991) general and task-related hurry subscales. Consistent with our definition of time urgency, these items assess the extent to which individuals feel chronically hurried and rushed. Example items are, "I find myself hurrying to get to places even when there is plenty of time," "I often work slowly and leisurely" (reverse-coded), and "People that know me well agree that I tend to do most things in a hurry." Cronbach's alpha was .68.

### 2.2.2 | Self-perceived status

Supervisors assessed their perceived status among their subordinates using four items from Hays and Bendersky (2015) and Bunderson, van der Vegt, and Sparrowe (2014). We slightly modified these items to allow for self-ratings rather than peer-ratings. The specific items were, "I have much respect among my subordinates," "I have much esteem

<sup>3</sup>All supervisors and subordinates responded within a period of 1 week. An examination of the time stamps revealed that 10 subordinates submitted ratings of their supervisors' autocratic leadership behavior prior to supervisors' ratings of time urgency and self-perceived status (i.e., more than 24 hr in advance). We removed these data points (and one associated supervisor) and repeated our analyses. Substantive conclusions were not affected; result patterns and hypotheses tests using the reduced dataset closely mirrored the full sample results.

among my subordinates," "I have much prestige among my subordinates," and "I have much work-related knowledge." Cronbach's alpha was .70.

### 2.2.3 | Autocratic leadership

Subordinates rated their direct supervisor's autocratic leadership behavior using De Hoogh, Den Hartog, and Koopman's (2004) five-item measure. Example items are, "My supervisor believes that, in reality, only one person can be the leader," "My supervisor is bossy and orders subordinates around," and "My supervisor is very critical of new ideas." Intraclass correlation coefficients ( $ICC1 = .29$ ;  $F(59, 217) = 2.84$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $ICC2 = .65$ ) as well as interrater agreement statistics (median  $r_{wg(j)} = .89$ , using a uniform expected variance distribution) justified aggregating multiple subordinate ratings of the same supervisor's behavior. Cronbach's alpha was .74.

### 2.2.4 | Work stress

Subordinates rated their perceived stress at work by completing Motowidlo, Packard, and Manning's (1986) four-item measure. Example items include, "I feel a great deal of stress because of my job" and "I almost never feel stressed at work" (reverse-coded). Cronbach's alpha was .81.

### 2.2.5 | Time pressure

Subordinates assessed their perceived time pressure at work using a four-item measure (Maruping, Venkatesh, Thatcher, & Patel, 2015), slightly adapted to allow for self-ratings rather than using the original items' team-level referent. Sample items are, "I am often under a lot of pressure to complete my tasks on time" and "I am not afforded much time to complete my tasks." Cronbach's alpha was .90.

### 2.2.6 | Control variables

When examining the relationship of supervisors' time urgency and self-perceived status with autocratic leadership (Hypotheses 1 and 2), we considered supervisors' gender (0 = female; 1 = male) and age (in years) as potential covariates. Prior research suggests that autocratic behavior may be more congruent with stereotypical role expectations toward males rather than females (Eagly & Johnson, 1990) and toward older rather than younger individuals (Buengeler, Homan, & Voelpel, 2016). Hence, it seems possible that these demographic factors will bias the time urgency-autocratic leadership linkage.

Additionally, we considered supervisors' gender and age, subordinates' time urgency, and subordinates' average weekly work hours as potential covariates for the proposed conditional indirect effects (Hypotheses 3a and 3b). Scholars have suggested that female (rather than male) and younger (rather than older) supervisors' autocratic leadership may trigger more adverse reactions, as this type of behavior contradicts stereotypes toward women and younger individuals (Buengeler et al., 2016; Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992). Furthermore, subordinates' own time-urgent personality may confound our proposed relationships. Research has shown that highly time-urgent individuals are more prone toward experiences of stress and time pressure (Rastegary & Landy, 1993) and, as such, it seems possible that highly time-urgent subordinates may react more strongly toward their supervisors' autocratic behavior. We therefore captured subordinates' time urgency in the subordinate survey, using the same measure as for supervisors' time urgency ( $\alpha = .62$ ). Finally, subordinates' number of work hours per week might constitute an important covariate because long work hours may impose considerable demands (Jex & Bliese, 1999). With autocratic leadership likely diminishing subordinates' sense of control and autonomy on the job (Van Vugt et al., 2004), these bossy and otherwise domineering behaviors might be particularly stressful for subordinates with longer (rather than shorter) work hours.

## 2.3 | Data analysis

In our data, subordinates are nested within teams/supervisors, and our focal variables are located at two conceptual levels. Supervisors' time urgency, self-perceived status, and autocratic leadership behavior are located at the supervisor level (Level-2), whereas subordinates' work stress and time pressure perceptions are located at the individual subordinate level (Level-1). Moreover, teams/supervisors are additionally nested in 43 organizations that represent six industry sectors. Considering these additional layers of nesting, we find that organizational membership did not explain significant variance in any of our study's focal variables (all  $p > .122$ ) and controlling for industry sector (using five dummy variables) did not meaningfully affect our findings. Hence, all hypotheses tests were based on a two-level model (i.e., subordinates nested within supervisors). We used multilevel path analysis in Mplus 8 (Muthén & Muthén, 2017) to test our hypotheses in a single model, utilizing the TWOLEVEL function and a maximum likelihood estimation with robust standard errors to account for the nested data structure.

In order to examine our proposed conditional indirect effects (i.e., Hypotheses 3a and 3b), we followed Preacher, Zyphur, and Zhang (2010) and Bauer, Preacher, and Gil (2006). Specifically, we calculated simple slopes for the relationship between supervisors' time urgency and autocratic leadership at higher (+1 SD above the mean) and lower (-1 SD below the mean) values of self-perceived status (i.e., the '*a*' path), and we utilized the cross-level estimates for the relationships between autocratic leadership and individual subordinates' perceptions of work stress and time pressure to derive the '*b*' paths. Using these estimates, we calculated the product terms (i.e., '*ab*') and associated confidence intervals for the hypothesized conditional indirect relationships between supervisors' time urgency and subordinates' work experiences, through autocratic leadership, at higher and lower levels of supervisors' self-perceived status. This analytical approach allows us to separate Level-1 from Level-2 relationships and to simultaneously estimate all parameters, rather than a step-wise mediation procedure (Preacher et al., 2010). We z-standardized all continuous predictor variables before creating the interaction term (i.e., supervisor time urgency  $\times$  self-perceived status).

## 3 | RESULTS

### 3.1 | Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations

Table 1 presents means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations for all study variables at both the supervisor (Level-2) and the subordinate level (Level-1). In terms of control variables, male supervisors were rated as exhibiting more autocratic leadership behavior than female supervisors ( $r = .14, p = .020$ ). Moreover, subordinates' time urgency was significantly associated with their perceptions of work stress ( $r = .36, p < .001$ ) and time pressure ( $r = .23, p < .001$ ), and subordinates' weekly work hours were correlated with both work stress ( $r = .24, p < .001$ ) and time pressure ( $r = .21, p = .001$ ). By contrast, supervisors' age was unrelated with the focal outcome variables (all  $p > .215$ ); we therefore excluded supervisors' age when testing study hypotheses (cf. Bernerth & Aguinis, 2016; Bernerth, Cole, Taylor, & Walker, 2018). Hence, we controlled for supervisors' gender when autocratic leadership was the dependent variable (Hypotheses 1 and 2), and we controlled for supervisors' gender as well as subordinates' time urgency and weekly work hours when examining subordinates' experiences of work stress and time pressure as dependent variables (Hypotheses 3a and 3b).

### 3.2 | Hypotheses tests

Hypothesis 1 predicted that supervisors' time urgency positively relates with their autocratic leadership behavior. As depicted in Table 2, there was no relationship between supervisors' time urgency and autocratic leadership ( $\gamma = 0.12, SE = 0.09, p = .182$ ). Hence, this finding does not support Hypothesis 1.

**TABLE 1** Means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
<i>Controls</i>													
1. Supervisor gender	0.68	0.47	–	.22	.01	.18	.06	–.06	.22	–.11	–.07	–.09	–.02
2. Supervisor age	47.20	9.94	.20 <sup>**</sup>	–	–.09	–.06	–.08	.03	.02	–.04	–.06	–.16	–.13
3. Subordinate time urgency	3.30	0.56	–.01	–.08	(.62)	.21	–.13	.10	.11	.50 <sup>***</sup>	.22	.08	.02
4. Subordinate working hours/week	34.31	9.20	.16 <sup>*</sup>	–.03	.12	–	–.02	–.13	.03	.37 <sup>**</sup>	.33 <sup>*</sup>	.13	.15
<i>Main study variables</i>													
5. Supervisor time urgency	3.36	0.62	.11	–.05	–.02	–.05	(.68)	–.07	.26 <sup>*</sup>	.11	.26 <sup>*</sup>	.14	.08
6. Supervisor self-perceived status	3.90	0.43	–.07	–.02	.08	–.01	–.06	(.70)	.05	.11	.05	.09	.07
7. Autocratic leadership behavior	2.54	0.46	.14 <sup>*</sup>	–.04	.07	.03	.17 <sup>**</sup>	–.03	(.74)	.24	.28 <sup>*</sup>	–.04	–.12
8. Subordinate work stress	2.95	0.81	–.10	–.08	.36 <sup>**</sup>	.24 <sup>**</sup>	.10	.10	.22 <sup>**</sup>	(.81)	.77 <sup>***</sup>	.06	.07
9. Subordinate time pressure	2.88	0.86	–.06	–.07	.23 <sup>**</sup>	.21 <sup>**</sup>	.14 <sup>*</sup>	.05	.17 <sup>**</sup>	.65 <sup>***</sup>	(.90)	–.01	00
<i>Post hoc variables</i>													
10. Task-oriented leadership behavior	3.77	0.40	–.13 <sup>*</sup>	–.08	.12 <sup>*</sup>	.06	.05	.10	–.14 <sup>**</sup>	.00	–.08	(.80)	.77 <sup>***</sup>
11. Temporal leadership behavior	3.50	0.49	–.09	–.07	.09	.07	.06	.06	–.12 <sup>*</sup>	.00	–.04	.71 <sup>***</sup>	(.89)

Note. Subordinate-level correlations are below the diagonal ( $N = 260\text{--}277$ ); supervisor-level correlations are above the diagonal ( $N = 59\text{--}60$ ). For gender, 0 = female and 1 = male.

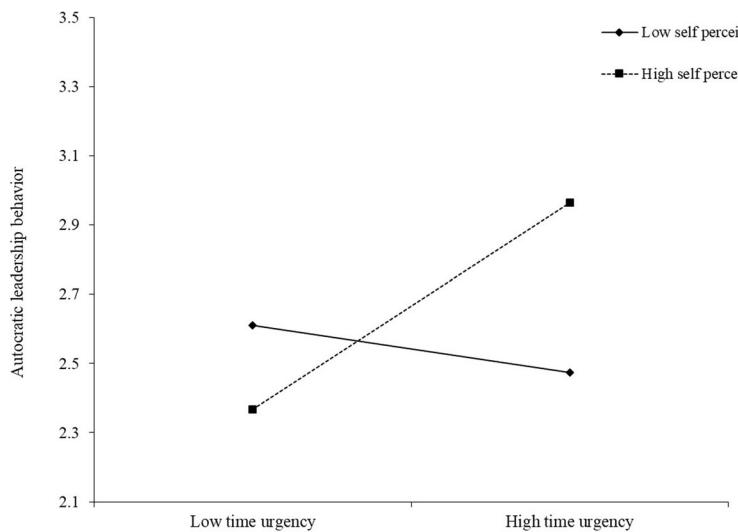
\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$  (two-tailed).

**TABLE 2** Simultaneous multilevel path model results

Predictor variable	Outcome variable					
	Autocratic leadership		Work stress		Time pressure	
	$\gamma$ (SE)	p	$\gamma$ (SE)	p	$\gamma$ (SE)	p
Supervisor gender (0 = female; 1 = male)	0.35 (0.16)	.026	–0.39 (0.13)	.003	–0.31 (0.15)	.031
Supervisor time urgency	0.12 (0.09)	.182				
Supervisor self-perceived status	0.06 (0.08)	.432				
Supervisor time urgency $\times$ self-perceived status	0.18 (0.07)	.011				
Subordinate time urgency			1.19 (0.43)	.006	0.94 (0.43)	.029
Subordinate work hours/week			0.33 (0.08)	.000	0.27 (0.08)	.001
Autocratic leadership behavior			0.42 (0.13)	.001	0.39 (0.12)	.001

Note. Supervisor  $N = 60$ . Subordinate  $N = 277$ . Robust standard errors are shown in parentheses. Unstandardized coefficients are shown. Significance levels are two-tailed.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that supervisors' self-perceived status moderates the relationship between supervisors' time urgency and autocratic leadership behavior. As shown in Table 2, the time urgency  $\times$  self-perceived status cross-product term predicted autocratic leadership ( $\gamma = 0.18$ ,  $SE = 0.07$ ,  $p = .011$ ), after considering control variables and main effects. Depicted in Figure 2, simple slopes analyses revealed that the relationship between time urgency and autocratic leadership was significant and positive for supervisors with relatively high self-perceived status (+1 SD;  $\gamma = 0.30$ ,  $SE = 0.07$ ,  $p < .001$ ), whereas this relationship was not significant when self-perceived status was lower (-1



**FIGURE 2** Interactive relation of supervisors' time urgency and self-perceived status with autocratic leadership behavior

$SD; \gamma = -0.07, SE = 0.14, p = .633$ ). Further analyses based on the Johnson–Neyman technique (Hayes, 2018; Preacher, Curran, & Bauer, 2006) revealed that the relationship between supervisors' time urgency and autocratic leadership was positive and significant at any value of self-perceived status of 0.22 SD above the mean or beyond (i.e., self-perceived status values equal to or greater than 4.00). Thus, Hypothesis 2 was supported.

Finally, Hypothesis 3 predicted a pattern of conditional indirect effects. We expected the positive and indirect relationships between supervisors' time urgency and individual subordinates' experiences of work stress (H3a) and time pressure (H3b), as transferred by autocratic leadership, to only be significant for supervisors with higher (but not lower) self-perceived status. As shown in Table 2, autocratic leadership positively predicted both individual subordinates' experiences of work stress ( $\gamma = 0.42, SE = 0.13, p = .001$ ) and time pressure ( $\gamma = 0.39, SE = 0.12, p = .001$ ). In support of H3a, the indirect linkage between supervisors' time urgency and individual subordinates' work stress (through autocratic leadership) was positive and significant for supervisors with relatively high status perceptions (+1 SD;  $\gamma = 0.13, 95\% CI [0.035, 0.215]$ ), whereas this indirect relationship was not significant for supervisors with lower self-perceived status (-1 SD;  $\gamma = -0.03, 95\% CI [-0.148, 0.091]$ ). Similarly, the indirect relationship between supervisors' time urgency and individual subordinates' perceived time pressure (through autocratic leadership) was positive and significant for supervisors with relatively high status perceptions (+1 SD;  $\gamma = 0.12, 95\% CI [0.024, 0.207]$ ), but not for supervisors with lower self-perceived status (-1 SD;  $\gamma = -0.03, 95\% CI [-0.133, 0.080]$ ). Hence, Hypothesis 3b was also supported.

### 3.3 | Supplementary analyses

We conducted supplementary analyses to rule out a number of possible alternative explanations and investigate the robustness of our results. For example, Fischer, Dietz, and Antonakis (2017) have suggested that it is important to examine additional mediating processes to provide some supporting evidence that one's hypothesized channel of influence is not spurious. Thus, we identified supervisors' task-oriented leadership (i.e., behavior aimed at promoting task execution; Fleishman, 1973) and temporal leadership (i.e., behavior aimed at synchronizing team members' efforts and building in time for contingencies; Mohammed & Nadkarni, 2011) as possible alternative leadership styles that might serve as mediating mechanisms. We selected these leadership styles because (a) they are conceptually similar to (yet

distinct from) autocratic leadership and (b) it seems plausible that they might be affected by time urgency and/or self-perceived status (Chen & Nadkarni, 2017; Waller et al., 2001).<sup>4</sup>

In a first step, we re-estimated our hypothesized relationships but included task-oriented leadership and temporal leadership as additional control variables. The pattern and significance of the results remained virtually unchanged. Next, we consecutively replaced autocratic leadership with task-oriented leadership and temporal leadership as the focal mediating mechanism and re-estimated our model. Neither the main effect of supervisors' time urgency nor the time urgency  $\times$  self-perceived status interaction significantly predicted the two alternative leadership styles. Overall, these supplementary results support our reasoning that autocratic leadership (rather than other types of leadership) is a transferring mechanism linking (high-status) supervisors' time urgency with individual subordinates' experiences of stress and time pressure at work.

Moreover, following Cortina (1993) and Edwards (2008), we retested our hypotheses but added the squared (i.e., quadratic) terms for both supervisors' time urgency and self-perceived status along with these variables' main effects and their predicted two-way interaction. This post-hoc analysis explores whether our primary findings for the time urgency  $\times$  self-perceived status interaction might be spurious, resulting from curvilinear relationships between one (or both) of the predictor variables and autocratic leadership (see also Lubinski & Humphreys, 1990). The squared terms for supervisors' time urgency and self-perceived status were not significantly related with autocratic leadership, and the time urgency  $\times$  self-perceived status interaction remained statistically significant. These results underscore our model's robustness, rendering it unlikely that the observed interaction is attributable to unobserved curvilinear associations.

Finally, we explored supervisors' gender and age as possible moderators in the linkages between autocratic leadership and subordinates' work stress as well as time pressure experiences. Theoretically, autocratic leadership behavior might result in less negative subordinate reactions when exhibited by male (rather than female) or older (rather than younger) supervisors (Buengeler et al., 2016; Eagly & Johnson, 1990). As such, these personal characteristics might interact with supervisors' autocratic leadership to predict subordinates' perceived well-being. We therefore reanalyzed our data, but this time included the interaction terms of autocratic leadership with supervisor gender as well as supervisor age when examining the linkages between autocratic leadership and individual subordinates' work stress and time pressure experiences. The respective cross-products did not reach statistical significance, however, and including these interaction terms did not meaningfully alter the pattern or interpretation of our hypotheses tests. Detailed results for all supplementary analyses are displayed in Tables S1 through S5 in the Online Supporting Information for this article.

## 4 | DISCUSSION

It has long been acknowledged that perceptions of and orientations toward time play a distinct role in how individuals navigate the organizational landscape (Ancona, Goodman, Lawrence, & Tushman, 2001; Bluedorn & Jaussi, 2008; Tang et al., 2020). Although leadership scholars have begun to consider temporal dispositions (e.g., Chen, 2020; Chen & Nadkarni, 2017; Gamache & McNamara, 2019; Zhang et al., 2014), important questions remain about the role of time-based personality characteristics (a) for a supervisor's leadership behavior and (b) for subsequent downstream consequences among subordinates. To address these issues, the present study examined the linkages between supervisors' time urgency, their autocratic leadership behavior, and important outcomes related to subordinates' well-being. Our results supported a conditional indirect effects model. Among supervisors with relatively high (but not low)

<sup>4</sup>Measures for both task-oriented leadership (5 items,  $\alpha = .80$ ; Stogdill, 1963) and temporal leadership (7 items,  $\alpha = .89$ ; Mohammed & Nadkarni, 2011) were included in the subordinate survey. Intraclass correlation coefficients and interrater agreement statistics justified aggregating individual subordinates' responses to the supervisor level (task-oriented leadership:  $ICC1 = .20$ ,  $F(59, 217) = 2.14$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $ICC2 = .53$ , median  $r_{wg(j)} = .93$ ; temporal leadership:  $ICC1 = .24$ ,  $F(59, 217) = 2.43$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $ICC2 = .59$ ; median  $r_{wg(j)} = .93$ ).

self-perceived status, time urgency was positively associated with autocratic leadership and, consequently, was positively and indirectly related with individual subordinates' work stress and time pressure experiences.

#### 4.1 | Theoretical implications

The present investigation expands our knowledge on the consequences associated with a supervisor's time urgency and, in doing so, it responds to scholars' repeated calls for further empirical research on supervisors' time-based personality characteristics (Alipour et al., 2017; Bluedorn & Jaussi, 2008). Although relatively scarce, prior work has emphasized the 'potential benefits' that may go along with time urgency for supervisors (e.g., Chen & Nadkarni, 2017; Mohammed & Alipour, 2014). By contrast, the present study demonstrates that supervisors' time urgency may also relate with *undesirable* leadership behaviors (i.e., autocratic leadership) and, by consequence, with diminished subordinate well-being (i.e., perceptions of work stress and time pressure). Our findings reiterate the relevance of integrating subjective time considerations into the study of leadership, echoing Bluedorn and Jaussi's (2008) observation that "it is difficult, if not impossible, to consider leadership without time playing a role" (p. 657; see also Alipour et al., 2017). More specifically, our results draw attention to a potential 'dark' side of time-based personality characteristics in a leadership context, promoting a more balanced theoretical perspective on supervisors' time urgency by highlighting potential risks and drawbacks that previous research has neglected.

Furthermore, our results highlight a key boundary condition for the role of supervisors' time urgency. Drawing from theory on the psychological experience of status (Anderson et al., 2012; Lount & Pettit, 2012), we found that time-urgent supervisors are more likely to showcase their preferences for dominance, control, and authority when they perceive themselves as respected and valued by their subordinates. Our results show that slightly increased status perceptions (i.e., 0.22 SD above the mean and beyond) were sufficient for supervisors' time urgency to translate into autocratic leadership behavior. By contrast, we found that supervisors with average-to-low status perceptions largely refrain from such leadership even when they are highly time urgent. As such, this study breaks new conceptual ground for the literature on subjective time and leadership, anchoring the behavioral consequences of supervisors' time urgency within the context of the specific social hierarchy in which the respective relationships unfold. To fully understand the consequences of a supervisor's time-based personality characteristics, it appears important to consider his or her self-perceived status as a key contingency factor.

Another important contribution relates to our linking supervisors' time urgency to subordinate-related outcomes. Prior research has predominantly focused on the *intrapersonal* consequences of time-based personality characteristics for a supervisor's own attitudes and behaviors (Chen & Nadkarni, 2017; Gamache & McNamara, 2019). The present investigation complements this perspective with a more *interpersonal* approach, thus demonstrating the far-reaching, social consequences associated with a supervisor's time urgency. Our findings illustrate that, by triggering autocratic leadership behavior (at least among supervisors with relatively high self-perceived status), this temporal personality trait can diminish subordinates' well-being at work (i.e., increased stress and time pressure experiences). With research suggesting that highly time-urgent individuals are especially likely to attain supervisory positions (e.g., Leroy et al., 2015; Sanders & Malkis, 1982), our study thus offers a new explanation for the prevalence of stress symptoms (and associated problems, such as burnout and emotional exhaustion) within many organizations and occupations (Ganster & Rosen, 2013). Moreover, our results suggest that a supervisor's time-based personality characteristics may exhibit contagious qualities, with subordinates' *situational* experiences of time pressure at work mirroring their supervisor's *chronic* sense of hurriedness. Such a finding is consistent with the literature on temporal entrainment (Ancona & Chong, 1996). This research has shown, for example, that team members develop shared orientations toward time (e.g., Harrison, Mohammed, McGrath, Florey, & Vanderstoep, 2003)—and our study provides evidence that similar entrainment processes may take place between supervisors and their subordinates.

Collectively, the present findings advance a more integrative understanding of the consequences associated with supervisors' time urgency. By bringing together theory on time urgency and the psychological experience of status with contemporary thinking on job demands and resources, we were able to address recent calls for more comprehensive

leadership models (Fischer et al., 2017; Tunçdogan et al., 2017). In doing so, we followed scholarly recommendations to not only examine the direct behavioral implications associated with supervisors' personality traits but to also investigate key (contextual) constraints and relevant downstream consequences for subordinates (DeRue et al., 2011; Tunçdogan et al., 2017). Thus, our overarching conceptual model provides a more complete understanding of *when* and *why* supervisors' time urgency may shape important leadership processes and outcomes.

## 4.2 | Practical implications

Our findings suggest that autocratic leadership is associated with diminished subordinate well-being (i.e., higher stress and time pressure experiences). Indeed, there exists a considerable body of research that emphasizes the adverse consequences of supervisors' autocratic behavior (Harms et al., 2018). Hence, organizations and HR professionals are generally well-advised to reduce instances of autocratic leadership among their supervisors. It would appear premature, however, to disregard highly time-urgent individuals for leadership selection and promotion opportunities. After all, these individuals are deadline oriented and strive to stay on schedule—characteristics that are often encouraged and sought after (especially in fast-paced and dynamic environments; Greenberg, 2002).

Instead, organizations may find it worthwhile to address the potentially undesirable side effects of chronic hurriedness. Our findings suggest that high time urgency primarily triggers autocratic leadership behavior among supervisors who perceive themselves as having an above-average status position—and even slightly elevated status perceptions are sufficient for the adverse consequences of time urgency to unfold. Hence, organizations could aim to create an egalitarian work atmosphere in which supervisors perceive themselves as being socially close to subordinates (Cole, Bruch, & Shamir, 2009). Similarly, organizations may limit or eliminate the overt use of status symbols (e.g., the 'corner office') and/or avoid excessive pay differentials to prevent inflated status differentials across hierarchical levels (Gruenfeld & Tiedens, 2010). Training and assessment procedures may also enable organizations to more directly address the autocratic tendencies of time-urgent supervisors. As part of their leader development efforts, organizations could acknowledge the value of efficient time usage and deadline-oriented behavior while also explaining that a chronic sense of hurriedness can result in unintended consequences. Combined with performance appraisal systems (e.g., 360-degree feedback; Brett & Atwater, 2001) that measure and reward supervisors' use of more participative leadership styles, such efforts may encourage supervisors to avoid autocratic behavior even when they feel chronically short on time.

## 4.3 | Limitations

The present study has potential limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. For example, the internal consistency estimate for the measure of supervisors' time urgency ( $\alpha = .68$ ) was relatively low. It is possible that translating this measure's items from English to German has impacted reliability. Prior research using this measure has, however, reported similar reliability values (i.e., with Cronbach's  $\alpha$  between .62 and .74) among employees in the United States (Jansen & Kristof-Brown, 2005; Leroy et al., 2015) as well as supervisors in China (Chen & Nadkarni, 2017). Moreover, our supervisor-level sample size was less than optimal (supervisor  $n = 60$ ). Although this supervisor-level sample size is comparable with other leadership studies (e.g., Chen et al., 2015; Schaubroeck et al., 2017) and each supervisors' autocratic leadership was assessed by multiple subordinates (subordinate  $n = 277$ ), this should be considered when interpreting our findings.

Another potential limitation is that the study sample was drawn from a single country (i.e., Germany), which raises generalizability concerns. Autocratic leadership may be more consistent with cultural norms in countries where individuals prefer high power distance situations (e.g., China; Harms et al., 2018), such that even a low-status supervisor's time urgency may prompt autocratic behavior. Similarly, beyond national culture, aspects of the organizational and/or team culture may be relevant (Hartnell, Ou, Kinicki, Choi, & Karam, 2019). Autocratic leadership may be more acceptable, for instance, in organizations with a strong emphasis on behavioral discipline (e.g., military; Harms et al., 2018).

Given that our sample did not include participants from this type of context, future research could benefit from examining our findings' generalizability in more diverse settings.

We further acknowledge the possibility of self-selection bias; that is, individuals with extreme time urgency may not have invested the time to complete our questionnaire (Harber, Zimbardo, & Boyd, 2003; Landy et al., 1991). Notably, however, the average time urgency score in our sample was above the scale mid-point and exhibited variability ( $M = 3.4$ ;  $SD = 0.6$ ). These values are comparable to those reported in prior studies on time urgency (Chen & Nadkarni, 2017; Mohammed & Nadkarni, 2011) and, thus, we believe our results are unlikely to suffer from undue biases related to self-selection or range restriction.

Moreover, we point toward possible common source concerns regarding the second stage of our conceptual model (Podsakoff et al., 2012). Although we used independent sources to measure supervisors' time urgency and self-perceived status, on the one hand, and autocratic leadership behavior, on the other, both autocratic leadership and perceived work stress/time pressure were rated by subordinates. We believe this concern is attenuated, to some extent, by the modest correlations between autocratic leadership and work stress/time pressure (see Table 1). Nevertheless, future research could address this issue by temporally separating the measurement of the mediator and outcome variables (Podsakoff et al., 2012), or by using alternative measurement approaches for subordinates' work stress (e.g., cortisol level or skin conductance; Ganster, Crain, & Brossoit, 2018) and time pressure (e.g., coworkers' behavioral observations; Waller, Gupta, & Giambatista, 2004).

A final limitation is that "any mediation study implies causal associations" (Bono & McNamara, 2011, p. 658), but our cross-sectional study design prevents us from making causal inferences. Although the present findings supported our theoretical reasoning, an experimental or longitudinal research design is required for causal claims. Whereas experimental approaches could be used to examine cause-and-effect relationships, longitudinal field designs that repeatedly measure all focal variables could represent a noteworthy extension of our work. Scholars have emphasized, in this regard, that leadership behavior and its associated consequences (e.g., subordinates' well-being) are dynamic, such that they may fluctuate within persons over time (McClean, Barnes, Courtright, & Johnson, 2019; McCormick, Reeves, Downes, Li, & Ilies, 2020). Hence, examining within-person variations could shed some light on the potentially dynamic aspects of our conceptual model. This type of longitudinal research would take important steps toward the development of a "completely temporal view" (Shipp & Cole, 2015, p. 251) that integrates subjective time perceptions and personality characteristics with objective time (i.e., clock time), thereby advancing a deeper understanding of how subjective and objective temporal factors may jointly shape leadership processes and outcomes.

#### 4.4 | Future research directions

The current findings suggest a number of interesting directions for future research. Apart from time urgency, it would be worthwhile to investigate other time-based personality characteristics and cognitions when studying leadership phenomena. Individuals with a strong past temporal focus, for example, are often reluctant to accept new ideas and hold pessimistic attitudes and negative emotions (Shipp, Edwards, & Lambert, 2009). Additionally, individuals with a low synchrony preference tend to impose their own rhythm upon others (Leroy et al., 2015). It would be interesting, therefore, to examine the role of these time-based personality traits. For example, supervisors' time urgency might interact with their temporal focus and/or synchrony preference to influence how they prefer to lead the team and, by consequence, affect their subordinates' well-being.

Future research may also extend our model by integrating subordinates' time-based personality characteristics (Alipour et al., 2017). Subordinates high in synchrony preference, for example, may be more willing to accept a time-urgent supervisor's autocratic and pressuring tendencies. Subordinates lower in synchrony preference, by contrast, may invest emotional and physical resources in an attempt to maintain their preferred working pace. In a similar vein, subordinates with relatively high future temporal focus may assign greater relevance to carefully planned, long-term goals, and they might therefore react more negatively (as compared with less future-focused subordinates) when a time-urgent supervisor requests swift and immediate action.

Moreover, it would be interesting to examine self-perceived status as a potential boundary condition for the linkages between supervisors' time-based personality characteristics and alternative forms of leadership (and associated consequences). For example, supervisors low in time urgency might live out their preference for unhurried behavior by exhibiting passive types of leadership (e.g., laissez-faire; DeRue et al., 2011), particularly when perceptions of high status grant them with the freedom and autonomy to follow such inclinations. Similarly, supervisors' self-perceptions of status might strengthen the relationship between future temporal focus and visionary leadership prior research has observed (e.g., Zhang et al., 2014).

Finally, research should investigate the indirect relationships of supervisors' time urgency and self-perceived status with additional outcome variables. Beyond work stress and time pressure, research has linked autocratic leadership with numerous other work experiences, attitudes, and behaviors among subordinates (e.g., commitment, cynicism, and aggression; Harms et al., 2018). It would be worthwhile to examine whether the detrimental consequences of supervisors' time urgency (through autocratic leadership behavior), as uncovered in this investigation, may generalize toward such alternative outcomes. It may be particularly interesting to examine the implications for subordinates' task performance, given that existing research has depicted time-urgent supervisors as relatively high-performing leaders (e.g., Chen & Nadkarni, 2017). Also, despite its broad negative consequences for subordinates' well-being, research suggests that the performance consequences of autocratic leadership may be contextually bound, such that this style of leadership may be effective under specific conditions (e.g., during crises; Harms et al., 2018; Huang et al., 2015).

## 5 | CONCLUSION

This study provides new insights into the complex role of supervisors' time urgency for leadership and subordinates' well-being. It illustrates supervisors' self-perceived status as an important boundary condition for the consequences of time urgency, and it highlights autocratic leadership as a generative mechanism that transfers a (high-status) supervisor's sense of urgency and hurriedness toward his or her subordinates. As such, we expand current knowledge on the relevance of time-based personality characteristics in a leadership context, and we hope to stimulate further research on this important issue that will advance a fresh, improved understanding of the role of temporal considerations in the literature on leadership and organizational behavior.

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## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information may be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of the article.

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