

# **Informal Influence Processes in Teams and Organizations**

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## 1 General Introduction

Organizations heavily rely on effective collaboration between their members to be successful and to reach relevant work-related goals (e.g., Kozlowski & Bell, 2013; Mathieu, Maynard, Rapp, & Gilson, 2008). In general, such collaboration reflects “an evolving process whereby two or more social entities actively and reciprocally engage in joint activities aimed at achieving at least one shared goal” (Bedwell, Wildman, DiazGranados, Salazar, Kramer, & Salas, 2012: 130). Research has shown that interpersonal collaboration and cooperation can benefit important organizational-level outcomes such as performance (Barrick, Bradley, Kristof-Brown, & Colbert, 2007; Francis & Sandberg, 2000; Srivastava, Bartol, & Locke, 2006) and profitability (Bunderson & Sutcliffe, 2003). Ineffective collaboration between employees, in contrast, can have far-reaching negative consequences for their respective organizations (Longenecker, Simonetti, & Sharkey, 1999; West, 2012). In fact, scholars have linked poor interpersonal collaboration with a range of detrimental outcomes like, for example, reduced organizational success (Kauffeld & Lehmann-Willenbrock, 2012) or insufficient product quality (Menon, Jaworski, & Kohl, 1997).

Building on this backdrop, scholars have focused on the behavioral mechanisms underlying interpersonal collaboration, arguing that interaction processes between individual employees and their peers are fundamental elements of effective collaboration (e.g., Hackman, 1987; McGrath, 1984). Importantly, such interaction processes entail different forms of informal influence between individuals as critical elements (Barrick, Stewart, Neubert, & Mount, 1998). Coordination between organizational members, for example, involves “orchestrating the sequence and timing of interdependent actions” (Marks, Mathieu, & Zaccaro, 2001: 363). As such, interpersonal cooperation typically includes the use of various informal influence and leadership behaviors between peers (e.g., within a work team) to align actions and, thus, to accomplish shared objectives (Arrow,

McGrath, & Berdahl, 2000; Spreitzer & Quinn, 2001). Such behaviors entail efforts to plan, structure, and regulate the pace of joint activities (Espinosa, Lerch, & Kraut, 2004; Rico, Sánchez-Manzanares, Gil, & Gibson, 2008), for example, as well as employees' sharing of information with their peers (Henningsen & Henningsen, 2003) and employees' attempts at creating a desired image among colleagues (e.g., by highlighting one's abilities and accomplishments; Bolino, Kacmar, Turnley, & Gilstrap, 2008; Bolino, Long, & Turnley, 2016).

In sum, it is clear that influence between peers is an essential aspect of life in organizations that critically affects processes of interpersonal collaboration and cooperation which, eventually, represent key inputs to organizational success or failure. As such, the purpose of this dissertation is to address important, yet largely neglected issues in our academic understanding of the development of informal influence behaviors in teams and organizations and, thus, to extend existing knowledge on the origins of these important behaviors. To do so, I start with a definition of this dissertation's understanding of informal influence behavior between employees and their coworkers and provide a selective literature review of research on this issue. Subsequently, I illustrate the present dissertation's research approach and objectives. I conclude the general introduction with an outline of the dissertation's structure and a description of how each empirical chapter will contribute to address the dissertation's key research objectives.

## **1.1 State of the Literature and Open Questions**

### **1.1.1 Defining Informal Influence Behavior**

The literature has discussed three related types of actions that individuals may use to yield influence over their peers, including specific influence tactics (e.g., Kipnis, Schmidt, & Wilkinson, 1980), impression management strategies (e.g., Gardner & Martinko, 1988), and informal leadership behaviors (e.g., Gardner & Martinko, 1988; Kipnis et al., 1980;

Spreitzer & Quinn, 2001). Influence tactics are actions that persons use to change the attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors of target individuals to obtain a desired goal (e.g., support for or compliance with a specific request; Yukl & Falbe, 1990). In an attempt to synthesize the research on influence tactics, Kipnis and Schmidt (1985) distinguished three main categories: hard tactics, soft tactics, and rational tactics. Hard tactics involve the application of direct assertive requests for compliance (e.g., pressure or coalition formation), whereas soft tactics aim to achieve compliance or support in a polite, friendly, or humble manner (e.g., ingratiation or personal appeals). Moreover, rational tactics include the use of bargaining and logic to invoke instrumental reasoning in order to gain what is desired (e.g., rational persuasion or exchange; Yukl, 2013).

Impression management refers to individuals' actions designed to influence the general perception that others have of them (Rosenfeld, Giacalone, & Riordan, 1995). Scholars have developed a number of different frameworks to conceptualize impression management (e.g., Bolino et al., 2008; Bolino et al., 2016). A prominent approach, in this regard, is the distinction between assertive and defensive strategies (Ellis, West, Ryan, & DeShon, 2002; Stevens & Kristof, 1995). Assertive impression management strategies are proactive and aimed at enhancing an individual's image in some way, and they include behavior like, for example, ingratiation (i.e., appearing considerate and helpful to evoke interpersonal liking and attraction) and self-promotion (i.e., highlighting desirable qualities to appear more skilled and competent). Defensive impression management strategies are reactive and focus on protecting or repairing an individual's image, and they comprise behavior such as excuses (i.e., claiming that one was not responsible for a negative outcome) and justifications (i.e., accepting responsibility for a negative outcome but suggesting that it is not as bad as it appears). In sum, despite their differing goals, influence tactics and impression management strategies appear conceptually similar, in that both types of

influence attempts entail similar behavioral patterns (e.g., ingratiation behavior or persuasion).

Finally, informal leadership occurs when an individual without formal authority aims to take on a leadership role and, thus, to yield informal influence (e.g., within a team; Yukl, 1989, 2013). Although many taxonomies of leadership exist in the literature, the research on informal leadership often distinguishes task-oriented vs. relationship-oriented leadership behaviors (Burke, Stagl, Klein, Goodwin, Salas, & Halpin, 2006; Judge, Piccolo, & Ilies, 2004b). Task-oriented behavior is aimed at facilitating team task performance (e.g., by assigning task roles among members and monitoring task completion), whereas relationship-oriented behavior is focused on strengthening social connections among team members (e.g., by demonstrating respect and concern and resolving interpersonal conflicts; Yukl, 2013). As such, informal leadership can be considered as occurring when individual employees who are not formally designated leaders nevertheless attempt to adopt leadership responsibilities toward their peers in order to determine team goals, motivate task activity in pursuit of those goals, and/or create a positive social climate within the team. In contrast to influence tactics and impression management strategies, informal leadership therefore does not primarily focus on changing others' perceptions and behavior in favor of the influencer but, rather, is more directly oriented toward promoting effective collaborative processes.

### **1.1.2 Informal Influence Behavior and Work-Related Consequences**

Given this broad focus on various facets of informal influence between peers from different streams of research, it is not surprising that a large number of studies has focused on the consequences of such behavior (e.g., Ferris, Hochwarter, Douglas, Blass, Kolodinsky, & Treadway, 2002; Yukl, 2013). As outlined in the previous chapter, most research has examined such informal influence from either an influence tactics, an impression management, or an informal leadership perspective. In line with scholars' notion that

influence tactics and impression management strategies are conceptually similar (e.g., Bolino et al., 2016), I will review important studies on the work-related consequences of those two types of influence collectively. Then, I will proceed with illustrating relevant insights regarding the effects of informal leadership behavior.

First, existing research on informal influence behavior between peers (also known as lateral influence behavior) has focused on how influence tactics and impression management strategies may shape peers' reactions toward the influencer. For example, Jensen (2007) analyzed the use of influence tactics in decision-making settings and found that inspirational appeals proved most effective in convincing others to change their opinions during visioning processes, whereas inspirational appeals, consultation (i.e., asking for input or seeking advice about a decision), and rational persuasion tended to be particularly effective when more concrete decisions were needed. In addition, Yukl and Tracey (1992) illustrated that soft tactics (i.e., ingratiation, consultation, as well as inspirational and personal appeals) and rational tactics (i.e., rational persuasion and exchange) can positively affect target's task commitment. These authors concluded that such tactics were particularly effective because they are viewed as socially acceptable for lateral influence attempts. In contrast, Yukl and Tracey found hard tactics (e.g., pressure) to reduce peers' task commitment, probably because such manipulative and coercive acts can evoke anger in the target of influence.

Adopting an impression management perspective, Bolino and Turnley (2003) have studied individuals' use of various associated strategies, illustrating that individuals who used only positive strategies (e.g., ingratiation or self-promotion), or avoided using impression management strategies altogether were seen more favorably than those who used relatively high levels of all types of strategies that were studied (including more negative strategies, such as intimidation). In fact, meta-analytic evidence generally found support for the effectiveness of positive strategies, such as ingratiation, for promoting task-oriented

(e.g., receiving favorable performance appraisals) and relations-oriented (e.g., creating favorable impressions) outcomes in lateral relationships (Gordon, 1996; Lee, Han, Cheong, Kim, & Yun, 2017). Interestingly, Gundlach, Douglas, and Martinko (2003) adopted a different perspective and focused on the conditions under which negatively perceived impression management strategies can be beneficial for individuals in specific situations. They examined how wrongdoers may engage in intimidation to discourage others from blowing the whistle or may use defensive strategies (e.g., apologies) to restore their damaged image. Focusing explicitly on the negative consequences of impression management for the influencer, Harris, Gallagher, and Rossi (2013) analyzed a sample of full-time human resource employees and found a positive association between employees' usage of intimidation and exemplification and their level of job strain and burnout, concluding that using such assertive strategies may be resource draining.

Second, scholars have approached the potential consequences of lateral influence from an informal leadership perspective. Most research on this issue has assumed that informal leadership can increase information sharing and participation among team members and, as such, may enhance team functioning and effectiveness (e.g., Mehra, Smith, Dixon, & Robertson, 2006; Pearce & Conger, 2003). Focusing on the general degree to which persons who are not in formal authority positions exert influence on other members of a team (i.e., informal leadership emergence), Zhang, Waldman, and Wang (2012)'s study of customer service teams illustrated that leadership emergence can enhance performance. Similarly, De Souza and Klein (1995) studied a sample of 468 college students that performed an interdependent group task and found that groups in which informal leaders emerged outperformed groups without emergent leaders (see also Carson, Tesluk, & Marrone, 2007; Durham, Knight, & Locke, 1997). In fact, the overall positive effects of informal leadership within teams on different performance criteria are largely supported by

two recent meta-analyses (D'Innocenzo, Mathieu, & Kukenberger, 2016; Nicolaides, LaPort, Chen, Tomassetti, Weis, Zaccaro, & Cortina, 2014).

Although this research has provided valuable insights into the positive consequences of informal leadership, it has not examined the implications associated with specific types of informal leadership behavior. More directly pertaining to the present dissertation's research focus, however, a number of studies have examined this latter issue. Taggar, Hackett, and Saha (1999), for example, have provided evidence for a positive relationship of informal task-oriented leadership behavior with team task performance. Similarly, Wellman, Newton, Wang, Wei, Waldman, and LePine (2018) found that team members' aggregated task-oriented, relationship-oriented, and change-oriented leadership behaviors were positively associated with team performance. Moreover, Hmieleski, Cole, and Baron (2012) examined new venture top management teams and illustrated a positive effect of informal authentic leadership on teams' positive affective tone, suggesting that such leadership may evoke positive feelings because it builds credibility and trust among members. In addition, Hoch (2013) analyzed a sample of work teams and found a positive linkage between different types of informal leadership behavior (i.e., transformational and empowering leadership) and innovative behavior. Finally, a study by Sivasubramaniam, Murry, Avolio, and Jung (2002) provided further support for the positive association between different types of informal leadership and team performance using a longitudinal research design. In a sample of student groups, they found that team members' transformational behavior can increase group potency and, in turn, group performance, whereas the indirect relationship between members' laissez-faire leadership and group performance (through group potency) was negative.

All in all, past research has greatly advanced our understanding of how informal influence behavior between peers can shape a range of critical outcomes at both the

individual and the team level. Hence, it is not surprising that scholars are interested in relevant factors that can predict the emergence of such actions (e.g., Ferris et al., 2002; Porter, Angle, & Allen, 2015). In the following chapter, I will therefore review existing research on such antecedents of lateral influence behavior in work settings. In doing so, I will again first focus on influence tactics and impression management strategies and, then, on informal leadership.

### **1.1.3 Antecedents of Informal Influence Behavior in Work Settings**

Although research on the antecedents of informal influence tactics and impression management strategies has remained relatively scant, scholars have shed some light on this issue by examining the role of individual characteristics and attitudes in this regard. For example, Kacmar, Carlson, and Bratton (2004) investigated antecedents of ingratiation behavior in a sample of 136 state lottery employees and found that self-esteem was negatively related with the use of ingratiation, whereas job involvement was positively associated with such behavior. In addition, Brouer, Badaway, Gallagher, and Haber (2015) analyzed a sample of automotive employees and illustrated that persons with higher (rather than lower) political skills (i.e., “the ability to effectively understand others at work, and to use such knowledge to influence others to act in ways that enhance one’s personal and/or organizational objectives”; Ahearn, Ferris, Hochwarter, Douglas, & Ammeter, 2004: 311) used positive strategies (i.e., ingratiation, self-promotion and exemplification) more often than negative or aggressive ones (i.e., intimidation or supplication). Similarly, Bolino and Turnley (2003) found that individuals’ high in Machiavellianism tended to engage in various types of impression management strategies (i.e., both positive and negative ones) whereas higher self-monitoring (i.e., the ability to control one’s expressive behavior; Snyder, 1974) only increased the likelihood of positive strategies and reduced the use of more aggressive ones. This latter study further revealed differences regarding influencers’ gender. In

particular, women appeared to be more passive than men and tended to engage less frequently in all of the influence strategies that were studied. Similarly, other work has suggested that men tend to use assertive impression management strategies more frequently, whereas women tend to more frequently use other-oriented strategies (e.g., ingratiation and excuses; Guadagno & Cialdini, 2007; Singh, Kumra, & Vinnicombe, 2002).

Individual characteristics were also examined as antecedents of informal leadership behavior. Taggar et al. (1999), for example, illustrated that general cognitive ability, conscientiousness, and extraversion were positively related with a team member's informal task-oriented leadership behavior, whereas neuroticism was negatively related with such behavior. Similarly, Kickul and Neuman (2000) analyzed a sample of 67 student groups and found that extraversion, openness to experience, and cognitive ability were predictive of informal task-oriented and relationship-oriented leadership behavior during a joint group task. Finally, Kellett, Humphrey, and Sleeth (2006) found that individual's with higher empathy received higher ratings of informal task-oriented and relationship-oriented leadership, whereas cognitive abilities only increased peer ratings of informal task-oriented leadership behavior (see also Walter, Cole, van der Vegt, Rubin, & Bommer, 2012).

Relatively few studies have investigated possible antecedents of informal leadership that lie outside individual team members (i.e., contextual influencing factors). Most existing research on this issue has focused on the role of the formal supervisors, arguing that supervisors can help develop team members' capabilities to lead themselves and, as such, may promote the emergence of informal leadership (e.g., Carson et al., 2007). Building on this backdrop, Margolis and Ziegert (2016), for example, provided evidence for a positive association between supervisors' visionary leadership and their employees' respective informal leadership behavior. Moreover, Pearce and Sims (2002) have shown positive relationships between different types of formal task-oriented leadership (e.g., directive and

transactional leadership) and the degree to which their team members engaged in similar behaviors. Finally, a recent study by Wellman et al. (2018) illustrated that supervisors' laissez-faire leadership can both encourage members' informal task-oriented, relationship-oriented, and change-oriented leadership behavior (through members' perceived need for leadership) and discourage such informal leadership (through members' perceived modeling of leadership).

#### **1.1.4 Conclusions from the Literature Review**

All in all, the present literature review has revealed a wide range of important work-related consequences associated with different types of informal influence attempts. As compared to these consequences, less is known about the antecedents of influence behavior between peers, such that our theoretical and empirical understanding remains relatively limited in this regard. In fact, a considerable body of research has acknowledged that individual characteristics are important antecedents of employees' use of different informal influence behaviors toward their peers. Although some other work has suggested that supervisors might play an important role in shaping lateral influence processes, however, the relevance of other contextual factors remains largely unexplored. Indeed, scholars have noted that we know surprisingly little about how the social context (e.g., within teams) can shape informal influence between peers (Chen, Takeuchi, & Shum, 2013; Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008).

The present dissertation addresses this issue by examining important antecedents of informal influence behavior between employees and their coworkers. In particular, this dissertation aims at further investigating the relevance of the social context in which influence processes unfold to achieve a better understanding of why and under what conditions some employees are more likely to engage in specific lateral influence attempts than others. Devoting more research attention to contextual factors is particularly important

because they “have the capacity to permit and reinforce some forms of influence, while inhibiting or constraining others” (Ferris et al., 2002: 91). In particular, as outlined in the next chapter, this dissertation develops three distinct perspectives to explore different types of specific contextual antecedents of individuals’ informal influence behavior.

## **1.2 Approach and Goals of the Dissertation**

The first perspective adopted in this dissertation conceptualizes individuals’ status (i.e., the extent to which individuals enjoy prestige, respect, admiration, and esteem in the eyes of others; Anderson, John, Keltner, & Kring, 2001) in teams as an important predictor of their informal influence attempts toward other members. Individuals with higher status enjoy many advantages, including greater social support, superior control over joint decisions, and better access to important resources (Barkow, 1975; Berger, Cohen, & Zelditch, 1972; Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). Given these consequences, it is likely that individuals may, in general, value the amount of status they have among peers and, as such, might engage in specific influence attempts to achieve higher status when they perceive their position within the informal status hierarchy to be problematic. Importantly, however, prior empirical research has rarely examined the behavioral consequences associated with an individual’s perceived lack of status (Blader & Chen, 2012). It seems highly important to examine this issue, given that most of a team’s members are located at the lower levels of a typical (i.e., pyramid-shaped or centralized) status hierarchy (Magee & Galinsky, 2008), such that low status may have the potential to decisively shape the informal influence behaviors prevalent within a team. Hence, Chapter 2 draws from prior theoretical notions that status is a key contextual factor within groups that may shape interaction processes between individuals (e.g., Berger, Fisek, Norman, & Zelditch, 1977) to empirically examine how and why status may affect employees’ decisions to engage in specific informal influence behaviors toward their peers within teams.

The second perspective focuses on the role of formal leadership for employees' informal influence behavior. Although some prior work on the antecedents of informal influence has illustrated the potential relevance of formally assigned leadership, as noted before, there are strong theoretical reasons to assume that this relationship is more complex and situationally contingent than the existing research would suggest. In particular, scholars have argued that employees may perceive their formal supervisors as important role models and, thus, closely observe and mimic such supervisors' leadership behavior, presumably because supervisors are vested with official authority and are often seen as legitimate representatives of the organization (Margolis & Ziegert, 2016; Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes, & Salvador, 2009). It is unrealistic, however, to assume (a) that all supervisors are equally suitable as potential role models and (b) that all employees are equally susceptible to their supervisors' influence. In fact, research has shown that supervisors differ significantly in the degree to which their team members respect, admire, and look up to them (Triana, Richard, & Yücel, 2017). Moreover, scholars have illustrated that individuals vary in how confident they are in their own attitudes and decisions and, thus, how reliant they are on authority figures to guide their behavior (Briñol, Petty, Valle, Rucker, & Becerra, 2007). Extrapolating from this work, it seems logical to assume that specific factors related to both the supervisors and individual employees may critically shape the linkage between formal and informal leadership within teams. Further exploring this issue can help to create a more complete and realistic picture of the emergence of informal influence behaviors within teams. As such, Chapter 3 empirically examines how, why, and when supervisors' formal leadership behavior may shape individual team members' tendency to engage in informal influence behavior toward other members.

The dissertation's third perspective accounts for a phenomenon that scholars have described as highly characteristic in modern work environments – namely the role of time

pressure for individuals' informal leadership behavior. Because employees are increasingly responsible for managing complex and time-critical tasks under tight deadlines (e.g., designing and bringing new products and services to market), they often perceive a significant amount of time pressure at work (Amabile, Hadley, & Kramer, 2002). Moreover, theorists have suggested that time pressure perceptions may strongly affect how individuals approach and influence each other in collaborative work settings (Karau & Kelly, 1992; McGrath, 1991; McGrath & Kelly, 1986). In highly time-critical work situations, for example, individuals may adopt task completion as their major interaction objective and urge their peers to finish a task as quickly as possible, whereas lower time pressure might provide some space to focus on other, less task-oriented issues within social interactions (Kelly & Loving, 2004). Empirical research on this issue, however, has remained relatively scant. Given the predominance of time pressure in today's workplaces (Rudd, 2019) and the collaborative nature of today's work (Driskell, Salas, & Driskell, 2018), it is highly important to better understand the consequences associated with an individual's time pressure perceptions for the occurrence of informal influence behavior. Hence, Chapter 4 examines this issue to provide a better understanding of why and under what conditions perceived time pressure may shape an individual's informal leadership behavior at work.

In sum, the overall goal of the present dissertation is to contribute to a deeper knowledge on the antecedents of informal influence behavior, enabling scholars to more fully understand key predictors, mechanisms, and boundary conditions in this regard. In doing so, this dissertation pays special attention to how contextual features (i.e., status hierarchies, formal leadership structures, and time pressure perceptions) may shape influence processes between employees and their peers. Providing new knowledge on contextual predictors of influence behavior has both theoretical as well as practical implications for managers and organizations. From a theoretical perspective, this dissertation

strives to provide a better understanding of how and when individuals approach and affect their peers at work. As noted before, this is important because influence is a fundamental aspect of life in organizations with far-reaching implications for within-team collaboration and, in turn, various team effectiveness criteria (e.g., Ferris et al., 2002; Ferris, Perrewé, Daniels, Lawong, & Holmes, 2017; Porter et al., 2015). From a practical perspective, the present research helps managers and organizational decision-makers to better understand the contextual factors that drive informal influence behaviors and, depending the specific situation, to promote or prevent the emergence of such behaviors.

### **1.3 Outline of the Dissertation**

In this section, I outline the structure of the dissertation and provide some details on the objectives of each chapter. In summary, this dissertation is divided into five chapters to address its key research questions. The first part of this dissertation consists of this introductory chapter. The following three chapters focus on developing a deeper understanding of informal influence behavior in teams by consecutively addressing the three perspectives discussed before. The final chapter concludes the dissertation with a discussion of its main findings, future research directions, and theoretical as well as practical implications. The main contents of these chapters are briefly summarized in the following.

**Chapter 1** consists of this introductory chapter and outlines the background of the dissertation and the research problem to be investigated. It highlights the theoretical and empirical relevance of this problem, and it develops research objectives based on a selective review of the empirical research on this issue. Finally, this chapter provides an outline of the dissertation's structure.

**Chapter 2** addresses the first perspective outlined in the previous section and contains the first study of the dissertation entitled "Looking up with a Frown: Status, Negative Affect, and Enhancement Behavior in Groups". This chapter aims to reconcile

seemingly conflicting theoretical perspectives on the issue of why and when individual team members' (lack of) status may shape their decision to engage in specific lateral influence behaviors aimed at improving their status position. Although some theoretical approaches have assumed that individuals' perception of their status in groups may affect their tendency to engage in specific influence behaviors, they remain ambiguous about the specific form of these behavioral consequences. In particular, whereas traditional functional approaches toward status (e.g., expectation states theory; Berger, Conner, & Fisek, 1974) would predict that lower-status individuals accept their position and, thus, largely refrain from proactive attempts at advancing their situation, low-status compensation theory (Henry, 2009) would predict that individuals with relatively low status feel agitated and distressed and, thus, tend towards assertive acts to improve their unfavorable situation.

Drawing from affective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), Chapter 2 addresses this issue by empirically investigating the indirect relationship between a group member's lack of status and enhancement behavior (i.e., a type of influence behavior aimed at signaling one's competence, expertise, and value toward others; Lee, Quigley, Nesler, Corbett, & Tedeschi, 1999), through an individual's high-arousal negative affective reactions. Moreover, Chapter 2 examines a member's status striving as a key motivational boundary condition in the relationship between status and high-arousal negative affect that may help to investigate the seemingly conflicting theoretical approaches in prior research. The particular focus on enhancement behavior is motivated by prior research which suggests that such behavior may represent a viable strategy for status improvement (Leary, Jongman-Sereno, & Diebels, 2014; Owens & Sutton, 2001).

Chapter 2 employs a multi-study design to examine these notions, including both experimental approaches (i.e., a scenario experiment using a sample of 190 participants and a critical-incident recall design based on a sample of 115 participants) and a correlational

field study based on a sample of 141 employees from different organizations in Germany. Chapter 2's results demonstrate the important role of status perceptions as a key contextual factor within teams that can shape an individual's tendency to engage in enhancement behavior, and it illustrates the key role of high-arousal negative affect as a mediating mechanism and status striving as a moderating factor in this linkage. As such, Chapter 2 extends prior research on the predictors of informal influence by providing fresh insights into the complex relationship between status perceptions and informal influence behavior in groups.

**Chapter 3** deals with the second perspective on informal influence, as outlined before, and comprises the second empirical study conducted in the context of the present dissertation entitled "Formal Leadership and Informal Leader Emergence: Examining the Roles of Task-Oriented Behavior and Status". This chapter develops and tests a trickle-down model to provide a better understanding of the relationship between supervisors' formal leadership behavior and team member's respective informal leadership behavior. In doing so, it empirically examines the conditions under which trickle-down processes of leadership are more or less likely to occur. In this regard, theories on the emergence of informal leadership remain somewhat ambiguous. Whereas a functional leadership perspective would suggest that team members may refrain from engaging in informal task-oriented leadership when their supervisor already shows such behavior (e.g., Morgeson, DeRue, & Karam, 2010), a social learning theory perspective would assume that team members may emulate their supervisors' behavior because they perceive them as important role models (e.g., Bandura, 1986).

Chapter 3 integrates insights from social learning theory (Bandura, 1986) with recent research on status in organizations (e.g., Piazza & Castellucci, 2014) to address this issue and to unravel the complexity in the relationship between formal and informal leadership.

Specifically, it examines the indirect relationship between formal supervisors' task-oriented leadership behavior and a team member's informal leader emergence, through the member's own, informal task-oriented leadership behavior toward his or her teammates. Taking up some notions from the previous chapter, Chapter 3 investigates supervisors' as well as a member's status within their team as central contextual contingencies that may moderate the linkage between supervisors' task-oriented leadership and a team member's respective behavior. Chapter 3 focuses on task-oriented behavior because a large number of studies attests to the relevance of such behavior for important team processes and outcomes (e.g., Burke et al., 2006; Judge et al., 2004b).

Chapter 3 examines its hypothesized relationships using a field sample of employees within two state-owned hospitals in southern central China. Targeted participants were 226 nurses working in 51 teams across various areas of medical specialization. The results demonstrate that status considerations play an important role in shaping the trickle-down relationship between a supervisor's task-oriented leadership behavior and a member's informal leadership behavior and informal leader emergence. All in all, Chapter 3 contributes to the literature on influence processes between employees by providing new insights into the complex relation between formal and informal leadership behavior, illustrating that this linkage is contingent on the social context within it occurs.

**Chapter 4** focuses on the third perspective on informal influence, as previously discussed, and it comprises the third and last empirical study of this cumulative dissertation entitled "Are we in Time? An Actor-Partner Interdependence Approach toward the Interpersonal Consequences of Time Pressure". Scholars have illustrated that time pressure perceptions can shape employees' work-related attitudes and decisions (Wright, 1974), influence important work outcomes (Baer & Oldham, 2006; Beck & Schmidt, 2013), and play a key role for interpersonal interaction processes between peers (Karau & Kelly, 1992;

McGrath & Kelly, 1986). The existing empirical research, however, has typically assumed that individuals working together in the same group and/or on the same task hold shared, similar perceptions of time pressure (Chong, van Eerde, Chai, & Rutte, 2011), thereby largely neglecting the fact that even employees working in the same group may often perceive differing degrees of time pressure (Cummings & Haas, 2012). Hence, our knowledge is limited about how differences between cooperating employees' time pressure perceptions may shape their informal leadership behavior.

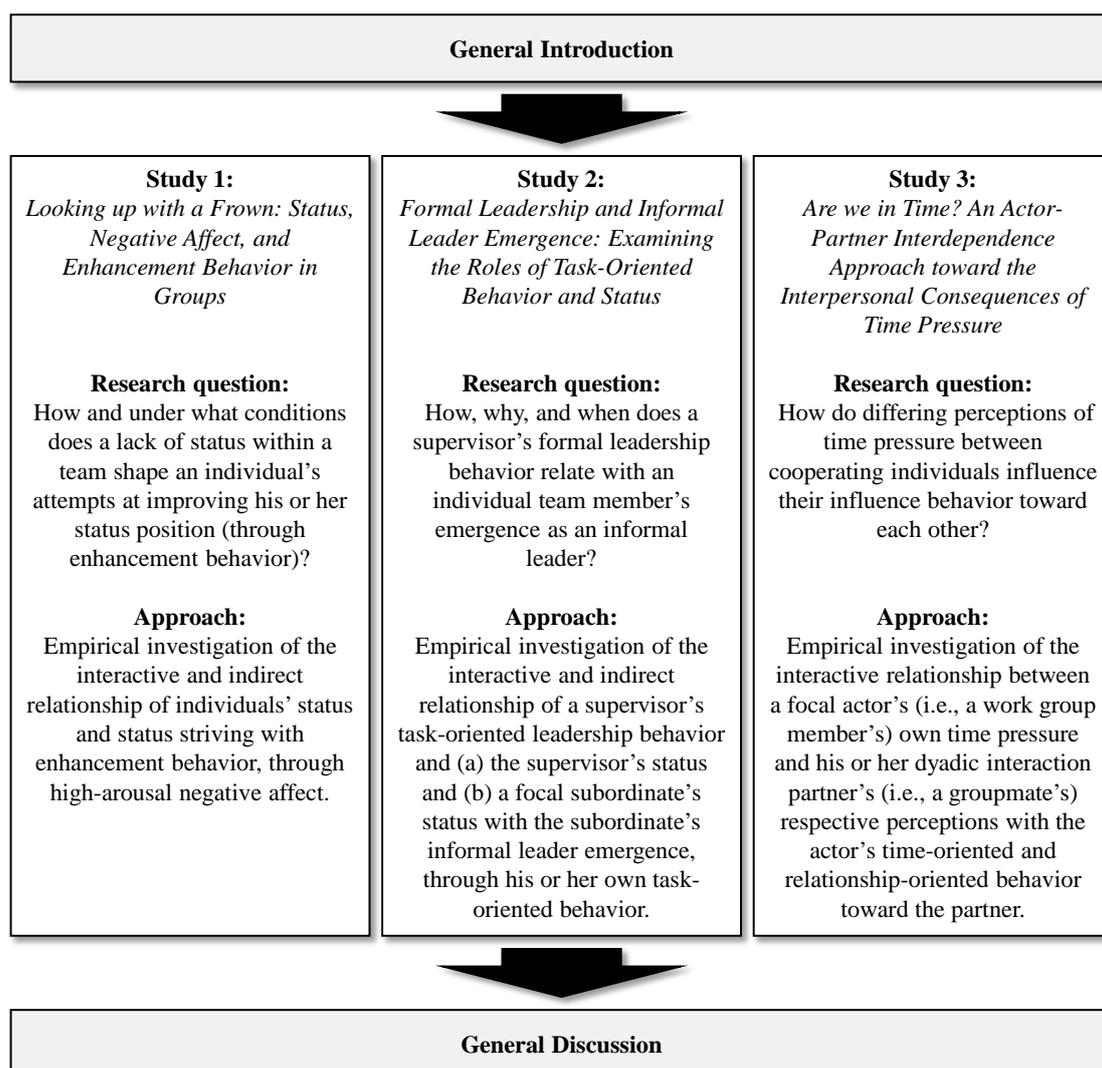
Drawing from time, interaction, and performance theory (McGrath, 1991), Chapter 4 examines this issue by depicting perceived time pressure as an important contextual factor that may shape individual employees' choice to engage in informal leadership behavior. Specifically, Chapter 4 examines the joint role of a focal individual's and a dyadic interaction partner's time pressure perceptions for the focal individual's time-oriented and relationship-oriented behavior toward the partner. Chapter 4's focus lies on these two types of informal leadership behavior because prior research has highlighted the relevance of such behavior for individuals' interpersonal relations (e.g., Janicik & Bartel, 2003; McAllister, 1995) and joint goal achievement (e.g., Mohammed & Nadkarni, 2011; Ng & van Dyne, 2005).

Chapter 4 employs a multi-study design, adopting two distinct experimental approaches across different cultural contexts to test its hypotheses. In particular, this includes an online scenario study based on a sample of 178 participants from the US as well as a laboratory experiment based on a sample of 114 students from a German university. Results reveal the important, conjoint role of a focal individual's and his or her interaction partner's time pressure perceptions for shaping the focal individual's time-oriented and relationship-oriented behavior toward the partner. Hence, Chapter 4 extends existing knowledge on informal influence processes by uncovering how the interplay between an actor's and a

partner’s (potentially divergent) time pressure perceptions shape an actor’s choice to engage in specific informal leadership behavior in dyadic, cooperative task settings.

Finally, **Chapter 5** concludes with a summary and discussion of the main findings of the dissertation, thereby illustrating how the three separate studies presented in the previous chapters help to address the dissertation’s overall research questions. It critically reflects on the dissertation’s major limitations, points toward possible future research directions, and highlights key theoretical as well as practical implications. Figure 1.1 presents the overall structure of this dissertation as an overview.

**Figure 1.1:**  
**Overall Structure of the Dissertation**



## 2 Looking up with a Frown: Status, Negative Affect, and Enhancement Behavior in Groups

Sebastian Hohmann<sup>a</sup> and Frank Walter<sup>a</sup>

### Abstract

This manuscript aims to address existing ambiguity on the behavioral consequences of (low) status in groups by examining mechanisms and moderating factors in the linkage between individual members' lack of status and their attempts at improving their status position. Specifically, we propose an indirect relationship between a group member's lack of status and enhancement behavior, through his or her high-arousal negative affective reactions, and we cast a member's status striving as a key motivational boundary condition for this indirect association. We tested our predictions across three studies, namely (1) a scenario experiment, (2) a critical-incident recall design, and (3) an organizational survey study. Results demonstrated an interactive relationship of perceived status and status striving with high-arousal negative affect, such that lower (rather than higher) status triggered high-arousal negative affective reactions among individuals with higher (but not lower) status striving. Moreover, a group member's high-arousal negative affect was positively related with his or her enhancement behavior. Together, these findings shed new light on key psychological mechanisms and contingency factors that may explicate individuals' diverse behavioral reactions toward a lack of status in groups.

*Keywords:* status, status striving, negative affect, enhancement behavior

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Status differentiation is a pervasive element of social interaction in groups, with some individuals enjoying greater respect, prestige, and esteem (i.e., higher status) among their group members than others (Anderson & Brown, 2010). Higher status is associated with a range of advantages, including greater social support (van der Vegt, Bunderson, & Oosterhof, 2006) and superior access to important resources (Barkow, 1975). By contrast, lacking status (i.e., enjoying little respect and appreciation within a group; Fast, Halevy, & Galinsky, 2012) goes along with considerable challenges and disadvantages, including increased blame for group failures (Weisband, Schneider, & Connolly, 1995) and diminished opportunities for resource attainment (Magee & Galinsky, 2008).

Given these important consequences, it is likely that an individual's perceptions of his or her status in a group will trigger distinct behavioral reactions (Spataro, Pettit, Sauer, & Lount, Jr., 2014). Individuals that perceive a relative lack of status may act differently from higher-status individuals, in particular, and these reactions may enable them to improve their social standing or, if ineffective, may reinforce their precarious position (Hays & Bendersky, 2015). Thus, it seems critical to understand the behavioral consequences associated with an individual's perceived status and, more specifically, with a perceived lack of status, given that the majority of a group's members are located at the lower ranks of a typical (i.e., pyramid-shaped or centralized) status hierarchy (Magee & Galinsky, 2008). Despite scholars' repeated calls for studies on this issue (e.g., Blader & Chen, 2012; Hays & Bendersky, 2015), however, empirical research has remained relatively scant and, perhaps more importantly, the existing literature appears inconclusive.

On the one hand, the functional approaches toward status traditionally employed in research on status in organizations would predict status-consistent behavior (e.g., Correll & Ridgeway, 2006). From this perspective, lower-status individuals may face strong social expectations to act rather passively and submissively, which may lead them to accept their

position and, thus, to largely refrain from proactive attempts at advancing their status (e.g., Anderson, Ames, & Gosling, 2008; Anderson & Brown, 2010; Anderson, Srivastava, Beer, Spataro, & Chatman, 2006). On the other hand, alternative approaches would predict status-inconsistent behavior, such that individuals with relatively low status in their groups may tend toward assertive (or even aggressive; Griskevicius, Tybur, Gangestad, Perea, Shapiro, & Kenrick, 2009) acts. Low-status compensation theory (Henry, 2009), for example, postulates that individuals develop a sense of self-worth based on their status positions, leading individuals with lower status to feel disrespected and unappreciated and, thus, triggering negative feelings, heightened vigilance, and a broad motivation to counter such ego threats (see also Fast et al., 2012). Hence, rather than passively accepting their position, lower-status individuals may engage in proactive efforts to improve this problematic situation. Taken together, the literature clearly suggests that perceptions of lower status may shape individuals' behavior – but it remains ambiguous about the specific form of these behavioral consequences.

The present article strives to address this issue by examining the role of an individual's perceived status for his or her behavior aimed at proactively signaling (and even exaggerating) one's competence, expertise, and value toward others (i.e., enhancement behavior; Anderson, Brion, Moore, & Kennedy, 2012; Lee et al., 1999). Scholars have consistently highlighted competence perceptions as a primary means of status attainment (Anderson & Kilduff, 2009; Berger et al., 1972), such that emphasizing one's expertise and accomplishments can critically advance an individual's status (Leary et al., 2014). In fact, research has linked strong displays of confidence with increased status, even if such displays exaggerate an individual's actual competencies and task contributions (Anderson et al., 2012; Kennedy, Anderson, & Moore, 2013). Hence, enhancement behavior may represent a

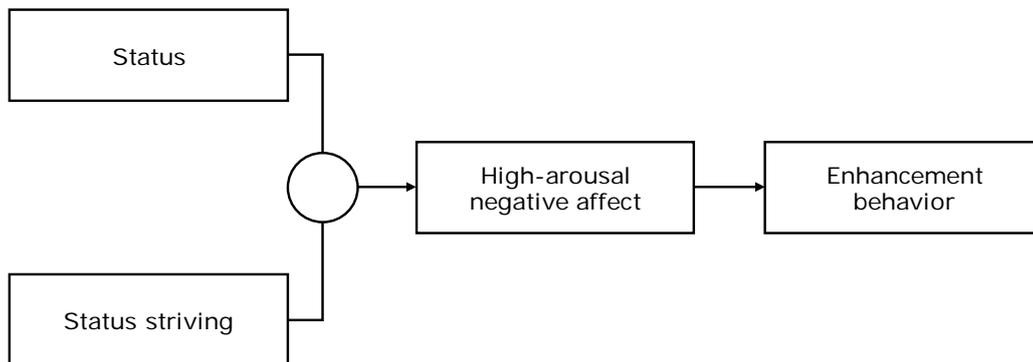
particularly important and effective type of “status move” (Cho, Overbeck, & Carnevale, 2011: 115; Owens & Sutton, 2001).

As noted before, however, the existing literature leads to inconsistent predictions as to whether individuals with lower status perceptions will exhibit more or less enhancement behavior than those with higher status. To resolve this conundrum, the present article investigates key mechanisms and boundary conditions in the relationship between status perceptions and such behavior. Drawing from affective events theory (AET; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), we cast an individual’s negative affective reactions (i.e., unpleasant mid-range emotional experiences, located between short-term moods and emotions and stable affective traits; George & Zhou, 2002, 2007) as a critical mediator that may transfer the behavioral implications associated with low-status perceptions. Specifically, research has shown that *high-arousal negative affect* (i.e., unpleasant emotional experiences characterized by high activation levels and energy; Watson & Tellegen, 1985) is particularly likely to induce individuals to take initiative and exhibit proactive behavior (Leith & Baumeister, 1996; Mano, 1994). Hence, we believe that high-arousal negative affective experiences represent a key explanatory mechanism linking an individual’s perceptions of low status with his or her enhancement behavior.

This rationale builds on the notion that status processes are ripe with emotions, such that an individual’s social standing within a relevant group influences his or her affective experiences (Lovaglia & Houser, 1996; Tiedens, Ellsworth, & Mesquita, 2000). Given its potentially detrimental implications for the respective individual’s goal attainment, in particular, a relative lack of status may represent an important feature of the work environment that increases the likelihood of adverse emotional events (cf. Elfenbein, 2007; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), thus triggering strong, high-arousal negative emotionality. This intense negative affect, in turn, may activate an individual’s motivation to engage in

enhancement behavior (as a type of affect-driven behavior; Weiss & Beal, 2005) to improve his or her status position and, thus, to cope with and ameliorate such unfavorable feelings. On this basis, we propose an individual's status perceptions to indirectly associate with his or her tendency to engage in enhancement behavior, through the individual's high-arousal negative affective reactions.

Importantly, however, AET further emphasizes the role of dispositional factors as key boundary conditions, such that individuals' values, preferences, and personality characteristics may moderate the relationship between features of the work environment (and associated affective events) and individuals' affective reactions (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Drawing from this theoretical backdrop, we cast an individual's *status striving* (i.e., the motivational desire to pursue high status in one's social relations; Barrick, Stewart, & Piotrowski, 2002) as a key contingency factor for the role of low-status perceptions. Although the need for status may represent a fundamental human motive (Anderson, Hildreth, & Howland, 2015), research has shown that people attach differing value to issues of power, dominance, and social influence within status hierarchies and, thus, differ in their tendency to pursue high status (Griskevicius & Kenrick, 2013; Neel, Kenrick, White, & Neuberg, 2016). As shown in Figure 2.1, our overall conceptual model therefore suggests that such differences in individuals' status striving shape their high-arousal negative affective reactions toward a perceived lack of status and, thus, critically influence the indirect linkage between an individual's status perceptions and his or her enhancement behavior.

**Figure 2.1:****The Conceptual Model**

By examining this model across three independent studies (i.e., a scenario experiment, a critical-incident recall design, and an organizational survey study), this research addresses scholars' calls to further investigate the behavioral consequences associated with individuals' (low) status perceptions (e.g., Blader & Chen, 2012; Hays & Bendersky, 2015). Our key goal is to reconcile seemingly contradictory perspectives, in this regard, by introducing high-arousal negative affect and status striving as key mechanisms and boundary conditions, respectively. In doing so, this investigation aims to shed new light on *when* and *why* inferior status perceptions may (or may not) associate with enhancement behavior aimed at elevating one's status position, thus unravelling the psychological complexity underlying individuals' behavioral reactions toward a perceived lack of status in relevant groups.

## **2.1 Theory and Hypotheses Development**

### **2.1.1 The Interactive Role of Status and Status Striving for High-Arousal Negative Affect**

We draw from AET to suggest that an individual's perceived status and status striving will interactively associate with his or her high-arousal negative affective

experiences.<sup>1</sup> Although AET emphasizes the role of discrete affective events as proximal causes of emotions, it also acknowledges the relevance of environmental features in this regard, arguing that characteristics of the work context may shape an employee's affective experiences "by making certain events...more or less likely" (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996: 12). Elfenbein (2007) has noted, accordingly, that any aspect of the work environment that is personally salient for an individual may represent a relevant emotional stimulus. Moreover, AET holds that dispositional factors (i.e., individual differences) may critically shape the affective consequences of specific work environment features and their associated events (Wegge, van Dick, Fisher, West, & Dawson, 2006; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). What is perceived as highly salient by one person may appear largely irrelevant for another individual and, thus, similar work environment features and events may cause distinct affective reactions across different persons.

More specifically, AET builds on theories of cognitive appraisal (Frijda, 1993; Lazarus, 1991) to explicate the origins of an individual's affective experiences at work (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Appraisal theorists have argued that affective reactions to a specific situation depend on two key factors (Lazarus, 1991; Smith & Lazarus, 1993). First, for any affective response to ensue, individuals need to appraise the situation as relevant for themselves (Moors, Ellsworth, Scherer, & Frijda, 2013). And second, for any situation appraised as relevant, the resulting affective response (e.g., positive vs. negative) hinges on the extent to which the situation promotes or hinders one's goal attainment (Ellsworth & Scherer, 2003). Building on these insights, AET suggests that individual differences in desires, needs, and personality traits may decisively influence whether an individual appraises a specific work situation (and the associated events) as self-relevant and, thus, such

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<sup>1</sup> Although we believe high-arousal negative affect is particularly important in the present conceptual framework, we also explored the potential roles of low-arousal negative affect as well as high-arousal and low-arousal positive affect. These results are summarized in the Supplementary Analyses section.

characteristics may determine both the type and the strength of the resulting affective reactions (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996; Weiss & Kurek, 2003). We argue, therefore, that an individual's perceived status (as a type of work environment feature with potential affective consequences; Kemper, 1991) and status striving (as a type of dispositional trait related to the self-relevance of status considerations; Barrick et al., 2002) should interactively associate with his or her experiences of high-arousal negative affect.

To the extent an individual appraises status situations as self-relevant, in particular, we suggest that the affective stimuli and events resulting from perceptions of being in a low-status position have the potential to evoke intense negative emotionality. After all, lower status may entail a number of personal disadvantages, including diminished social esteem, disrespectful treatment from others, and inferior access to organizational and group resources (Anderson et al., 2015; Spataro et al., 2014). In many cases, a perceived lack of status is likely, therefore, to trigger adverse events and experiences that severely hinder an individual's goal attainment and threaten his or her well-being. Based on these important consequences, it seems plausible to assume that being in low-status position may evoke pronounced high-arousal negative feelings.

Importantly, however, it is unlikely that all individuals will appraise status situations as equally relevant for themselves. As noted before, individuals differ in the salience they attach to issues of power, status, and social standing, and the respective motivational orientations can shape individuals' reactions (Neel et al., 2016). Specifically, the degree to which an individual is concerned about status issues (as reflected in his or her status striving; Barrick et al., 2002) may substantially alter the individual's responses toward situations of lower vs. higher status (Blader & Chen, 2011, 2012). Consistent with AET's notion of a moderating role of individual dispositions (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), we therefore

propose that status striving will critically influence the extent to which an individual's perceptions of relatively low status trigger high-arousal negative affective reactions.

People with higher (rather than lower) status striving attach greater personal value to their placement within social hierarchies (Flynn, Reagans, Amanatullah, & Ames, 2006). Such individuals urgently desire social esteem, influence, and respect, and both the advantages associated with higher status and the disadvantages associated with lower status should be particularly salient for them (Mehta, Jones, & Josephs, 2008; Newman, Sellers, & Josephs, 2005). Hence, individuals with higher status striving should be more emotionally reactive toward their perceived status and the associated affective events. When they find themselves in a lower-ranking status position, these individuals may experience an acute sense of threat to their ego and self-worth, whereas higher-status situations may affirm their motivational goals (Barrick, Mount, & Li, 2013; Griskevicius et al., 2009). As such, situations of inferior status may trigger more pronounced high-arousal negative feelings among these individuals, as compared with higher status situations (Josephs, Sellers, Newman, & Mehta, 2006). We therefore anticipate a negative relationship between status perceptions and experiences of high-arousal negative affect for individuals with relatively high status striving.

With lower status striving, by contrast, individuals exhibit lower concern for their status position and its (dis)advantages, such that status considerations should have less relevance for personal goal achievement (Barrick et al., 2002). Consequently, in line with AET, people with lower status striving should be less emotionally reactive toward their perceived status and the associated workplace events, experiencing similar emotionality in both lower-status and higher-status situations. These individuals may feel relatively comfortable even in lower-status positions, in particular, and they may not perceive limited status as a relevant threat to their self-worth (Barrick et al., 2013; Josephs et al., 2006).

Hence, a lack of status is less likely to trigger pronounced high-arousal negative affect among individuals with lower rather than higher status striving. Consistent with this notion, scholars have argued that lower-status individuals tend to show strong negative emotional reactions primarily when they view themselves as deserving of a better status position (Kemper, 2006; Leary et al., 2014). Building on this backdrop, we expect that individuals' high-arousal negative affective experiences will not differ markedly across lower vs. higher status situations among individuals with relatively low status striving. Taken together, we hypothesize:

*Hypothesis 1: Perceived status and status striving are interactively related with an individual's high-arousal negative affect, such that the negative relationship between perceived status and high-arousal negative affect is more pronounced among individuals with higher rather than lower status striving.*

### **2.1.2 High-Arousal Negative Affect and Enhancement Behavior**

Building on a vast body of evidence that has shown individuals' affect to shape their subsequent actions (for reviews, see Ashkanasy & Humphrey, 2011; Elfenbein, 2007), we further propose that high-arousal negative affect will promote an individual's enhancement behavior. Drawing from appraisal theory (Lazarus, 1991; Smith & Lazarus, 1993), AET accordingly holds that emotional experiences can trigger "affect driven behaviors" as a direct coping response (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996: 52). Specifically, high-arousal negative affect may serve as a salient signal that problems and threats are imminent, such that decisive action is required to counter these issues (Foo, Uy, & Baron, 2009; Frijda, 1986). When experiencing high-arousal negative affect, individuals may therefore exhibit proactive, problem-focused coping behaviors to address (and potentially rectify) the troublesome situation that has created this negative emotionality (Ashton-James & Ashkanasy, 2005; Frijda, 1986). Past research has provided support for this notion by highlighting, for

example, that high-arousal negative affect can lead to increased risk taking (e.g., Leith & Baumeister, 1996; Mano, 1994).

Applying this logic to high-arousal negative affect originating from an individual's perceived lack of status, our conceptual framework would suggest that such negative emotionality may evoke targeted behavioral responses aimed at enhancing one's status position (cf. Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Consistent with research on status moves (Cho et al., 2011; Owens & Sutton, 2001), we propose that enhancement behavior may represent an important behavioral option in this context. This research has highlighted behaviors aimed at (over-)emphasizing one's value, competences, and qualities toward other group members as an important strategy for status improvement (Cho et al., 2011; Kim, Pettit, & Reitman, 2019). Hence, enhancement behavior may appear as a useful instrument for improving one's unfavorable low-status situation (Leary et al., 2014) and, thus, for ameliorating the resulting high-arousal negative affect. We anticipate, accordingly, that such intense negative affective experiences triggered by perceptions of relatively low status will lead individuals to exhibit more enhancement behavior.

*Hypothesis 2: High-arousal negative affect is positively related with an individual's enhancement behavior.*

### **2.1.3 The Conditional Mediating Role of High-Arousal Negative Affect**

Together, the arguments outlined above point toward a complex pattern of conditional indirect relations (i.e., moderated mediation; Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007), such that an individual's high-arousal negative affect may represent a key mediating mechanism that links the interactive role of perceived status and status striving, on the one hand, with enhancement behavior, on the other. In other words, we do not necessarily expect a direct, interactive association of perceived status and status striving with enhancement behavior. Rather, consistent with recent theorizing that has argued individuals' feelings to

transfer the behavioral consequences associated with their status position (Anicich, Fast, Halevy, & Galinsky, 2016), we anticipate this conditional relation to flow through a focal individual's high-arousal negative affect (i.e., a "sequence of events" model, as depicted in Figure 2.1; cf. Cole, Walter, & Bruch, 2008: 946; see also Shrout & Bolger, 2002). This notion is in line with the "macro structure" suggested by AET (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996: 12). This overall model casts individuals' moods and emotions as central mechanisms that connect features and stimuli from the work environment (in our case, perceived status) and the associated affective events with individuals' subsequent attitudes and behavioral reactions, and it depicts individuals' dispositional characteristics (in our case, status striving) as key boundary conditions.

Building on this conceptual fundament, we propose a conditional indirect association, such that (a) perceived status and status striving interactively relate with an individual's high-arousal negative affect (Hypothesis 1), and (b) such negative affect, in turn, positively relates with an individual's enhancement behavior (Hypothesis 2). With status striving suggested to amplify the negative relationship between status and high-arousal negative affect, we expect a similar pattern to apply for the indirect relation between status and enhancement behavior, through high-arousal negative affect. Hence, we propose:

*Hypothesis 3: Perceived status and status striving are indirectly and interactively related with an individual's enhancement behavior, through high-arousal negative affect. Specifically, the negative, indirect relationship between perceived status and enhancement behavior, as transferred by high-arousal negative affect, is more pronounced among individuals with higher rather than lower status striving.*

## **2.2 Overview of the Present Research**

The above reasoning casts perceived status and status striving as antecedents of an individual's high-arousal negative affect, which in turn is suggested to promote enhancement

behavior (see Figure 2.1). We implemented a multi-study design to examine these linkages (cf. Wright & Sweeney, 2016), including both experimental approaches (to support the proposed causal directions) and a correlational field study (for greater external validity). Specifically, Study 1 used a scenario approach and Study 2 drew on a critical-incident recall method (cf. Flanagan, 1954) to test our conceptual model using different experimental designs across different cultural contexts. Moreover, Study 3 aimed to constructively replicate the results of Studies 1 and 2 in an organizational field setting, using a correlational survey approach to corroborate our findings' generalizability.

## **2.3 Study 1**

### **2.3.1 Design and Participants**

Study 1 examined our hypotheses using an experimental scenario design as a first step toward disentangling causal relations (cf. De Cremer, 2006). The experiment used a one-factorial between-subjects design, such that participants were randomly assigned to either a high-status or a low-status condition. Moreover, we measured participants' status striving as a moderating factor prior to the manipulation, and we measured participants' high-arousal negative affect and enhancement behavior after the manipulation. Two-hundred individuals recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) participated in the study in exchange for a small monetary compensation. Prior research has shown that data collected through such online methods does not systematically differ in validity and reliability, as compared with data collected in laboratory settings (e.g., Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011; Goodman, Cryder, & Cheema, 2013; Peer, Brandimarte, Samat, & Acquisti, 2017). To further ensure data quality, we included attention checks and carefully screened the data for possible indicators of inattentive responding (i.e., unrealistically quick survey completion).

Of the 200 individuals that had initially participated in our study, three individuals responded incorrectly to our attention checks (see below) and seven participants completed the questionnaire too quickly.<sup>2</sup> Following prior recommendations (e.g., Meade & Craig, 2012), these persons were excluded from further analyses, for an effective sample size of 190 participants (94 in the low-status condition, 96 in the high-status condition). Of these participants, 54% were male and 46% female, and their mean age was 40.08 years (SD = 10.34). On average, they had 18.90 years of work experience (SD = 10.47) and 63% had a college degree or higher. All of the participants were located in the United States.

### **2.3.2 Status Striving Measure**

Before presenting the experimental scenario and status manipulation, we used an 8-item measure from Flynn et al. (2006) to capture participants' status striving (see also Chang, Chow, & Woolley, 2017; Park, Chae, & Choi, 2017). A sample item is "I want others to respect me and hold me in high esteem" (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree;  $\alpha = .93$ ).

### **2.3.3 Baseline Scenario and Status Manipulation**

Building on a scenario by Hays and Bendersky (2015), participants were then asked to imagine that they were part of a cross-functional work group, with each member possessing specialized expertise necessary to complete the group's tasks. Also, they were told that this group had a clear status hierarchy. Subsequently, participants read the status manipulation (also based on Hays & Bendersky, 2015). In the high (low) status condition, participants read the following excerpt, "*You are [not] seen as the leader of the group because of your seniority – you have been with the organization longer [more briefly] than anyone else in the group. Accordingly, during your first couple of meetings with the group, you have been treated with a great deal more [less] respect and status than other group*

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<sup>2</sup> Whereas the average completion time for the study was 9.96 minutes, these seven participants completed the study in less than three minutes. Importantly, our pre-tests showed that it was impossible to read all items and instructions in this time. We note, however, that the results and conclusions remained robust when including or excluding these seven participants.

*members. The other group members looked up to you [did not look up to you] and often [seldom] deferred to your opinion.”*

### **2.3.4 Measures of High Arousal Negative Affect and Enhancement Behavior**

After the status manipulation, participants were asked to think about the scenario and assess how they would feel in this situation. Specifically, we used five items from Van Katwyk, Fox, Spector, and Kelloway (2000) to measure high arousal negative affect. This measure has frequently been used in previous research (e.g., Kunze & Menges, 2017; Walter & van der Vegt, 2013). Following circumplex models of affect (e.g., Russell, 1980; Watson & Tellegen, 1985), it enables researchers to capture individuals’ emotional experiences along relatively broad affect categories characterized by distinct levels of arousal (i.e., activation – high vs. low) and pleasantness (i.e., valence – positive vs. negative; Van Katwyk et al., 2000). Sample items for high-arousal negative affect, in particular, include “angry”, “disgusted”, and “furious” (1 = not at all, 5 = extremely often;  $\alpha = .84$ ).

Moreover, we used four items from Lee et al. (1999) to measure enhancement behavior (see also Hart, Adams, Burton, & Tortoriello, 2017; Hewitt et al., 2003). Consistent with our research focus, this instrument captures a type of deliberate, proactive status move aimed at (over)emphasizing one’s value for the group, competences, and task contributions (cf. Schlenker, 1980). Participants were asked to assess how they would act in the described situation, and we slightly adapted the items accordingly. A sample item is, “When I succeed at a task, I would emphasize to others how important the task was” (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree;  $\alpha = .78$ ). We omitted the item, “I correct people who underestimate the value of gifts that I give to them” because it did not fit our scenario description.

### **2.3.5 Attention Check and Manipulation Check**

To avoid potential problems with careless responding (cf. Curran, 2015; Meade & Craig, 2012), we used two instructed response items (e.g., “This is a control question as an

attention check – please select ‘never’”). We excluded three respondents who did not respond correctly to either of these questions from further analyses. Further, to examine our manipulation’s viability, we asked the participants, “How would you rate your personal status in the described situation?” (1 = very low, 5 = very high). A one-way ANOVA indicated that individuals in the high-status condition reported significantly higher status ( $M = 4.72$ ,  $SD = 0.54$ ) than individuals in the low-status condition ( $M = 1.38$ ,  $SD = .74$ ;  $F(1, 188) = 1280.05$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .87$ ).

### 2.3.6 Control Variables

We considered a number of potential covariates when investigating the hypothesized associations. Regarding the relationship of status and status striving with high-arousal negative affect, past research has found that individuals’ age and gender can shape status processes (Bunderson, 2003; Ridgeway, 1991). We therefore considered participants’ age (in years) and gender (1 = female, 2 = male) as potential control variables. Moreover, we captured communion striving (i.e., the motivation to obtain acceptance in personal relationships and get along with others; Barrick et al., 2013) as a possible covariate to illustrate the unique role of status striving, using nine items from Barrick et al. (2002; e.g., “I focus my attention on getting along with others”; 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree;  $\alpha = .89$ ).

Further, when investigating the proposed relationship between individuals’ high-arousal negative affect and enhancement behavior, we again considered individuals’ age and gender as potential covariates because these characteristics may influence the use of behavioral tactics aimed at proactively influencing one’s status position within a group (Bolino & Turnley, 2003). Additionally, we considered participants’ low-arousal negative affect as well as high-arousal and low-arousal positive affect during the scenario situation to corroborate the unique importance of high-arousal negative affect as a mediating mechanism

in our model. We measured all of these affective states with items from Van Katwyk et al. (2000), using five items for low-arousal negative affect (e.g., bored, depressed;  $\alpha = .84$ ), four items for high-arousal positive affect (e.g., excited, enthusiastic;  $\alpha = .93$ ), and five items for low-arousal positive affect (e.g., content, satisfied;  $\alpha = .94$ ). As for high-arousal negative affect, the participants were asked to assess how they would feel in the respective situation when rating these items.

### 2.3.7 Results

**Descriptive statistics.** Table 2.1 presents means, standard deviations, and correlations for all Study 1 variables. In terms of control variables, individuals' age was negatively correlated with high-arousal negative affect ( $r = -.21, p < .01$ ), but the relationships between high-arousal negative affect and individuals' gender ( $r = .04, p = .60$ ) and communion striving ( $r = .11, p = .13$ ) were not significant. Moreover, individuals' age ( $r = -.18, p < .05$ ) and low-arousal negative affect ( $r = .34, p < .01$ ), but not gender ( $r = -.00, p = .99$ ), high-arousal positive affect ( $r = -.03, p = .66$ ) and low-arousal positive affect ( $r = -.14, p = .06$ ), were significantly related with enhancement behavior. Hence, we controlled for individuals' age when examining high-arousal negative affect as dependent variable, whereas we used both individuals' age and low-arousal negative affect as covariates when examining enhancement behavior as dependent variable. We excluded gender, communion striving, and high-arousal as well as low-arousal positive affect when testing the study hypotheses to avoid power problems and biased parameter estimates (Becker, Atinc, Breugh, Carlson, Edwards, & Spector, 2016; Bernerth, Cole, Taylor, & Walker, 2018). Notably, however, the results remained virtually unchanged when omitting or including all of the control variables. We mean-centered all continuous predictor variables before hypotheses testing.

**Table 2.1:**  
**Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations (Studies 1 and 2)**

	Study 1		Study 2		<i>r</i>										
	<i>M</i>	<i>(SD)</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>(SD)</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
1. Age	40.08	(10.34)	32.56	(11.74)											
2. Gender <sup>a</sup>	1.54	(.50)	1.38	(.49)	.05										
3. Status <sup>b</sup>	.51	(.50)	.49	(.50)	.12	.16 <sup>#</sup>									
4. Communion striving	2.94	(.79)	3.28	(.58)	-.08	-.11	-.08								
5. Status striving	3.37	(.88)	3.69	(.54)	-.14	.03	.10	.45 <sup>**</sup>							
6. Low-arousal positive affect	2.88	(1.23)	2.91	(1.02)	.05	.27 <sup>**</sup>	.44 <sup>**</sup>	-.18 <sup>#</sup>	.01						
7. High-arousal positive affect	2.65	(1.24)	2.92	(1.11)	.11	.11	.57 <sup>**</sup>	-.01	.14	.72 <sup>**</sup>					
8. Low-arousal negative affect	1.59	(.77)	1.94	(.86)	-.07	-.14	-.46 <sup>**</sup>	.10	.07	-.59 <sup>**</sup>	-.51 <sup>**</sup>				
9. High-arousal negative affect	1.47	(.62)	1.81	(.67)	-.02	-.07	-.27 <sup>**</sup>	.09	.02	-.54 <sup>**</sup>	-.26 <sup>**</sup>	.78 <sup>**</sup>			
10. Enhancement behavior	1.90	(.77)	2.31	(.76)	.07	.15	.09	.14	.09	-.15	-.04	.26 <sup>**</sup>	.36 <sup>**</sup>		

*Note.* Study 1: Correlations above the diagonal;  $n = 190$ . Study 2: Correlations below the diagonal;  $n = 115$ .

<sup>#</sup> $p < .10$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$  (two-tailed).

<sup>a</sup> Gender (1 = female, 2 = male).

<sup>b</sup> Experimentally manipulated (0 = low status condition; 1 = high status condition).

**Hypotheses testing.** Hypothesis 1 predicted that status and status striving will interactively relate with an individual's high-arousal negative affect.<sup>3</sup> We used hierarchical moderated regression analysis to examine this prediction. Specifically, we entered participants' age (as a control variable) together with participants' status condition (0 = low status, 1 = high status) and status striving in Step 1, and we inserted the status  $\times$  status striving interaction in Step 2. The respective findings are depicted in Table 2.2.

Consistent with prior research (Chattopadhyay, Finn, & Ashkanasy, 2010; Kemper, 1991), the results yielded a significant main effect of status on high-arousal negative affect ( $B = -.46$ ,  $SE = .08$ ;  $p < .01$ ). Importantly, this main effect was qualified by a significant status  $\times$  status striving interaction ( $B = -.22$ ,  $SE = .09$ ;  $p < .05$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .03$ ). As depicted in Table 2.2, individuals with higher status striving (+ 1 SD) indicated that they would experience more high-arousal negative affect under conditions of lower rather than higher status (simple slope:  $B = -.66$ ,  $SE = .12$ ;  $p < .01$ ). This relationship was less pronounced for individuals with lower status striving (- 1 SD; simple slope:  $B = -.27$ ,  $SE = .11$ ;  $p < .05$ ). Hence, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

Hypothesis 2 anticipated high-arousal negative affect to positively associate with enhancement behavior. As shown in Table 2.2, a hierarchical regression analysis (controlling for age, low-arousal negative affect, status, status striving, and the respective interaction term) corroborated this prediction ( $B = .40$ ,  $SE = .14$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was supported.

Finally, Hypothesis 3 proposed a conditional indirect relationship (cf. Preacher et al., 2007), whereby the strength of the indirect link between status and enhancement behavior,

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<sup>3</sup> For exploratory reasons, we also tested whether status striving may serve as a moderator for the direct relationship between perceived status and enhancement behavior. In line with our theoretical framework, however, we did not find consistent evidence for a direct interactive relation of status and status striving with enhancement behavior across our three studies. Details on these additional analyses are available from the first author.

through high-arousal negative affect, is conditional on an individual's status striving. The pattern of results for Hypotheses 1 and 2, as depicted before, offers tentative support for this complex association. More directly corroborating this conclusion, the respective index of moderated mediation (cf. Hayes, 2015) was statistically significant, as indicated by a 95% bootstrap confidence interval (based on 5,000 resamples) that did not include zero (*estimate* = -.09, *SE* = .05; 95% CI = -.22, -.01). This indicates that status striving indeed moderated the indirect association between status and enhancement behavior, through high-arousal negative affect. The conditional indirect relationship was more pronounced for individuals with higher status striving (+1 SD: *B* = -.26, *SE* = .11, 95% CI = -.50, -.08) than for individuals with lower status striving (-1 SD: *B* = -.11, *SE* = .07, 95% CI = -.26, -.00). Hence, Hypothesis 3 was supported.

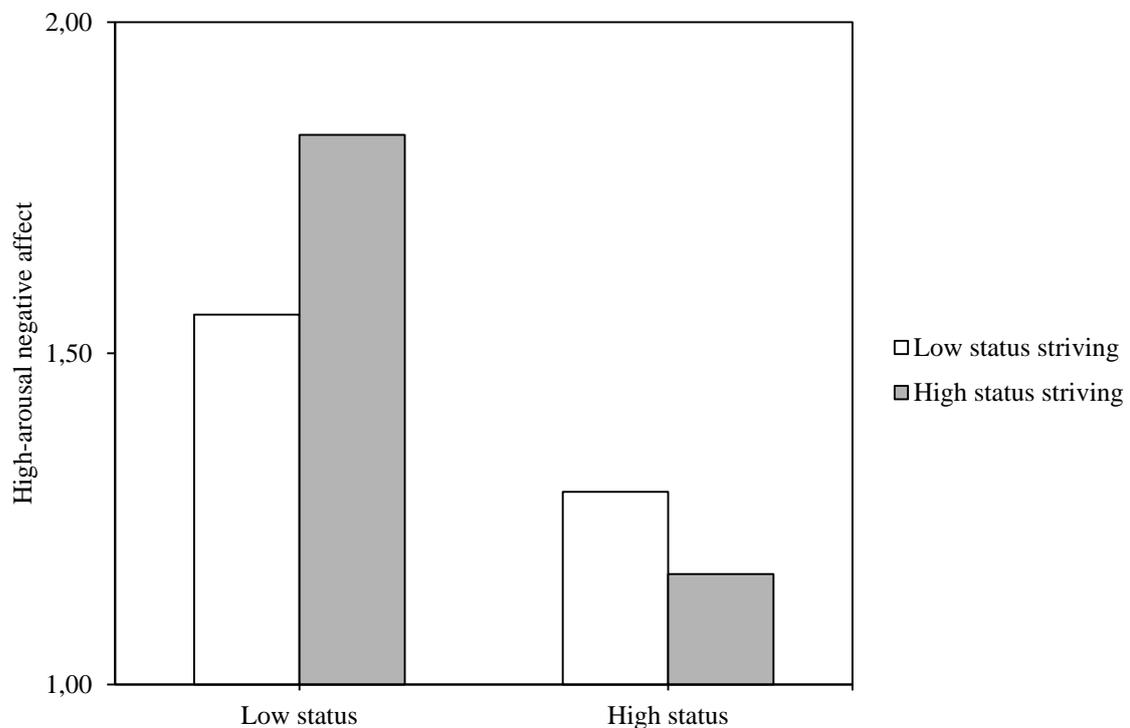
**Table 2.2:**  
**Regression Results (Study 1)**

Variables	High-arousal negative affect				Enhancement behavior			
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 1		Model 2	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
<i>Control variable</i>								
Age	-.01**	.00	-.01*	.00	-.01*	.01	-.01*	.01
Low-arousal negative affect					.39***	.08	.14	.11
<i>Main effects</i>								
Status	-.46**	.08	-.47***	.08	.22#	.12	.21#	.11
Status striving	.05	.05	.15*	.06	.12	.08	.11	.08
<i>Interaction</i>								
Status x status striving			-.22*	.09	.29*	.12	.30*	.11
<i>Mediator</i>								
High-arousal negative affect							.40**	.14
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> (Adjusted <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> )	.19** (.18)		.22** (.20)		.25** (.23)		.29** (.26)	
<i>ΔR</i> <sup>2</sup>			.03*				.04**	

Note. *n* = 190. Unstandardized coefficients are shown.

#*p* < .10; \* *p* < .05; \*\* *p* < .01 (two-tailed).

**Figure 2.2:**  
**Interactive Relationship of Status and Status Striving with High-Arousal Negative Affect (Study 1)**



### 2.3.8 Discussion of Study 1

The first study demonstrated that individuals higher (rather than lower) in status striving experienced more high-arousal negative affect under conditions of lower rather than higher status. Moreover, these high-arousal negative affective reactions transferred the interactive association of status and status striving with enhancement behavior. These results represent a first step toward better understanding the complex linkage between low-status perceptions and individuals' behavioral reactions and toward resolving existing ambiguity in this regard. At the same time, we acknowledge that the present study has a number of limitations. For example, the study sample was drawn from one country (i.e., the United States), which raises possible concerns about cross-cultural generalizability. Moreover, questions about external validity may arise because we used a hypothetical scenario design

and measured participants' self-rated inclination toward high-arousal negative affect and enhancement behavior, rather than capturing individuals' actual affective experiences and behavior. Hence, although scenario approaches may have benefits in terms of experimental control (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014), it is important to provide further evidence using alternative study contexts and designs to support our findings' robustness and viability. We conducted Study 2 to address these issues and constructively replicate Study 1's findings. Specifically, we collected the data for Study 2 in a different cultural context (i.e., Germany) and employed an alternative critical-incident recall methodology (Flanagan, 1954; for similar approaches see, e.g., Aquino, Tripp, & Bies, 2006; Bobocel, 2013).

## **2.4 Study 2**

### **2.4.1 Design and Participants**

We recruited a sample of 124 individuals (via social media postings) for an on-line study in which we randomly asked the participants to recall either a high-status or a low-status situation. Hence, we again employed a one-factorial between-subjects design, but this time individuals referred to an actual incident from their past (rather than a hypothetical scenario) and reported their reactions. As in Study 1, we measured status striving prior to the status manipulation, whereas high-arousal negative affect and enhancement behavior were measured after the status manipulation. Participation was voluntarily, anonymous, and based on informed consent; the participants received no financial compensation.

We excluded nine participants because they did not respond to the manipulation check (see below). Of the remaining 115 individuals, 38% were male and 62% female, and their mean age was 32.56 years ( $SD = 11.74$ ). The majority of the participants (84%) were currently employed, and 34% had a college degree or higher. On average, participants in an employment relationship had worked for their current organization for 8.26 years ( $SD = 9.46$ ). As mentioned before, all of the participants were located in Germany; hence, we

presented all study materials in German, using a back-translation procedure for the measurement items (Brislin, 1980).

#### **2.4.2 Status Striving Measure**

We used the same measure as in Study 1 to capture participants' status striving (cf. Flynn et al., 2006). Cronbach's alpha in the present study was .71.

#### **2.4.3 Status Manipulation**

We manipulated individuals' perceived status using an adapted version of the procedure described by Duguid and Goncalo (2015) (Duguid & Goncalo, 2015). Participants in the high (low) status condition read: *“Please recall a particular incident in which you were part of a group and in that group your status relative to others was high [low], that is at the top [bottom] of the status hierarchy. With status we mean the extent to which people respected and looked up to you or deferred to your opinion because you had a lot of experience or competence. Please describe this situation in which you had high [low] status – what happened, how you felt, and so forth.”* Consistent with previous research (e.g., Bowles & Gelfand, 2010; Galinsky, Gruenfeld, & Magee, 2003), we asked the participants to briefly describe this incident in writing to strengthen the manipulation. Typical high-status incidents referred to group situations in which the focal individual and his or her opinions were highly valued and appreciated by others. Typical low-status incidents, by contrast, included situations in which individuals' opinions and ideas were ignored, for example because they were newcomers in an existing group.

#### **2.4.4 Measures of High Arousal Negative Affect and Enhancement Behavior**

After the status manipulation, participants reported their high-arousal negative affect during the situation they had described, using the same five items from Van Katwyk et al. (2000) as in Study 1 ( $\alpha = .78$ ). Moreover, the participants rated the extent to which they had used enhancement behavior. We again used four items from Lee et al. (1999) to capture such

behavior, as in Study 1. Participants were asked to think about the situation they had depicted and to assess how they had acted in this instance. Hence, we slightly adapted the items to reflect this focus on a past situation. A sample item is, “When I succeeded at a task, I emphasized to others how important the task was” (1 = never, 5 = very often;  $\alpha = .76$ ).

#### 2.4.5 Manipulation Checks and Control Variables

To examine our manipulation’s viability, we asked the participants, “How would you describe your personal status in the situation you have just described?” (1 = very low, 5 = very high). As noted before, nine participants who did not respond to the manipulation check were excluded from the analyses. A one-way ANOVA on the remaining 115 participants indicated that individuals in the high-status condition reported significantly higher status ( $M = 4.00$ ,  $SD = .74$ ) than individuals in the low-status condition ( $M = 2.59$ ,  $SD = 1.10$ ;  $F(1, 113) = 64.10$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .36$ ).

As in Study 1, we considered participants’ age (in years), gender (1 = female, 2 = male), and communion striving (Barrick et al., 2002;  $\alpha = .75$ ) as possible covariates for the linkage between status (and status striving) and high-arousal negative affect. Regarding the relationship between high-arousal negative affect and enhancement behavior, we again considered participants’ age, gender, and low-arousal negative affect as well as high-arousal and low-arousal positive affect (Van Katwyk et al., 2000; low-arousal negative affect:  $\alpha = .85$ ; high-arousal positive affect:  $\alpha = .91$ ; low-arousal positive affect:  $\alpha = .88$ ) during the situation they had described as potential control variables.

#### 2.4.6 Results

**Descriptive statistics.** Means, standard deviations, and correlations for all Study 2 variables are shown in Table 2.1. Whereas both status and status striving were unrelated with enhancement behavior (status:  $r = .09$ ,  $p = .33$ ; status striving:  $r = .09$ ,  $p = .34$ ), we observed a positive correlation between high-arousal negative affect and enhancement behavior,

consistent with our expectations ( $r = .36, p < .01$ ). Further, low-arousal negative affect was positively correlated with enhancement behavior ( $r = .26, p < .01$ ), but none of the other variables considered as potential controls was significantly correlated with either high-arousal negative affect or enhancement behavior. We therefore controlled for low-arousal negative affect when examining enhancement behavior as dependent variable and excluded the other control variables (Becker et al., 2016). We note, however, that the results remained virtually unchanged when incorporating all of the controls. All continuous predictor variables were mean-centered before hypotheses testing.

**Hypotheses testing.** We again tested the hypotheses using moderated hierarchical regression analyses (see Table 2.3). Similar to Study 1, there was a negative main effect of status on high-arousal negative affect ( $B = -.37, SE = .12, p < .01$ ). Again, this main effect was qualified by a significant status  $\times$  status striving interaction ( $B = -.63, SE = .22, p < .01, \Delta R^2 = .06$ ). As Table 2.3 shows, individuals with relatively high status striving (+ 1 SD) experienced more high-arousal negative affect under conditions of low rather than high status (simple slope:  $B = -.71, SE = .17, p < .01$ ). The relationship between status and high-arousal negative affect was not significant, by contrast, for individuals with lower status striving (- 1 SD; simple slope:  $B = -.03, SE = .17, p = .86$ ). Hence, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

As further shown in Table 2.3, a hierarchical regression analysis (controlling for low-arousal negative affect, status, status striving, and the respective interaction term) corroborated our prediction that high-arousal negative affect is positively associated with enhancement behavior ( $B = .42, SE = .16, p < .05$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 2 was supported.

Finally, Hypothesis 3 proposed that the strength of the indirect linkage between status and enhancement behavior, through high-arousal negative affect, is conditional on an individual's status striving. Consistent with the pattern of results obtained for Hypotheses 1

and 2, the respective index of moderated mediation (cf. Hayes, 2015) was statistically significant ( $estimate = -.26$ ,  $SE = .15$ ; 95% CI =  $-.59$ ,  $-.03$ ). The conditional indirect relationship between status and enhancement behavior, through high-arousal negative affect, was negative and significant for individuals with higher status striving (+1 SD:  $B = -.30$ ,  $SE = .14$ , 95% CI =  $-.62$ ,  $-.06$ ). With lower status striving, by contrast, this indirect association was not significant (-1 SD:  $B = -.01$ ,  $SE = .08$ , 95% CI =  $-.18$ ,  $.13$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was supported.

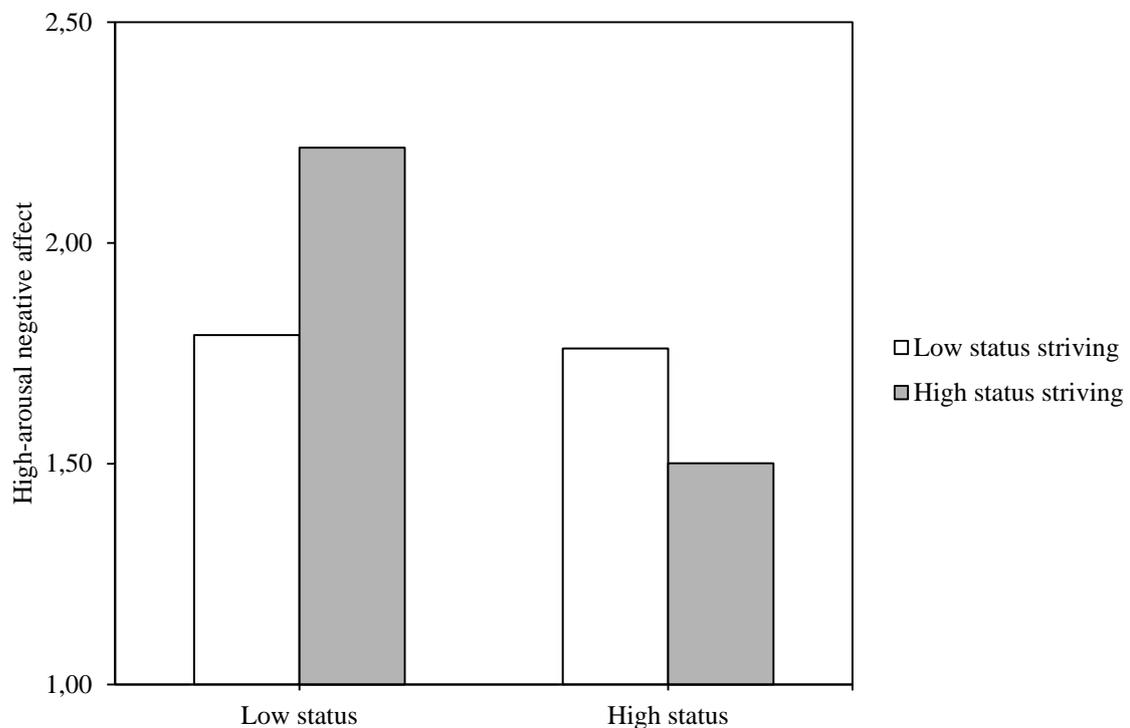
**Table 2.3:**  
**Regression Results (Study 2)**

Variables	High-arousal negative affect				Enhancement behavior			
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 1		Model 2	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
<i>Control variable</i>								
Low-arousal negative affect			.33**	.09	.06	.14		
<i>Main effects</i>								
Status	-.37**	.12	-.37**	.12	.33*	.15		
Status striving	.06	.11	.39*	.16	.02	.19		
<i>Interaction</i>								
Status x status striving			-.63**	.22	.11	.26		
<i>Mediator</i>								
High-arousal negative affect					.42*	.16		
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> (Adjusted <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> )	.08* (.06)		.14** (.12)		.12** (.09)		.17** (.13)	
$\Delta R^2$			.06**				.05*	

Note.  $n = 115$ . Unstandardized coefficients are shown.

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

**Figure 2.3:**  
**Interactive Relationship of Status and Status Striving with High-Arousal Negative Affect (Study 2)**



#### 2.4.7 Discussion of Study 2

This second study further supports the conceptual model put forward in our theorizing, with an individual's high-arousal negative affect transferring the interactive relationship of status and status striving, on the one hand, with enhancement behavior, on the other. As predicted, the indirect relationship between status and enhancement behavior, through high-arousal negative affect, was more pronounced for individuals with higher rather than lower status striving. As such, this study constructively replicated Study 1's findings and addressed some of the limitations identified for Study 1.

Nevertheless, we acknowledge that Study 2 suffers from some limitations of its own. In particular, the present study design does not allow for strong causal conclusions on the role of status, because we asked the participants to freely recall a specific status situation

(rather than independently manipulating participants' status), introducing potential problems related to the recall of a past incident (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Lowe, 2002). Also, this study referred to a singular event rather than an ongoing status situation (similar to Study 1). Hence, it remains uncertain whether the findings generalize toward more permanent contexts in which individuals occupy specific status positions and interact with others on a more enduring basis. We conducted a third study to address these issues and further constructively replicate the previous studies' findings, using an organizational field survey design.

## 2.5 Study 3

### 2.5.1 Design and Participants

We approached a sample of about 165 employees from different organizations in Germany through personal and university contacts (for similar approaches see, e.g., Bledow, Rosing, & Frese, 2013; Bunderson, van der Vegt, Cantimur, & Rink, 2016). Possible participants either received an e-mail invitation with a link to a web-based survey, or they were asked to complete an identical paper-pencil survey that was to be returned directly to the researchers.<sup>4</sup> All measures were translated to German following a back-translation procedure (Brislin, 1980). Participation was voluntarily and anonymous, and the participants received no financial compensation.

Of the individuals initially contacted, 141 provided usable data, for a response rate of roughly 85%. These participants worked in multiple industries (e.g., public sector & non-profit – 51%, financial services & insurance – 17%, retail – 7%, consulting – 7%, manufacturing & engineering – 4%, telecommunication & IT – 3%). They were primarily female (60%), and 50.40% held a college degree or higher. On average, participants were 31.69 years old ( $SD = 11.35$ ) and had been employed with their current company for 7.70 years ( $SD = 9.03$ ).

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<sup>4</sup> Controlling for the mode of survey administration did not alter the conclusions from our hypotheses tests.

### 2.5.2 Measures

**Status.** We measured participants' perceived status at work using 5 items from Hays and Bendersky (2015) and Bunderson, van der Vegt, and Sparrowe (2014), slightly modified to allow for self- rather than peer-ratings (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree;  $\alpha = .83$ ). The items were, "I have much respect among my colleagues", "I have much esteem among my colleagues", "I have much prestige among my colleagues", "I have much influence among my colleagues", and "I have much work-related knowledge or expertise."

**Status striving.** As in the previous studies, we captured status striving with Flynn et al.'s (2006) 8-item measure ( $\alpha = .82$ ).

**High-arousal negative affect.** We again used five items from Van Katwyk et al. (2000) to capture high-arousal negative affect, asking the participants to report the extent to which they generally experienced each of the respective emotions at work ( $\alpha = .66$ ).

**Enhancement behavior.** We used the same four items from Lee et al.'s (1999) measure as in Studies 1 and 2 to assess individuals' enhancement behavior. Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they used the respective behaviors in their interactions with colleagues at work (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree;  $\alpha = .84$ ). To further explore our findings' robustness, we included an additional, closely related outcome measure in Study 3, using a 5-item instrument from (Bolino & Turnley, 1999) to capture participants' *self-promotion behavior* (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree;  $\alpha = .87$ ). A sample item is "I make people aware of my talents or qualifications." Such self-promotion reflects the communication of abilities and/or accomplishments in an attempt to appear competent (Bolino et al., 2016). Hence, although our measure of enhancement behavior entails a greater component of consciously exaggerating one's abilities and achievements (Lee et al., 1999), both enhancement and self-promotion similarly reflect a potential status move by proactively signaling competence and expertise toward others (Bolino et al., 2008). Accordingly, these

variables were substantially correlated in the present study ( $r = .64, p < .01$ ), and we would expect our hypotheses to hold for both measures.

**Control variables.** Similar to the previous studies, we considered participants' age (in years) and gender (1 = female, 2 = male) as potential controls when testing the relationship between status and high-arousal negative affect. Moreover, we included an individual's subjective power at work as a possible covariate, because prior research has shown that power can shape individuals' reactions toward their status (Anicich et al., 2016; Fast et al., 2012). We measured this variable using an approach by Lammers, Stoker, and Stapel (2010; see also Feenstra, Jordan, Walter, Yan, & Stoker, 2017), with participants indicating their hierarchical position in the organization on a 0 (bottom) to 100 (top) slider bar.

For the relationship between high-arousal negative affect and enhancement behavior, we again considered participants' age, gender, and low-arousal negative affect as well as high-arousal and low-arousal positive affect as possible control variables (Van Katwyk et al., 2000; low-arousal negative affect:  $\alpha = .70$ ; high-arousal positive affect:  $\alpha = .80$ ; low-arousal positive affect:  $\alpha = .80$ ). Moreover, participants' subjective power may confound the proposed relationship between high-arousal negative affect and enhancement behavior, as power might liberate participants to act on their own goals and interests (e.g., by proactively enhancing one's status) when experiencing such negative affect (Anicich et al., 2016; Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003). Hence, we considered subjective power as an additional potential covariate when examining the high-arousal negative affect – enhancement behavior linkage.

### 2.5.3 Results

**Descriptive statistics.** Table 2.4 shows means, standard deviations, and correlations for all Study 3 variables. Status was not significantly correlated with either enhancement ( $r$

= .01,  $p = .89$ ) or self-promotion behavior ( $r = .08$ ,  $p = .34$ ), whereas status striving was positively correlated with both of these variables (enhancement:  $r = .37$ ,  $p < .01$ ; self-promotion:  $r = .27$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Additionally, individuals' high-arousal negative affect was positively associated with enhancement ( $r = .43$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and self-promotion ( $r = .46$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

In terms of control variables, subjective power ( $r = -.19$ ,  $p < .05$ ), but not age or gender, was significantly correlated with high-arousal negative affect. Moreover, low-arousal negative affect was significantly correlated with enhancement ( $r = .23$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and self-promotion behavior ( $r = .21$ ,  $p < .05$ ), but none of the other control variables was correlated with one of these variables. Following Becker et al.'s (2016) recommendations, we therefore controlled for subjective power when examining high-arousal negative affect as dependent variable, and we controlled for low-arousal negative affect when examining enhancement and self-promotion behavior as dependent variables. We excluded the other control variables to preserve statistical power and avoid biased parameter estimates. We note, however, that additional analyses including or excluding all covariates yielded virtually identical results, such that our substantive conclusions remained unchanged.<sup>5</sup> We again mean-centered all continuous predictor variables before hypotheses testing.

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<sup>5</sup> Prior research has shown that status and power may jointly influence an individual's attitudes and behaviors (e.g., Anicich et al., 2016). In the present data, however, there was no significant status  $\times$  subjective power interaction on high-arousal negative affect ( $B = -.00$ ,  $SE = .00$ ,  $p = .39$ ), enhancement behavior ( $B = .00$ ,  $SE = .00$ ,  $p = .99$ ), or self-promotion behavior ( $B = .00$ ,  $SE = .00$ ,  $p = .52$ ).

**Table 2.4:**  
**Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations (Study 3)**

	<i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Age	31.69 (11.35)										
2. Gender <sup>a</sup>	1.40 (.49)	.08									
3. Status	3.50 (.63)	.24**	.12								
4. Subjective power	30.81 (23.47)	.44**	.06	.33**							
5. Status striving	3.41 (.65)	-.14 <sup>#</sup>	.02	.26**	.04						
6. Low-arousal positive affect	3.25 (.75)	-.03	.08	.35**	.24**	.05					
7. High-arousal positive affect	2.88 (.77)	.11	-.01	.32**	.14	.32**	.51**				
8. Low-arousal negative affect	2.45 (.69)	-.16 <sup>#</sup>	-.14	-.34**	-.22**	-.01	-.51**	-.37**			
9. High-arousal negative affect	2.13 (.69)	.02	-.03	-.23**	-.19*	.17*	-.40**	-.08	.54**		
10. Enhancement behavior	2.05 (.78)	.04	.12	.01	.02	.37**	-.07	.11	.23**	.43**	
11. Self-promotion behavior	2.11 (.77)	-.03	.09	.08	-.00	.27**	-.00	.21*	.21*	.46**	.64**

*Note.*  $n = 141$ .

<sup>#</sup> $p < .10$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ .

<sup>a</sup> Gender (1 = female, 2 = male).

**Hypotheses testing.** As illustrated in Table 2.5, the results of our moderated hierarchical regression analyses showed that status was negatively related with individuals' experiences of high-arousal negative affect ( $B = -.28$ ,  $SE = .10$ ,  $p < .01$ ), whereas status striving was positively related with such negative affect ( $B = .26$ ,  $SE = .09$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Importantly, these main effects were qualified by a significant interaction of status and status striving ( $B = -.35$ ,  $SE = .12$ ,  $p < .01$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .05$ ). Table 2.4 depicts this interaction. As anticipated, individuals with relatively high status striving (+1 SD) experienced more high-arousal negative affect under conditions of lower rather than higher status (simple slope:  $B = -.45$ ,  $SE = .11$ ,  $p < .01$ ). For individuals with relatively low status striving (-1 SD), in contrast, perceived status was not significantly associated with high-arousal negative affect (simple slope:  $B = -.00$ ,  $SE = .14$ ,  $p = .99$ ). Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

As shown in Table 2.5, high-arousal negative affect was positively related with both enhancement behavior ( $B = .39$ ,  $SE = .10$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and self-promotion ( $B = .50$ ,  $SE = .10$ ,  $p < .01$ ), even when controlling for an individual's low-arousal negative affect, status, status striving, and the corresponding interaction term. Hence, Hypothesis 2 was supported.

Finally, the index of moderated mediation for the conditional indirect relationship between status and enhancement behavior suggested in Hypothesis 3 was statistically significant ( $estimate = -.13$ ,  $SE = .06$ , 95% CI =  $-.25, -.03$ ). With higher status striving, the indirect relation between status and enhancement behavior, through high-arousal negative affect, was negative and significant (+1 SD:  $B = -.17$ ,  $SE = .06$ , 95% CI =  $-.28, -.06$ ). With lower status striving, by contrast, this indirect association was not significantly different from zero (-1 SD:  $B = -.00$ ,  $SE = .05$ , 95% CI =  $-.11, .11$ ). Additionally, Table 2.5 illustrates that we obtained highly similar results for self-promotion behavior. Using this alternative dependent variable, the index of moderated mediation was also significant ( $estimate = -.18$ ,  $SE = .07$ , 95% CI =  $-.31, -.05$ ). With higher status striving, there was a significant indirect

relationship between status and self-promotion, through high-arousal negative effect (+1 SD:  $B = -.23$ ,  $SE = .07$ , 95% CI =  $-.35, -.10$ ), but this indirect relation was not significant with lower status striving (-1 SD:  $B = -.00$ ,  $SE = .07$ , 95% CI =  $-.14, .13$ ). In sum, Hypothesis 3 was supported.

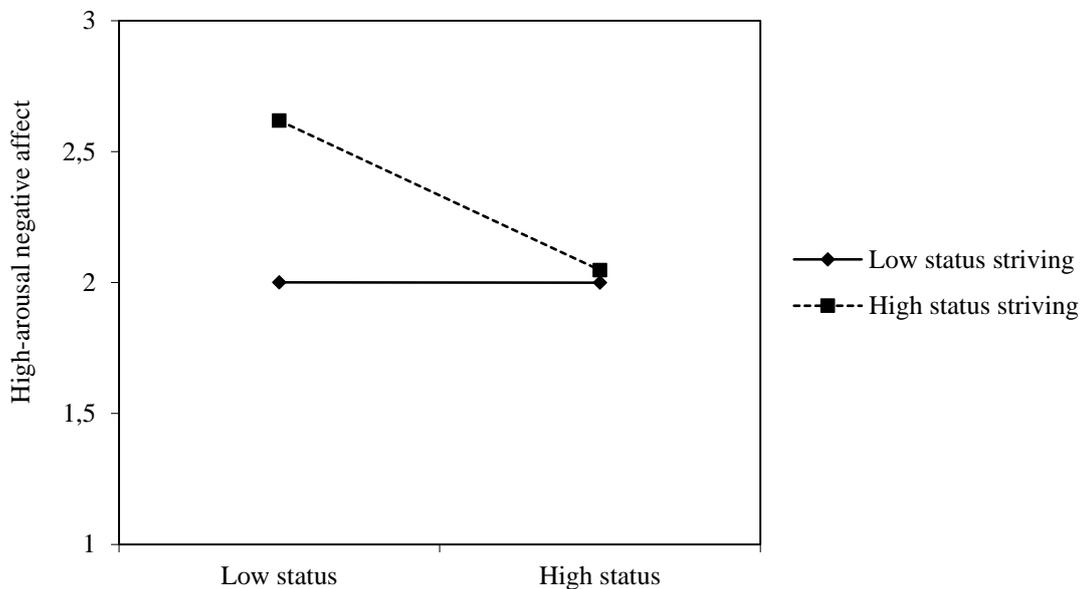
**Table 2.5:**  
**Regression Results (Study 3)**

Variables	High-arousal negative affect		Enhancement behavior		Self-promotion behavior	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
<i>Control variables</i>						
Subjective Power	-.00	.00	-.00	.00		
Low-arousal negative affect			.24*	.09	.06	.10
					.25*	.10
					.01	.10
<i>Main effects</i>						
Status	-.28**	.10	-.23*	.10	.05	.10
Status striving	.26***	.09	.46***	.10	.37***	.10
					.14	.11
					.30***	.10
					.19#	.10
					.19*	.09
<i>Interaction</i>						
Status x status striving			-.35**	.12	-.19	.14
					-.10	.14
					-.20	.14
					-.08	.13
<i>Mediator</i>						
High-arousal negative affect					.39***	.10
					.28** (.25)	.08
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> (Adjusted <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> )	.12** (.11)	.17** (.15)	.20** (.18)	.28** (.25)	.14** (.11)	.27** (.24)
$\Delta R^2$		.05				.13

Note.  $n = 141$ . Unstandardized coefficients are shown.

#  $p < .10$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$  (two-tailed).

**Figure 2.4:**  
**Interactive Relationship of Status and Status Striving with High-Arousal Negative Affect (Study 3)**



#### 2.5.4 Discussion of Study 3

The results from Study 3 provided further support for our conceptual model. Again, individuals with higher (but not lower) status striving reported more high-arousal negative affect in lower-status rather than higher-status situations. These negative affective reactions, in turn, transferred the joint, indirect relation of status and status striving with enhancement behavior. Moreover, we found an equivalent pattern of linkages for self-promotion behavior as an alternative outcome variable. As such, the present results corroborate the viability of our theorizing, explicating critical mechanisms and boundary conditions for the behavioral consequences of an individual's (lack of) status.

Taken together, Study 3 underscored the conclusions drawn from Studies 1 and 2 in a more naturalistic field setting, using a correlational (rather than experimental) research design. At the same time, it is clear that Study 3 is not without limitations. All of the

measures were obtained from the same survey, for example, potentially raising concerns about common method/common source variance (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Importantly, however, the pattern of results uncovered in Study 3 is equivalent to the patterns obtained in Studies 1 and 2, which are not subject to such common method concerns. Moreover, common method/source bias is unlikely to account for our interactive pattern of findings, with studies illustrating that it is virtually impossible to obtain moderated relationships in the presence of such bias (Evans, 1985; Siemsen, Roth, & Oliveira, 2010). Additionally, as further explained in the General Discussion section, we empirically examined the extent of method variance in the data, and the respective analyses suggest that common method bias is unlikely to have substantially confounded our findings. Hence, we believe Study 3's constructive replication of the outcomes obtained in the previous studies adds confidence in the robustness and generalizability of these results.

## **2.6 Supplementary Analyses**

We conducted supplementary analyses to illustrate the unique role of high-arousal negative affect in our conceptual model. Following scholars' suggestion to examine additional mediating processes to provide some support that one's hypothesized channel of influence is not spurious (Fischer, Dietz, & Antonakis, 2017), in particular, we tested our proposed moderated mediation model using low-arousal negative affect as well as high-arousal and low-arousal positive affect as alternative mediators. In doing so, we first reanalyzed our conceptual model across all three studies, but we controlled for the other three affect types when examining the linkage between high-arousal negative affect and enhancement behavior. The pattern and significance of the results remained virtually unchanged in these post-hoc analyses, as compared with the primary analyses reported before.

Then, we consecutively replaced high-arousal negative affect with low-arousal negative affect, high-arousal positive affect, and low-arousal positive affect as the focal mediating mechanism and re-estimated our model. Across all three studies, these additional analyses showed that the alternative affective states did not represent viable mediators. First, in contrast to high-arousal negative affect, we did not observe a consistent interactive relationship of perceived status and status striving with the alternative types of affect. The respective interaction term (a) was significantly related with low-arousal negative affect in Studies 1 and 2, but not Study 3; (b) was significantly related with high-arousal positive affect in Study 1, but not Studies 2 and 3, and (c) was significantly related with low-arousal positive affect in Studies 1 and 3, but not Study 2. Second (and maybe more importantly), high-arousal negative affect emerged as a significant predictor of enhancement behavior when entering all four affect types into the same equation across all three studies, whereas the respective coefficients for low-arousal negative affect, high-arousal positive affect, and low-arousal positive affect were all insignificant. Hence, we believe these supplementary analyses support the unique mediating role of high-arousal negative affect in our overall conditional indirect effects model. With that said, we acknowledge that these supplementary results should be considered with caution, given both their exploratory nature and the substantive correlations between the four affect types (see Table 2.1 and Table 2.4). Further research is needed to more fully understand the role of specific affective experiences in the present conceptual model (e.g., Gooty, Gavin, & Ashkanasy, 2009), and we will return to this point in the General Discussion section.

## **2.7 General Discussion**

The present investigation developed and tested a conceptual model that highlights mechanisms and boundary conditions underlying the relationship between individuals' status perceptions and enhancement behavior. Across three independent studies, we

demonstrated that (a) high-arousal negative affect is an important mediating mechanism in this regard, and (b) status striving represents a critical contingency factor. We found lower perceived status, in particular, to induce pronounced, high-arousal negative emotionality among individuals with higher (but not lower) status striving. This high-arousal negative affect, in turn, was positively associated with enhancement behavior. In sum, these results promote new knowledge as to *why* and *when* a perceived lack of status may trigger tendencies toward proactive status moves aimed at elevating one's precarious position.

### **2.7.1 Theoretical Implications**

The present findings offer important theoretical implications for our understanding of the behavioral consequences of individuals' status perceptions. As Blader and Chen (2012: 995) noted, past research has devoted relatively little attention to examining "how status shapes the way that status holders approach and interact with others." Moreover, the existing literature on this issue remains ambiguous, such that it is unclear whether perceptions of low status are more likely to induce proactive and assertive behavior or trigger relatively passive and submissive acts (e.g., Correll & Ridgeway, 2006; Henry, 2009). We address this ambiguity by introducing status striving as an important contingency factor. Our findings illustrate that the behavioral consequences associated with (a lack of) status are not uniform across individuals but, rather, are more complex than previously believed, with an individual's stable motivational orientations representing a critical boundary condition.

Moreover, this study reveals a key mechanism underlying higher vs. lower status-strivers' differential reactivity toward low-status perceptions. Consistent with research depicting status processes as highly emotional (e.g., Kemper, 1991), we enrich prevalent theories on the behavioral consequences of status by demonstrating high-arousal negative affect as a mediator. For individuals with relatively high status striving, perceptions of inferior status appear to be highly aversive, triggering strong negative affective responses

that, in turn, activate enhancement behavior as a possible coping mechanism. For individuals with lower status striving, in contrast, status perceptions seem to lack these affective qualities and, consequently, such perceptions are less likely to trigger a pronounced behavioral response. Hence, our studies provide relevant insights into the psychological foundations that can elicit individuals' behavioral reactions toward (low) status perceptions, illustrating high-arousal negative affect as an important explanatory factor.

Finally, this research enriches the growing literature on status moves in groups (Cho et al., 2011; Owens & Sutton, 2001). Prior research on this issue has primarily examined how such behaviors may influence group processes and outcomes (Bendersky & Hays, 2012) or how others react towards individuals' attempts to alter a group's informal status order (Kim et al., 2019). Adding to this work, the present studies advance an antecedent-oriented perspective that can explicate why individuals may (or may not) engage in specific types of status moves (i.e., enhancement or self-promotion behaviors aimed at highlighting one's value to the group) when they perceive their own status to be relatively low. Rather than reflecting a purely rational process, it appears that perceptions of inferior status have the potential to trigger pronounced negative emotionality among some individuals (i.e., with higher status striving), but not among others (i.e., with lower status striving). Hence, these affective reactions may explicate high status-strivers' unique tendency to exhibit proactive status moves in low-status situations.

### **2.7.2 Strengths and Limitations**

An important strength of the present research is that we employed a multi-method approach to constructively replicate our findings across three independent studies, using widely differing research designs, samples, and study contexts (Wright & Sweeney, 2016). Despite potential weaknesses associated with each individual study, this approach enabled us to counterbalance many of the respective limitations and, thus, to draw more robust

conclusions. At the same time, we acknowledge some limitations that pertain to our research as a whole and, thus, should be considered when interpreting its outcomes.

All three of our studies used participants' self-ratings to measure enhancement behavior (albeit referring to behavioral intentions in Study 1, recalls of past behavior in Study 2, and actual behavior at work in Study 3). On the one hand, we believe this approach is justified (and consistent with prior research; e.g., Hart et al., 2017; Hewitt et al., 2003) because enhancement behavior often entails relatively subtle and/or covert acts (e.g., overemphasizing one's contributions and depicting oneself in a particularly favorable light) that are difficult to discern for the targets of such behavior or for external observers (Bolino & Turnley, 1999; Stevens & Kristof, 1995). On the other hand, this procedure may raise common method concerns, for example because we captured both high-arousal negative affect and enhancement behavior through self-reports at the same time point (although we note that these constructs were only moderately correlated in all three studies; see Table 2.1 and Table 2.4). Hence, we used a series of confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) to further examine this issue. First, we estimated CFA models with all focal self-rated constructs (i.e., high-arousal negative affect, enhancement behavior, and status striving in Studies 1-3, as well as perceived status in Study 3) as correlated latent factors and no item cross-loadings. We compared these models with alternative single-factor CFAs. As expected, the multifactor models provided adequate fit to the data across all three studies, and the single-factor models fit the data significantly worse (all  $p < .01$ ). Second, we added an uncorrelated latent method factor (with loadings from all items) to the multi-factor models described above (cf. Williams, Cote, & Buckley, 1989). Importantly, this method factor only accounted for a relatively small percentage of the items' overall variance (i.e., 11% in Study 1, 4% in Study 2, and 3% in Study 3), and the latent correlations between the focal study constructs remained largely equivalent with and without a common method factor. Even after adding

the method factor, for example, the latent correlation between high-arousal negative affect and enhancement behavior was significant in all three studies ( $\Phi = .13, .18, \text{ and } .34, p < .05$ , in Studies 1-3, respectively). In sum, these results suggest that common method variance is not a pervasive problem in our studies and is unlikely to have confounded the interpretation of our results.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, we acknowledge that future research using alternative measurement approaches (e.g., independent observations) would be worthwhile to further bolster the generalizability and robustness of our conclusions.

Moreover, despite Study 1 and 2's experimental designs, status striving was measured, rather than manipulated. We found this approach to be justified because we conceptualized status striving as an underlying, trait-like motivational orientation (Barrick et al., 2002, 2013). Nevertheless, future research might benefit from experimentally manipulating individuals' respective momentary motivation (cf. Griskevicius et al., 2009), thus enabling stronger claims of causality in this regard. Similarly, we implemented cross-sectional research designs across all three studies. Hence, although our respective reasoning is predicated on a strong theoretical fundament (i.e., AET; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), causal claims about the mediating role of negative affect are not justified. To address this issue, future research could use longitudinal approaches or employ experimental designs that manipulate the mediating variable (cf. Spencer, Zanna, & Fong, 2005).

### **2.7.3 Directions for Future Research**

Beyond addressing limitations, the current investigation calls attention to several interesting avenues for future research. Scholars could, for instance, extend the present model to advance a broader understanding of the behavioral consequences associated with status, in general, and low status, in particular. By triggering high-arousal negative affective experiences among individuals with relatively high status striving, for example, low status

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<sup>6</sup> Details on all of the analyses described in this section are available from the first author.

may not only promote enhancement (or self-promotion) behavior, but also induce other behavioral reactions and status moves designed to improve one's unfavorable positioning, including ingratiation, competition, or outright aggression (e.g., Bendersky & Hays, 2012; Cho et al., 2011; Henry, 2009).

Another fruitful direction for future research would be to consider additional boundary conditions for the role of (low) status. Beyond individuals' needs, goals, and desires, it seems plausible that contextual contingencies may shape an individual's affective reactions to specific environmental features and associated events (Restubog, Zagenczyk, Bordia, Bordia, & Chapman, 2015). Hence, future studies may benefit from investigating such context factors. For example, researchers could examine the role of cultural aspects originating from a societal or organizational level. Low-status individuals may experience less high-arousal negative affect and, thus, may be less inclined to advance their status position in societies characterized by higher (rather than lower) power distance, as individuals in such cultures are more likely to expect (and accept) that status and power are unequally distributed (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010; Huberman, Loch, & Öncüler, 2004). Additionally, in organizational cultures that deemphasize hierarchical differentiation, low-status positions may carry less disadvantages than in more hierarchical organizations, potentially triggering less high-arousal negative affect (and thus, less enhancement behavior) even among individuals with high status striving.

In a similar vein, research could examine possible moderators of the linkage between high-arousal negative affect and enhancement behavior. Insights from appraisal theory suggest, for example, that the relationship between negative affect and problem-focused coping may depend on processes of secondary appraisal (Lazarus, 1991), and individuals' sense of control over the situation that has initially triggered a negative affective reaction may be particularly important in this regard (Folkman, 1984). In the case of low status, the

perceived stability of the status hierarchy within a group may critically shape such control perceptions. Status hierarchies are based on individuals' voluntary granting of respect and esteem (Magee & Galinsky, 2008). Hence, scholars have generally depicted these hierarchies as rather malleable, such that individuals' relative positioning may readily change as group members acquire new status-relevant information about each other (Bendersky & Shah, 2013; Hays & Bendersky, 2015). Nevertheless, studies have observed variability in the robustness of different groups' status hierarchies (Ellemers, Knippenberg, & Wilke, 1990), and scholars have argued that particularly unstable (or permeable) hierarchies are most likely to invite individuals' competitive behavior to enhance their status (Wright, 1997). Hence, with low-status individuals potentially perceiving greater control over their positioning, the positive linkage between high-arousal negative affect and enhancement behavior uncovered in our studies may be more pronounced in groups with relatively unstable (rather than stable) status hierarchies. Future research investigating such additional boundary conditions could more solidly anchor the present conceptual model within the specific group context in which the respective relationships unfold.

Further, our supplementary analyses have illustrated a potentially unique role of high-arousal negative affect (rather than low-arousal negative affect or high-arousal and low-arousal positive affect). Building on this notion, it would be interesting to further examine alternative dimensions of affective experiences (beyond valence and arousal) or discrete emotions as potential mediators between perceived status and status striving, on the one hand, and an individual's behavior, on the other. It may be informative, for example, to examine why and when low status may be more likely to trigger discrete negative emotions associated with either approach (e.g., anger) or avoidance (e.g., anxiety) tendencies (cf. Elliot, Eder, & Harmon-Jones, 2013; Frijda, 1986) and to investigate the implications

associated with these emotions for an individual's status moves (e.g., enhancement behavior).

Important new insights could also be obtained through longitudinal research designs. Although our experimental studies support the role of perceived status as a predictor of enhancement behavior, it seems likely that such behavior also shapes an individual's status position over time (Bolino, Klotz, & Daniels, 2014). After all, individuals generally exhibit this type of status move in a deliberate attempt to enhance their status in groups and organizations (Kim et al., 2019; Leary et al., 2014). Hence, there is a distinct possibility of reciprocal causation, and longitudinal studies could unravel this complex pattern of associations. Also, such studies could examine whether perceived status differentially shapes enhancement behavior at different points in time (cf. Bendersky & Shah, 2013; Owens & Sutton, 2001). Possibly, low-status individuals may exhibit more enhancement behavior at the beginning of a group interaction when the informal status hierarchy is not well established yet, whereas such behavior may become less common during later interaction phases (Cho et al., 2011). Finally, longitudinal studies could examine daily affective events as a key linking pin between status perceptions and affect (e.g., using experience sampling methods; Beal, 2015). As noted before, AET casts work environment features as relatively distal, indirect predictors that shape an individual's affective reactions by making specific events more or less likely (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Hence, future research could examine which types of events (e.g., being denied help from others or receiving blame for group failures; van der Vegt et al., 2006; Weisband et al., 1995) are particularly important for eliciting low-status individuals' negative affective experiences. In doing so, such studies may advance knowledge on the ebb and flow of low-status vs. high-status individuals' momentary affective experiences across specific situations.

#### **2.7.4 Practical Implications**

The present research suggests that, particularly among high status-strivers, being in a position of low status is highly aversive, triggering strong negative affective experiences and enhancement behavior to climb up the social ladder in a group. Importantly, however, such behavior may be undesirable from an organizational perspective, as it may channel an individual's efforts away from one's core job tasks (Loch, Huberman, & Stout, 2000) and toward purposeful and often unrealistic self-presentation. Hence, enhancement behavior may not only diminish an individual's own task accomplishment (Bendersky & Shah, 2012) but also disrupt group functioning by creating conflict and hindering a group's overall performance (Anderson et al., 2008; Bendersky & Hays, 2012). Moreover, although even clear-cut displays of overconfidence may yield status benefits (Kennedy et al., 2013), an individual's enhancement behavior may backfire, in the long run, if the person is continuously unable to meet the exaggerated performance expectations he or she has created, with potentially detrimental social consequences (Bendersky & Shah, 2013; Magee & Galinsky, 2008).

To circumvent these problems, organizations seem well-advised to avoid creating work contexts that trigger extensive perceptions of status differences between colleagues and group members. They may do so, for example, by emphasizing egalitarian values and/or limiting the use of overt status symbols (Pfeffer, 2005). Additionally, it seems worthwhile to create an appreciative climate in the organization that reinforces employees' perceived value and self-esteem, for example by taking deliberate actions toward empowering low-status individuals (Spreitzer, 2008). And finally, organizations may point their members toward more productive ways of enhancing their position in perceived low-status situations. Rather than engaging in mere competence-signaling behavior, individuals may be encouraged to actually make tangible contributions to their group's overall success (e.g.,

through organizational citizenship behavior). Combined with an organizational culture that acknowledges, values, and rewards such contributions, this may serve as a viable means for status improvement, without resorting to enhancement behavior (Flynn et al., 2006).

## **2.8 Conclusion**

All in all, this research demonstrates that perceptions of low status may trigger high-arousal negative affect among individuals with relatively high status striving and, thus, may positively relate with their enhancement behavior. As such, the present studies provide fresh insights into the behavioral consequences associated with individuals' status perceptions in groups, highlighting key boundary conditions and psychological mechanisms in this regard. We hope these findings will serve as an impetus for further research on status as a near-ubiquitous feature of human interaction (Magee & Galinsky, 2008), enabling a better understanding and, eventually, a more effective management of status processes both inside and outside organizations.

### 3 Formal Leadership and Informal Leader Emergence: Examining the Roles of Task-Oriented Behavior and Status

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#### Abstract

Although scholars have argued that formal and informal leadership are closely connected, little remains known about *how*, *why*, and *when* formal supervisors may influence their team members' emergence as informal leaders. The present research addresses this issue by empirically examining the indirect relationship between formal supervisors' task-oriented leadership behavior and individual team members' informal leader emergence, through members' task-oriented behavior toward their teammates. Drawing from social learning theory, we suggest that this relationship hinges on both the supervisor's and the focal member's status in the team. We tested our theoretical model using a field sample of 226 nurses working in 51 teams. Results indicated that a formal supervisor's task-oriented leadership behavior was positively associated with a focal member's task-oriented behavior toward his or her teammates when (a) the supervisor enjoyed relatively high (but not lower) status and (b) the focal member had relatively low (but not higher) status within the team. Moreover, a member's task-oriented behavior was positively related with his or her informal leader emergence. Together, these findings support our proposed conditional indirect effects model: A supervisors' task-oriented leadership behavior was positively and indirectly associated with a team member's informal leader emergence, through the member's own task-oriented behavior, among supervisors with higher (but not lower) status and among members with lower (but not higher) status in the team.

*Keywords:* leader emergence, formal leadership, informal leadership, task-oriented behavior, status

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Scholars have long acknowledged that leadership (i.e., “a process whereby intentional influence is exerted over other people to guide, structure, and facilitate activities;” Yukl, 2013: 3) is not bound to specific formal roles or positions in the organizational hierarchy (e.g., Denis, Langlely, & Sergi, 2012; Spreitzer & Quinn, 2001). In fact, there is ample evidence that a team’s individual members may actively participate in leadership processes and, thus, may emerge as informal leaders, largely irrespective of their formal hierarchical positioning (Neubert & Taggar, 2004; Wheelan & Johnston, 1996). Studies have shown that such informal leaders can strongly influence team processes and outcomes (e.g., Bass & Bass, 2008; Taggar et al., 1999). Consequently, a considerable body of research has developed that illustrates antecedents of individuals’ informal leader emergence, including a team member’s demographic characteristics (e.g., gender; Eagly & Karau, 1991), cognitive intelligence (Judge, Colbert, & Ilies, 2004a), and personality traits (Judge, Bono, Ilies, & Gerhardt, 2002).

This research has greatly advanced our understanding of why some individuals are more likely than others to take on informal leadership roles in their teams. Notably, however, this literature has rarely examined how formal supervisors (i.e., official leaders tasked with defining and structuring team members’ roles and guiding the team toward goal attainment) may influence processes of informal leader emergence. In fact, many of the respective studies have virtually eliminated any possible influence of formally assigned leadership by investigating informal leader emergence in leaderless groups or self-managing teams working inside (e.g., Nevicka, Hoogh, Van Vianen, Beersma, & McIlwain, 2011) or outside the laboratory (e.g., Walter et al., 2012). In organizational practice, however, even self-managing or semi-autonomous teams typically have some kind of formal (possibly external) supervisor to facilitate intra-team coordination and/or represent the team (Morgeson, 2005). Moreover, scholars have emphasized that formal and informal leadership are inextricably

linked, such that disregarding the role of formal supervisors may create an incomplete and unrealistic picture of informal leader emergence (DeRue, 2011; Hernandez, Eberly, Avolio, & Johnson, 2011).

In this regard, a handful of studies have illustrated linkages between formal supervisors' behavior, on the one hand, and a team's overall pattern of shared informal leadership, on the other (Carson et al., 2007; Pearce & Sims, 2002). Given their team-level focus, however, these studies cannot explain how individual team members react to their supervisors' behavior and how such reactions may evoke differences in individuals' informal leader emergence. This individual-level perspective would be an important addition because (a) a large body of research has acknowledged that formal supervisors' influence may differ widely between individual subordinates (Martin, Epitropaki, Thomas, & Topakas, 2010) and (b) recent studies have shown that team members frequently form differentiated informal leadership hierarchies, with some individuals yielding considerably larger influence than others (e.g., Bunderson et al., 2016). Not surprisingly, then, scholars have repeatedly called for studies that examine the link between formal supervisors' leadership behavior and individual members' informal leader emergence, thus further advancing our knowledge on how and when individuals adopt informal leadership roles in their teams (e.g., Paunova, 2015; Zhang et al., 2012).

The present study aims to address this issue by developing and empirically testing a conceptual model that indirectly links formal supervisors' task-oriented leadership behavior (e.g., goal setting, planning, structuring; Fleishman, 1973; Yukl, 2013) with individual members' informal leader emergence, through a member's own task-oriented behavior in the team. Our specific focus on task-oriented behavior, in this regard, is informed by prior research that has shown individuals to primarily reach informal leadership roles by providing valued contributions for the team, coordinating members' task-related activities, and

advancing the team's task accomplishment (e.g., Bass & Bass, 2008; Lord, 1977; Neubert & Taggar, 2004). Moreover, a large number of studies attests to the relevance of formal supervisors' task-oriented leadership behavior for team processes and outcomes (for meta-analyses, see Burke et al., 2006; Judge et al., 2004b).<sup>1</sup>

Drawing from this background, we build on social learning theory (Bandura, 1977, 1986) to suggest that a formal supervisor's task-oriented leadership behavior may trickle down the hierarchy to promote an individual member's task-oriented behavior toward his or her teammates and, thus, to facilitate the member's emergence as an informal leader. This theoretical perspective argues that individuals closely observe key role models in their social environment and emulate these models' behavior (Wood & Bandura, 1989). Given their power position and prominent visibility, formal supervisors may be particularly salient as role models for their team members (Mayer et al., 2009). Thus, individual members may look to their formal supervisor for guidance and try to mimic his or her task-related actions.

Importantly, however, a social learning perspective further suggests that the linkage between formal supervisors' and individual team members' task-oriented behavior (and, thus, team members' informal leader emergence) may hinge on important boundary conditions. In particular, it is a central notion of this theoretical perspective that both a role model's and an observer's status in relevant groups (i.e., the amount of respect, prestige, and esteem they enjoy among group members; Magee & Galinsky, 2008) distinctly shape processes of social learning (Bandura, 1986; Wood & Bandura, 1989). Accordingly, studies have shown that (a) a supervisor's ability to effectively exert leadership influence may hinge on his or her status among the team's members (Triana et al., 2017), and (b) an individual member's status in the team may shape his or her susceptibility to the formal supervisor's

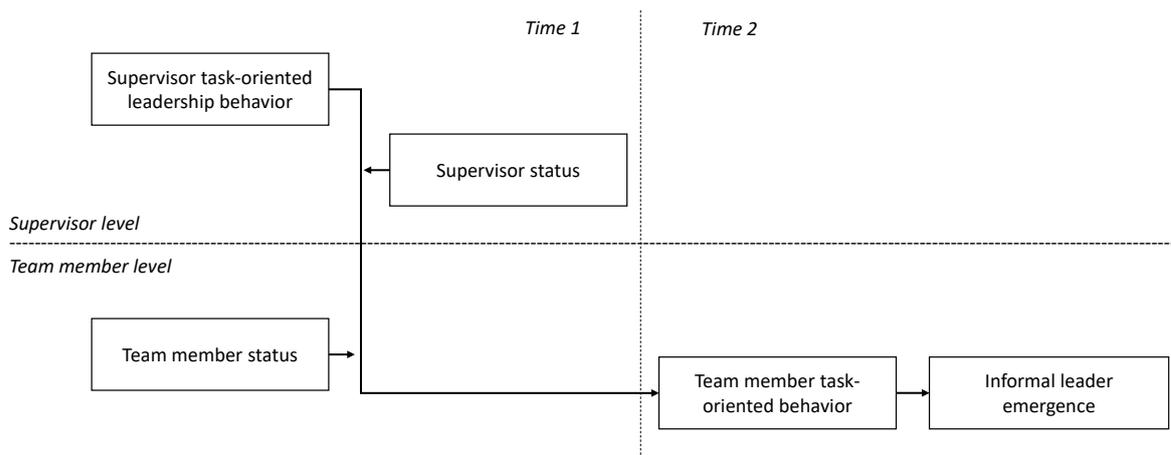
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<sup>1</sup> Although we believe task-oriented behavior is particularly important for processes of informal leader emergence, we also explored the potential role of relationship-oriented behavior (cf. Yukl, 2013) in the Supplementary Analyses section.

influence attempts (Weiss, 1977, 1978). On this basis, we suggest that both a formal supervisor's and an individual member's status in the team will moderate the extent to which the team member perceives the supervisor as a salient and appropriate role model and, thus, is motivated to emulate the supervisor's task-oriented behavior. In sum, we therefore propose a conditional indirect effects model (cf. Preacher et al., 2007), as depicted in Table 3.1, such that the indirect association between a formal supervisor's task-oriented leadership behavior and an individual team member's informal leader emergence, as mediated by the member's own task-oriented behavior, hinges on both the supervisor's and the member's status in the team.

**Figure 3.1:**

**The Conceptual Model**



We examine this model in a field study of 226 individuals working in 51 teams. Our key goal is to address scholars' calls for a more integrative perspective on formal and informal leadership (e.g., Morgeson et al., 2010; Zhang et al., 2012) by better understanding the relation between formal supervisors' (task-oriented) leadership behavior and individual team members' informal leader emergence. By investigating members' task-oriented behavior as a generative mechanism and highlighting both a supervisor's and an individual member's status in the team as relevant boundary conditions, we aim to clarify key role

modeling and social learning processes in this regard. Hence, this investigation provides new insights into the complexity underlying the linkage between formal and informal leadership, and it illustrates that processes of individual members' informal leader emergence are highly contingent on the specific social context in which they unfold.

### **3.1 Hypotheses Development**

#### **3.1.1 Theoretical Background**

As noted before, we anticipate that a formal supervisor's task-oriented leadership behavior may trickle down the hierarchy and relate with an individual member's respective behavior toward his or her teammates, eventually promoting the member's emergence as informal leader. In fact, a growing body of empirical research has illustrated similar trickle-down processes, albeit referring to other leadership styles and/or contexts and without linking such processes with individuals' informal leader emergence. Studies have shown positive associations, for example, between higher-level leaders' visionary (Margolis & Ziegert, 2016), ethical (Mayer et al., 2009), and abusive leadership (Mawritz, Mayer, Hoobler, Wayne, & Marinova, 2012), on the one hand, and lower-level supervisors' respective behavior, on the other. More directly pertaining to the present rationale, Pearce and Sims (2002) have illustrated positive team-level linkages between various types of task-oriented leadership among formal supervisors (e.g., directive and transactional leadership) and the degree to which similar behavior is present within the respective supervisors' teams as a whole.

Social learning theory offers a strong conceptual framework to explicate such trickle-down processes (Bandura, 1986). According to this theoretical perspective, individuals look to salient role models (either through direct experience or vicarious learning) to determine which behavior is expected and appropriate in a given social context, and they may emulate the respective role models' behavior to align their own actions with relevant social norms

and behavioral standards (Bandura, 1977). For such behavioral mimicry to take place, it is critical that (a) the observer pays close attention to the role model and (b) the observer evaluates the model's actions as normative and appropriate (Wood & Bandura, 1989).

On this basis, it is plausible to assume that formal supervisors may be highly relevant as role models for individual team members. By virtue of their assigned position, supervisors are vested with official authority, enabling them to control their team members' access to important organizational resources (Magee & Galinsky, 2008). Also, supervisors are often seen as legitimate representatives of the organization as a whole (Tekleab & Taylor, 2003). Consequently, team members may closely observe their supervisor's leadership behavior and conclude that such behavior is in line with the organization's and/or team's normative expectations (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005). These mechanisms may be particularly relevant in the context of task-oriented behavior. It is not self-evident, after all, that team members without formal authority will view it as legitimate (and/or necessary) for themselves to exhibit informal leadership behavior aimed at assigning task-related roles toward other teammates and at coordinating their team's joint task accomplishment. Hence, individual members may look to their formal supervisor for guidance to determine whether such behavior is appropriate or even expected in the team (cf. Wood & Bandura, 1989).

On first glance, this rationale could lead one to anticipate a positive linkage between a formal supervisor's and his or her individual team members' task-oriented behavior. Importantly, however, there are strong theoretical reasons to expect that this relationship is more complex and situationally contingent. It is a central insight from social learning theory and research, in particular, that (a) not all individuals are equally suitable as role models for others and (b) not all individuals are equally susceptible to others' role modeling influence (Bandura, 1986; Sims & Manz, 1982). Specifically, a social learning approach suggests that role modeling processes critically hinge on both the potential role model's and the observer's

status in relevant groups (Bandura, 1977). As outlined in the following, we therefore cast both a supervisor's and an individual member's status in the team as important boundary conditions for the association between a supervisor's task-oriented leadership and the member's respective behavior and, subsequently, the member's informal leader emergence.

### **3.1.2 The Moderating Role of Supervisor Status**

Drawing from social learning theory, we propose that a focal member's tendency to mimic his or her supervisor's task-oriented leadership behavior should hinge on the supervisor's status in the team (cf. Bandura, 1986). Importantly, although holding a formal supervisory position may advance an individual's status, studies have shown that supervisors may differ considerably in the status they enjoy among their team of subordinates (Fragale, Overbeck, & Neale, 2011; Triana et al., 2017). Supervisors may have relatively low status, for example, when they are newly assigned to their team (Sauer, 2011) or when they appear as relatively inexperienced, incompetent, or otherwise non-prototypical for a leader (Buengeler, Homan, & Voelpel, 2016). We therefore believe it is reasonable to cast a supervisor's status as an important boundary condition for the role modeling processes relevant for the cascading of task-oriented behavior from supervisors to individual team members.

Social learning theory suggests, in particular, that a person's status may critically determine the extent to which others pay attention to the respective person's behavior and perceive such behavior as normative, appropriate, and worthy of imitation (Bandura, 1986). With relatively high status, supervisors enjoy considerable prestige, respect, and esteem among the members of their team and, thus, they are likely to have substantial influence over their team members' decisions and actions (Berger et al., 1972). Also, members are likely to view high-status supervisors as possessing valuable skills, knowledge, and competencies (Bunderson, 2003), and such supervisors' leadership may therefore appear as an important

point of orientation, indicating the type of behavior that is considered adequate within the organization and/or the team (Fiske, 1993).

Building on this conceptual fundament, we anticipate that a high-status supervisor's task-oriented leadership behavior will serve as a powerful cue for team members, highlighting how individual members should act to comply with organizational norms and to be effective (cf. Sims & Manz, 1982; Weiss, 1978). To the extent that a high-status supervisor emphasizes efficient task accomplishment, directs and coordinates members' work activities, and structures team tasks, for example, we expect that individual members will strive to emulate this role model and incorporate such task-oriented behavior in their interactions within the team. If, however, a high-status supervisor refrains from this type of behavior, individual members may conclude that such activities are not required, undesirable, and maybe even counternormative (cf. Weiss, 1977). Again emulating their supervisor's role model, team members are less likely to exhibit task-oriented behavior in this situation. Consequently, we predict a positive association between a formal supervisor's task-oriented leadership behavior and individual members' task-oriented behavior if the supervisor enjoys relatively high status within his or her team.

With relatively low status, by contrast, supervisors have little prestige, respect, and esteem within their team, and they are less likely, therefore, to command their members' attention (Foulsham, Cheng, Tracy, Henrich, & Kingstone, 2010). Hence, these supervisors' potential influence on team members should remain limited (Ridgeway, 2004), and members' judgements of the respective supervisors may be negatively colored (Fragale et al., 2011). In fact, such supervisors may be perceived as lacking relevant expertise and competences (Bunderson, 2003), and their behavior is unlikely to appear representative for the types of actions required to comply with organizational norms and be successful (Manz & Sims, 1981). Social learning theory suggests, accordingly, that low-status supervisors may

be rather unsuitable as role models for their team members, as emulating these supervisors' behavior is unlikely to provide strong normative or functional value (Bandura, 1986; Sims & Manz, 1982).

We anticipate, therefore, that lower supervisory status will diminish the positive relation between a supervisor's task-oriented leadership and individual team members' respective behavior. Rather than following their supervisors lead in exhibiting task-oriented behavior to a greater or lesser extent, individual team members are likely to feel that their relatively incompetent and uninfluential supervisor has little to contribute to the team's successful task attainment (Darioly & Schmid Mast, 2011). Consequently, team members may feel compelled to take action themselves to ensure their team's success – largely irrespective of their supervisor's behavior (Williams & Karau, 1991). In teams with a low-status supervisor, we therefore predict relatively high levels of task-oriented behavior among individual members, independent of whether the formal supervisor exhibits strong task-oriented leadership or not. Taken together, we propose:

*Hypothesis 1: A formal supervisor's status in the team moderates the relationship between the supervisor's task-oriented leadership behavior and an individual team member's task-oriented behavior, such that this positive relationship is more pronounced among supervisors with higher rather than lower status.*

### **3.1.3 The Moderating Role of Team Member Status**

Beyond model attributes, social learning theory suggests that effective role modeling critically hinges on relevant observer characteristics as well (Bandura, 1986). In particular, an individual's status within a focal group may shape his or her susceptibility to others' role modeling (Bandura, 1977). Hence, we again draw from this theoretical perspective to explain why individual members with differential status within their team may differ in the inclination to mimic their supervisor's task-oriented leadership behavior.

On the one hand, we propose that an individual member's relatively high status in the team will diminish his or her susceptibility to the formal supervisor's role modeling, thus buffering the positive association between the supervisor's task-oriented leadership and the member's respective behavior. Research has shown, accordingly, that higher-status individuals are less reliant on authority figures to guide their behavior, because such individuals are more confident in their own attitudes and decisions (Anderson et al., 2015). After all, members with superior status may enjoy a range of advantages in the team, including greater social support and superior access to important resources (van der Vegt et al., 2006). Consequently, these members are likely to feel highly valued by others and experience a greater sense of self-worth and self-confidence than individuals at the bottom of the team's status hierarchy (Anderson et al., 2015). In fact, a considerable body of research has shown that other members often look up to their higher-status teammates for guidance and support in completing team tasks, enabling and encouraging team members with higher status to make important decisions for the team, facilitate member collaboration, and structure team interactions (Berger, Rosenholtz, & Zelditch, 1980; Keltner et al., 2003). Rather than emulating their supervisor's task-oriented leadership, we therefore anticipate that high-status team members will exhibit relatively high levels of task-oriented behavior regardless of their formal supervisor's actions.

On the other hand, an individual member's relatively low status in the team is likely to strengthen his or her susceptibility to the supervisor's role modeling and, thus, to enhance the positive linkage between the supervisor's and the focal team member's task-oriented behavior. Research has shown, accordingly, that lacking status goes along with diminished feelings of self-worth and social esteem (Anderson et al., 2015), leading individuals to be less confident in their own choices and less certain about appropriate behavior, norms, and standards (Ridgeway, 1991). As individuals look for clear-cut behavioral cues in this

situation, social learning theory suggests that they will be highly responsive to others' influence (Bandura, 1986). Low-status team members are particularly likely, then, to focus their attention on the behavior of individuals in formal power positions (e.g., the team's formal supervisor; Weiss, 1978) and to be concerned about gaining these high-power individuals' acceptance and approval (Berger et al., 1972). Consequently, low-status team members may strive to align their actions with the formal supervisor's behavior. To the extent their supervisor emphasizes task-oriented leadership, in particular, low-status members are likely to view such behavior as normative, appropriate, and worth emulating, thus exhibiting task-oriented behavior toward their teammates as well. If the supervisor largely refrains from task-oriented leadership, by contrast, low-status team members are likely to conclude that such behavior is ineffective, undesirable, or even counternormative, thus deliberately avoiding any attempt at providing explicit structure to the team's task activities and coordinating team members' cooperation. Taken together, we therefore hypothesize:

*Hypothesis 2: An individual member's status in the team moderates the relationship between the formal supervisor's task-oriented leadership behavior and the member's task-oriented behavior, such that this relationship is more pronounced for team members with lower rather than higher status.*

### **3.1.4 Individual Team Members' Task-Oriented Behavior and Leader Emergence**

Drawing from implicit leadership theory (Lord, Foti, & Vader, 1984), we further propose that a member's task-oriented behavior may critically shape his or her emergence as an informal leader in the team. According to this theoretical perspective, individuals have in mind an image of the features and behavior of a prototypical leader that influences their leadership perceptions and expectations (Lord, Foti, & Phillips, 1982). Specifically, individuals tend to categorize others as leaders or non-leaders, to a large extent, based on the

degree to which another person's behavior matches such implicit models of leadership (Epitropaki & Martin, 2004). In this regard, scholars have argued that task-oriented behavior fits particularly well with individuals' implicit beliefs about the characteristics of a prototypical leader, such that others recognize a focal individual as an informal leader primarily if he or she facilitates team task execution (Cronshaw & Lord, 1987; Lord et al., 1984). Past research has repeatedly supported this notion, illustrating that team members are more likely to attain informal leadership positions if they provide valued contributions for team tasks, for example through behavior such as coordinating and structuring team activities, developing orientation for other team members, synthesizing ideas, and managing the team's cooperative task performance (Bass & Bass, 2008; Eby, Cader, & Noble, 2003; Lord & Maher, 1991; Walter et al., 2012). We therefore hypothesize:

*Hypothesis 3: An individual team member's task-oriented behavior is positively related with his or her informal leader emergence.*

### **3.1.5 The Conditional Mediating Role of a Team Member's Task-oriented Behavior**

The above theorizing suggests a conditional linkage between a formal supervisor's task-oriented leadership and an individual member's task-oriented behavior toward his or her teammates, such that this positive association should be more pronounced for supervisors with higher (rather than lower) status and for members with lower (rather than higher) status (Hypotheses 1 and 2).<sup>2</sup> An individual member's task-oriented behavior, in turn, is suggested to positively associate with his or her informal leader emergence (Hypothesis 3).

These proposed relationships illustrate a complex pattern of linkages between formal and informal leadership. To the extent that social learning processes enable a formal supervisor's task-oriented leadership behavior to trickle down the hierarchy, such formal

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<sup>2</sup> As outlined in the Results section, we also explored a possible three-way moderated relationship of a supervisor's task-oriented leadership, supervisor status, and member status with a member's task-oriented behavior, although we had no a-priori expectations regarding the potential shape of this complex interactive association.

leadership may not only shape individual team members' respective behavior but, in doing so, it may also influence the degree to which these members attain informal leader roles. In sum, we therefore propose a pattern of conditional indirect relationships (Preacher et al., 2007), as depicted in Figure 3.1. The indirect linkage between a formal supervisor's task-oriented leadership behavior and an individual member's informal leader emergence should flow through the respective member's own task-oriented behavior, and the strength of this indirect association should hinge on both the supervisor's and the member's status in the team. Specifically, our theorizing suggests that the positive indirect relation between formal task-oriented leadership and informal leader emergence, through a member's task-oriented behavior, is stronger (a) among higher-status rather than lower-status supervisors and (b) among lower-status rather than higher-status members. Thus, we predict:

*Hypothesis 4: A formal supervisor's and a team member's status both moderate the indirect relationship between the supervisor's task-oriented leadership behavior and the member's informal leader emergence, as mediated by the member's task-oriented behavior. This positive, indirect relationship is more pronounced for supervisors with higher rather than lower status (H4a) and for team members with lower rather than higher status (H4b).*

## **3.2 Method**

### **3.2.1 Sample and Procedure**

We collected survey data from employees within two state-owned hospitals in southern central China to test our hypotheses. Targeted participants were 256 nurses working in 51 teams across various areas of medical specialization (e.g., neurology, oncology, physiotherapy, general medicine, etc.). Participants received paper-and-pencil surveys that they completed during their work time. Participation was voluntary, anonymous, and confidential, and the surveys were returned directly to the researchers. To ameliorate

common method/common source concerns, we used a time-lagged design, measuring the independent and dependent variables at different points (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012). At Time 1, team members rated their formal supervisors' task-oriented leadership behavior and status as well as each of their teammates' status. At Time 2 (approximately 4 weeks later), team members rated each of their teammates' task-oriented behavior and informal leader emergence. A total of 226 participants from 51 teams provided usable surveys at both time points, for an overall response rate of roughly 88 percent. The number of participants per team ranged from 2 to 12 ( $M = 4.43$ ,  $SD = 2.47$ ). Participants' average age was 27.57 years ( $SD = 4.13$ ), all of them were female, and 98% had a professional degree. Their average organizational tenure was 5.33 years ( $SD = 4.59$ ).

### 3.2.2 Measures

All measurement instruments were translated to Chinese following a back-translation procedure (Brislin, 1980). Unless indicated otherwise, all measures used a 5-point response scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

**Task-oriented leadership behavior (T1).** Following prior research (e.g., DeRue, Nahrgang, Hollenbeck, & Workman, 2012; Walter et al., 2012), team members rated their direct supervisor's task-oriented leadership behavior using five initiating structure items from the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (Stogdill, 1963). Sample items include, "*My supervisor lets other team members know what is expected from them,*" "*...schedules the work to be done,*" and "*...maintains definite standards of performance.*" Cronbach's alpha was .88. We aggregated multiple team members' ratings of the same supervisor by averaging the respective scores, based on appropriate intraclass correlation coefficients ( $ICC1 = .14$ ,  $F[50, 175] = 1.75$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $ICC2 = .43$ ; Bliese, 2000) and interrater agreement statistics (median  $r_{wg(j)} = .96$ , using a rectangular reference distribution; James, Demaree, & Wolf, 1984). Although the respective ICC2 value was lower than desirable (possibly due to

the relatively small average group sizes; Bliese, 1998), we believe the significant between-team variance and strong within-team agreement indicated by these statistics justify such aggregation (cf. Bliese, Maltarich, & Hendricks, 2018; Hofmann & Jones, 2005).

**Supervisors' status (T1).** Members rated their direct supervisor's status in the team using four items derived from Hays and Bendersky (2015) and Bunderson et al. (2014). The specific items were, "*How much respect does this person have in the team?*", "*How much esteem does this person have in the team?*", "*How much prestige does this person have in the team?*" and "*How much knowledge or expertise in the work your team performs does this person have?*" (1 = very little, 5 = very much;  $\alpha = .93$ ). Again, we aggregated multiple ratings of the same supervisor by averaging the respective scores (ICC1 = .19,  $F[50, 174] = 2.02$ ,  $p < .01$ , ICC2 = .50; median  $r_{wg(j)} = .93$ ).

**Individual team members' status (T1).** An individual member's status in the team was assessed through peer-ratings provided by the other teammates, based on the same four items used to measure supervisors' status ( $\alpha = .95$ ). We aggregated multiple ratings of the same team member to the individual level (ICC1 = .21,  $F[225, 849] = 2.27$ ,  $p < .01$ , ICC2 = .56; median  $r_{wg(j)} = .94$ ).

**Team members' task-oriented behavior (T2).** We assessed a member's task-oriented behavior through peer-ratings provided by the other teammates, based on the same five items used to measure supervisors' task-oriented leadership behavior (Stogdill, 1963). Cronbach's alpha was .90. Again, we aggregated multiple ratings referring to the same member to the individual level (ICC1 = .10,  $F[225, 736] = 1.47$ ,  $p < .01$ , ICC2 = .32; median  $r_{wg(j)} = .95$ ).

**Informal leader emergence (T2).** We drew from the other teammates' peer-ratings to assess a member's informal leader emergence, using a three-item measure from Kent and Moss (1994). We chose this measure because it does not require participants to nominate a

predetermined number of individuals as informal leaders but, rather, enables independent leader emergence scores for all members of the team (Walter et al., 2012). Specifically, the respondents assessed the extent to which each of their individual teammates, “...*assumes a leadership role*“, “...*leads conversations*“, and “...*influences team goals and decisions*” (1 = never, 5 = always;  $\alpha = .92$ ). We aggregated multiple ratings referring to the same member to the individual level (ICC1 = .31,  $F[225, 735] = 2.88, p < .01$ , ICC2 = .65; median  $r_{wg(j)} = .90$ ).

**Control variables.** Considering the link between supervisors’ task-oriented leadership and individual members’ respective behavior, prior research has demonstrated that older supervisors may better match individuals’ implicit beliefs about leadership (Buengeler et al., 2016). Hence, supervisors’ age might shape the extent to which team members emulate their supervisor. We therefore incorporated a *supervisor’s age* (in years) as potential covariate when examining the suggested trickle-down process of task-oriented leadership.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, a *supervisor’s relationship-oriented leadership behavior* may confound relevant social learning mechanisms, as such behavior is often associated with more favorable leader-member relations (Yukl, O’Donnell, & Taber, 2009). Team members therefore assessed such supervisory behavior using five consideration items from Stogdill (1963; sample item: “...*looks out for the personal welfare of team members*;”  $\alpha = .72$ ). We aggregated individuals’ responses to the supervisor level (ICC1 = .15,  $F[50, 175] = 1.76, p < .01$ , ICC2 = .43, median  $r_{wg(j)} = .91$ ). Finally, leadership processes may change over time as supervisors and team members get to know each other (Shamir, 2011), and member interactions may differ in larger vs. smaller teams (e.g., Wheelan, 2009). Hence, we considered a *team member’s organizational tenure* and *tenure with the supervisor* (in months) as well as *team size* (number of members) as possible control variables when

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<sup>3</sup> We did not include gender as a control variable because all supervisors and team members in our study were female.

examining the role of task-oriented leadership for an individual member's behavior in the team.

Further, when investigating the proposed relationship between an individual team member's task-oriented behavior and informal leader emergence, we considered the respective *member's age* (in years) and *organizational tenure* (in months) as potential covariates. With older and more experienced individuals better matching implicit leadership stereotypes, these characteristics might shape teammates' responses toward a focal member's task-oriented behavior (Lord & Maher, 1991). Moreover, we captured a *team member's relationship-oriented behavior* as a possible covariate to illustrate the unique role of task-oriented behavior for informal leader emergence, using peer-ratings of the same items as for supervisors' respective leadership behavior (Stogdill, 1963;  $\alpha = .70$ ). We aggregated multiple ratings referring to the same member to the individual level (ICC1 = .09,  $F[225, 736] = 1.43, p < .01$ , ICC2 = .30; median  $r_{wg(j)} = .92$ ). Additionally, we again controlled for *team size* in the task-oriented behavior – leader emergence linkage, due to its potential role for team interaction processes (Wheelan, 2009).

### 3.2.3 Data Analysis

The present data have a nested structure (i.e., multiple team members reporting to the same supervisor), thus violating independence assumptions (Bickel, 2007). Moreover, consistent with our theoretical reasoning, supervisors' task-oriented leadership behavior and status are located at the team (i.e., supervisor) level (Level-2), whereas a team member's task-oriented behavior, status, and informal leader emergence are located at the individual member level (Level-1). We therefore employed random intercept models to examine the hypotheses, using the mixed model procedure in SPSS (Bickel, 2007). We grand-mean centered the team-level independent variables and group-mean centered the individual-level

independent variables to generate unbiased estimates when examining the hypothesized cross-level relations (Hofmann & Gavin, 1998).

To examine the cross-level 2-1-1 moderated mediation models proposed in Hypotheses 4a and 4b, we built on procedures outlined by Krull and MacKinnon (2001) and Zhang, Zyphur, and Preacher (2009; see also Schaubroeck, Shen, & Chong, 2017). First, we calculated simple slopes for the cross-level relation between supervisors' task-oriented leadership behavior and individual members' task-oriented behavior at higher and lower values of supervisor and team member status, respectively ( $\pm 1$  SD above the mean). Second, we estimated the individual-level relation between a member's task-oriented behavior and leader emergence. In doing so, we reintroduced the subtracted group average of the group-mean centered individual-level mediator to avoid confounding between-group and within-group mediation effects (i.e., the CWC(M) approach; Zhang et al., 2009). Finally, we used the resulting parameter estimates to derive percentile 95%-confidence intervals for the conditional indirect relation between a supervisor's task-oriented behavior and a team member's informal leader emergence, through the member's task-oriented behavior, at higher and lower levels of the two moderator variables, using Selig and Preacher's (2008) Monte Carlo method (with 20,000 resamples). This procedure is considered superior to traditional approaches (e.g., the Sobel test) when examining (conditional) indirect relationships, because it avoids normality assumptions (Mackinnon, Lockwood, & Williams, 2004).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> To explore our findings' robustness, we also examined H4 using grand-mean centered individual-level variables and without reintroducing the group average of the mediator. The results and conclusions remained virtually identical in these alternative analyses.

### 3.3 Results

#### 3.3.1 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Table 3.1 presents means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations for all study variables at both the supervisor (Level-2) and the team member level of analysis (Level-1). In terms of control variables, at Level-1, an individual team member's task-oriented behavior was significantly related with the members' organizational tenure ( $r = .16, p < .05$ ) and the supervisor's age ( $r = .16, p < .05$ ), and marginally related with the member's tenure with the supervisor ( $r = .11, p < .10$ ) and the supervisor's relationship-oriented behavior ( $r = .11, p < .10$ ). Moreover, a member's informal leader emergence was significantly related with his or her age ( $r = .16, p < .05$ ), organizational tenure ( $r = .27, p < .01$ ), and relationship-oriented behavior ( $r = .32, p < .01$ ). Team size, in contrast, was unrelated with either of the focal outcome variables, and we therefore excluded this variable when testing the study hypotheses (Bernerth et al., 2018). Hence, we controlled for the supervisor's age and relationship-oriented leadership behavior as well as an individual member's organizational tenure and tenure with the supervisor when examining a member's task-oriented behavior. Further, we controlled for a member's age, organizational tenure, and relationship-oriented behavior when examining his or her informal leader emergence. We note that the results and conclusions remained virtually unchanged when (a) omitting all control variables, (b) including all of the control variables considered in the Methods section, (c) incorporating supervisor age and tenure with supervisor as additional control variables in the linkage between a member's task-oriented behavior and informal leader emergence, and (d) including members' hospital affiliation as an additional covariate.

**Table 3.1:**  
**Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations**

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Supervisor age	32.50	4.11		.20	.33*	.51**	.13	.05	-.08	.14	-.01	.20	.12	.16
2. Member age	27.64	4.20	.09		.88**	.38**	.04	-.10	-.13	-.27#	-.17	-.05	-.18	-.30*
3. Member organizational tenure	63.88	54.94	.15*	.88**		.53**	.05	-.08	-.11	-.24#	-.11	.02	.12	-.08
4. Member tenure with supervisor	37.94	40.23	.21**	.52**	.64**		.09	-.05	-.16	-.09	-.01	.16	-.04	.05
5. Team size	5.02	2.29	.18**	.07	.07	.02		-.08	-.22	-.15	-.26#	-.16	-.23	.03
6. Task-oriented leadership (T1)	3.97	.38	-.02	-.15*	-.11	-.04	.04		.72**	.66**	.58**	.58**	.50**	.17
7. Relationship-oriented leadership (T1)	3.90	.39	-.08	-.18**	-.15*	-.10	-.06	.60**		.66**	.65**	.45**	.68**	.22
8. Supervisor status (T1)	4.06	.47	.10	-.32**	-.32**	-.21**	-.03	.62*	.59**		.51**	.35*	.42**	.11
9. Member status (T1)	3.58	.52	-.04	.19**	.25**	.21**	-.15*	.06	.15*	.01		.63**	.61**	.30*
10. Member task-oriented behavior (T2)	3.67	.42	.16*	.10	.16*	.11#	.03	.15*	.11#	.05	.53**		.58**	.54**
11. Member relationship-oriented behavior (T2)	3.71	.37	.08	-.03	.01	-.01	-.09	.11	.16*	.09	.47**	.49**		.42**
12. Informal leader emergence (T2)	2.89	.59	.14*	.16*	.27**	.14*	.10	-.06	-.05	-.12#	.44**	.58**	.32**	

*Note.* Individual-level correlations are below the diagonal (*N* = 226); team-level correlations are above the diagonal (*N* = 51).

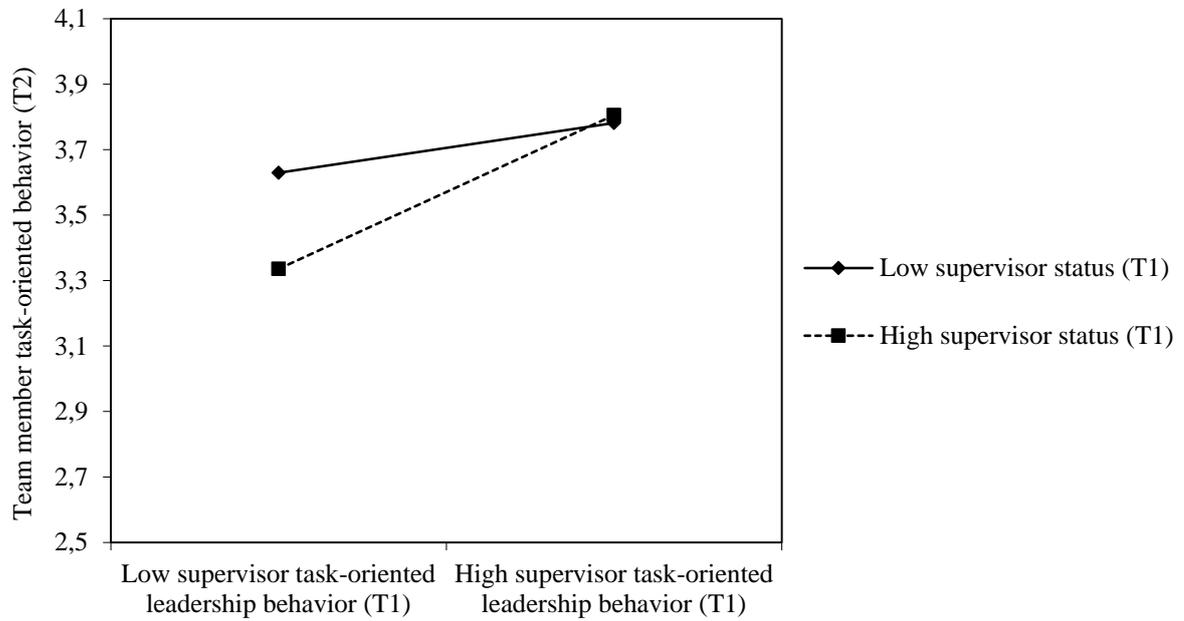
#*p* < .10, \**p* < .05, \*\**p* < .01 (two-tailed)

### 3.3.2 Tests of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 predicted a supervisor's status to moderate the relationship between the supervisor's and individual team members' task-oriented behavior. As shown in Table 3.2 (Model 3), the interaction coefficient for supervisors' task-oriented behavior and status was significantly related with an individual member's task-oriented behavior ( $\gamma = .55$ ,  $SE = .20$ ,  $p < .01$ ), after considering control variables and main effects. Following Preacher, Curran, and Bauer's (2006) procedure for probing cross-level interactions, we plotted these conditional relationships for supervisors with higher and lower status in Figure 3.2. Supporting Hypothesis 1, the relationship between a supervisor's and an individual member's task-oriented behavior was positive when the supervisor's status in the team was relatively high (simple slope at +1 SD:  $\gamma = 1.01$ ,  $SE = .23$ ,  $p < .01$ ). For supervisors with relatively low status, in contrast, this relationship was not statistically significant (simple slope at -1 SD:  $\gamma = -.09$ ,  $SE = .29$ ,  $p = .75$ ).

**Figure 3.2:**

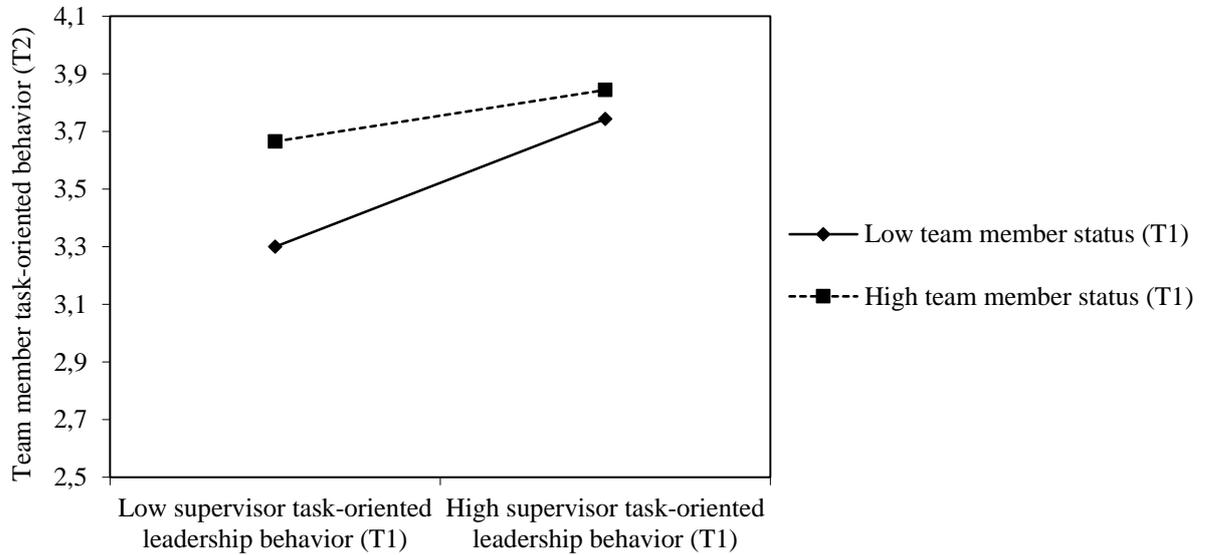
**Interactive Relationship of Supervisors' Task-Oriented Leadership Behavior and Status with Individual Team Members' Task-Oriented Behavior**



Hypotheses 2 predicted a team member's status to moderate the cross-level relationship between a supervisor's task-oriented leadership and the member's respective behavior. As shown in Table 3.2 (Model 3), the interaction coefficient for supervisors' task-oriented behavior and member status was significantly related with an individual member's task-oriented behavior ( $\gamma = -.64, SE = .15, p < .01$ ), after considering control variables and main effects. Figure 3.3 depicts the respective interaction pattern. As suggested, the relationship between a supervisor's and an individual member's task-oriented behavior was positive when the member's status in the team was relatively low (simple slope at -1 SD:  $\gamma = 1.10, SE = .23, p < .01$ ), whereas this relationship was not significant when the member's status was relatively high (+1 SD:  $\gamma = -.18, SE = .23, p = .44$ ).

**Figure 3.3:**

**Interactive Relationship of Supervisors’ Task-Oriented Leadership Behavior and Team Member’s Status with Individual Team Members’ Task-Oriented Behavior**



Although not hypothesized, we also explored a possible three-way interactive relationship of a supervisor’s task-oriented leadership behavior, supervisor status, and team member status with an individual member’s task-oriented behavior. Corroborating the previous findings’ robustness, none of the additional interaction coefficients reached statistical significance. By contrast, the hypothesized two-way interaction coefficients of a supervisor’s task-oriented leadership behavior with both supervisor and individual member status remained significant in this expanded model.

Hypotheses 3 predicted an individual team member’s task-oriented behavior to positively relate with his or her informal leader emergence. As shown in Table 3.3 (Model 2), a member’s task-oriented behavior was indeed positively related with leader emergence ( $\gamma = .81, SE = .10, p < .01$ ), even when incorporating relevant control variables as well as the

supervisor's task-oriented leadership behavior, team member status, and supervisor status.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was supported.

Finally, Hypothesis 4 suggested a pattern of conditional indirect relationships. Consistent with Hypothesis 4a, the indirect association between a supervisor's task-oriented leadership behavior and an individual member's informal leader emergence (through the member's task-oriented behavior) was positive and significant for supervisors with relatively high status in the team (+1 SD; indirect relationship = .82, 95% CI = .43, 1.27), whereas this indirect association was not significant for supervisors with lower status (-1 SD; indirect relationship = -.07, 95% CI = -.54, .40). Further, consistent with Hypothesis 4b, the indirect linkage between a supervisor's task-oriented leadership behavior and an individual team member's informal leader emergence (through the member's task-oriented behavior) was positive and significant for members with relatively low status in the team (-1 SD; indirect relationship = .89, 95% CI = .50, 1.36), but not for members with higher status (+1 SD; indirect relationship = -.14, 95% CI = -.52, .22).

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<sup>5</sup> These results remained virtually unchanged when also including the two-way interaction terms of supervisors' task-oriented leadership behavior with supervisor status and team member status in the respective equation.

**Table 3.2:**  
**Random Coefficient Results for a Member's Task-Oriented Behavior**

Variable	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE
<i>Control variables</i>								
Supervisor age	.02#	.01	.02#	.01	.02*	.01	.02*	.01
Supervisor relationship-oriented leadership (T1)	.48**	.13	.19	.19	.19	.17	.19	.17
Member organizational tenure	.00*	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Member tenure with supervisor	-.00	.00	-.00	.00	-.00	.00	-.00	.00
Member task-oriented behavior (T1)							.32**	.07
<i>Main effects</i>								
Supervisor task-oriented leadership (T1)			.57**	.18	.46*	.18	.46*	.18
Supervisor status (T1)			-.15	.14	-.16	.13	-.16	.13
Member status (T1)			.30**	.06	.33**	.06	.16*	.06
<i>Interactions</i>								
Supervisor task-oriented leadership (T1) x supervisor status (T1)					.55**	.20	.55**	.20
Supervisor task-oriented leadership (T1) x member status (T1)					-.64**	.15	-.60**	.14
$R^2$	.19	**	.29	**	.38	**	.39	**
$\Delta R^2$			.10	**	.09	**	.10	**

Note.  $N = 226$  at the individual level;  $N = 51$  at the group level. Unstandardized coefficients are shown. Model 4 also controls for a team member's task-oriented behavior at T1.  $\Delta R^2$  for Model 4 refers to the incremental variance explained beyond Model 2.

# $p < .10$ , \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$  (two-tailed).

**Table 3.3:**  
**Random Coefficient Results for a Member’s Informal Leader Emergence**

Variable	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE
Member age	.01	.02	.01	.01	.01	.01
Member organizational tenure	.00	.00	.00	.00	-.00	.00
Supervisor task-oriented leadership (T1)	-.26	.20	-.26	.20	-.26	.20
Member task-oriented behavior (T2) (group mean)	.71**	.16	.71**	.15	.70**	.15
Member relationship-oriented behavior (T2)	.14	.13	-.05	.11	.02	.09
Supervisor status (T1)	.03	.14	.03	.14	.03	.14
Member status (T1)	.61**	.09	.41**	.08	-.07	.08
Member leader emergence (T1)					.59**	.06
Member task-oriented behavior (T2) (individual)			.81**	.10	.63**	.09
$R_f^2$	.31**		.39**		.48**	
$\Delta R_f^2$			.08**		.17**	

*Note.*  $N = 226$  at the individual level;  $N = 51$  at the group level. Unstandardized coefficients are shown. Model 3 also controls for a team member’s leader emergence at T1.  $\Delta R_f^2$  for Model 3 refers to the incremental variance explained beyond Model 1.

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$  (two tailed significance)

### 3.3.3 Supplementary Analyses

We conducted a number of supplementary analyses to address possible alternative explanations for our results. Scholars have pointed to the possibility that observed moderator effects might spuriously result from curvilinear relationships between the predictor variables

and the outcome (e.g., Edwards, 2008). Following (Cortina, 1993), we therefore re-examined our moderation hypotheses, adding the squared terms for supervisors' task-oriented leadership behavior, supervisor status, and team member status along with these variables' main effects and predicted two-way interactions. Corroborating our initial findings, the respective squared terms were not significantly related with a member's task-oriented behavior, and both of the hypothesized two-way interaction coefficients remained statistically significant.

Additionally, because members' task-oriented behavior and informal leader emergence were both assessed through teammates' peer-ratings at the same point in time, the results of our proposed mediation models (i.e., Hypothesis 4) may suffer from common source bias (Podsakoff et al., 2012). We therefore followed Ostroff, Kinicki, and Clark's (2002) split-sample procedure, randomly dividing the peer-ratings for a member's task-oriented behavior and leader emergence into two groups per target individual (if more than one peer-rating was available for the respective individual, as was the case for about 90% of the participants). We then used teammates' responses from the first group to assess a focal individual's task-oriented behavior, whereas independent responses from the second group were used to assess his or her informal leader emergence. Again corroborating our previous conclusions, the split-sample results were equivalent to the full-sample results.

To further explore our findings' robustness, we extended the previous hypotheses tests by also controlling for a team member's task-oriented behavior and leader emergence at Time 1 (measured using the same procedures and items as outlined before) when examining the respective outcome variables at Time 2. Importantly, as shown in Table 3.2 (Model 4) and Table 3.3 (Model 3), the results and conclusions remained virtually unchanged in these additional analyses.

Finally, although our research focus was on a team member's task-oriented behavior as a key mechanism that transfers the indirect association of a supervisor's task-oriented leadership behavior with a member's leader emergence (contingent on both supervisor and team member status), we acknowledge the possibility that members may also emerge as informal leaders through relationship-oriented behavior aimed at promoting their teammates' well-being (Lord, 1977; Taggar et al., 1999). Despite a positive bivariate correlation between an individual member's relationship-oriented behavior and informal leader emergence ( $r = .32, p < .01$ ), however, the respective association was not significant when adding a member's relationship-oriented behavior to the full model examined in Table 3.3 (i.e., controlling for task-oriented behavior and other relevant covariates;  $\gamma = -.05, SE = .11, p = .67$ ). Hence, as outlined above, the hypothesized conditional indirect relation between a supervisor's task-oriented leadership behavior and a team member's informal leader emergence, through the member's task-oriented behavior, was supported when controlling for the respective member's relationship-oriented behavior. By contrast, we did not find support for an alternative conditional indirect relation between a supervisor's relationship-oriented behavior and a member's informal leader emergence, through the member's relationship-oriented behavior, when controlling for the respective member's task-oriented behavior. Detailed findings for all supplementary analyses are available from the first author.

### **3.4 Discussion**

Although scholars have long argued that it is a key aspect of formal leaders' tasks to transform followers into (informal) leaders (e.g., Day, Gronn, & Salas, 2004; Denis et al., 2012), our theoretical and empirical knowledge remains very limited on how this process unfolds. To address this issue, the present study developed and tested a conceptual model that links a formal supervisor's task-oriented leadership behavior with individual team

members' emergence as informal leaders. Our results demonstrated that (a) individual members' task-oriented behavior toward teammates is a key generative mechanism in this regard, and (b) both supervisors' and individual members' status represent critical boundary conditions. For supervisors with relatively high (but not lower) status, and for members with relatively low (but not higher) status in the team, the supervisor's task-oriented leadership behavior was positively associated with the member's task-oriented behavior toward teammates and, thus, with the member's informal leader emergence.

### **3.4.1 Theoretical Implications**

This study addresses scholars' repeated calls for a more integrative perspective on aspects of formal and informal leadership within teams (e.g., Morgeson et al., 2010; Zhang et al., 2012), providing new knowledge on *how*, *why* and *when* supervisors' formal leadership behavior may relate with individual team members' emergence as informal leaders. In doing so, our findings offer important theoretical implications for our understanding of the trickle-down processes that may link formal supervisors' leadership behavior with individual members' respective behavior toward their teammates (cf. Mayer et al., 2009; Pearce & Sims, 2002). Drawing from theory and research on social learning (Bandura, 1986), we illustrate that the relation between supervisors' task-oriented leadership and individual team members' respective behavior is more complex than previously believed, with both supervisor and member status representing critical contingency factors. A team member is most likely to emulate his or her supervisor's task-oriented behavior (a) when the supervisor is respected and valued among the team's members and, thus, appears as a salient and adequate role model and (b) when the member him-/herself is lacking respect and prestige among peers and, thus, is particularly susceptible to the supervisor's role modeling.

Moreover, the present results clarify the complex role of formal supervisors' leadership behavior for individual members' informal leader emergence. We offer new insights on how supervisors' task-oriented leadership can transform followers into informal leaders, highlighting a team member's own task-oriented behavior as an important (albeit conditional) explanatory factor. It appears that a higher-status supervisor can proactively shape processes of informal leader emergence by encouraging or discouraging individual members' task-oriented acts, whereas a lower-status supervisor leaves a leadership vacuum that forces members to take on informal leader roles largely irrespective of the supervisor's behavior. Furthermore, it seems that a lower-status team member's task-oriented behavior and subsequent informal leader emergence are critically driven by the formal supervisor's guidance, whereas higher-status members may proactively structure team tasks and, thus, adopt informal leader positions largely irrespective of their supervisor's role modeling.

Taken together, this research therefore advances the existing literature on the social learning and trickle-down processes that may link formal and informal leadership by drawing attention to the social context in which such processes unfold. Consistent with research that has emphasized the relevance of status considerations in organizations (Magee & Galinsky, 2008), it appears vital to incorporate both supervisors' and individual members' social standing in the team to more fully comprehend how a formal supervisor's task-oriented behavior may cascade toward his or her subordinates and, thus, may shape individual members' emergence as informal leaders.

Finally, the interactive relationships uncovered in this research enrich the growing literature on the interplay of power and status in organizations. Prior research on this issue has primarily examined how the informal status of individuals in formal power positions (e.g., supervisors) influences their behavior toward others (e.g., Anicich et al., 2016; Fast et al., 2012). Adding to this work, the present study shows that status considerations may also

shape the consequences associated with formal power holders' behavior, and it illustrates that both power holders' own status and their subordinates' status may be critical in this regard. As such, our results suggest that aspects of both the formal power hierarchy and the informal status hierarchy within teams may conjointly shape processes of informal leadership emergence.

### **3.4.2 Strengths and Limitations**

Despite some notable strengths (e.g., multiple peer-ratings of the focal variables, measurement of formal and informal leadership at different time points), we acknowledge some study limitations that should be considered when interpreting the present findings. Considering the cross-level hypotheses, for example, our supervisor-level (i.e., team-level) sample size is relatively small ( $n = 51$ ). We note, however, that (a) the sample size is considerably larger at the individual team members' level ( $n = 226$ ) and (b) the size of our supervisor-level sample is comparable with other recently published leadership research (e.g., Margolis & Ziegert, 2016; Schaubroeck et al., 2017). Further, we collected the data for our study in one country (i.e., China), and the sample comprised only female participants working in hospital settings. Hence, although our hypotheses are predicated on a conceptual fundament that is not bound to a specific cultural or occupational context, future research that replicates our findings in more diverse samples and/or alternative study settings would be worthwhile to corroborate our results' generalizability.

Moreover, we measured individual team members' task-oriented behavior and informal leader emergence at the same time point and using the same survey, potentially raising common source concerns regarding this specific association (Podsakoff et al., 2012) – although we believe the supplementary analyses (using a split-sample procedure to separate the measurement sources for these variables) ameliorate this issue. Finally, we acknowledge that the correlational study design does not warrant causal conclusions, even

though (a) our predictions build on a strong and established theoretical foundation (i.e., social learning theory; Bandura, 1986) and (b) our results remained robust when controlling for the dependent variables at an earlier time point. Experimental or longitudinal research would be helpful to further address this issue. Experimental designs, for instance, may shed new light on cause-and-effect relationships, whereas longitudinal approaches could aid a better understanding of the dynamic interaction processes between formal supervisors and team members (and among team members themselves) that may promote a member's informal leader emergence over time (cf. Shamir, 2011).

### **3.4.3 Future Research Directions**

Beyond addressing limitations, future research could extend the present investigation by examining supervisors' and individual team members' status as boundary conditions for the cascading effects of alternative leadership behavior. As noted before, studies have illustrated potential trickle-down relationships for various leadership styles, including formal supervisors' ethical (Mayer et al., 2009), visionary (Margolis & Ziegert, 2016), and abusive behavior (Mawritz et al., 2012). We believe the present theoretical rationale could apply for such types of leadership as well, such that social learning and role modeling mechanisms may more strongly contribute to the transfer of such behavior from formal supervisors with relatively high status and/or toward individual members with relatively low status. Investigating these notions could more broadly establish status as a key contingency factor in the linkage between formal and informal leadership and, thus, could enhance the generalizability of the present theoretical considerations.

Another fruitful direction for future research would be to consider additional boundary conditions in the linkage between formal supervisors' leadership behavior and individual members' informal leader emergence. A team member's motivation to lead (Chan & Drasgow, 2001), for example, may encourage him or her to take on informal leadership

responsibilities (e.g., by exhibiting task-oriented behavior toward teammates) largely irrespective of the formal supervisor's behavior, whereas a member with less motivation to lead may tend to emulate the supervisor's behavior to a greater extent. Moreover, it could be interesting to examine contextual boundary conditions for the linkages observed in the present study. For example, individual team members may face greater uncertainty about how to act in complex, ambiguous, and changing work environments (Duncan, 1972). Hence, strong environmental complexity and/or dynamism may motivate members to seek their formal supervisor's guidance to a larger degree (Kerr & Jermier, 1978), such that the linkage between supervisors' task-oriented leadership and individual subordinates' respective behavior (and subsequent informal leader emergence) might be more pronounced in more (rather than less) complex and dynamic settings.

Finally, important new insights could be obtained by extending the present theorizing toward behavioral role modeling processes between team members. Akin to the present argumentation, it seems plausible that high-status members appear as salient and appropriate role models for their formal peers, and that low-status team members are particularly susceptible to their peer's role modeling (cf. Flynn & Amanatullah, 2012). Hence, beyond top-down linkages between formal and informal leadership, processes of behavioral transfer between the peer members of a team may shape an individual's informal leader emergence. It would be particularly interesting, then, to examine the individual and contextual boundary conditions that might make either the formal leader's or another team member's role modeling more relevant for a focal member's behavior in the team and, thus, for his or her emergence as an informal leader.

### **3.4.4 Practical Implications**

The present findings have relevant implications for supervisors aiming to promote informal leadership within their teams. Specifically, our research highlights the role of a

formal supervisor's task-oriented leadership. Whereas members with relatively high status in the team may take on informal leadership responsibilities largely irrespective of their supervisor's actions, we found low-status members to heavily rely on their supervisor's guidance. Hence, supervisors striving to advance task-oriented behavior among *all* members and, thus, to facilitate a broad pattern of shared informal leadership throughout their team (cf. Carson et al., 2007), are well-advised to explicitly role model such task-oriented behavior – particularly toward low-status members. Moreover, our findings show that exhibiting task-oriented leadership is particularly important among high-status supervisors. Their prominent position as a role model appears, at least partially, as a double-edged sword, because team members are likely to follow a high-status supervisor's example both if he or she exhibits strong task-oriented leadership and if he or she refrains from such behavior. Hence, high-status supervisors may (possibly inadvertently) hinder their members' informal leader emergence if they neglect task-oriented leadership aspects.

From an organizational perspective, our findings suggest that adequate selection and development processes for formal supervisors may be a viable means of stimulating employees without formal authority to adopt informal leader roles. Organizations could, for instance, consider candidates' task-orientation when selecting or promoting individuals for formal supervisory positions, including structured interviews and simulations (e.g., group discussions, in-basket exercises; Smither, Reilly, Millsap, Pearlman, & Stoffey, 1993) that assess how an individual initiates and structures team activities, assigns tasks within a team, and coordinates joint goal attainment. Similarly, an organization's leadership development may enable and encourage supervisors to function as role models for their team members by incorporating relevant task-oriented behavior in training programs.

### **3.4.5 Conclusion**

Taken together, this study provides new insights into the complex relation between formal and informal leadership, illustrating that the indirect linkage between a supervisor's task-oriented leadership behavior and an individual team member's informal leader emergence, through the respective member's own task-oriented behavior, is contingent on both the supervisor's and the member's status in the team. We hope these findings will stimulate further research on this important topic, promoting a better understanding of formal supervisors' roles for processes of informal leadership emergence within their work units and enabling a more effective management of such processes in organizational practice.

#### 4 Are we in Time? An Actor-Partner Interdependence Approach toward the Interpersonal Consequences of Time Pressure

Sebastian Hohmann<sup>a</sup>, Roman Briker<sup>a</sup>, and Frank Walter<sup>a</sup>

##### Abstract

Although research has shown that time pressure can shape employees' behavior and work outcomes, little remains known about how *differing* perceptions of time pressure between cooperating individuals may influence their behavioral reactions. The present investigation addresses this issue by examining the joint role of a focal individual's (i.e., an actor's) and a dyadic interaction partner's time pressure perceptions for the actor's time-oriented and relationship-oriented behavior toward the partner. We tested our predictions using an online and a laboratory experiment across two different cultural contexts. Results demonstrated that an actor's perceptions of time pressure were positively related with his or her time-oriented behavior. Also, in Study 1 (but not Study 2), the partner's time pressure perceptions moderated this association, such that the linkage between an actor's time pressure and time-oriented behavior was more pronounced when the partner experienced lower (rather than higher) time pressure. Furthermore, the partner's time pressure perceptions moderated the role of an actor's time pressure for his or her relationship-oriented behavior across both studies. This linkage was positive and significant when the partner experienced high (but not low) time pressure. In sum, this research advances new insights into the consequences of time pressure in cooperating dyads, illustrating that conflicting time pressure perceptions may critically influence individuals' interpersonal behavior in such settings.

*Keywords:* time pressure, dyads, time-oriented behavior, relationship-oriented behavior, actor-partner interdependence model

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Many employees in modern work environments regularly perceive substantive time pressure, such that they feel there is insufficient time to adequately complete their tasks (Eurofund, 2017; Rudd, 2019). Hence, it is not surprising that a large body of research has developed on the consequences of such time pressure (e.g., Maruping, Venkatesh, Thatcher, & Patel, 2015; Stuhlmacher, Gillespie, & Champagne, 1998). This literature has shown an employee's time pressure perceptions to shape his or her work-related attitudes and decisions (Wright, 1974) and to influence important work outcomes, such as individual creativity (Baer & Oldham, 2006) and task performance (Beck & Schmidt, 2013). Extrapolating these findings toward interpersonal contexts, scholars have demonstrated that time pressure can critically alter individuals' interactions with other persons (Karau & Kelly, 1992; McGrath & Kelly, 1986). In group settings, for example, this stream of research suggests that perceptions of time pressure may trigger two distinct types of interpersonal behavior. On the one hand, time pressure may lead group members to exhibit time-oriented behavior, such as emphasizing timeliness and deadlines, pushing others toward a faster working speed, and proactively synchronizing joint task accomplishment (Karau & Kelly, 1992; Waller, Zellmer-Bruhn, & Giambatista, 2002). On the other hand, research has linked time pressure with relationship-oriented, friendly, and cooperative acts, with some studies demonstrating that such perceptions may diminish interpersonal helping and support within groups (Kelly & Loving, 2004; Pearson & Porath, 2004) and others illustrating that time pressure may amplify such behavior (Maruping et al., 2015; Rand, Greene, & Nowak, 2012).

Importantly, this existing research has predominantly assumed that individuals working together in the same group and/or on the same task hold shared, similar perceptions of time pressure, with these collective perceptions shaping key behavioral reactions and outcomes (Chong et al., 2011; Isenberg, 1981). Due to fundamental changes in modern work environments, however, even employees working in the same group or task context may

often perceive differing degrees of time pressure (Cummings & Haas, 2012). Many employees in today's organizations belong to multiple teams and work on multiple concurrent projects, for example, simultaneously occupying diverse roles across these distinct assignments (Ballard, Vancouver, & Neal, 2018; van de Brake, Walter, Rink, Essens, & van der Vegt, 2018). Hence, even individuals working together on the same task may, at any given point, have non-overlapping schedules and differing temporal demands, potentially evoking pronounced differences in individuals' perceptions of time pressure for the task at hand (O'Leary, Mortensen, & Woolley, 2011). The existing empirical research has not examined the consequences associated with such conflicting time pressure perceptions. As such, little remains known about how a focal individual may react to the common type of situation in which his or her own time pressure exceeds an interaction partner's respective perceptions, or vice versa. Despite the pervasive nature of time pressure, our current understanding of this phenomenon therefore remains cursory and incomplete.<sup>1</sup>

The present study addresses this issue by investigating the role of time pressure for individual employees' interpersonal behavior in cooperative dyadic interactions. We draw from TIP theory (time, interaction, and performance theory; McGrath, 1991) to propose an actor-partner interdependence model (Kenny, Kashy, & Cook, 2006), such that a focal employee's (i.e., an actor's) own time pressure and his or her dyadic interaction partner's respective perceptions may *jointly* influence the actor's interpersonal behavior toward the partner. Specifically, as depicted in Figure 4.1, we examine the joint role of actor and partner time pressure for an actor's time-oriented behavior (i.e., structuring the joint pace of work,

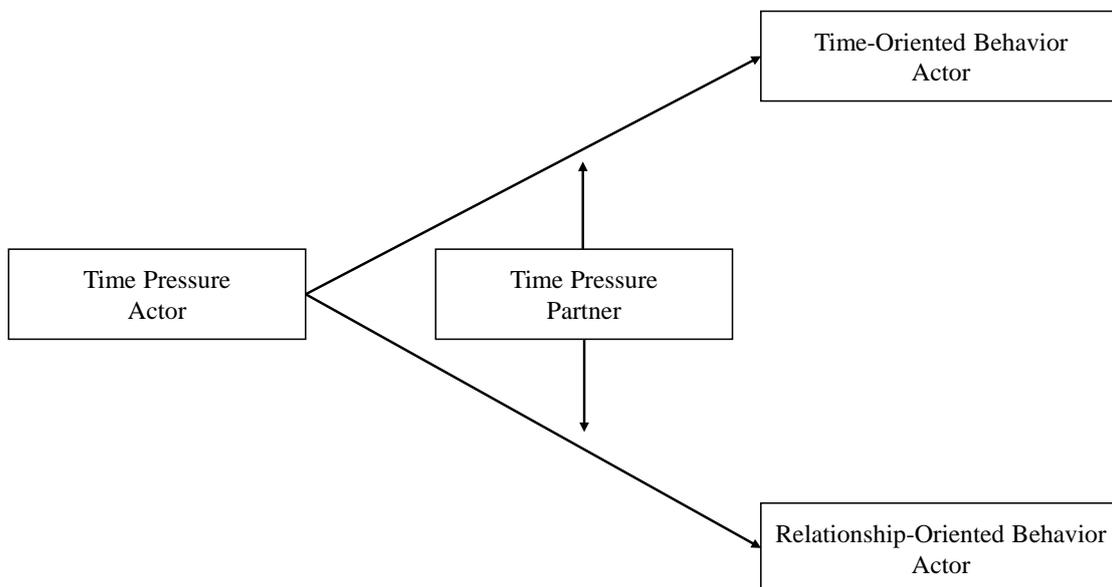
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<sup>1</sup> We note that some studies have examined team diversity in members' time-based personality characteristics (e.g., Mohammed & Nadkarni, 2011, 2014). Although informative, however, this research has focused on members' stable personality traits rather than acute, situational perceptions of time. Moreover, these studies have adopted a team-level perspective on the consequences of temporal diversity, rather than examining individual employees' reactions toward another person's more or less divergent time orientations and preferences.

synchronizing common efforts, monitoring schedules and deadlines; Janicik & Bartel, 2003; Mohammed & Nadkarni, 2011)<sup>2</sup> and relationship-oriented behavior (i.e., friendly, considerate, and helpful acts; Brief & Motowidlo, 1986; Mossholder, Richardson, & Settoon, 2011). Prior research attested to the relevance of such behavior for individuals' interpersonal relations (e.g., trust and coordination; Janicik & Bartel, 2003; McAllister, 1995) and joint goal attainment (e.g., task performance; Mohammed & Nadkarni, 2011; Ng & van Dyne, 2005).

**Figure 4.1:**

**The Conceptual Model**



We empirically examine our conceptual model across two independent experimental studies, including an online scenario design and a laboratory investigation. In doing so, our goal is to advance existing theory and research on time pressure in organizations, shedding new light on the important consequences of conflicting time pressure perceptions between

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<sup>2</sup> Other scholars have labeled similar types of behavior as “temporal planning” (Janicik & Bartel, 2003: 122) or, if conducted in a hierarchical context, as “temporal leadership” (Mohammed & Nadkarni, 2011: 492). In line with Waller, Giambatista, and Zellmer-Bruhn (1999), we refer to such actions as time-oriented behavior.

individuals working on a joint task. More specifically, we aim to move beyond existing research on individual or group-level time pressure by highlighting the *interplay* between an actor's and a partner's (potentially divergent) time pressure perceptions as a critical factor that shapes an actor's behavioral choices. Our research therefore depicts time pressure as an inherently social phenomenon. By doing so, it emphasizes the complexity of the associated behavioral implications in modern work environments, where individuals' unique job arrangements may induce conflicting perceptions of time pressure even within cooperative interactions. As such, we strive to introduce a new, more nuanced perspective on the role of time pressure in today's organizations that anchors an individual's respective perceptions within his or her work context.

#### **4.1 Theory and Hypotheses Development**

##### **4.1.1 Time Pressure and Time-Oriented Behavior**

We draw from TIP theory (McGrath, 1991) to explain how, within cooperative dyads that work interdependently toward shared goals, an actor's and a partner's time pressure perceptions may jointly influence the actor's behavioral choices toward the partner. In a first step, we suggest that an actor's own perceptions of time pressure will positively relate with his or her time-oriented behavior toward the partner. TIP theory holds that individuals in cooperative settings face "generic temporal problems" (McGrath, 1991: 162) that may threaten successful and timely goal attainment (see also Mohammed & Nadkarni, 2011). One key problem, in this regard, results from perceptions of time pressure (i.e., a "scarcity of temporal resources;" McGrath, 1991: 162). Such perceptions indicate that successful task achievement is endangered unless all relevant parties work swiftly, quickly, and in synchrony to jointly meet tight deadlines and stay on schedule (Karau & Kelly, 1992).

To solve this problem, a TIP perspective suggests that actors experiencing high time pressure will typically respond with time-oriented behavior, urging their interaction partners

to work faster and proactively scheduling partners' task activities to meet perceived temporal requirements (McGrath, 1991). In such situations, an actor may believe that quick and decisive action is paramount, such there is no time to carefully consider alternative task approaches (Payne, Bettman, & Luce, 1996). Consequently, time-pressed actors may cut short time-consuming discussions (Carnevale & Conlon, 1988), and they may try to impose their own, hurried working pace upon others, urging a cooperation partner to work as fast as possible and trying to synchronize his or her work pace with their own (Chen & Nadkarni, 2017).

Actors under lower time pressure, by contrast, may perceive little need for time-oriented acts because they feel there is sufficient time for successful task completion (Kelly & McGrath, 1985; Waller et al., 2002). Hence, from a TIP perspective, these actors are less likely to perceive temporal scarcity as a substantive problem, such that they can afford to consider and discuss alternative task approaches in detail without having to nudge a cooperation partner toward timely task accomplishment or to proactively structure the pace of a partner's work activities (Kelly & Loving, 2004; McGrath, 1991). In this situation, the actor is likely to perceive that it is possible to attain joint goals even if actor and partner work at their own, possibly divergent paces. Supporting these notions, scholars have demonstrated that with lower (rather than higher) time pressure, group members talk less about time and deadlines, steer their attention away from temporal demands, and settle for a relatively modest working speed (Karau & Kelly, 1992; Waller et al., 2002). In sum, we therefore hypothesize:

*Hypothesis 1: An actor's time pressure will be positively associated with his or her time-oriented behavior toward the partner.*

Beyond time scarcity as such, TIP theory suggests that conflicting temporal interests and requirements constitute a second key problem for collaborative efforts (McGrath, 1991;

see also Waller, Conte, Gibson, & Carpenter, 2001). In cooperating dyads, for example, this type of problem may occur if an actor needs to finish a joint project as quickly as possible, whereas the partner has different priorities and, thus, focuses most of his or her time and efforts on other, concurrent projects. Based on a TIP perspective, it seems likely that the actor will perceive the need to address such temporal misalignment. Hence, we anticipate that the interaction partner's time pressure will moderate the relationship between an actor's respective perceptions and his or her time-oriented behavior.

In particular, we suggest that an actor's perceptions of time pressure will positively relate with his or her time-oriented behavior when the partner's time pressure is relatively low. The actor may perceive little need for time-oriented interventions, on the one hand, if he or she shares an interaction partner's low time pressure perceptions. In this situation, both actor and partner are likely to exhibit a relatively slow working pace regarding the task at hand, with little concern about tight schedules and deadlines (Blount & Janicik, 2002). As such, the partner's relatively unhurried work approach should match the actor's own preferences, affirming the actor's view that there is abundant time for joint goal accomplishment (Waller et al., 2001). Hence, the actor should perceive the interaction partner's working style as adequate, and he or she is unlikely to push toward an increased work pace (Mohammed & Nadkarni, 2011).

On the other hand, an actor that feels pronounced time pressure may find it necessary to exhibit time-oriented behavior when facing an interaction partner with lower time pressure perceptions. In this scenario, the actor should be highly concerned with efficient and timely task accomplishment, whereas the partner may tend to work more slowly on joint assignments, potentially assigning higher priority to other, unrelated tasks (Blount & Janicik, 2002; Kelly & Loving, 2004). Hence, the partner's working style is likely to contradict the actor's preferences in this situation, and the actor may perceive the partner as causing delays

that obstruct successful collaboration (Sheldon, Thomas-Hunt, & Proell, 2006). To counter these tangible threats, TIP theory suggests that the actor will try to impose his or her scheduling preferences upon the partner, for example by defining clear-cut deadlines, issuing temporal reminders, and urging the partner to work faster (McGrath, 1991).

By contrast, we anticipate that the linkage between an actor's time pressure perceptions and his or her time-oriented behavior will be less pronounced when working with a partner who experiences relatively high time pressure. Specifically, we expect an actor to exhibit moderate levels of time-oriented behavior if his or her interaction partner feels highly pressed for time, largely irrespective of the actor's own respective perceptions. If an actor experiences relatively low time pressure, in this situation, he or she will initially assign little relevance to timely and efficient task accomplishment and perceive no heightened urgency when working on joint tasks (Kelly & Karau, 1999; Wright, 1974). Nevertheless, the partner's strong preference for quick and timely goal attainment may color the actor's respective behavior, because the partner is likely to assertively emphasize temporal demands and requirements (Waller et al., 2001) and, thus, to potentially increase the actor's awareness of such issues. Moreover, this scenario is ripe with temporal conflict, as actor and partner may find it difficult to agree on a common, synchronized working pace (Santos, Passos, Uitdewilligen, & Nübold, 2016; Standifer, Raes, Peus, Passos, Santos, & Weisweiler, 2015). Even among actors perceiving relatively low time pressure, we anticipate that such temporal misalignment may evoke time-oriented behavior to some extent, as temporal issues become a focal point in actor-partner interactions and as the actor tries to bring the partner's timing of work tasks closer to his or her own inclinations.

Likewise, a TIP perspective (McGrath, 1991) suggests that an actor will exhibit moderate levels of time-oriented behavior when experiencing high time pressure and working with a partner who shares this perception. In this scenario, the actor may feel that

timely goal attainment is a key problem, thus focusing his or her attention on deadlines, schedules, and efficient task accomplishment (Waller, Giambatista, & Zellmer-Bruhn, 1999). Importantly, however, the partner's similar emphasis on a quick and efficient working style may mitigate the actor's resulting time-oriented behavior. Although timing issues may be central to actor-partner interactions in this situation, the actor may not find it necessary to forcefully push the partner toward a faster working pace and to consistently remind the partner of upcoming deadlines, because the partner's behavior will already be aligned with the actor's respective preferences (Gevers, Rispons, & Li, 2016; Mohammed & Harrison, 2013)

Taken together, this rationale suggests that the positive relationship between an actor's time pressure and time-oriented behavior should be more pronounced when working with a partner who experiences relatively low (rather than higher) time pressure. Offering initial support for this notion, research has shown that individuals with a highly time-urgent personality feel frustrated when interacting with less time-urgent individuals and, by consequence, tend to impose strict deadlines upon such persons (Jansen & Kristof-Brown, 2005; Waller et al., 1999). Hence, we hypothesize:

*Hypothesis 2: The partner's time pressure will moderate the positive association between an actor's time pressure and his or her time-oriented behavior toward the partner, such that this linkage will be stronger when the partner's time pressure is lower rather than higher.*

#### **4.1.2 Time Pressure and Relationship-Oriented Behavior**

Our previous argumentation has focused on task- and outcome-related concerns, such that potential timing and productivity problems resulting from actors' and their interaction partners' time pressure perceptions may affect actors' time-oriented behavior. Importantly, however, TIP theory and related research suggests that individuals' perceptions of time may

also shape social aspects of their interpersonal relations, potentially influencing the degree to which interaction partners are seen as likable and trustworthy (e.g., Jansen & Kristof-Brown, 2005; McGrath, 1991). On this basis, we expect perceptions of time pressure within cooperating dyads to also shape an actor's relationship-oriented behavior toward the partner, although we anticipate the pattern of this association to differ substantially from our suggestions for time-oriented behavior. In fact, empirical findings on the role of an individual's time pressure for his or her relationship-oriented behavior have been ambiguous and contradictory. Some studies have shown that higher time pressure may decrease interpersonal helping and support, for example, because individuals may feel that they do not have sufficient temporal resources to afford such behavior (Pearson & Porath, 2004; Škerlavaj, Connelly, Cerne, & Dysvik, 2018). By contrast, other studies have demonstrated that pronounced time pressure may fuel collaboration and interpersonal support to cope with such stressful circumstances (Kinicki & Vecchio, 1994; Rand et al., 2012). Consequently, we see little reason to expect an actor's time pressure to directly associate with his or her relationship-oriented behavior (i.e., a main effect). Rather, we again draw from TIP theory and related research to propose that the interaction partner's time pressure perceptions will critically moderate this linkage.

Specifically, we expect a negative association between an actor's perceptions of time pressure and relationship-oriented behavior when the partner's time pressure is relatively low. When both the actor and the partner experience little time pressure, on the one hand, we suggest that the actor is likely to demonstrate considerate and helpful behavior toward the partner. Research has shown, accordingly, that individuals value and appreciate it if others' temporal attitudes and preferences mirror their own (Gevers, van Eerde, & Rutte, 2009). An actor with low time pressure may feel comfortable and relaxed, in particular, if the partner shares his or her easy-going work attitudes and modest working speed (Blount &

Janicik, 2002). By consequence, the actor may view the partner in a favorable light, experiencing positive attitudes and emotions toward him or her (Waller et al., 2001). We therefore suggest, in this situation, that the actor should be more likely to approach the partner in a friendly, cooperative, and considerate manner.

On the other hand, an actor experiencing higher time pressure may be less motivated to exhibit such relationship-oriented behavior toward a partner with relatively low time pressure perceptions. In this scenario, the partner's preference for a relatively slow working pace may sharply contradict the actor's sense of urgency, endangering the actor's temporal interests and, thus, inducing him or her to view the partner as a disturbance and a cause of annoying delays (Blount & Janicik, 2002). By consequence, the actor may feel "frustrated and discomforted" by the partner (Mohammed & Nadkarni, 2011: 493), rendering it less likely that the actor will exhibit friendly and attentive behavior. In fact, research suggests that such situations of temporal misfit may even trigger aggressive acts and evoke open conflicts (e.g., Mohammed & Angell, 2004).

When working with a partner experiencing relatively high time pressure, by contrast, we anticipate the linkage between an actor's own time pressure and relationship-oriented behavior to be positive. On the one hand, we expect an actor to rarely exhibit relationship-oriented behavior in this situation when he or she experiences relatively low time pressure. In this scenario, the actor's preference for a modest working speed may be in stark contrast to the partner's fast and deadline-oriented working style and with the partner's tendency to emphasize scheduling and timing issues (Waller et al., 2001). Hence, the actor may perceive the partner as demanding and obtrusive, potentially resulting in adverse interpersonal attitudes and negative emotions such as "anger, frustration, and/or anxiety" (Blount & Janicik, 2002: 255). We propose that such unsatisfying experiences will increase the likelihood of pronounced arguments and conflicts about temporal issues, impairing the

actor's motivation to act courteously and friendly toward the partner (Mohammed, Alipour, Martinez, Livert, & Fitzgerald, 2017; Santos et al., 2016).

Actors experiencing relatively high time pressure, on the other hand, are more likely to exhibit relationship-oriented behavior when working with a highly time-pressed partner. In this situation, the interaction partner's fast working pace and swift efforts will mirror the actor's own preferences for timeliness and speed (Mohammed et al., 2017). Because of such shared temporal interests, it seems likely that the actor will be satisfied with the partner's work attitudes and will view him or her in a favorable light (Mohammed & Harrison, 2013). Even under higher time pressure, an actor may perceive such a situation as relatively enjoyable and collegial and as providing a pleasant work atmosphere (Jansen & Kristof-Brown, 2005). Accordingly, we suggest that such instances of similarly high time pressure may lead an actor to invest efforts in building and maintaining a positive social relationship.

In sum, we therefore anticipate an actor to engage in relationship-oriented behavior toward an interaction partner with relative frequency if actor and partner share similar perceptions of time pressure. By contrast, if the actor experiences greater time pressure than the partner (or vice versa), we expect the actor's relationship-oriented behavior to be less pronounced. Providing some initial support for this notion, team-level research has demonstrated that similarity among individual members' stable temporal personality traits can reduce team conflicts, smoothen interaction processes, and increase members' satisfaction (Gevers et al., 2016; Mohammed & Angell, 2004). Hence, we hypothesize:

*Hypothesis 3: The partner's time pressure will moderate the association between an actor's time pressure and his or her relationship-oriented behavior toward the partner, such that this linkage will be positive when the partner's time pressure is relatively high and negative when the partner's time pressure is relatively low.*

## 4.2 Overview of the Present Research

We implemented a multi-study design to examine the present hypotheses, using two distinct experimental approaches across different cultural contexts. Specifically, Study 1 used an online scenario design with participants from the US to test our conceptual model. Study 2 used a laboratory experiment with participants from Germany to constructively replicate Study 1's results and examine the hypotheses in an actual dyadic interaction context.

## 4.3 Study 1

### 4.3.1 Sample and Procedure

Study 1 tested the hypotheses using an experimental scenario design as a first step toward disentangling causal relations. Participants were randomly assigned to one condition in a 2 (actor time pressure: low vs. high)  $\times$  2 (partner time pressure: low vs. high) between-subjects design. Using Amazon's MTurk, we recruited 185 Master Workers (i.e., individuals with a track record of conscientious participation in previous MTurk tasks) located in the US in exchange for a small monetary compensation. Participation was restricted to individuals who indicated they had prior organizational work experience. Research has shown that data collected through such online methods do not systematically differ in validity and reliability, as compared with data collected in laboratory settings (Buhrmester et al., 2011; Peer et al., 2017). Moreover, as outlined below, we used attention checks to safeguard data quality (cf. Meade & Craig, 2012), and seven participants who did not pass these attention checks were excluded from further analyses. The final sample therefore comprised 178 participants. Of these participants, 56% were male and 44% female, and their mean age was 37.57 years ( $SD = 10.57$ ). On average, they had 18.04 years of work experience ( $SD = 11.82$ ), and 71% had a college degree or higher.

### 4.3.2 Experimental Materials and Manipulations

After providing informed consent, all participants read the following excerpt, *“Imagine that you work for a pharmaceutical company called Randberg Inc. You started working on a very important project together with a colleague. You have not worked previously with this colleague. While you two normally work in different departments under different supervisors, the results of this project will be meaningful for both of your future careers within Randberg Inc. Then, participants (who served as actors in the present study) received their own time pressure manipulation. In the high [low] actor time pressure condition, participants read, “For you, this project is very time sensitive [not time sensitive], so you feel [no] time pressure and a [no] need to hurry. Hence, you will do your best to make the project successful, but you will also try to finish the project as quickly as possible [take your time to finish the project].” Finally, participants received the manipulation for the partner’s time pressure. In the high [low] partner time pressure condition, participants read, “For your colleague, this project is very [not] time sensitive, and he is under a lot of [not under any] time pressure. Therefore, you expect that he will do his best, but he will also try to finish the work as fast as possible [take his time to finish the work].”*

### 4.3.3 Dependent Variable Measures

After reading the scenario and manipulations, participants were asked to think about the situation and assess how they would behave toward their colleague. All measures were assessed using a 5-point response scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

**Time-oriented behavior.** We used three items from Mohammed and Nadkarni (2011) to measure time-oriented behavior. Consistent with our research focus, these items capture behavior aimed at structuring the collective work pace and reminding others about timely task accomplishment. We slightly adapted the items to refer to participants’ likely behavior toward their colleague in the scenario (rather than time-oriented leadership

behavior toward subordinates). The items were, “I would urge my colleague to finish his tasks on time,” “I would remind my colleague of the time left for his tasks,” and “I would pace my colleague so that the work is finished on time.” Cronbach’s alpha was .84.

**Relationship-oriented behavior.** We measured relationship-oriented behavior using a five-item instrument from Stogdill (1963) that captures friendly, helpful, and considerate behavior. Again, we slightly modified these items to allow for self-ratings in a hypothetical interaction with a colleague (rather than relationship-oriented leadership behavior toward subordinates). Example items are, “I would be friendly and approachable toward my colleague,” “I would look out for the personal welfare of my colleague,” and “I would act without consulting my colleague” (reverse coded). Cronbach’s alpha was .78.

#### 4.3.4 Attention and Manipulation Checks

Scholars have pointed toward potential problems with careless responding in online research designs (e.g., Bowling, Huang, Bragg, Khazon, Liu, & Blackmore, 2016). We therefore used two instructed response items (e.g., “This is a control question as an attention check – please select strongly disagree”) to check whether the participants paid attention when completing the measures. As noted before, we excluded seven participants who did not respond correctly to one or both of these questions from further analyses.

Further, to examine our manipulations’ viability, we asked the participants (after they had completed the dependent variable measures) to describe their own and their partner’s time pressure in the scenario with the following questions: (1) “How time sensitive was this project for you?” and (2) “How time sensitive was this project for your colleague?” Answer options ranged from 1 (“not time sensitive at all”) to 5 (“very time sensitive”). A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated that individuals perceived the project to be more time sensitive for themselves in the high (rather than low) actor time pressure condition ( $M = 4.82, SD = .53$ , vs.  $M = 1.26, SD = .72$ ),  $F(1, 176) = 1415.58, p < .001, \eta^2 = .89$ . Similarly,

participants perceived the project as more time sensitive for their partner in the high (rather than low) partner time pressure condition ( $M = 4.76$ ,  $SD = .82$ , vs.  $M = 1.41$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ),  $F(1, 176) = 553.35$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .76$ .

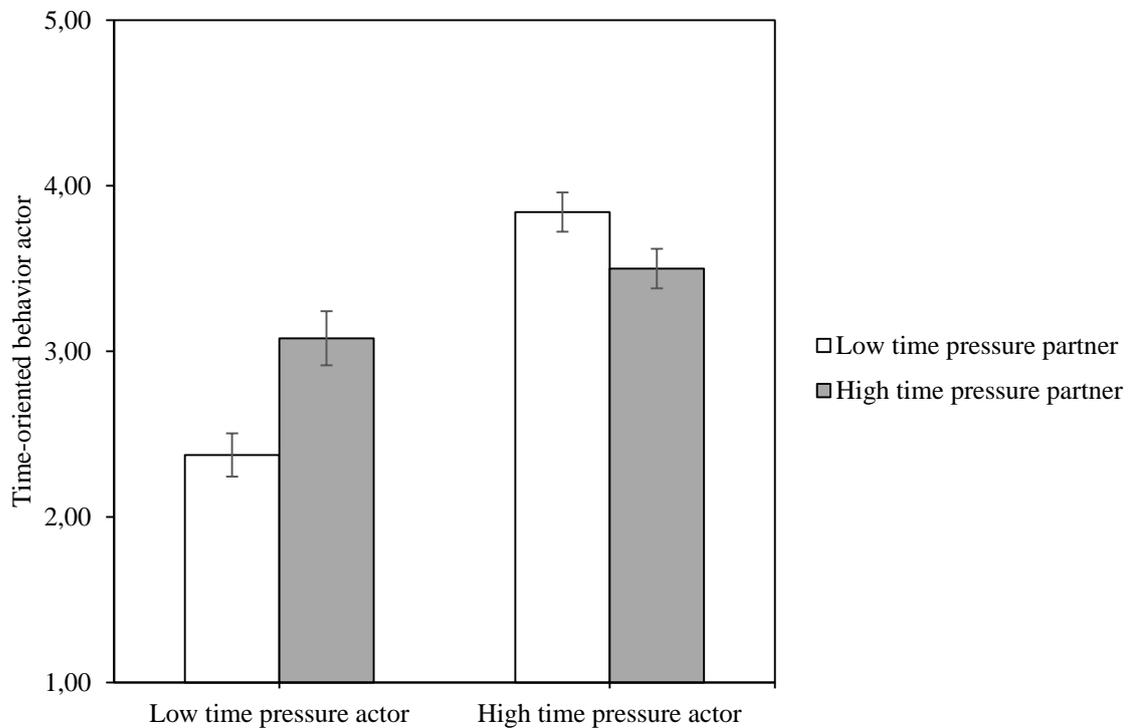
#### 4.3.5 Tests of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 predicted an actor's time pressure to positively associate with his or her time-oriented behavior. A two-way ANOVA on time-oriented behavior, with actor and partner time pressure as independent factors, revealed a significant main effect for actor time pressure ( $F[1, 174] = 51.47$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .23$ ), but not for partner time pressure ( $F[1, 174] = 1.98$ ,  $p = .16$ ,  $\eta^2 = .01$ ). Individuals in the high actor time pressure condition reported significantly higher tendencies to engage in time-oriented behavior ( $M = 3.67$ ,  $SD = 0.81$ ) than individuals in the low actor time pressure condition ( $M = 2.67$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

Importantly, however, this main effect was qualified by a two-way interaction of actor and partner time pressure ( $F[1, 174] = 15.89$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .08$ ), as anticipated in Hypothesis 2. Specifically, this hypothesis suggested that the association between an actor's time pressure and time-oriented behavior will be more strongly positive when working with a partner under lower (rather than higher) time pressure. As depicted in Figure 4.2, participants with high actor time pressure indicated that they would exhibit more time-oriented behavior than participants with low actor time pressure in both the low partner time pressure ( $M = 3.84$ ,  $SD = .79$  vs.  $M = 2.37$ ,  $SD = .91$ ;  $t(92) = 8.37$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and the high partner time pressure conditions ( $M = 3.50$ ,  $SD = .81$  vs.  $M = 3.08$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ;  $t(82) = 2.13$ ,  $p = .04$ ). As illustrated by the significant interaction coefficient, however, the respective simple effect was more pronounced in the low partner time pressure condition ( $d = 1.73$ ) than in the high partner time pressure condition ( $d = .46$ ). Hence, Hypothesis 2 was supported.

**Figure 4.2:**

**Interaction between actors' and partners' time pressure on actors' time-oriented behavior (Study 1). Error bars represent standard errors**

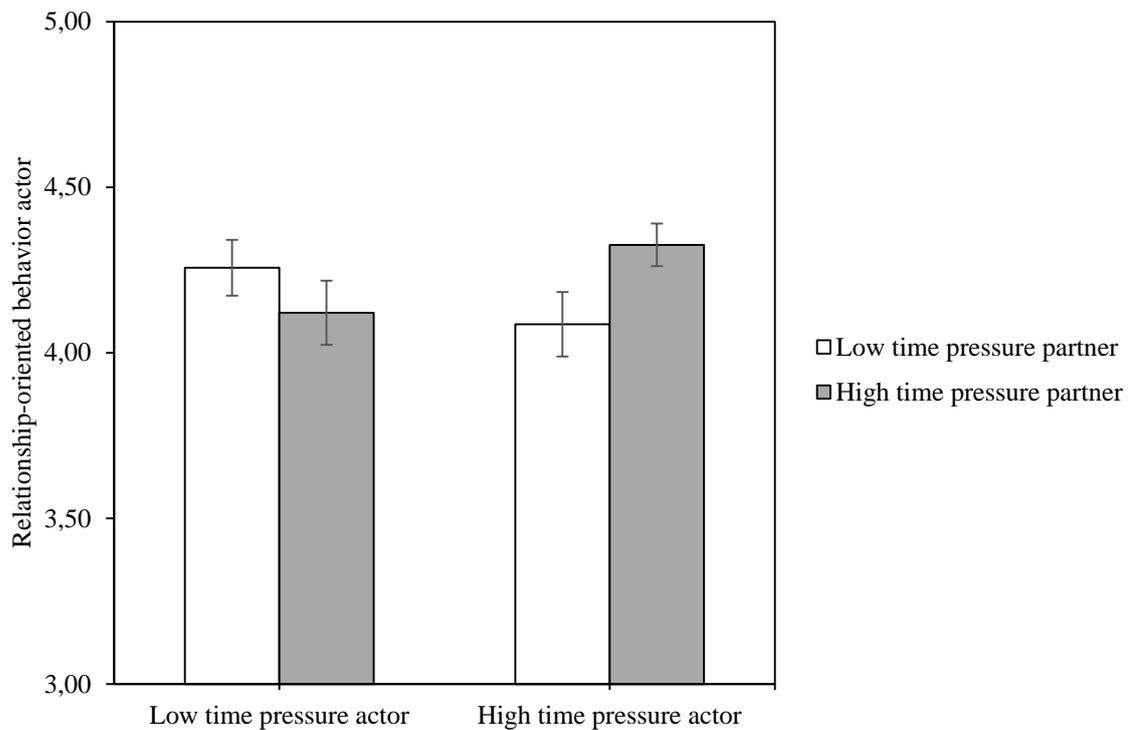


Hypothesis 3 predicted partner time pressure to moderate the association between an actor's time pressure and his or her relationship-oriented behavior, such that this linkage should be positive with higher partner time pressure and negative with lower partner time pressure. As expected, a two-way ANOVA on relationship-oriented behavior revealed no significant main effects for either actor time pressure ( $F[1, 174] = .02, p = .89, \eta^2 = .00$ ) or partner time pressure ( $F[1, 174] = .29, p = .59, \eta^2 = .00$ ). Again, however, there was a significant two-way interaction of actor and partner time pressure ( $F[1, 174] = 5.05, p = .03, \eta^2 = .03$ ). We depicted this interactive relationship in Figure 4.3. When working with a high time pressure partner, participants in the high actor time pressure condition indicated (marginally) greater tendencies toward relationship-oriented behavior ( $M = 4.33, SD = .44$ ) than participants in the low actor time pressure condition ( $M = 4.12, SD = .60, t(82) = 1.82,$

$p = .07$ ,  $d = .40$ . When working with a low time pressure partner, by contrast, participants' tendencies toward relationship-oriented behavior did not differ significantly between the high ( $M = 4.09$ ,  $SD = .65$ ) and low actor time pressure conditions ( $M = 4.27$ ,  $SD = .59$ ),  $t(88) = 1.42$ ,  $p = .16$ ,  $d = .29$ . Hence, despite a significant interaction, these findings do not offer unequivocal support for Hypothesis 3 – although the interaction pattern depicted in Figure 4.3 illustrates a trend in the proposed directions.

**Figure 4.3:**

**Interaction between actors' and partners' time pressure on actors' relationship-oriented behavior (Study 1). Error bars represent standard errors**



#### 4.3.6 Discussion of Study 1

As hypothesized, our first study revealed a positive relationship between an actor's time pressure perceptions and his or her time-oriented behavior. This positive relationship was qualified by a significant two-way interaction between actor and partner time pressure,

such that the role of an actor's time pressure for his or her time-oriented behavior was more pronounced when the partner's time pressure was lower (rather than higher). Moreover, Study 1 revealed that the partner's time pressure moderated the linkage between an actor's time pressure and relationship-oriented behavior, although the specific shape of this interaction differed slightly from our expectations.

Hence, we believe these initial results attest to the plausibility of our theoretical considerations – but we also acknowledge that the present study has a number of relevant limitations. Study 1's experimental scenario design, in particular, may raise external validity concerns because (a) participants read descriptions about their own and their interaction partner's time pressure perceptions, rather than actually experiencing such time pressure, and (b) we measured participants' self-rated behavioral inclinations in a hypothetical situation, rather than actual behavior. Moreover, as the results for relationship-oriented behavior (i.e., Hypothesis 3) were not fully in line with expectations, it is clear that further evidence is required to draw more robust conclusions in this regard. We conducted Study 2 to address these limitations, using a dyadic laboratory experiment with actual actor-partner interaction.

#### **4.4 Study 2**

##### **4.4.1 Sample and Procedure**

We recruited 120 students at a German university for an experimental study on problem solving via online and classroom announcements, in exchange for monetary compensation. As in Study 1, the participants were randomly assigned to one condition in a 2 (actor time pressure: low vs. high)  $\times$  2 (partner time pressure: low vs. high) between-subjects design. Participation was voluntary and anonymity guaranteed, and we randomly matched participants to form same-sex dyads (to prevent gender differences from biasing

interaction processes; cf. Eagly & Karau, 1991).<sup>3</sup> Three dyads were excluded because (a) at least one participant did not follow the experimental instructions or (b) at least one participant experienced technical difficulties during the experimental task. Hence, the final sample comprised 114 participants (58 female and 56 male) across 57 dyads. The participants' average age was 25.11 years ( $SD = 4.01$ ).

The study was conducted within an on-campus behavioral research laboratory, and the experiment was run with one dyad at a time. After they had provided informed consent, we told participants that they were to subsequently complete an individual and a dyadic exercise. We used the first, individual exercise to manipulate participants' perceptions of time pressure in the second, dyadic exercise. To do so, the participants within a dyad were seated individually in front of a computer in different cubicles to complete the "Lost on the Moon" task (Hall & Watson, 1970; see also Sheldon et al., 2006). Participants were asked to imagine that they were on a space mission that had crash-landed on the moon, and their task was to rank-order 15 pieces of equipment (without explicit time limit) according to their importance for survival and rescue. We depicted this individual exercise as a trial task for the subsequent, highly similar dyadic exercise, and we emphasized that the computer would assess participants' performance in both exercises based on two criteria, namely (a) how correct their responses were and (b) how fast they had completed the respective exercise. In addition, we informed the participants that the best performing dyad in the subsequent exercise could win a €50 gift certificate. After the individual exercise, bogus feedback was provided to independently manipulate both individuals' time pressure perceptions within each dyad, as outlined below.

In the following phase of the study (after the time pressure manipulation), both participants in a dyad were seated in front of a single computer to conduct the "Lost at Sea"

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<sup>3</sup> Controlling for gender did not meaningfully alter the results or conclusions.

exercise together (Nemiroff & Pasmore, 1975; see also Reinig, Horowitz, & Whittenburg, 2015). In this exercise, participants are asked to imagine that they are part of a shipwrecked crew drifting on the ocean in a lifeboat, and their task is to rank-order 15 pieces of equipment on their importance for survival and rescue.<sup>4</sup> As in the first exercise, participants were to complete the task as correctly and quickly as possible. Importantly, however, the participants in each dyad had to agree on a common solution in the second exercise, such that discussion and collaboration were required to solve the problem.

After completing the dyadic exercise, the participants returned to their previous, individual cubicles to complete a post-task questionnaire. This questionnaire captured our dependent variables, asking individuals to assess their interaction partner's time-oriented and relationship-oriented behavior during the dyadic exercise. Finally, we debriefed, thanked, and compensated the participants.

#### **4.4.2 Time Pressure Manipulation**

We randomly assigned individual participants to either a high time pressure or a low time pressure condition. Hence, given our dyadic study design, each participant was randomly placed in a dyad in which (a) his or her own time pressure (as actor) was either high or low and (b) the other participant's time pressure (as partner) was either high or low. Specifically, all participants received bogus feedback on their performance in the first, individual exercise on their individual computer screens, with two bars allegedly comparing a participant's own performance with other participants' average performance. In reality, all participants were informed that their performance was slightly below average, as compared

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<sup>4</sup> We chose two similar tasks across both experimental phases so that participants were more likely to consider the feedback obtained for first task as relevant to the second task.

with other participants.<sup>5</sup> The high and low time pressure conditions differed, however, in the reasons and recommendations accompanying this evaluation.

In the high time pressure condition, participants were told that the main reason for their substandard evaluation was that they had taken too much time for the task, whereas the correctness of their solution was adequate. Therefore, it was explicitly recommended that they should try to work much faster in the dyadic task to have a chance at winning the gift certificate. In the low time pressure condition, by contrast, participants received the information that they had worked sufficiently fast, but that they had made too many content errors. Thus, they received the explicit advice that they should take more time during the dyadic task to have a chance at winning the certificate. Participants within a dyad were blind to their partner's respective time pressure manipulation.

#### 4.4.3 Dependent Variable Measures

We translated all measures to German using a double-blind back-translation procedure (Brislin, 1980). All items were assessed using a 5-point response scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

**Time-oriented behavior.** We used the same three items as in Study 1 to measure time-oriented behavior (Mohammed & Nadkarni, 2011), slightly adapted to allow for peer-ratings (rather than self-ratings of one's own hypothetical behavior) of the dyadic interaction partner's respective behavior (e.g., "My partner urged me to finish the task on time"). Coefficient alpha was .77.

**Relationship-oriented behavior.** We used the same five items as in Study 1 to capture relationship-oriented behavior (Stogdill, 1963), again slightly adapted to allow for

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<sup>5</sup> To avoid suspicion, the exact performance feedback differed slightly within each dyad, such that one participant had allegedly achieved 46 points and the other participant 48 points. We note that this slight variation did not affect any of the study variables. Compared to participants who had supposedly achieved 46 points, participants who had allegedly scored 48 points did not significantly differ in either time-oriented behavior ( $F[1, 112] = 1.94, p = .18, \eta^2 = .02$ ) or relationship-oriented behavior ( $F[1, 112] = .37, p = .55, \eta^2 = .00$ ).

peer-ratings of the partner's respective behavior (e.g., "My partner was friendly and approachable"). Coefficient alpha was .70.

#### 4.4.4 Manipulation Checks

After the time pressure manipulation (and before the dyadic task), participants were asked about the feedback they had received. Specifically, we asked the participants to indicate how they had been evaluated regarding their overall performance (1 = "well below average", 5 = "well above average") as well as their speed (1 = "far too slow", 5 = "far too fast") and the correctness of their solutions (1 = "well below average", 5 = "well above average"). One-way ANOVAs showed that participants in the high (vs. low) time pressure conditions perceived (a) their overall performance evaluations as virtually identical ( $M = 2.09$ ,  $SD = .29$  vs.  $M = 2.00$ ,  $SD = .38$ ;  $F[1, 112] = 2.03$ ,  $p = .16$ ,  $\eta^2 = .02$ ), (b) their working speed evaluations as slower ( $M = 1.96$ ,  $SD = .87$  vs.  $M = 4.17$ ,  $SD = .68$ ;  $F[1, 112] = 228.12$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .67$ ), and (c) their correctness evaluations as better ( $M = 3.75$ ,  $SD = 1.75$  vs.  $M = 2.24$ ,  $SD = .84$ ;  $F[1, 112] = 34.73$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .24$ ). Hence, as expected, participants in the high time pressure condition perceived that they had worked too slowly in the first exercise (but had produced sufficiently correct solutions), whereas participants in the low time pressure condition perceived that they had worked too quickly and, therefore, had made too many content errors.

#### 4.4.5 Analytic Strategy

In the present study, individual participants were nested within dyads, such that each individual appeared in the data as both an actor and a partner. This dyadic data structure violates independence assumptions, potentially producing biased parameter estimates (Cook & Kenny, 2005). Consequently, scholars have recommended the use of dyadic techniques of data analysis to explicitly model such non-independence (Kenny et al., 2006; Krasikova

& LeBreton, 2012). Following such recommendations, we used Kenny and colleagues' (2006) actor-partner interdependence model (APIM) to test our hypotheses.

Our particular data structure reflects a "reciprocal standard design" with indistinguishable dyads (Krasikova & LeBreton, 2012: 743), such that (a) every dyad comprises two individuals who are not members of another dyad, (b) all focal variables were gathered from both members of a dyad, and (c) the members of a dyad could not be ordered in theoretically or empirically meaningful ways (as would be the case, for example, for supervisor-subordinate dyads). Hence, we followed suggestions by Krasikova and LeBreton (2012; see also Cook & Kenny, 2005) to apply a dyadic multilevel modeling approach when estimating our APIM, using the DyadR web program (Kenny, 2015). Dyadic multilevel modeling retains individual-level (i.e., Level-1) variables but accounts for the fact that these variables are nested within dyads (i.e., Level-2), treating them as repeated measures within dyads and fixing the Level-1 slopes to be equal (Kenny et al., 2006; Krasikova & LeBreton, 2012).

More specifically, we used actor-partner interdependence moderation models (APIMoM) to test Hypotheses 2 and 3, with partner time pressure representing a mixed moderator that varies both between and within dyads. Following Kenny and colleagues' recommendations (Garcia, Kenny, & Ledermann, 2015; West, Popp, & Kenny, 2008), we tested these hypotheses by including the interaction term between actor and partner time pressure together with both actor and partner effects to predict an actor's time-oriented and relationship-oriented behavior, respectively. Subsequently, we examined the simple effects of actors' time pressure on these behavioral outcomes under conditions of low vs. high partner time pressure, respectively.

#### 4.4.6 Tests of Hypotheses

As shown in Table 4.1, an actor's perceived time pressure was positively associated with his or her time-oriented behavior (estimate = .37,  $SE = .17$ ;  $p = .03$ ), even after controlling for partner effects. Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported. Moreover, Hypothesis 2 predicted that a partner's time pressure moderates the association between an actor's time pressure and his or her time-oriented behavior. As depicted in Table 4.1, however, the interaction term of actor and partner time pressure was not significantly related with time-oriented behavior (estimate = -.16,  $SE = .35$ ;  $p = .65$ ). Hence, contrary to Study 1, the present findings did not support Hypothesis 2. We will return to this unexpected finding in the General Discussion section.

Hypothesis 3 argued that a partner's time pressure moderates the association between an actor's time pressure and his or her relationship-oriented behavior. As shown in Table 4.1, the interaction coefficient for actor and partner time pressure was significantly related with an actor's relationship-oriented behavior (estimate = .61,  $SE = .21$ ;  $p = .003$ ), after controlling for main effects. Further, as illustrated in Figure 4.4, the simple relationship between an actor's time pressure and relationship-oriented behavior was positive under conditions of high partner time pressure (estimate = .33,  $SE = .14$ ;  $p = .02$ ), whereas this relationship was negative under conditions of low partner time pressure (estimate = -.28,  $SE = .14$ ;  $p = .045$ ). Hence, these results supported Hypothesis 3.

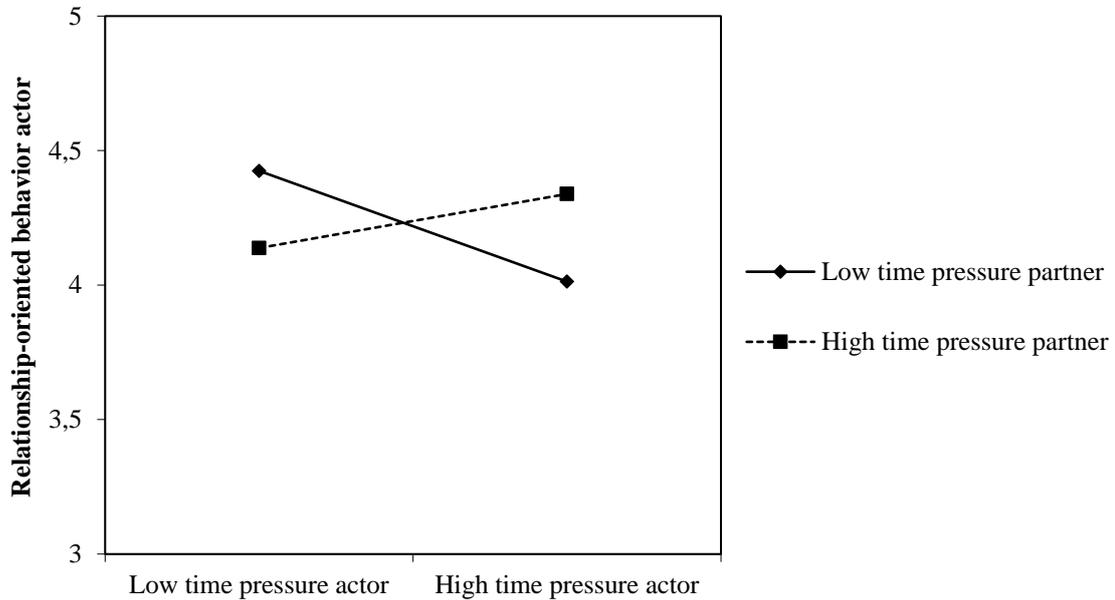
**Table 4.1:**  
**Dyadic Multilevel Modeling Results for Actors' Time-oriented and Relationship-oriented Behavior (Study 2)**

	Outcome Variables											
	Time-oriented behavior actor					Relationship-oriented behavior actor						
	Model 1		Model 2			Model 1		Model 2				
	Estimate	SE	95% CI	Estimate	SE	95% CI	Estimate	SE	95% CI	Estimate	SE	95% CI
Time Pressure Actor <sup>a</sup>	.37*	.17	[.04; .07]	.45 <sup>#</sup>	.09	[-.02; .93]	-.11	.10	[-.31; .08]	-.41**	.14	[-.69; -.14]
Time Pressure Partner <sup>a</sup>	-.23	.17	[-.56; .11]	-.15	.24	[-.79; .17]	.02	.10	[-.18; .21]	-.28*	.14	[.05; .61]
Time Pressure Actor x Time Pressure Partner				-.16	.35	[-.84; .52]				.61**	.21	[.21; 1.01]
$\Delta R^2$		.04*			.00			.00			.07**	

Note.  $N = 114$ . <sup>#</sup> $p < .10$ , \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$  (two-tailed significance)

<sup>a</sup>Experimentally manipulated (0 = low time pressure condition; 1 = high time pressure condition).

**Figure 4.4:**  
**Interaction between actors' and partners' time pressure on actors' relationship-oriented behavior (Study 2)**



#### 4.5 General Discussion

This research examined the joint role of actor and partner time pressure perceptions for individuals' interpersonal behavior in cooperating dyads. Across two independent studies, our results showed that an actor's perceived time pressure is positively related with his or her time-oriented behavior. Moreover, Study 1 illustrated this positive association to be more pronounced when the partner experienced low (rather than high) time pressure, although the respective interaction did not reach significance in Study 2. Hence, this investigation provides initial evidence that an interaction partner's time pressure may moderate the role of an actor's own time pressure perceptions for time-oriented behavior, although our inconsistent findings clearly call for further research in this regard. Furthermore, across both studies, the interaction partner's time pressure moderated the linkage between an actor's own time pressure perceptions and his or her relationship-

oriented behavior. Both studies illustrated that this association was positive when the interaction partner's time pressure was relatively high. When the partner's time pressure was low, by contrast, the linkage between actor time pressure and relationship-oriented behavior was non-significant in Study 1 and negative in Study 2.

#### **4.5.1 Theoretical Implications**

The present findings offer important theoretical implications for our understanding of the behavioral consequences associated with time pressure in organizations. Existing research on the role of time pressure in collaborative contexts has typically depicted this construct either as an individual phenomenon (e.g., Baer & Oldham, 2006; Beck & Schmidt, 2013) or as a collective, shared feature of the work environment (e.g., Kelly & Loving, 2004; Maruping et al., 2015). In modern work settings, however, cooperating employees often have differing perceptions of time pressure regarding their common tasks, for example due to divergent temporal preferences and priorities (Cummings & Haas, 2012). Our research illustrates how such divergent time pressure perceptions may shape interpersonal interactions. As such, our findings provide a novel, more nuanced perspective toward the role of time pressure, illustrating that joint consideration of all interaction parties' potentially diverse time pressure perceptions is required for a more complete and realistic understanding of how this common phenomenon may shape individuals' behavior toward each other.

In doing so, this study advances the emerging literature that has examined how group-level diversity in stable temporal personality traits (e.g., time urgency, temporal focus, or polychronicity) may influence group outcomes (Mohammed et al., 2017; Mohammed & Nadkarni, 2014). Moving beyond this prior focus on stable characteristics, the present findings demonstrate how similarities and differences between cooperating individuals' *situational, task-specific* time pressure perceptions can influence important interpersonal behaviors. Hence, with employees' schedules and timetables being fluid and often changing

on a daily basis (Blount & Janicik, 2001), it seems necessary to consider both individuals' time-related personality traits and their momentary temporal experiences at work to understand the consequences of temporal diversity.

Finally, this investigation sheds new light on a long-standing debate regarding the role of time pressure for individuals' helpful, cooperative, and friendly behavior. As outlined before, previous findings on this issue have been inconsistent and controversial, with some studies demonstrating that time pressure may increase interpersonal support and collaboration (e.g., Kinicki & Vecchio, 1994; Rand, 2016) and others illustrating that time-pressed individuals may act less civil and neglect others' needs (e.g., Darley & Batson, 1973; Pearson & Porath, 2004). Our results offer a possible explanation for this seemingly contradictory state of the research by emphasizing the *joint* consequences of both interaction parties' time pressure perceptions in dyadic settings. It appears that the role of an actor's time pressure for his or her relationship-oriented behavior critically hinges on the time pressure experienced by the interaction partner, such that this type of behavior is most pronounced when both parties' respective perceptions are aligned (rather than misaligned). Integrating previous results, individuals' perceptions of time pressure may, therefore, both increase (when the interaction partner perceives relatively high time pressure) and decrease (when the partner perceives little time pressure) the likelihood of friendly and considerate acts.

#### **4.5.2 Strengths and Limitations**

We believe our multi-study approach is an important strength of this research, enabling us to counterbalance many of the individual studies' specific limitations and, thus, to draw more robust conclusions. At the same time, we acknowledge some limitations that pertain to our research as a whole and that should be considered when interpreting its outcomes. Although our studies covered two different national contexts (i.e., the United

States and Germany), they were both conducted in Western cultures. Scholars have argued that individuals' assessments of time pressure may differ across cultures (Fulmer, Crosby, & Gelfand, 2014), such that high time pressure may be an implicit status symbol in Western societies (Keinan, Bellezza, & Paharia, 2019), whereas some Eastern cultures may assign greater value to patient and well-wrought rather than fast-paced actions (Brislin & Kim, 2003; Salmon, Gelfand, Ting, Kraus, Gal, & Fulmer, 2016). Hence, although our theoretical rationale is not bound to a specific cultural setting, the pattern of results we observed might differ in other cultures. Constructive replication of our findings in alternative cultural contexts would therefore be worthwhile to strengthen the generalizability of our conclusions.

Moreover, we note that our findings pertain to dyadic settings, possibly limiting their generalizability toward larger groups. For example, majority and minority influence processes (Levine & Russo, 1987; Nemeth, 1986) might alter the present relationships, such that a time-pressed actor may be reluctant to engage in time-oriented behavior if several other group members perceive little time pressure (Blount & Janicik, 2002). Scholars have emphasized that “the dyad is arguably the fundamental unit of interpersonal interaction and interpersonal relations” (Kenny et al., 2006: 1; see also Krasikova & LeBreton, 2012). Hence, we believe our dyadic focus is justified as a first step toward understanding the role of individuals' divergent time pressure perceptions. Nonetheless, we encourage future research to extend our theoretical model and empirical investigation toward larger groups to more comprehensively understand the behavioral consequences of time pressure in cooperating work units.

Finally, an important inconsistency between our two studies' results deserves mention. As noted before, Study 1 revealed a significant interaction effect of actor and partner time pressure on time-oriented behavior, but the respective interaction term was not significant in Study 2. A possible explanation may be that Study 1 used a hypothetical

scenario to manipulate partner time pressure as unambiguously high or low, whereas Study 2's participants did not receive explicit information about the partner's time pressure but, rather, observed the partner's high or low time pressure during the experimental interaction. It therefore seems possible that the partner's time pressure was less clear and salient in Study 2. This inconsistent finding certainly calls for further investigation. It may be particularly fruitful to examine this issue in longer social interactions that may offer more opportunities for individuals to recognize each other's degree of time pressure and, thus, to react accordingly.

#### **4.5.3 Directions for Future Research**

Beyond addressing limitations, future research could extend the present model to advance a broader understanding of the behavioral consequences associated with actors' and partners' time pressure perceptions. As noted before, for example, scholars have suggested that conflicting time pressure perceptions may induce feelings of anger and irritation (Blount & Janicik, 2002). Hence, such temporal misalignment between actor and partner may also trigger distinctly negative, counterproductive interpersonal behaviors characterized by aggression and hostility. Studies examining such additional behavioral outcomes could advance a wider perspective on the role of time pressure in collaborative contexts.

Moreover, future research could adopt a dynamic perspective to examine the present conceptual model. Punctuated equilibrium theory (Gersick, 1988), for example, suggests that time-related issues become more salient for social interactions after the temporal midpoint of a joint task or project. Hence, scholars could investigate whether the role of actors' and partners' time pressure perceptions may be more pronounced after a dyad has reached the midpoint of its assignments. By integrating "objective" time into our considerations, such research could promote a "completely temporal" perspective (Shipp & Cole, 2015: 250), investigating subjective perceptions of time pressure over the course of objective time to

more deeply understand the interpersonal consequences of conflicting time pressure perceptions in cooperative dyads.

Another fruitful direction for future research would be to extend our study's focus on peer interactions toward interactions in hierarchical relations. Specifically, (Chen, Blount, & Sanchez-Burks, 2004: 129) suggested that "with status, comes the control of time," such that individuals with higher status are more likely to impose their temporal preferences upon others (see also Blount & Leroy, 2007). Similarly, formal supervisors may be particularly likely to follow their temporal inclinations when interacting with subordinates (Chen & Nadkarni, 2017). Hence, it seems possible that such hierarchical differentiation alters the degree to which actors' and partners' time pressure perceptions shape their behavior. Examining this notion may enable future research to provide a more context-specific understanding of the behavioral consequences associated with perceived time pressure.

Finally, as our study's focus was on collaborative contexts, researchers could extrapolate our ideas and findings to competitive situations. Scholars have long acknowledged, for instance, that time pressure may shape negotiation processes and outcomes (De Dreu, 2003; Stuhlmacher et al., 1998). Similar to existing research within collaborative contexts, however, the negotiation literature has not empirically investigated the role of conflicting time pressure perceptions. It would be interesting to examine, for example, whether misaligned time pressure perceptions may limit cooperation and friendliness among negotiators, thus possibly reducing the chance of integrative agreements.

#### **4.5.4 Practical Implications**

Our findings yield relevant implications for managers and employees in organizations, demonstrating that time pressure perceptions can critically shape individuals' time-oriented and relationship-oriented behavior in cooperating dyads. Hence, our research alerts organizational practitioners to the relevance of actively considering their employees'

respective perceptions in organizing and monitoring joint task efforts. Specifically, both of the present studies have shown that an individual's perceptions of time pressure can promote his or her time-oriented behavior toward an interaction partner. Corroborating research that has depicted time pressure as an activating challenge stressor (e.g., Baer & Oldham, 2006; Maruping et al., 2015), our results suggest that projects requiring fast results and strict adherence to deadlines could benefit from including a highly time-pressed employee, who synchronizes the joint work pace and diligently monitors temporal milestones.

Moreover, our studies have shown that within cooperating dyads, both parties' time pressure perceptions may jointly influence an actor's relationship-oriented behavior, with such friendly and supportive acts being more pronounced if both parties' respective perceptions are aligned rather than misaligned. Hence, managers and employees should be aware of the potentially detrimental consequences of conflicting time pressure perceptions for a harmonious work environment. In such situations, managers could strive to proactively align employees' time pressure perceptions. Temporal leadership behaviors (Mohammed & Nadkarni, 2011) may be particularly relevant in this regard, such that managers may explicitly and consistently communicate temporal milestones, deadlines, and priorities toward all employees working on a joint project (Santos et al., 2016). Moreover, managers could encourage employees to openly discuss their pacing expectations and temporal preferences. By doing so, employees may be able to identify and resolve conflicting temporal demands and expectations (Bluedorn & Jaussi, 2007), thus increasing the likelihood of interpersonally supportive and considerate behaviors.

#### **4.5.5 Conclusion**

Our study provides new insights into the consequences of time pressure, illustrating that an employee's and his or her interaction partner's time pressure perceptions may jointly shape the focal employee's behavior toward the partner in dyadic task settings. Hence, this

research extends current knowledge on the relevance of time pressure for interpersonal behavior. We hope this study will stimulate further research on this important topic that will advance an improved, deeper understanding of this common phenomenon in modern work environments.

## 5 General Discussion

Informal influence is an essential aspect of life in organizations, such that “almost all organizational members engage in influencing other members and, in turn, virtually everyone in any organization is subject to the influence of others” (Porter et al., 2015: 3). In fact, collaboration between coworkers naturally entails different forms of informal influence, making it unlikely that organizations could function without it (Bedwell et al., 2012). Consequently, much research has been devoted toward providing a better understanding of the consequences of such informal influence processes. Scholars have, for example, examined how individuals’ use of specific influence tactics and impression management strategies can shape their peers’ attitudes and behavior (e.g., Bolino et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2017). Moreover, a considerable body of work has illustrated the implications of informal leadership behavior for team effectiveness (e.g., D’Innocenzo et al., 2016; Nicolaidis et al., 2014).

At the same time, there is still much to learn about the predictors of informal influence between colleagues at work (Ferris et al., 2002; Porter et al., 2015). Building on this general backdrop, the first chapter of this dissertation developed and discussed three key perspectives that may help to better understand important contextual antecedents in this regard. First, I concluded that there is disagreement about how individuals’ perceptions of lower status within teams can motivate them to engage in specific influence behaviors to enhance their status among other members. Second, there is ambiguity regarding how supervisors’ as well as individual team members’ status within teams can shape the trickle-down processes by which formal leadership behavior can translate into similar acts of informal influence. And finally, little is known on how differing degrees of time pressure between interacting peers can affect their mutual influence behavior.

As such, the overall goal of this dissertation was to address these issues and, in doing so, to respond to scholars' calls to "investigate lateral influences in more detail" (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008: 1097). Using various research designs and methods, I examined contextual antecedents of a range of influence behaviors between coworkers across three independent studies, each with a unique research focus and drawing from different samples and contexts. In doing so, I aimed to address key ambiguities and oversights in the literatures on influence tactics and impression management strategies as well as informal leadership and, thus, to increase our academic understanding of lateral influence processes. This final chapter of the present dissertation summarizes how Chapter 2, 3, and 4's key findings collectively contribute to various streams of organizational behavior research, describes overall limitations beyond each individual study's constraints, and explicates how future research may build on these empirical findings to further increase our knowledge of this important topic. The general discussion concludes with a description of relevant implications for managerial practice.

### **5.1 Summary of Findings**

Chapter 2's purpose was to address the first of the perspectives noted in the previous section. It empirically examined underlying mechanisms and moderating factors in the linkage between individual group members' (lack of) status and their attempts at improving their status position through a specific type of influence behavior, namely by proactively signaling their competence and value (i.e., enhancement behavior). Building on AET (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), I proposed that being in a low status position within a focal group can increase an individual member's experience of highly activating, unpleasant feelings (i.e., high arousal negative affect) which, in turn, may lead a member to engage in pronounced enhancement behavior. I further argued, however, that it is unlikely that all individuals will appraise low-status status situations as equally relevant for themselves, such that

motivational orientations (i.e., status striving) should shape individuals' affective (and subsequent behavioral) reactions.

I tested these hypothesized relationships across three independent studies. As anticipated, the results revealed a work group member's high-arousal negative affect as a conditional mediating variable that can translate his or her status perceptions into enhancement behavior toward other members. Importantly, however, the strength of this indirect relationship depended on the member's status striving, such that low-status situations primarily triggered high-arousal negative affective reactions (and subsequent enhancement behavior) among individuals with higher (but not lower) status striving. All in all, Chapter 2 provides fresh insights into the behavioral consequences associated with individuals' status in groups, illustrating why and when a perceived lack of status may trigger specific influence behaviors.

Chapter 3's main goal was to address the second perspective, as outlined before. Specifically, this chapter aimed to advance a broader understanding of influence processes in teams by examining the role of direct supervisors' formal leadership behavior for the emergence of individual team members' informal leadership. Adopting a social learning perspective (Bandura, 1986), I suggested that a formal supervisor's task-oriented leadership behavior can trickle down the hierarchy and affect a member's emergence as an informal leader, through the member's own task-oriented behavior toward his or her teammates. Moreover, I argued that these processes are more complex than previously believed, hinging on the status of both the supervisor and the team member.

I tested these predictions in a sample of 226 individuals working in 51 teams. Results corroborated a member's task-oriented behavior toward teammates as a key generative mechanism for the indirect relationship between the supervisor's task-oriented leadership behavior and the member's emergence as an informal leader. The strength of this indirect

linkage depended on the supervisor's status within the team, however, such that members emulated their supervisor's leadership behavior to a larger extent when the supervisor enjoyed much prestige, respect, and esteem. Moreover, a team member's motivation to mirror his or her supervisor's task-oriented leadership behavior was more pronounced when the member him- or herself enjoyed lower (rather than higher) status among peers. In sum, these findings address key ambiguities surrounding the association between formal and informal influence by demonstrating both how and under what conditions supervisors' formal task-oriented leadership may relate with an individual team member's respective behavior and, thus, with the member's emergence as an informal leader.

And finally, Chapter 4 addressed the third perspective on informal influence, as discussed before. Building on TIP theory and research (McGrath, 1991), it examined the role of perceived time pressure as an important contextual factor that may shape influence processes between peers in collaborative, dyadic work situations. Specifically, I proposed that a focal individual's (i.e., an actor's) time pressure perceptions can shape his or her choice of informal leadership behaviors toward an interaction partner. Further, I argued that the interaction partner's respective perceptions may critically shape the linkage between a focal actor's perceived time pressure and the actor's informal leadership behavior, such that the interplay between an actor's and his or her partner's (potentially divergent) time pressure perceptions may jointly influence the actor's behavior toward the partner.

I empirically examined these notions in two experimental studies. Results from both studies identified an actor's perceived time pressure as an important factor that can increase his or her time-oriented behavior toward an interaction partner in work settings. Moreover, results of the first study (but not the second) indicated that the strength of this relationship depended on the interaction partner's time pressure perceptions. With increasing time pressure, actors primarily engaged in more time-oriented behavior when their partner's time

pressure was lower rather than higher. Finally, both studies illustrated that an actor demonstrated more relationship-oriented behavior toward the partner when both actor and partner shared similar (rather than dissimilar) time pressure perceptions. All in all, these findings help to resolve existing ambiguity regarding the relevance of time pressure as a contextual antecedent of informal leadership by illustrating how (conflicting) time pressure perceptions matter for the decision to engage in specific influence behaviors in collaborative work settings.

### **5.2 Theoretical Contributions**

The findings of this dissertation make important contributions to theory advancement in various research areas. In particular, they provide new insights into the origins of individuals' use of diverse informal influence behaviors, illustrating the relevance of specific contextual factors (i.e., perceived status and time pressure as well as formal leaders' behavior) in this regard. By doing so, this dissertation addresses scholars' calls to further examine the emergence of informal influence processes and associated behaviors between peers (Chen et al., 2013; Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008). Although prior work has emphasized the importance of lateral influence for various work-related outcomes, as discussed in Chapter 1, existing research on possible antecedents is still relatively scarce, and the few studies that have been conducted on this issue have largely focused on influencers' individual characteristics like, for example, demographics and personality traits (e.g., Bolino et al., 2016; Judge et al., 2002). To address this issue, the present dissertation's empirical chapters examined key contextual factors that have largely been overlooked by prior research, and they illustrated how and under what conditions these factors may shape different forms of informal influence behavior. As such, this dissertation advances an antecedent-oriented view that can promote a better understanding of informal influence in organizations.

In addition, the dissertation further contributes to our understanding of informal influence processes by emphasizing the important role of moderating factors in the above linkages. By doing so, the dissertation illustrates that the associations between contextual factors and informal influence behaviors are not uniform but, rather, are more complex than one might initially expect. For example, the research presented here illustrates how an individual work group member's status striving may alter the behavioral consequences of his or her perceived status (Chapter 2), and how an interaction partner's (potentially divergent) time pressure may shape the role of an individual's own time pressure perceptions for his or her informal influence behavior (Chapter 4). As such, this dissertation provides a more in-depth understanding of when specific context factors may shape informal influence processes.

And finally, the dissertation's contributions to the emerging literature on the behavioral implications of status in organizations are noteworthy (Magee & Galinsky, 2008; Piazza & Castellucci, 2014). Prior theoretical research in this regard has suggested that status differentiation between individuals likely plays an important role for shaping informal influence processes (Correll & Ridgeway, 2006; Henry, 2009). Importantly, however, empirical studies have rarely examined this issue in a work context (Blader & Chen, 2012). The present dissertation advances this line of inquiry by illustrating (a) the relevance of members' own status within work groups for their decision to use specific influence strategies (Chapters 2 and 3) and (b) the important role of formal supervisors' status as a key boundary condition for the consequences associated with a member's own status in this regard (Chapter 3). Hence, the present dissertation highlights the distinct value of incorporating status considerations in research on informal influence.

### 5.3 Strengths, Limitations, and Future Research Directions

This dissertation has some notable strengths that refer to its use of diverse research methods (i.e., different types of experimental approaches and field studies) and analytical techniques (i.e., bootstrapping, multilevel modeling, and dyadic data analysis). Moreover, whereas the individual study samples of Chapter 2 and Chapter 4 were drawn from Western cultures (i.e., Germany and the United States), Chapter 3 used a sample from an Eastern culture (i.e., China) and, as such, adds some confidence in the generalizability of this dissertation's results. In addition, the multi-study designs of Chapters 2 and 4 represent distinctive strengths.

Besides these strengths, the present dissertation has potential limitations that should be considered when interpreting its conclusions and findings and that may offer interesting directions for future research. For example, although scholars have stressed the importance of integrating objective time when studying organizational behavior phenomena (Shipp & Cole, 2015), in general, and the need for longitudinal research on informal influence processes (Bolino et al., 2014), in particular, the empirical research presented in this dissertation did not utilize longitudinal study designs. As such, the dissertation is not able to provide a more dynamic perspective toward informal influence processes and to examine how such processes may develop over time.

Moreover, all of the individual studies presented in the dissertation have relied on quantitative analytical techniques for hypotheses testing. Scholars have emphasized, however, that “qualitative research is essential for uncovering deeper processes in individuals, teams, and organizations, and understanding how those processes unfold” (Bluhm, Harman, Lee, & Mitchell, 2011: 1870). Hence, complementing the present research with qualitative techniques may help to understand the social processes underlying informal influence behavior in more detail and to capture the significance and the meaning individuals

attach to associated influence processes (Edmondson & Mcmanus, 2007; Gephart, 2004). This would have been an important addition to better understand why exactly the contextual factors examined within the framework of the present dissertation shape the emergence of specific informal influence behaviors.

Above this, Chapters 2, 3, and 4 revealed that specific contextual features can shape individuals' use of different types of informal influence behavior. As this dissertation necessarily concentrated on a restricted range of such behaviors, future work could benefit from extending the present focus to advance a broader understanding of this issue. For example, very few empirical studies have examined the antecedents of negative, counterproductive forms of influence tactics in lateral relations like, for instance, intimidation, pressure, or outright aggression (Bolino et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2017). Some initial studies on this issue assume trickle-down effects of formal supervisors' destructive leadership, with such behavior shaping subordinates' decisions to engage in similar behavior toward their coworkers (Liu, Liao, & Loi, 2012; Mawritz et al., 2012). In addition, it seems possible that status and time pressure perceptions might lead individuals to engage in counterproductive influence behavior. In fact, as discussed in Chapter 2, scholars have assumed that the various detrimental consequences associated with a lack of status may evoke assertive (or even aggressive) acts (Griskevicius et al., 2009; Henry, 2009) and can lead to highly competitive behavior between peers (Hays & Bendersky, 2015). Moreover, other research has assumed that conflicting time pressure perceptions between individuals might result in pressure tactics toward others (Pearson & Porath, 2004; Ross & Wieland, 1996). Empirical research that builds on these notions and examines how the contextual factors studied in this dissertation as well as other, additional antecedents may relate with such alternative types of informal influence behavior may provide more in-depth insights into this important topic.

A related issue involves the dissertation's focus on a limited number of contextual factors that may shape informal influence in teams. As indicated in Chapter 1, this dissertation concentrated on the role of perceived status and time pressure as well as formal leadership structures because research suggests that these aspects may have a strong impact on informal influence behavior between employees. Empirically investigating other context-related features, however, would also be interesting. Prior theorizing and empirical work, for example, pointed toward the relevance of power differentiation, arguing that individuals' level of power may shape their tendency to engage in influence attempts (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2002; Yukl & Falbe, 1991). Moreover, although the individual studies of this dissertation utilized samples from Western and Eastern cultures, the particular goal of this dissertation was not to examine whether culture may shape individuals' use of influence behaviors. As such, it would be worthwhile to more systematically examine this issue. Scholars have suggested, in this regard, that cultural norms and expectations may determine what type of influence behavior is acceptable or desired (Sandal et al., 2014; Yukl, Ping Fu, & McDonald, 2003). It seems possible, for example, that the use of behavior aimed at proactively changing others' perceptions of an individual (e.g., enhancement behavior) may occur more often in individualistic than in collectivistic cultures because individuals in such cultures are less likely to face social restrictions to use such behaviors (cf. Kurman, 2001). By further examining these notions, future research could provide a more comprehensive view of the origins of informal influence behavior.

Finally, future research could also benefit from further investigating the interplay between contextual factors and stable personality characteristics. Much prior research has illustrated that personality traits play an important role for the use of influence tactics and impression management strategies (e.g., Bolino et al., 2008; Lee et al., 2017) as well the emergence of informal leadership (e.g., Judge et al., 2002; Paunova, 2015). Importantly,

Chapter 2 of this dissertation empirically demonstrated that contextual factors (i.e., status perceptions) and stable motivational orientations (i.e., status striving) may jointly affect an individual's tendency to engage in specific influence strategies. In a similar vein, theories on trait activation suggest that contextual cues and personality traits together affect individuals' behavior at work (Tett & Burnett, 2003; Tett & Guterman, 2000). Building on this backdrop, it seems possible that the contextual factors examined in the present dissertation (i.e., perceived status, time pressure, and formal leadership) as well as other features of the social environment may interact with certain personality traits to shape individuals' decision to engage in specific influence behavior toward peers. For example, situations that require informal leadership (e.g., when the formal supervisor is absent) might lead individual team members with a strong motivation to lead (Chan & Drasgow, 2001) to engage in particularly pronounced acts of informal influence. In sum, future research that builds on these notions may provide new insights in how both contextual factors and stable personality characteristics can shape informal influence processes at work.

### **5.4 Practical Implications**

This dissertation offers important practical recommendations for managing informal influence processes. Scholars have long emphasized that influence “is a pervasive phenomenon in organizational life” (Ferris et al., 2002: 116), and research has illustrated the far-reaching consequences of informal influence behavior for collaboration between employees as well as within teams and organizations (Forgas & Williams, 2001; Porter et al., 2015). Consequently, it is vital for organizational decision-makers to better understand why and under what conditions employees engage in which types of such behavior. Prior research has generally shown that individual characteristics shape individuals' decision to use certain influence behaviors (Bolino et al., 2008; Yukl, 2013). On this basis, managers might consider, for example, evaluating cognitive and emotional abilities and utilizing

personality inventories to assess whether employees and job applicants possess relevant traits that have been identified as relevant in this regard (e.g., self-monitoring and extraversion; Eby et al., 2003; Taggar et al., 1999).

This dissertation, however, highlights that such conclusions are incomplete, illustrating that informal influence processes must be considered within the social context in which they occur. Integrating prior research with central insights from the present dissertation, in particular, it seems worthwhile for organizations to consider both social contextual features of the environment as well as individual difference variables to more comprehensively manage informal influence behaviors between peers. The empirical chapters of this dissertation illustrate important levels that organizations may use in this regard, including contextual features such as employees' status position (Chapters 2 and 3) and time pressure (Chapter 4) as well as formal supervisors' status and leadership behavior (Chapter 3).

### **5.5 Concluding Remarks**

Informal influence processes are pervasive in organizations, and as such, it is important for scholars to better understand their nature, prerequisites, and consequences. Although a large body of research has focused on the possible consequences of such behaviors in teams and organizations, however, research has remained relatively limited on why and under what conditions employees are more likely to engage in certain influence behaviors toward their peers. This dissertation addresses this issue, offering new knowledge on key contextual factors that may affect influence processes and behaviors between peers in teams and organizations. In doing so, this dissertation advances existing theory and practice in the field of organizational behavior by examining informal influence from various theoretical and empirical perspectives. I hope that this dissertation helps to better understand

and manage informal influence in practice and motivates other scholars to create new knowledge on this intriguing topic.

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## **Affidavit**

Ich erkläre hiermit, dass ich die vorgelegten und nachfolgend aufgelisteten Aufsätze selbstständig und nur mit den Hilfen angefertigt habe, die im jeweiligen Aufsatz angegeben oder zusätzlich in der nachfolgenden Liste aufgeführt sind. In der Zusammenarbeit mit den angeführten Koautoren war ich mindestens anteilig beteiligt. Bei den von mir durchgeführten und in den Aufsätzen erwähnten Untersuchungen habe ich die Grundsätze guter wissenschaftlicher Praxis, wie sie in der Satzung der Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen zur Sicherung guter wissenschaftlicher Praxis niedergelegt sind, eingehalten.

Gießen, 15. April 2019

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Sebastian Hohmann

## **Submitted Papers**

- Hohmann, S., & Walter, F. Looking up with a Frown: Status, Negative Affect, and Enhancement Behavior in Groups. *Working Paper*.
- Hohmann, S., Walter, F., Lam, C. K., & Zhang, Y. Formal Leadership and Informal Leader Emergence: Examining the Roles of Task-Oriented Behavior and Status. *Working Paper*.
- Hohmann, S., Briker, R., & Walter, F. Are we in Time? An Actor-Partner Interdependence Approach toward the Interpersonal Consequences of Time Pressure. *Working Paper*.