The influence of workplace friendship on coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal:

Does it help when the supervisor explains?

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Project period: January 2012 until August 2012
Abstract

This study investigates the influence of workplace friendship and antecedent supervisor communication on coworkers’ acceptance of an idiosyncratic deal (i-deal). Additionally, the moderating effect of antecedent supervisor communication on the relationship between workplace friendship and coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal is explored. Idiosyncratic deals are individually negotiated work agreements, beneficial for both the employer and the employee. Previous research has shown that the ultimate effectiveness of i-deals is dependent on coworkers’ acceptance of it. In a study of 95 employees who indicated to have coworkers with an i-deal, it was found that friendships at work do not have a significant influence on coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal. Results suggest that employees use their coworkers as referents when evaluating workplace equality, by comparing their professional inputs and outcomes to those of others, which leads to either dissent or acceptance of coworkers’ work arrangements. Nonetheless, antecedent communication by the supervisor is found to be a significant influencer of coworker acceptance of i-deals on its own. Implications of these findings for both research and practice are discussed.

Keywords: Idiosyncratic deals, workplace friendship, coworker acceptance, antecedent supervisor communication, social cohesion theory, fairness, equality
Introduction

Nowadays, the majority of people spend a substantial part of their life at work, where they engage in a variety of interpersonal relationships like peer friendships, superior-subordinate relationships and mentor-protégée interactions (Sias & Perry, 2004; Sias & Cahill, 1998). These workplace relationships may lead to multiple desirable organizational and individual outcomes. Described organizational outcomes are employee commitment to the organization (Rawlings, 1992), increased job satisfaction, job involvement (Riordan & Griffeth, 1995) and reduced turnover (Kram & Isabella, 1985). Work relationships on an individual level might lead to increased experiences of social support (Kram & Isabella, 1985), creativity (Yager, 2007) and career development (Graen & Scandura, 1987; Kram & Isabella, 1985).

In view of that, workplace friendships have received increasing attention of organizational researchers over the past decades (e.g. Berman, West & Richter, 2002; Boyd & Taylor, 1998; Nielsen & Adams, 2000; Sias & Cahill, 1998; Winstead, Derlega, Montgomery & Pilkington, 1995) because an employee’s workplace friendships are seen as a very important influencer of his/her organizational effectiveness (Berman, West & Richter, 2002; Sias & Cahill, 1998; Winstead et al., 1995). Interestingly, close workplace relationships act as a mitigating factor for an individual’s experience of workplace inequality (Frank, 1985). This indicates that people are more accepting and tolerant towards people they have an amicable relation with, than towards people they do not see as friends.

This tolerant attitude towards coworkers can be a very strong instrument against feelings of unfairness, given that due to individualization and talent shortages, employers are willing to grant special employment conditions that are increasingly adopted and customized to a single person’s needs (like working from home, flexible working hours, development opportunities and the like) (Lawler & Finegold, 2000; Rousseau, 2005). Employers who respond to these employee needs for special employment arrangements are consequently dealing with the risk that coworkers might feel inequitably treated (Greenberg, Roberge, Ho, & Rousseau, 2004). For that reason, the effect of workplace friendship on coworkers’ acceptance of individually arranged work agreements, in this research, idiosyncratic deals (i-deals), is of special interest.

I-deals can be described as individually negotiated work arrangements, which are beneficial for both the organization and the employee (Rousseau, 2005). In particular, Lai, Rousseau and Chang (2009) state that an i-deal’s ultimate effectiveness is dependent on a coworker’s acceptance of it, because
coworkers’ reactions to i-deals derive from the relationships they have with their employer, the colleague who has an i-deal, but also their relationship with other colleagues in the team (Rousseau, 2005). Hence, workplace relationships are an important condition to determine the success of an i-deal.

The third concept of importance in this study is antecedent communication between supervisor and coworker and its influence on the acceptance of a coworker’s i-deal. The general assumption is that coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal is bigger when coworkers’ interests during the formulation of an i-deal are considered (Rousseau, 2005). Accordingly, the employer’s consultation of the coworkers before granting an i-deal does not only strengthen the relationship coworkers have with both, the employer and the worker who requested the i-deal, it also reduces a possible information discrepancy, which could negatively affect the employment relationship (Rousseau, 2005). Thus, by giving the coworker the opportunity to communicate its view or to even let a coworker participate in the decision making process, the acceptance of an i-deal is positively affected (Rousseau, 2005).

The relation between the three variables under study, namely workplace friendship, coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal and antecedent supervisor communication can be grounded in the theory of social cohesion. The theory of social cohesion describes the natural desire of individuals to be part of a group, which triggers their willingness to contribute to a group’s welfare (Cartwright, 1968). Applied to this research this means that people have an inner need to develop social relations at work and are willing to make sacrifices to reach and maintain them. An additional theoretical underpinning may be found in the existence of a psychological contract as a form of social interaction between two parties (here: friendship between coworkers) (Schein, 1965). The psychological contract denotes the unwritten, mutual expectations and obligations individuals have of one another in a relationship (Thomas & Singh, 2011; Rigotti, 2009). It was found that meanderings of these obligations and expectations are more accepted when a strong positive relationship, such as friendship is present (Rousseau, 1995).

To conclude, the concept of workplace friendship is expected to significantly influence a coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal of another colleague. As anticipated by Rousseau (2005) and Lai, Rousseau and Chang (2009), a close personal relationship between coworkers and the worker who requests the i-deal results in higher coworker acceptance. Consequently, the absence of workplace friendship leads to lower levels of coworkers’ acceptance of the i-deal. One could expect that antecedent communication by the supervisor about the creation of the i-deal with the coworker and the participation of a coworker in the
decision making process can influence the (non-) existence of this particular relationship. Therefore the research question for the topic under study was:

“To what extent does the degree of workplace friendship influence the level of coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal and how does the degree of antecedent communication between the supervisor and the coworker moderate this relationship?”

This study can make a contribution to the limited existing research on i-deal acceptance amongst co-workers, by connecting and investigating the relationship between the three concepts in question. Up to the knowledge of the author, the relationship between the three variables is for the most part rather based on assumptions (Rousseau, 2005, Lai, Rousseau & Chang, 2009) than on concrete research outcomes. Additionally, only network level data has been used so far to evaluate friendship relations between coworkers and their colleagues who request an i-deal (Lai, Rousseau and Chang, 2009). Therefore, previous research was based on person-specific judgments rather than taking a general approach on the cohesion of the variables. This research is a mixture of person-specific judgments concerning the concept of coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal, whereas the concepts of workplace friendship and antecedent supervisor communication take a general, evaluative approach on team level. This allows the author to draw generalized conclusions who can more easily be applied in practice.

Found consequences of antecedent communication by the supervisor can have concrete implications for organizations, as they could exploit antecedent communication prior to generating an i-deal in order to enhance a coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal, based on the relationship they have with their colleague. This research will examine if this approach is beneficial for organizations and an applicable and effective instrument, valid to be transferred to practice.

At first the theoretical framework will be presented by linking the three variables under study, namely workplace friendship, coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal and antecedent supervisor communication. Subsequently, the methodological approach will be explained, followed by a thorough presentation of the results. To conclude, the findings of the study will be discussed, limitations of the research will be explained and practical and theoretical implications, as well as future research implications will be elaborated.
Theoretical framework

In order to develop the hypotheses which were in the focus of the underlying study, the concepts used, namely workplace friendship, coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal and antecedent supervisor communication need to be explained thoroughly. At first the concepts of workplace friendship, i-deals and their relationship with coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal are explained. Secondly, antecedent supervisor communication and its relationship with coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal are examined. Finally, the relation between all three concepts are scrutinized, with antecedent supervisor communication as a moderator.

Workplace friendship, i-deals and the relationship with coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal

Today’s employees increasingly try to balance their personal life and their role as employee, in order to satisfy their individual needs and desires (Freeman & Rogers, 1999). This recent development diminished the prominence of standardized human resource practices, universally valid for all employees within a company, but fostered the upcoming trend of highly customized, non-standard work arrangements (Rousseau, 2000). These non-standard work arrangements, which are referred to as idiosyncratic deals (i-deals), are individually negotiated work arrangements and intend to benefit both, the organization and the employee (Rousseau, 2001). Anand, Vidyarthi, Liden and Rousseau (2010) found that i-deals can appear in a variety of forms and can differ content-wise markedly from each other, as i-deals are negotiated in accordance with individual employee’s needs and wishes. Rousseau and Kim (2006) postulate that a differentiation can be made between three major forms of i-deals, namely developmental i-deals (e.g. special training and education possibilities), flexibility i-deals (e.g. customized working schedules) and reduced workload i-deals (e.g. less complex assignments).

Granting this flexible work arrangement is a progressively popular and powerful tool for employers to motivate individual workers (Rousseau, 2005). Conversely, i-deals which might be beneficial for an individual employee, can have negative side effects on coworkers. Already Taylor (1911) emphasized that, in contrast to individual work arrangements, standard human resource practices foster some assurance of fairness, as everybody is expected to be treated in the same manner. The individualistic nature of i-deals takes away this thinking, since demands of individual employees are taken into consideration. This bares the risk that coworkers could feel unequally treated (Greenberg, Roberge, Ho and Rousseau, 2005) and matters of injustice, secrecy and even favouritism can occur in the eye of the coworkers (Rousseau, 2005).
Ho (2005) warns that unique and special deals for one particular employee might lead to social comparison thinking among co-workers and especially in working teams. This thinking even increases, when tasks are interdependent and jobs hardly differ. Consequently, justice might be destabilized in these teams. Moreover, unfair and unequal working situations might lead to an even greater competition for status and resources in the workplace and individuals might experience this competition as a social threat, resulting in negative workplace emotions (for instance, jealousy, envy) and stress (Vecchio, 2000). Lai, Chang & Rousseau (2009) give the concrete example that a flexible working time i-deal might be beneficial for the i-dealer himself, but a burden for the coworkers who have to substitute for this colleague.

Hence, i-deals seem to benefit the organization and a single employee, but can negatively affect coworkers’ reactions and attitudes. Therefore, for an i-deal to be of ultimate effectiveness, coworkers’ acceptance of it is seen as crucial, as it demonstrates approval and assent to a colleague’s i-deal (Lai, Chang & Rousseau, 2009). Rousseau (2005) proposes that the definitive judgment a coworker makes about an i-deal determines, whether he accepts the i-deal or not. She presents various factors that can influence coworker reactions towards i-deal recipients, of which a coworker’s relationship with the i-dealer and the employer is the most profound one, regarding this particular study.

Accordingly, one major aspect that influences the acceptance of an i-deal is the coworker’s relationship with the i-dealer. Rousseau (2005, p.146) argues that “people who enjoy a close, caring personal relationship with an i-deal recipient are less likely to resent their peer’s good fortune than are those who lack such a relationship”. Thus, the closer this relationship, the better the acceptance of the i-deal.

One of the closest forms of interpersonal relationships at work is workplace friendship. Reohr (1991) suggests that these informal social relations lead to many noteworthy and satisfying organizational benefits, such as increased performance and attitudinal outcomes like job satisfaction (Hackman & Morris, 1975). Furthermore, and in light of this research more importantly, it is suggested that friendship among employees results in increased interaction, communication, respect, support and cooperation (Foote, 1985; Greeley, 1971; Krackhardt & Stern, 1988; Reohr, 1991). This in turn is expected to have a positive effect on attitudes and behaviours shown at work.

Mao (2007) describes workplace friendship as a distinctive relationship among other workplace relationships, as it is voluntary, people are personally bound to each other and personal and socio-emotional benefits can be derived from it. This kind of bondage between workplace friends can be termed
as a kind of psychological contract which can be described as mutual obligations and expectations individuals have of one another in a relationship (Thomas & Singh, 2011). Specifically looking at the work setting, Schein (1965) describes it as "an unwritten set of expectations operating at all times between every member of an organization and the various managers and others in that organization". This psychological contract is functioning properly when the boundaries of the zone of acceptance are adhered (Rousseau, 1995). The zone of acceptance sets the margins for gradual changes in this contract which are still accepted and tolerated by an individual. This means that the psychological contract is intact when an individual’s contract partner behaves and acts within an expected and acceptable frame. It was found that the zone of acceptance is more easily adjusted when there is a strong positive relationship, such as friendship, between two parties (Rousseau, 1995). In line with this theory, Rousseau (2005) indicates that coworkers’ reactions to i-deal recipients are very likely to be dependent on their relationship with these colleagues. Additionally, Clark and Reis (1988) state that coworkers who have a close and caring relation with their colleagues are more likely to accept i-deals within their team, than those who lack such relationships in their social work context. This indicates that employees are more accepting towards i-deals of coworkers who are friends, than towards i-deals of coworkers, with whom they do not have a friendly relationship.

A supplementary theoretical explanation why personal relations positively relate to i-deal acceptance can be found in social cohesion theory. Friedekin (2004, p. 411) describes social cohesion as “a causal system that determines individuals’ group membership attitudes and behaviors”. Cartwright (1968) states that social cohesion is as a person’s longing to be part of a group and resulting from this, the willingness of a person to contribute to a group’s well-being. A group is socially cohesive to the extent that its members like each other and feel emotionally close to one another (MacCoun, 1993). Accordingly, in groups characterized by high emotional attachment i.e., in the form of friendships, social cohesion is stronger in comparison to groups with lower levels of emotional attachment. Consequently, people are even more willing to contribute to a group’s wellbeing and to sustain their group membership when social cohesion is high. Therefore, it can be assumed that in teams where personal relations, like workplace friendship, are present, people want to maintain them, and might consequently be more lenient towards i-deals of their coworkers.

These findings suggest that there is more leeway for the acceptance of unequal treatment, such as the granting of an i-deal, amongst colleagues when an amicable relationship exists.
From these notions it can be concluded that the presence of workplace friendships can have a positive influence on coworkers’ acceptance of i-deals within their team.

Hypothesis 1: The more workplace friendship people experience, the higher their acceptance of a coworker’s i-deal.

Antecedent supervisor communication and its influence on coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal

A coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal is not only expected to be influenced by workplace friendship. It is anticipated that communication in general, but in particular antecedent communication by the supervisor can also influence it to a substantial extent (Rousseau, 2005).

According to Ibarra and Andrews (1993) social information processing influences the shaping of an individual’s perceptions, attitudes and beliefs about organizational phenomena. This highlights the importance of direct and indirect communication in an organizational context. Accordingly, it is not far-fetched that communication is an essential part of social cohesion, fostering and determining employee attitudes and behaviours within a team.

Favourable employee communication has been proved to have a positive effect on job satisfaction and employee performance in general (Ainspan & Dell, 2000). Furthermore, employee communication has also been found to result in organizational success (Baskin, Aronoff & Lattimore, 1996). In the relationship triangle between employer, coworker and the employee who desires an i-deal, communication is essential to avoid the failure of the i-deal or other negative organizational outcomes. This is supported by Rousseau (2005) who states that coworker consultation is critical to develop i-deals that serve the three parties of the triangle to their best benefit. Moreover, she postulates that consultation should be set up by seeking out information about a coworker’s perspective, prior to generating an i-deal to another employee. Additionally, by including a coworker’s opinion, the supervisor in charge shows that concerns and feelings are taken seriously.

Already Leventhal (1976) stresses the importance of a transparent process prior to generating an i-deal, as a person who has influence and knowledge about decisions affecting one’s own interest is experiencing workplace justice. Rousseau (2005) supports these findings as she notes that the consultation of the coworker can influence his or her belief that the basis on which the i-deal is made is fair and legitimate. Nevertheless, antecedent consultation is not only indicated to have positive effects on coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal, but it also assists the supervisor in charge with stimulating organizational
fairness and improving the quality of the i-deal with the knowledge acquired from his subordinates. Moreover, it gives the supervisor the opportunity to bring forward his arguments and explain his reasoning for making an i-deal. Therefore the following is hypothesized:

**Hypothesis 2:** The more antecedent supervisor communication people experience, the more acceptance a coworker will show for a colleague’s i-deal.

**Relationship between workplace friendship and coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal with antecedent supervisor communication as a moderator**

Concluding from the previous findings an even higher coworker’s acceptance of an i-deal can be expected, resulting from the combination of workplace friendship and antecedent supervisor communication. A special agreement a close friend gets via an i-deal is more likely to be accepted than the one of a less intimate coworker (Lai, Rousseau & Chang, 2009). This reasoning can again be based on the theory of social cohesion, as a friendship with colleagues, a positive attitude towards communication, and as a consequence the attitude and willingness to accept a coworker’s i-deal, reflects the longing of a person to remain in a group. Additionally, the psychological contract between colleagues plays a decisive role. The better this psychological contract is functioning, the more flexible is the zone of acceptance, especially amongst friends (Rousseau, 2005). Besides, it can be expected that antecedent supervisor communication also has a positive influence on this zone of acceptance, as the reasons employers offer for granting an i-deal and the way of communicating them, can contribute to coworkers ‘acceptance of i-deals within their team (Rousseau, 2005).

Hence, the positive relationship between workplace friendship and coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal might be even stronger in combination with antecedent supervisor communication as a moderator.

**Hypothesis 3:** The higher the level of antecedent supervisor communication, the stronger the relationship between workplace friendship and coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal.

The conceptual model researched in this study is presented below in Figure 1.
Figure 1. Conceptual model
Method

Design

The study design can be described as a cross-sectional, quantitative study design, in which questionnaires were handed out personally by a group of pre-master, bachelor and master students of Tilburg University, The Netherlands. Data were collected through convenience sampling in departments of various Dutch organizations. The research covered organizations operating in different sectors, situated in The Netherlands. In each participating organizational department two questionnaires were handed out, namely, one for the departmental manager and one for employees. The data gathered amongst the supervisors were not used in the research at hand, as this research exclusively focuses on employee data.

Managers provided information on, for instance, the departmental/organizational characteristics, HR practices and the presence of I-deals. The employee questionnaire provided information on e.g. individual job features, working environment, presence of idiosyncratic deals and employee attitudes and behaviors.

As this study solely focuses on individual-level data of workplace friendship, supervisor communication and coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal, individual employees embodied the unit of analysis.

Procedure

The students distributed and collected the questionnaires according to strict data collection protocol which was assured by means of a preceding training and a written instruction. In this way the sampling criteria, as well as ethical considerations could be guaranteed. Data collection requirements prescribed that the research had to be executed in organizations with more than 50 employees. Additionally, one supervisor and at least 7 employees of one department, who report to that particular supervisor, needed to fill in the questionnaires. Accompanying the questionnaires, an introduction letter, explaining the aim of the research, was handed out to the participants of the study. The introduction letter specifically assured the confidentiality and anonymity of the data gathered and pointed out that participation is on a voluntary basis.

After a first effort of data collection, merely 58 employees indicated to work with a colleague who has an i-deal. Accordingly, a selected group of six master students continued with a second, directed data
collection approach in their personal environment. For purposes of simplification of data gathering, the employee questionnaire was reduced to exclusively relevant questions and it was desisted from spreading the manager questionnaire again. The strict condition concerning organizational and team size was left out as well. This second data exertion led to 37 additional filled out questionnaires of people whose colleagues have an i-deal.

**Population and sample**

In total 606 employees completed the questionnaire. The two largest groups of respondents reported to work for the health care and welfare industry (19.0 percent of all respondents) and for financial institutions (11.7 percent of all respondents). The average age was 40.5 years, with more than half of the respondents (55.3 percent) being female. 51.0 percent of the respondents indicated to have a lower educational background (primary school, secondary school).

The research of this study only considered selected cases, where participants indicated that colleagues have an i-deal. As a result, the final sample size consisted of 95 employees (15.7 percent of all respondents). From the employees who said to have colleagues with an i-deal, 53 percent were women and 47 percent were men. The average age of the sample was 40.0 years. In contrary to the larger sample, a predominant group of 61.1 percent stated to have completed a higher vocational or university education. The average organizational tenure of the sample was 11.04 years, whilst the ordinary respondent worked 7.56 years together with the same team, with an average of 32.66 working hours per week.

**Measurement instrument**

The measurement of the three concepts was based on one previously established scale and two self-developed scales, which were grounded in literature of the theoretical context and own reasoning. The quality of the measures was examined for construct validity and reliability. Construct validity was tested by applying principal component analysis (PCA). All scales proved to be suitable for regression analysis based on inter-item correlations and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin values (KMO) (Kaiser, 1970; Kaiser, 1974). Cronbach’s α was used to compute the scale’s reliability.

*Workplace friendship.* This concept was measured using five items of the friendship prevalence dimension scale, developed by Nielsen, Jex and Adams (2000). The scale was translated from English to Dutch, as the questionnaires were distributed in The Netherlands. An example question was: “I have
formed strong friendships at work” [“Ik heb goede vriendschappen opgebouwd op het werk”] (see Appendix 1). The answer possibilities were arranged in a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. PCA of workplace friendship clearly revealed the presence of one component with an Eigenvalue of 2.642, explaining 52.86 percent of the variance. Additionally, this scale was already used in various other studies (Song & Olshfski, 2004, Tse, Dasborough & Ashkanasy, 2008). In the current study, the Cronbach’s α coefficient was .772.

**Antecedent supervisor communication.** This concept was measured by a self-developed scale. The development of the concept was inspired by previous research on antecedent i-deal communication by Rousseau (2005). Antecedent supervisor communication was measured by using a 6-item scale. The answer possibilities were on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. An example question was: “My supervisor keeps me up to date which i-deals are being agreed on with colleagues” [“Mijn leidinggevende houdt mij op de hoogte welke i-deals er met collega’s worden afgesproken”] (see Appendix 1). PCA of antecedent supervisor communication clearly established the existence of one component with an Eigenvalue of 4.152, explaining 69.192 percent of the variance. Reliability analysis of the scale displayed a Cronbach’s α coefficient of .907.

**Coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal.** This concept was measured by using a self-developed 5-item scale. The development of this scale was based upon research by Rousseau (2005), Lai, Rousseau and Chang (2009) and Greenberg, Roberge, Ho and Rousseau (2004). An example question was: “I have problems with the non-standard work arrangements of my colleague” [“Ik heb problemen met de niet-standaard arbeidsvoorwaarde van mijn collega”] (see Appendix 1). The answer possibilities were organized on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. PCA of coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal likewise exposed one clear component, with an Eigenvalue of 2.858, explaining 71.462 percent of the variance. The Cronbach’s α coefficient was .866.

**Control variables.** An advantage of the underlying study is that research took place in different kinds of organizations and sectors, which generated a broad diversity of data. This allowed the researchers to draw generalized conclusions. Nevertheless, this also emphasized the importance of control variables as otherwise the research would run the risk to generate too numerous and broad information. Therefore,
control variables were added in the analysis in order to detect the existence of possible spurious relationships.

There are a number of control variables, namely age, tenure in the organization and education, who regularly recur in the i-deal literature and who were proven to be of use, as they improved the fit of the models under study (Lai, Rousseau & Chang, 2009; Hornung, Rousseau & Glaser, 2008; Rousseau, Hornung & Kim, 2009).

The author argues, that organizational tenure (in years) could have an influence on how much people know about which working agreements are according to the standard within their organization and which are not. For that reason, individuals who work longer in an organization might be more critical towards i-deals their coworkers have, in contrast to individuals being employed for a short period of time. This also counted for the variable age, as people who are older might have more experience and have a stricter picture about what is “normal” and what is “abnormal” in the organization.

It is not yet verified if the level of education (0 = higher vocational or academic education, 1 = intermediate vocational, basic or elementary education) has a significant effect on i-deal negotiation and i-deal acceptance in general. However, it could be assumed that higher educated people might be found in positions where i-deals are more easily applicable in the work structure, whereas lower educated people are more likely to be found in work settings who are assembled by highly interdependent and co-located employees fulfilling the same tasks, where the applicability of i-deals is limited (Rousseau, 2005). Accordingly, next to organizational tenure and age, education was used in the study at hand.

As it was assumed by the author that tenure in a team (in years), but also the working hours of an employee per week might influence, for instance, the development and level of workplace friendship an employee experiences, these two variables were included as control variables as well.

Due to scarce research in the particular field of this study, it was decided to add two additional control variables to the study, in order to determine whether the organizational climate of the organization is supportive for i-deals or not. It is likely that organizational climate which supports and fosters i-deal creation can generally strongly influence coworkers’ acceptance of i-deals in their direct working environment. Two scales of the organization climate questionnaire of Patterson, West, Shackleton, Dawson, Lawthom, Maitlis, Robinson and Wallace (2005) were adapted to measure the employment conditions’ level of formalization, and level of innovativeness in an organization. Both, a formalized organizational climate as well as an innovative organizational climate were measured by 3-item scales. The answer possibilities were arranged in a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly
agree. An example question of formalization was: “It is considered as extremely important here to follow the standard rules for employment conditions” [“In deze organisatie vindt men het belangrijk om voor iedereen dezelfde standaard arbeidsvoorwaarden toe te passen.”]. An example question of innovation was: “In this organization the management reacts quickly if it is required to organize things differently for employees.” [“Leidinggevenden in deze organisatie reageren snel als het nodig is om dingen anders te regelen voor medewerkers.”] (see Appendix 1). PCA of organizational climate clearly revealed the presence of two components exceeding one, explaining 43.38 percent and 24.742 percent of the variance respectively. Consequently it was chosen to continue with the two separate concepts. PCA of formalization revealed one clear component with an Eigenvalue of 1.965 explaining 65.51 percent of the variance. It was chosen to tolerate a KMO-index slightly below the recommended value of .6, namely .553, as this aspect was attributed to the small size of the sample. The Cronbach’s α coefficient of formalization was .732. PCA of innovation likewise exposed one clear component with an Eigenvalue of 1.959, explaining 65.3 percent of the variance. The Cronbach’s α coefficient was .734.
Results

Descriptive statistics
By means of the SPSS Software analysis was conducted to test the proposed conceptual model. Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations (SD) and correlations of all the variables included in this study. A Pearson correlation analysis was carried out, in order to disclose basic relations between the variables and reveal potential multicollinearity problems.

As it is depicted by the values in Table 1, a significant, negative correlation was found between workplace friendship and antecedent supervisor communication \((r = -.178, p<.1)\). Also, a significant correlation was found between antecedent supervisor communication and coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal \((r = .291, p<.01)\). No significant correlation was found between workplace friendship and coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal. Additionally, a significant correlation was found between organizational tenure and the level of formalization of the organizational HR climate \((r = .320, p<.01)\). Not unexpectedly, significant correlations were found between team tenure and age \((r = -.415, p<.01)\) and organizational tenure and age \((r = -.552, p<.01)\). Likewise, a significant correlation between team tenure and organizational tenure \((r = .600, p<.01)\) was found.
Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities and Pearson Correlations

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<tr>
<td>6. Innovation</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>.75137</td>
<td>-.077</td>
<td>.159</td>
<td>.176*</td>
<td>-.037</td>
<td>-.301***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Age</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10.599</td>
<td>.126</td>
<td>-.127</td>
<td>-.029</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>-.240**</td>
<td>.123</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Organizational tenure</td>
<td>11.04</td>
<td>8.62594</td>
<td>.076</td>
<td>.136</td>
<td>-.215**</td>
<td>.320***</td>
<td>-.115</td>
<td>.552***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Team tenure</td>
<td>7.59</td>
<td>6.428</td>
<td>.110</td>
<td>.124</td>
<td>-.208</td>
<td>-.229**</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>-.091</td>
<td>.415***</td>
<td>.600***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Working hours</td>
<td>32.66</td>
<td>9.246</td>
<td>-.053</td>
<td>-.028</td>
<td>.143</td>
<td>.048</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>-.079</td>
<td>-.092</td>
<td>.181</td>
<td>.082</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*: p<.1, **: p<.05, ***: p<.01; Note: (4) Higher vocational/university education=0, other=1;
Hypothesis testing

With the purpose of testing the hypotheses of the study, the variables were entered into the regression analysis. The main variables were entered into the regression analysis one at a time, starting with workplace friendship and antecedent supervisor communication, with coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal as dependent variable. As a next step the interaction variable of workplace friendship and antecedent supervisor communication was added to the analysis. Lastly, the control variables namely, age, level of education, organizational tenure, tenure in the team, working hours per week, and formalization and innovation were inserted.

At step one of the sequential multiple regression analysis, the concept of workplace friendship and antecedent supervisor communication were entered. As the data in Model 1 about the regression coefficient and the statistical significance in Table 2 indicate, there was no statistically significant effect of workplace friendship on coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal. Consequently, no support was found for Hypothesis 1. Correspondingly, the Pearson Product-moment Correlation Coefficient in Table 1 found no significant correlation between the two concepts. As Model 1 in Table 2 also indicates, support was found for Hypothesis 2, which stated that the more antecedent supervisor communication people experience, the more acceptance a coworker will show for a colleague’s i-deal. A significant effect was found ($\beta = .290$, $p < .01$), showing the positive influence of antecedent supervisor communication on coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal.

At step two, the interaction term of workplace friendship and antecedent supervisor communication was entered into the regression analysis. In this particular research the moderating effect is significant when the model significantly improves ($\Delta R^2$, $F$ change < $\alpha$) after adding the interaction variable. No significant effect was found for Hypothesis 3 postulating that the higher the level of antecedent supervisor communication, the stronger the relationship between workplace friendship and coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal. There was no significant increase in the change in $R^2$ ($\Delta R^2$) from the first to the second model ($\Delta R^2 = .006$, $p=.451$)(see Appendix 2). This indicates that a higher level of antecedent supervisor communication does not lead to a stronger relationship between workplace friendship and coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal.

As a last step, workplace friendship, antecedent supervisor communication and the control variables namely, age, level of education, organizational tenure, tenure in the team, working hours per week, formalization and innovation were entered into the regression analysis. There was a significant increase in the change in $R^2$ ($\Delta R^2$) from the first model ($\Delta R^2 = .077$, $p<.1$) to the second model ($\Delta R^2 = .132$,
Accordingly, the second model explains 13.2 percent of the variation in coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal, including the additional explained variance by working hours per week. Tenure in the team relates to some extent to coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal (β = -.304, p<.05), indicating that the longer employees are part of a team the less acceptance they might show for an i-deal. However, antecedent supervisor communication remained significant (β = .288, p<.01).
Table 2. Results of the multiple regression analysis on coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>β</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>β</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace friendship</td>
<td>-.005</td>
<td>-.004</td>
<td>.967</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>.765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antecedent supervisor communication</td>
<td>.269</td>
<td>.290</td>
<td>.007***</td>
<td>.267</td>
<td>.288</td>
<td>.010***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.002</td>
<td>-.026</td>
<td>.843</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational level</td>
<td>.121</td>
<td>.067</td>
<td>.534</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational tenure</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>.111</td>
<td>.466</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Team tenure</td>
<td>-.041</td>
<td>-.304</td>
<td>.026**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working hours</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>.155</td>
<td>.142</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formalization</td>
<td>.109</td>
<td>.102</td>
<td>.404</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>.174</td>
<td>.154</td>
<td>.172</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[R^2\] 0.084** 0.209**  
\[\Delta R^2\] 0.084** 0.132**

N 95

*: p<.1, **: p<.05, ***: p<.01; Dependent variable= Coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal
Discussion

This study was conducted to investigate the relationship between workplace friendship and coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal, with antecedent supervisor communication as a possible moderator. The results yielded a significant effect of antecedent supervisor communication on coworkers’ acceptance of a colleague’s i-deal. However, the analysis did not disclose significant results of workplace friendship on coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal. When the interaction effect was added in the analysis, no significant results could be found.

In this section, these findings will be reviewed in more detail. Firstly, the results of the study will be discussed. Secondly, the limitations of the study will be explained, followed by concrete implications for future research. Lastly, specific theoretical and practical implications will be presented.

It was hypothesized that workplace friendship has a positive effect on coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal. Interestingly, the results of this study could not find any support for this. This finding is in contradiction with various researchers who highlighted the importance of workplace friendships and who stressed its important effects on coworkers’ acceptance of another colleague’s i-deal (e.g. Rousseau, 2005; Lai, Rousseau and Chang, 2009).

A possible explanation can be found in research by Ho (2005), who warns that individual and unique arrangements in the workplace might lead to social comparison thinking among coworkers. A study by Major and Forcey (1985) already suggested that individuals evaluate equality by comparing their inputs and outcomes to those of others. Goodboy, Chory and Dunleavy (2008) found that employees use their coworkers as referents when forming perceptions of organizational justice, leading to either dissent or acceptance of workplace outcomes and processes. A concrete example they give is that comparison takes place concerning, for instance allocations granted to coworkers. Vecchio (2000) notified the likelihood that unequal arrangements at work might lead to a feeling of social threat, which leads to greater competition for status and resources, possibly resulting in negative emotions, such as envy and jealousy.

Consequently, it is very likely that employees’ acceptance of a coworker’s i-deal is determined by comparing their outcomes to those of their colleagues, based on professional achievements at work and not on personal relations such as friendships at work. This could indicate that employees make a clear
distinction between personal relations they share with their coworkers and the professional attitude and treatment they show and expect at their workplace.

Above notions could also be ascribed to national culture. The Netherlands can be seen as an example for an individualistic society, emphasizing a preference for loose social relations, in which individuals are expected to take care of themselves and their immediate families only (Hofstede, 1983). Combining this understanding with the social identity theory (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986), one could infer that employees’ social identity comprises individualistic goals, only focusing on personal or direct family interests, rather than pursuing collectivistic interests of their coworkers or the team they work in. Individuals perceive their social identity primarily limited to their direct personal environment, trying to achieve the best situation possible for themselves. Hence, inequalities in work arrangements, possibly being disadvantageous or threatening for an employee’s personal interests, might in turn lead to less acceptance of these work arrangements. Giving a concrete example, an employee might not consent with a single coworker receiving career enhancement training if he thinks that he could derive personal benefits from participating as well. Consequently, an employee superordinates himself and his direct family above relationships (here: workplace friendships) being external to this direct proximity.

This strongly indicates that equality in work arrangements seems to be highly valued and important when striving for co-worker acceptance of work arrangements. Workplace friendships do not seem powerful and valued enough to be part of an individual’s central social identity, as individuals identify more with their direct personal environment whilst excluding amicable responsibilities they would have to comply with at work.

Furthermore, it was expected that antecedent supervisor communication could positively influence coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal. The results of this research validated this postulation, which is also in line with earlier literature on the effects of organizational communication and, in particular, on i-deal acceptance amongst coworkers. Rousseau (2005) suggested that a coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal is bigger when a coworkers’ interests are considered in the formulation of an i-deal, or if the co-worker can express his view on it. Ibarra and Andrews (1993) particularly emphasize the influential power of social information processing (here: antecedent supervisor communication) on the shaping of an individual’s perceptions and attitudes towards organizational phenomena. Chia, Foo and Fang (2006) noted that organizational members are looking for information to evaluate their suspicion of injustice and are willing to communicate this information and to accept it from others. Individuals do not
make judgements about fairness merely based on their own perceptions, but also include the perceptions of others around them (Umphress, Labianca, Brass, Kass & Scholten, 2003). This means that a supervisor can partly play a role in influencing this judgement formation by communication towards the employees.

For that reason, the findings of the current study, as well as those of previous studies, strongly support the assumption that antecedent supervisor communication can have a considerable influence on coworkers’ attitudes and perceptions about a colleague’s i-deal. Antecedent communication by, or with, the supervisor is important to avoid possible negative effects of information discrepancies, which in turn positively influences coworkers’ acceptance of a colleagues’ i-deal.

The third hypothesis of this study suggested that the higher the level of antecedent supervisor communication, the stronger the relationship between workplace friendship and coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal. Against expectation, the interaction of workplace friendship and antecedent supervisor communication did not lead to increased co-worker acceptance of an i-deal.

Social cohesion theory stresses individuals’ desires to be part of a group and consequently their willingness to make personal sacrifices to reach and maintain personal relations in a group. This theory does not seem fully applicable here, as employees apparently expect the same treatment at work as their colleagues, as already indicated earlier. So also here, equality in the workplace seems to be highly important, as perceptions of organizational fairness can lead to either disagreement or acceptance of individual work arrangements granted to coworkers (Goodboy, Chory & Dunleavy, 2008). This is in accordance with the earlier reasoning that people in individualistic cultures strive for their personal benefits and particularly identify themselves with their direct family only. Activities which might facilitate the ‘greater good’ of coworkers in an organization, but would be disadvantageous for the employee himself, are apparently subordinated.

In light of this, whether employees have a close and caring relationship with their colleagues, or not, does not seem to matter. As a result, also here workplace friendship, even in combination with antecedent supervisor communication, which in this study was proven to have a positive influence on coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal, does not increase the level of acceptance coworkers display towards a colleagues’ i-deal.
Limitations

Although the research was conducted by a well-trained group of students, a number of limitations need to be put forth.

A first limitation of this study might be the sample, which was generated via convenience sampling. This manner of questionnaire distribution could be a factor that may have influenced the results of this study as just respondents were chosen who were readily available and convenient. This might lead to a misrepresentation of the population as a whole. Nevertheless, the broad arrangement of organizations in manifold industrial sectors who responded to the questionnaires, offers a solid argumentation regarding the generalizability of the results.

As the data are cross-sectional it can be seen as a snapshot in time. Longitudinal studies would be needed to provide confirmation of the results. Results might be different for people where i-deals just recently and interspersed were implemented in the organizational structure, as in comparison to people where i-deals are already a solid part of the organizational environment. This could not only have an influence on the general knowledge about the existence of i-deals, but could possibly enhance or decrease the level of i-deal acceptance in general. Moreover, Rousseau (2005) pointed out that coworkers’ reactions to a colleagues i-deal can change over time as they recognize the everyday impact of a colleagues’ i-deal. This can be supported by psychological contract theory that states that a psychological contract between two parties is not a stable, but a flexible and dynamic concept, which is receptive to change over time (Thomas and Singh, 2011).

The study at hand was one of the first efforts to originate generalized conclusions regarding coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal, and how workplace friendship and antecedent supervisor communication can influence this acceptance. Consequently, the lack of previous studies on this particular conceptual model which could support or reject the results, may have led to inconclusive assessments.

Another explanation of the partially insignificant outcomes could be the scales measuring the concepts of antecedent supervisor communication and coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal, as they were newly developed by the researcher and solely tested in the current study. Therefore, validity is currently unknown and might ask for improvement.

Additionally, the outcomes of this study should be evaluated critically due to the small sample size of 95 respondents (15.7 percent of all respondents) in comparison of the total sample of 606 employees. One reason for the low response rate might be that the topic of i-deal is fairly new in organizational settings and, noticeably, often not officially introduced yet. Nonetheless, the sample size
is comparable to sizes in previous researches (Hornung et al., 2008; Lai et al., 2009). In line with this, it might also have been the case that respondents did not completely understand the concept of i-deals due to its actuality. Although the concept was thoroughly explained, the diversity of the concept of i-deals might still be difficult to be comprehended by laymen.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the study was executed in The Netherlands only, which limits the possibility to interpret the findings in an international setting. Certainly, the findings can be applied to countries with comparable cultural features to The Netherlands.

**Implications for future research**

Concluding from the discussion and limitations of the research, a number of implications for future research apply.

In order to enhance the quality of the statistical test of the proposed hypotheses, it would be advisable to identify a larger sample of respondents who state that their coworkers have an i-deal. Also, it is recommended to verify the scales of this research by reviewing and testing them regarding their reliability and validity. Nevertheless, the results of this study can serve as a broad basis for future research in this area in the Netherlands. Yet, to create international acceptance a multi-national research approach should be taken into consideration.

The found significant, negative correlation between workplace friendship and antecedent supervisor communication indicates that the more workplace friendship is present, the less antecedent supervisor communication is needed. This discovery might point out that the role of the supervisor is to verbally rectify decisions if no friendship is present. Future research should give attention to this, as this might have implications for further clarifying the part of the supervisor in the i-deal negotiation process.

As the findings of this study show, workplace friendship does not positively influence coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal. This might implicate that other alternatives, next to antecedent supervisor communication need to be discovered, who can actively enhance coworkers’ acceptance of i-deals. An intensified research approach by e.g. qualitative methods such as interviews and longitudinal studies could yield these possible alternatives. Furthermore, this study questions and contrasts with past research that claimed the positive effects of workplace friendship on coworkers acceptance and cooperation in the workplace. This discrepancy should be considered when doing further research on workplace friendship and how to enhance i-deal acceptance in a workforce.

Additionally, it should be considered that workplace friendship and its effects on coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal were measured on team level. Friendships in general could be seen as a very
intimate personal relation between two people, asking for individual level research instead of generalized team approaches. This should be considered and researched in future study attempts.

As a last implication for the future it should be noticed that this study showed that antecedent supervisor communication, as a broad concept, has an important effect on coworkers’ acceptance of i-deals. The study did not detect what kind of communication is important, namely, whether employees just want to have the possibility to communicate their opinion or if employee participation in decision making, prior to granting an i-deal to a colleague is essential.

**Theoretical and practical implications**

Determining the theoretical and practical implications, this study can offer various new insights into the topic at hand. The research provides a better understanding of the concept of workplace friendship, the importance of antecedent supervisor communication and its positive effect on coworkers’ acceptance of i-deals in an exclusively Dutch context. This supports future, research attempts, but also offers practical implications to especially Dutch companies.

This study questions and contrasts with past research who claimed the positive effects of workplace friendship on coworkers acceptance and cooperation in the workplace. This also holds the implication for organizations to search for other practical opportunities to enhance coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal, instead of fostering inter-personal relationships at work. Especially organizations investing and promoting in relationship-building interventions, like social events, in order to create more informal connections to foster greater coworker acceptance (Berman, West & Richter, 2002), may be advised to re-consider this approach. Nevertheless, it should be considered that workplace friendship is expected to have other beneficial organizational outcomes, which was not researched in the study at hand.

As a positive relationship was found between antecedent supervisor communication and coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal, it would be rather promising to invest in, for instance, team-building events with a strong focus on communicational encouragement and management trainings in effective organizational communication. Employee voice or employee participation, prior to granting a coworker’s i-deal can positively influence an employee’s mindset towards a colleague’s individual work arrangement. Therefore, antecedent communication by or with the supervisor can be used to avoid possible negative effects of information discrepancies, which in turn positively influences coworkers’ acceptance of a colleague’s i-deal.
Another practical implication is that especially organizations with an organizational culture which could be depicted as less open or even characterized by a culture of secrecy should be careful with the implementation of i-deals in general. That is because communication seems to be one of, surely various other, critical features to reach acceptance of a coworker’s i-deal.

To conclude, this research was able to contribute to the existing knowledge about workplace friendship, antecedent supervisor communication and its relationship with coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal, by giving new insights into the topic. Additionally, the findings, which are supported by statistical evidence, either fortify or question previous research on the different concepts. This suggests that still a lot of future research should be devoted to the concept of i-deals in general, the role of the coworker in this process and how to operationalize i-deals effectively for the benefit of the organization, the employee and involved coworkers.
References


doi: 10.1080/08824090802440113


Appendices

Appendix 1. Factor analysis loadings

*Workplace friendship*

Table 1. Component matrix (α=.772); Eigenvalue= 2.643

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Phrase</th>
<th>Oblimin Rotation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Ik heb goede vriendschappen opgebouwd op het werk</td>
<td>.858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Ik ga ook buiten het werk met mijn collega’s om.</td>
<td>.802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Ik kan over alles praten met de mensen op mijn werk.</td>
<td>.568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Een van de redenen waarom ik graag naar mijn werk ga is omdat ik mijn collega’s dan zie.</td>
<td>.527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Geen van de mensen met wie ik werk beschouw ik als een echte vriend.</td>
<td>.815</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The influence of workplace friendship on coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal: Does it help when the supervisor explains?

**Antecedent supervisor communication**

Table 2. Component matrix ($\alpha=.907$); Eigenvalue= 4.152

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oblimin Rotation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>164. Onze leidinggevende informeert mij wanneer er uitzonderingen op de standaard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>165. Mijn leidinggevende houdt mij op de hoogte welke i-deals er met collega’s worden afgesproken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>166. Mijn leidinggevende overlegt verzoeken om i-deals van mijn collega(s) met ons team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>167. Mijn leidinggevende vraagt om ons advies als een collega een verzoek heeft om een i-deal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>168. Ik heb inspraak in de totstandkoming van de i-deals van mijn collega(s).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>169. Mijn leidinggevende luistert naar mijn suggesties omtrent de i-deals voor collega(s).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal**

Table 3. Component matrix ($\alpha=.866$); Eigenvalue= 2,858

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oblimin Rotation</th>
<th>183.</th>
<th>Ik respecteer het dat mijn collega een niet standaard arbeidsvoorwaarde (i-deal) heeft.</th>
<th>.854</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>184.</td>
<td>Ik gun mijn collega diens niet-standaard arbeidsvoorwaarde (i-deal).</td>
<td>.872</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>185.</td>
<td>De i-deal van mijn collega is passend in ons team.</td>
<td>.806</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>186.</td>
<td>Ik heb problemen met de niet-standaard arbeidsvoorwaarde van mijn collega.</td>
<td>.848</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Formalization**

Table 4. Component matrix ($\alpha=.732$); Eigenvalue= 1,965

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oblimin Rotation</th>
<th>119.</th>
<th>In deze organisatie vindt men het belangrijk om voor iedereen dezelfde standaard arbeidsvoorwaarden toe te passen.</th>
<th>.791</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>120.</td>
<td>Alle arbeidsvoorwaarden moeten hier volgens dezelfde regels worden uitgevoerd.</td>
<td>.910</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121.</td>
<td>Ik heb problemen met de niet-standaard arbeidsvoorwaarde van mijn collega.</td>
<td>.716</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Innovation

Table 5. Component matrix (α=.734); Eigenvalue= 1.959

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Oblimin Rotation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>122. Voorstellen van medewerkers om hun arbeidsvoorwaarden aan te passen worden hier makkelijk geaccepteerd.</td>
<td>.845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123. Leidinggevenden in deze organisatie reageren snel als het nodig is om dingen anders te regelen voor medewerkers.</td>
<td>.742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>124. Deze organisatie is erg flexibel als het gaat om arbeidsvoorwaarden; men verandert makkelijk afspraken met mensen om tegemoet te komen aan problemen of veranderende omstandigheden.</td>
<td>.834</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2. Regression analysis

A. Regression analysis on dependent variable coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>β</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>β</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace friendship</td>
<td>-.005</td>
<td>-.004</td>
<td>.967</td>
<td>.178</td>
<td>.147</td>
<td>.516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antecedent supervisor communication</td>
<td>.269</td>
<td>.290</td>
<td>.007***</td>
<td>.534</td>
<td>.575</td>
<td>.145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction term (Workplace friendship * Antecedent supervisor communication)</td>
<td>-081</td>
<td>-.304</td>
<td>.451</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ R^2 \]
\[ .084** \]
\[ \Delta R^2 \]
\[ .084** \]
\[ N \]
\[ 95 \]

*: p<.1, **: p<.05, ***: p<.01; Dependent variable= Coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal
B. Regression analysis on dependent variable coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal, including control variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>β</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>β</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace friendship</td>
<td>-.024</td>
<td>-.020</td>
<td>.857</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>.765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antecedent supervisor communication</td>
<td>.252</td>
<td>.272</td>
<td>.014**</td>
<td>.267</td>
<td>.288</td>
<td>.010***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.002</td>
<td>-.026</td>
<td>.843</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational level</td>
<td>.121</td>
<td>.067</td>
<td>.534</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational tenure</td>
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<td>-.304</td>
<td>.026**</td>
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<td>.142</td>
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<td>.174</td>
<td>.154</td>
<td>.172</td>
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\[ R^2 \] = .077**                  \[ ΔR^2 \] = .077**

\[ N \] = 95

*: p<.1, **: p<.05, ***: p<.01; Dependent variable= Coworkers’ acceptance of an i-deal