

## Background

Influencing subordinates is a central function of leadership. Therefore it is interesting for researchers and practitioners alike to understand the processes which mediate influence in leadership dyads, particularly the conditions that result in subordinates' voluntary openness towards leadership. While the results of the Ohio Studies in the 50ies suggest that considerate leadership behaviour is one of the sources of leadership effectiveness (for recent review see Judge, Piccolo, & Illies, 2004), contemporary approaches often take an identity based perspective on the same. In the present study, we seek to link both perspectives. Specifically, we propose that subordinates' relational identity plays an important role in mediating influence processes in leadership dyads in that the relation between respectful / considerate leadership and subordinates' openness towards leadership is partially mediated by subordinates' identification with their leaders (see figure 1 below).

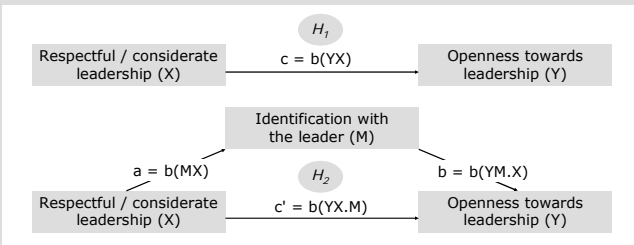


Figure 1: Model for the indirect effect of respectful / considerate leadership (X) on subordinates' openness towards leadership (Y) through identification with the leader (M)

**Hypothesis 1.** Subordinates' voluntary openness towards a leader's influence depends on how much they are treated with consideration and respect by their supervisors.

**Hypothesis 2.** This relationship between respectful / considerate leadership and subordinates' openness to leadership is partially mediated by subordinates' identification with the leader.

## Study 1

**Sample.** We recruited an online sample by using a multi-site-multi-entry strategy. We included only adults who indicated that they currently work for a leader. ( $N_1 = 320$ , age:  $M = 33$  years ( $SD = 11$  years), sex: 63% female, work experience:  $M = 12$  years ( $SD = 11$  years), average number of experienced leaders: 6 ( $SD = 5$ ), higher education: 59%).

**Measures.** Considerate leadership was measured with a German adaption of the *Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire* (cf. Neuberger, 2002). The degree to which subordinates are treated with respect by their leaders was measured with the *Respectful Leadership Scale* (Eckloff & van Quaquebeke, in press). This scale had been constructed based on an extensive content analysis of examples for respectful leadership behavior and shows high convergent validity with the consideration scale. Subordinates' openness towards leadership was measured by the proximate construct *Respect for Leaders* (van Quaquebeke & Brodbeck, in press), that encompasses how much subordinates are voluntarily open towards a leader's influence (e.g., seek

his/her advice, perceive him/her as a role model and respect his/her professional work). Identification with the leader was measured by the 6-item Mael and Ashforth (1992) *Organizational Identification Questionnaire* adapted to the current leader as the target focus of identification.

**Results.** Table 1: Descriptives, Correlations, & Reliabilities in Study 1

	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Respectful Leadership	3.82	0.97	(.95)			
2. Considerate Leadership	3.67	0.89	.83***	(.94)		
3. Openness Towards Leadership	3.29	1.02	.76***	.67***	(.91)	
4. Identification With the Leader	2.34	0.83	.39***	.28***	.45***	(.81)

Note. Values enclosed in parentheses represent Cronbach's  $\alpha$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

►  $H_1$  is supported.

Table 2: Indirect effect of respectful (considerate) leadership (X) on subordinates' openness towards leadership (Y) through identification with the leader (M) (Study 1:  $N_1 = 320$ )

	Direct and total effects				
	B	SE B	$\beta$	t	criteria <sup>a</sup>
b (YX)	0.76 (0.66)	.04 (.04)	.76*** (.67***)	20.79 (15.94)	c
b (MX)	0.39 (0.28)	.05 (.05)	.39*** (.28***)	7.50 (5.25)	a
b (YM.X)	0.18 (0.28)	.04 (.04)	.26*** (.37***)	4.77 (6.99)	b
b (YX.M)	0.69 (0.59)	.04 (.04)	.71*** (.63***)	17.96 (14.43)	c'
Normal theory test for the indirect effect					
	ab	SE ab	$\beta$	Z	
Sobel <sup>b</sup>	0.07 (0.08)	.02 (.02)	.05*** (.04***)	4.03 (4.20)	
Bootstrap results for indirect effect					
	M	SE	95% CI-l	95% CI-u	
Effect <sup>b</sup>	0.07 (0.08)	.02 (.02)	.04 (.05)	.11 (.12)	

Note. Values enclosed in parentheses represent results for considerate leadership as independent variable (X). Number of bootstrap resamples = 2000. <sup>a</sup>Baron and Kenny (1986) criteria for mediation; see also figure 1. <sup>b</sup>Estimation of the indirect effect with a normal theory approach and a bootstrap approach advocated by Preacher and Hayes (2004). 95% CI-l / 95% CI-u = lower / upper bounds of a 95% confidence interval for the bootstrap estimates of  $ab$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Following the Baron and Kenny (1986) criteria for mediation effects we also found support for the second Hypotheses (see Table 2): Respectful (considerate) leadership significantly predicts subordinates' openness towards leadership (criterion c) and identification with the leader (criterion a). The mediator identification with the leader significantly predicts subordinates' openness towards leadership controlling for respectful (considerate) leadership (criterion b). And the effect of respectful (considerate) leadership on subordinates' openness towards leadership decreases by a nontrivial amount, but not to zero, with the inclusion of the mediator (criterion c'), which is to say that our partial mediation hypotheses is supported by the data. Additionally Table 2 shows the results of the test of the indirect effect with the Sobel test by comparing the strength of the indirect effect to the point null hypothesis that it equals zero. Moreover, we find the same results with bootstrapping which is not based on the assumption of normality.

## Study 2

**Sample.** For the purpose of replication we used the same recruitment procedure as in Study 1. Again, we included only adults who indicated that they currently work for a leader. ( $N_2 = 596$ , age:  $M = 36$  years ( $SD = 10$  years), sex: 62% female, work experience:  $M = 15$  years ( $SD = 10$  years),

average number of personally experienced leaders: 6 ( $SD = 5$ ), higher education: 49%).

**Measures.** The same measures as in Study 1 were used in Study 2, with the exception, that due to the high convergent validity of considerate and respectful leadership, we abstained from using the consideration scale in the second study and only assessed respectful leadership to replicate our findings.

**Results.** Table 3: Descriptives, Correlations, & Reliabilities in Study 2

	M	SD	1	2	3
1. Respectful Leadership	3.63	0.99	(.96)		
2. Openness Towards Leadership	3.07	1.13	.78***	(.92)	
3. Identification With the Leader	2.14	0.89	.45***	.57***	(.85)

Note. Values enclosed in parentheses represent Cronbach's  $\alpha$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

►  $H_1$  is supported.

Table 4: Indirect effect of respectful leadership (X) on subordinates' openness towards leadership (Y) through identification with the leader (M) (Study 2:  $N_2 = 596$ )

	Direct and total effects				
	B	SE B	$\beta$	t	criteria <sup>a</sup>
b (YX)	0.79	.03	.79***	30.53	c
b (MX)	0.45	.04	.45***	12.26	a
b (YM.X)	0.27	.03	.39***	10.24	b
b (YX.M)	0.66	.03	.72***	24.96	c'
Normal theory test for the indirect effect (ab)					
	ab	SE ab	$\beta$	Z	
Sobel <sup>b</sup>	0.12	.02	.07***	Jul 87	
Bootstrap results for indirect effect					
	M	SE	95% CI-l	95% CI-u	
Effect <sup>b</sup>	0.12	.02	.09	.16	

Note. Values enclosed in parentheses represent results for considerate leadership as independent variable (X). Number of bootstrap resamples = 2000. <sup>a</sup>Baron and Kenny (1986) criteria for mediation; see also figure 1. <sup>b</sup>Estimation of the indirect effect with a normal theory approach and a bootstrap approach advocated by Preacher and Hayes (2004). 95% CI-l / 95% CI-u = lower / upper bounds of a 95% confidence interval for the bootstrap estimates of  $ab$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

►  $H_2$  is supported.

The results of Study 2 replicate our findings from Study 1.

## Discussion

The effectiveness of consideration for the matter of leadership has been shown convincingly in the recent meta analysis by Judge and his colleagues (2004). However there is a lack of models which show how consideration influences leadership outcomes. Here research on transformational leadership provides a convincing body of results which highlights the potential role of identification processes in mediating leadership effectiveness (van Knippenberg, van Knippenberg, De Cremer, & Hogg, 2004).

With the present studies we tested a model which combines both fields of research. The results show, that subordinates' identification with a leader partially mediates the relation between respectful/considerate leadership and subordinates' voluntary openness to leadership. Thus they provide a part of the answer how the positive effects of considerate/respectful leadership can be explained.



## References

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