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Defining Respectful Leadership: What It Is, How It Can Be Measured, and Another Glimpse at What It Is Related to

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ABSTRACT. Research on work values shows that respectful leadership is highly desired by employees. On the applied side, however, the extant research does not offer many insights as to which concrete leadership behaviors are perceived by employees as indications of respectful leadership. Thus, to offer such insights, we collected and content analyzed employees' narrations of encounters with respectful leadership (N_1 = 426). The coding process resulted in 19 categories of respectful leadership spanning 149 leadership behaviors. Furthermore, to also harness this comprehensive repertoire for quantitative organizational research, we undertook two more studies (N_{2a} = 228; N_{2b} = 412) to empirically derive a feasible item-based measurement of respectful leadership and assess its psychometric qualities. In these studies, we additionally investigated the relationships between respectful leadership as assessed with this new measurement and employees' vertical and contextual followership as assessed via subordinates' identification with their leaders, their appraisal respect for their leaders, their feeling of self-determination, and their job satisfaction.

KEY WORDS: interpersonal respect, followership, leadership, self-determination, work values

Most of us want to be respected by others. This holds true not only in our private life, but also at work (Mason, 1994; van Quaquebeke et al., 2008). When we feel respected at work, especially by authorities, we are not only personally more satisfied, but also more likely to identify with the collective and exert effort on behalf of it (Boezeman and Ellemers, 2008a; Lind and Tyler, 1988; Simon and Stürmer, 2003; Tyler and Blader, 2000; Tyler and Lind, 1992; Tyler et al., 1997). Yet despite the evidence that respectful leadership informs many positive organizational consequences and is likewise highly desired by employees, research shows that it is a rare experience at people's actual workplace (van Quaquebeke et al., 2008). In their paper, van Quaquebeke and his colleagues thus concluded that much organizational potential currently lies idle because many leaders have not yet adopted a respectful leadership style.

For those leaders who want to adapt their behavior, the extant research on respect, however, offers only limited insights into which specific leadership behaviors would lead to subordinates perceiving themselves as being treated with respect. Indeed, most of the studies in this field use experimental paradigms, which are hard to translate into the managerial world, or they use short item lists (such as "I feel respected for my work" or "I feel respected as a person"), which capture the feeling of being respected but not the leader's behaviors and attitudes that contribute to such a feeling.

As an answer to this void, the objective of the present paper is (1) to present insights as to what respectful leadership actually is, (2) to offer a feasible measure for the same to be used in future organizational research, and (3) to use this measure to investigate some more of the effects of respectful leadership on subordinates. We hope that in doing so, we will continue to inform the discussion for why respectful leadership is an important aspect to consider in organizational practice, inform research as to how respectful leadership can be measured, and finally inform leaders as to what they could actually do to be perceived as respectful.

Interpersonal respect – a theoretical introduction

In line with the general tenets in the philosophical traditions of respect research (cf. Dillon, 2003, 2007;

Hill, 1998; van Quaquebeke et al., 2007), we define respect as a person's attitude towards other people, in whom he/she sees a reason that, in itself, justifies a degree of attention and a type of behavior that in return engenders in the target a feeling of being appreciated in importance and worth as a person. The aspects that underlie this definition of respect need to be discussed in more detail:

A person who respects others, notices others. The Latin roots of the term *respicere*, the etymological origin of the word respect, can be translated literally as *to look back to* or *to look again*, in a wider sense *to consider, to notice*. This form of noticing and seeking to understand a person can therefore be described as a form of recognition (Dillon, 2003). Noticing other people means recognizing their importance and value. It means actively confronting oneself with the task to find out who or what they "really" are. Respect thus aims for an accurate assessment of the other person. This includes being consciously aware of the presence of the other person in one's own environment, recognizing his or her role appropriately in the context of the situation, and correctly understanding the mutual relationship.

A person who respects another person perceives a reason in the other person that justifies this respect in itself. Respect is owed, a person can earn respect, or he/she has a quality that calls for respect. The everyday use of the term indicates that the object of one's respect possesses certain qualities or markers that justify recognition and an appropriate, respectful reaction. The other person offers "good reason," as it were, for respecting and appreciating that he/she has a legitimate claim for our recognition and appreciation in terms of what he/she is. This reason is absolute, in the sense that its importance and significance do not depend on our own interests, ambitions, or needs. It affects our will immediately without being influenced by our inclinations (Rawls, 1999). In other words, a respectful action is voluntary, but one would feel disingenuous if one acted against this cause and the logic it establishes (cf. Birch, 1993; Raz, 2001; Sennett, 2003). This also means that respect fulfills Kant's conditions for the categorical imperative (Kant, 1788), i.e., perceiving the other person as an end in itself and not merely as a means to an end. If somebody behaves respectfully exclusively or to a predominant degree for reasons of usefulness of the other person for reaching own ambitions or satisfying own needs, it would not be called respect.

A person who respects another person acts in such a manner that it in return engenders a feeling in the other person of being appreciated in his/her importance and worth as a person. According to Spears et al. (2005), respect entails an appreciation for the other person that is communicated in one's own behavior. In the sense of this definition, respect can therefore be described as a process that is aimed at recognizing, appreciating, and communicating the importance and worth of the other person. Put differently, respect entails maintaining an appreciative attitude towards the other person and acting on the basis of this attitude (Downie and Telfer, 1969; Frankena, 1986) even if one does not personally like or agree with the object of respect (Simon and Stürmer, 2003; Spears et al., 2005). However, talking somebody down or flattering him/her, for reasons that that person does perceive to be true, cannot be called respect (Anderson, 1993; Pettit, 1989).

Interpersonal respect in organizations

The value of respect has gained considerable public recognition over the recent years. Particularly, a lack of respect and the absence of genuine appreciation for other people are seen as a cause for many problems in the social sphere (Margalit, 1998; Miller, 2001; Sennett, 2003). It is thus unsurprising that respect has gaining ever more ground as an object of research in the field of social psychology as well as organizational behavior.

Studies have, for instance, shown that organizational commitment and adherence to organizational rules can be improved if its representatives demonstrate respect in the treatment of others within that organization (Boeckmann and Tyler, 2002; Boezeman and Ellemers, 2008a; Lind and Tyler, 1988; Tyler and Blader, 2000; Tyler and Lind, 1992; Tyler et al., 1997). Likewise, being treated with respect has been shown to evoke a heightened degree of group-serving behavior in individuals' in-role and extra-role organizational behavior (Simon and Stürmer, 2003, 2005; Tyler and Blader, 2000). This commitment towards one's group even occurs if individuals receive a simultaneous message of disliking (Spears et al., 2005), a message of group exclusion

(Simon and Stürmer, 2005), or negative performance evaluations (Simon and Stürmer, 2003). Further research also revealed that people who were respected seem to lose concern for their personal image and rather engage in efforts to improve their group's image if it is under threat (Branscombe et al., 2002). Overall, many of these positive effects can be argued to be traced back to a sense of heightened self-worth that seems to be embedded in the commutation of respect (De Cremer and Tyler, 2005; Smith et al., 1998; Tyler and Blader, 2000). In contrast, disrespect often entails a message of inequality and lesser worth (Simon, 2007; Simon et al., 2006; van Quaquebeke et al., 2007) that is then reciprocated with deviance, anger, and aggression (Bettencourt and Miller, 1996; Cohen et al., 1996; Miller, 2001) and a generally more self-focused attitudinal and behavioral response (Sleebos et al., 2007).

Considering these findings, one can arguably propose that the question of interpersonal respect between leaders and their subordinates is highly relevant for productive cooperation in organizations, and even more so in contexts that rely strongly on committed and cooperation-minded employees (Boezeman and Ellemers, 2007, 2008a, b). Research even goes so far as to suggest that respectful treatment by authorities is at times an even more powerful means to foster vertical and horizontal cooperation, i.e., subordinates' cooperation with leaders and their peers, than any anticipated monetary returns (De Cremer, 2003; Ellingsen and Johannesson, 2007).

Furthermore, studies regarding the effects of interpersonal respect at the workplace are triangulated by research on work values. These studies show that respect also figures as a key value in employees' work value rankings, beating issues such as job security and higher income opportunities (Mason, 1994; van Quaquebeke et al., 2008). Most importantly for the present study, these previous studies have shown that employees foremost care about a respectful treatment by their leaders. In stark contrast to this desire, however, the research by van Quaquebeke et al. (2008) also shows that experienced organizational practices diverge strongly negatively, in that respectful leadership is highly desired but hardly encountered (highest rank difference among 18 work values).

Leaders in practice, however, will find it hard to obtain concrete insights from the extant research as to how they should change their behavior, i.e., which concrete behaviors or attitudes would convey a sense of respect. Indeed, as stated above, most of the studies in this field use experimental paradigms that are hard to translate into the managerial world, or they use short items that capture the feeling of being respected but not the perceived leadership behaviors and attitudes behind it.

The present set of studies

We opted for a multiple-study, multi-method approach to investigate the topic of respectful leadership from different angles. Study 1 was undertaken to explore what employees consider respectful leadership. Due to the explorative nature, we used a qualitative approach to gather and comprehensively analyze the data. The results of this study subsequently served as the basis of two quantitative studies, study 2a and 2b, in which we sought to reduce the previously gathered extensive respectful leadership inventory to a more feasible item list that could be used in organizational research. Instead of one study, we decided to conduct two studies to ensure that identified psychometric properties and relationships with other variables are replicable.

Study 1

Method

Sample

The study was conducted in Germany. In order to reach a broad cross-section of the working population and to avoid strong selection biases, a multi-site-multi-entry strategy was chosen for recruiting survey participants, i.e., participants were recruited on diverse online portals employing a variety of entry types (teaser text boxes, banners, or short articles about the study).

In total, 426 employees participated in the qualitative survey. The average age of the participants was 38 (SD = 11.00 years). The gender ratio was balanced, with 48% female participants. About a third of the test subjects had higher educational qualifications. On average, the participants had already worked for 15 years (SD = 12.78 years), with an average of four different employers. They had worked under an

average of seven different leaders in this time (SD = 5.67 leaders).

Measures

Central to the purpose of the present study, participants were surveyed about their encounters with respectful leadership. They were asked to name and describe critical incidents in which they felt truly respected by their leader. The participants were told that these examples could be drawn from experiences with different leaders and that they could list as many as they wanted to. Each description of such a critical incident was to be entered in a dedicated text box, formatted to a size that used up a considerable part of the screen to stimulate detailed answers.

Data analysis procedure

The qualitative data on respectful leaders were subjected to an explorative content analysis based on qualitative content analysis paradigm of Mayring (2000) as well as the principles and methods of grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Since these procedures can be used in slightly different ways, it is generally advised to make the procedure fully transparent for sakes of replication – which we will thus do in the following:

In a first step, the answers given by a single participant were split into ''one-dimensional'' analytical units. If the answers given by the participants were already structured by bullet points or paragraphs, this ''natural unit structure'' was initially maintained. Each unit was then reviewed to ascertain whether it carried one central meaning, in which case it was maintained as an analytical unit, or indeed included a number of significant dimensions, which suggested further subdivisions. A subdivision was not performed when additional information only contextualized the main unit of meaning, such as specifying the condition, an addition, or explanation. In other words, the smallest text fragment to be defined as an analytical unit could, for instance, be a single word, such as ''trust,'' or it included conditions, explanations, and additions and would thus be an entire description of a situation in which a leader displayed trust in the participant. All in all, this approach produced 1,363 analytical units.

A second step focused on the repeated pairwise comparisons of these analytical units and their inductive allocation by way of similarities into initially very broad categories. Via this process, we defined 21 superordinate categories that offered a first sense of direction. Both the categories and the allocation of the analytical units to these categories were not regarded as definite, so that the initial allocation and labeling could be changed as required over the course of the coding process. Throughout the process, we kept a coding protocol in which we recorded questions, assumptions about possible relationships, and our thoughts about the identified categories.

In a third step, the identified broad categories were subjected to closer scrutiny. Subcategories were developed by applying the same method of comparison, coding, and reversible, inductive categorization. Altogether, this process was primarily aimed at establishing internal stringency and unambiguousness in the subcategories.

In a fourth step, we reviewed and, if required, adjusted the categories to establish coherence among the categories and the allocated analytical units. This approach produced 94 subcategories that were, in turn, compared to one another and grouped inductively according to their similarity, which allowed for a comparison to and adjustment of the original superordinate category system. The result was a revision of the 21 superordinate categories into 19 categories and 1 category of analytical units that defied categorization. Subsequently, to investigate inter-rater agreement, another independent rater was given the broad descriptions of the 19 + 1 categories and was then asked to repeat the allocation of the 1,363 analytical units to the identified 19 + 1 categories of respectful leadership behavior.

Finally, standardized statements were formulated, category-by-category, for all 1,363 analytical units, merging all clearly redundant units within the categories. The standardization of the statements included further that the leader was always the subject who displayed a certain respectful attitude or behavior towards the participant from an ego-participant perspective. In this way, the number of statements was reduced to 149.

Results

Our content analysis of narratives of critical incidents in which participants felt truly respected by their leaders led to the definition of 19 categories of

respectful leadership, each reflecting one specific behavioral or attitudinal aspect. The categories are: Trusting, Conferring responsibility, Considering needs, Maintaining distance, Appreciating, Being error-friendly, Granting autonomy, Acknowledging equality, Promoting development, Being open to advice, Accepting criticism, Excavating potential, Seeking participation, Taking interest on a personal level, Being reliable, Being attentive, Supporting, and Interacting friendly.

To investigate inter-rater agreement concerning the allocation of the initial 1,363 analytical units to these categories of respectful leadership, Cohen's kappa (κ) was calculated (cf. inter-rater agreement for nominal data in Brennan and Prediger, 1981; Thompson and Walter, 1988). As a rule of thumb a $\kappa > 0.75$ is generally considered an indicator for good levels of agreement. In the present case, the ratings match exceptionally well ($\kappa = 0.982$, $t = 135.22$, $p < 0.001$), thus bolstering our confidence in the category system. The 19 categories and the respective 149 standardized statements of respectful leadership are shown in Appendix A.

Study 2a and 2b

The primary purpose of the second set of studies was to reduce the previously gathered extensive inventory for respectful leadership to a more feasible item list that could be used in organizational research. Instead of one study, we decided to conduct two studies to check whether identified psychometric properties and relationships with other variables could be replicated. In addition to this reduction process, across both studies, we sought to explore the effects of perceived respectful leadership on subordinates' vertical and contextual followership.

Vertical followership means that, in the best case, subordinates are voluntarily open to their leaders' influence (cf. Chemers, 2003; van Knippenberg and van Knippenberg, 2003; Yukl and Van Fleet, 1992). If happening consciously, this can, for instance, be read as subordinates' appraisal respect for their leaders (cf. Dillon, 2003; van Quaquebeke et al., 2007). Or, if it takes place on a more subconscious level, it can be argued to be reflected in subordinates' identification with their leaders (Kelman, 1958; Shamir et al., 1993; van Knippenberg et al., 2004).

Contextual followership means that, in the best case, subordinates perceive a sense of self-determination in their doing (autonomy, relatedness, and competence – see Deci and Ryan, 2000; Gagné and Deci, 2005), which enables them to react proactively and independently in the ever-changing organizational environments (cf. Baard et al., 2004; Organ et al., 2006). Apart from these issues of followership, subordinates' general job satisfaction was assessed as an additional dependent variable because it is a good reverse proxy for organizational role ambiguity and role conflict (Goldstein and Rockart, 1984), both of which can potentially threaten the effective functioning of an organization.

Given the extant literature on the effects of interpersonal respect on group commitment (e.g., Boezeman and Ellemers, 2008a; Simon and Stürmer, 2003, 2005) and rule adherence (e.g., Tyler and Blader, 2000, 2003), we can assume all of these independent variables to be positively related to perceptions of respectful leadership. Indeed, it seems that it should be easier for individuals to open up for someone's leadership if they feel that they are being treated respectfully in the leadership process. Likewise, it seems highly plausible that respectful leadership will also positively relate to employees' perceptions of self-determination with its facets of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci and Ryan, 2000). Indeed, the behavioral repertoire generated in study 1 encompasses categories that directly map onto these basic human needs, e.g., appreciating, maintaining distance, or showing loyalty, which suggests that respectful leadership might be exactly about satisfying basic human psychological needs as defined by Deci and Ryan (2000). Finally, given previous studies that show that respectful leadership is highly desired but hardly experienced in real life (van Quaquebeke et al., 2008), we also believe that, once it is encountered in organizational practice, employees will be very satisfied with their job.

Method

Sample 2a

Participants for study 2a were recruited by the same means employed in study 1. In total, 228 people participated in the survey. The average age of the participants was 37 (SD = 10.17 years), with 58%

female and 42% male participants. Fifty-four percent of the survey participants had higher educational qualifications. On average, they had spent 16 years (SD = 10.17 years) under six different superiors (SD = 3.95). Thirty percent of the participants had a female superior and 70% a male superior at the time of the survey. The professional background of the participants ranged over a total of 43 different areas of industry, from warehouse workers to university teachers.

Sample 2b

Participants for study 2b were recruited by means of a German consumer panel (Sozioland). The sample includes 412 participants. The average age of the participants was 35 (SD = 10.17 years) with 64% female and 36% male participants. Forty-eight percent of the participants had higher educational qualifications. On average, they had already worked 15 years (SD = 10.06 years) under six different superiors (SD = 5.14). Thirty percent of participants had a female superior at the time of the survey, compared to male superiors for 70% of participants. The range of professional backgrounds covered 42 different areas of industry from warehouse workers to business consultants.

Measures 2a and 2b

First, participants were requested to rate all of 149 standardized respectful leadership statements in terms of how important the described behavior is for them to feel respected by their leaders (''How important are the following leadership behaviors in order for you to feel respected by a leader?''). Answers were to be made on a seven-point Likert scale from 1 (not important at all) to 7 (very important). Second, participants were asked to rate their current leaders in terms of all 149 standardized respectful leadership statements (''My leader …''). The degree to which participants' perceived their current leaders to exhibit such behaviors were assessed on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much). Finally, we asked participants to indicate the degree to which they felt respected by their leader via a so-called marker item that would be used in the later item selection procedure (''If you think about your current leader, how strongly do you feel respected by him/her?''). The answer was to be made on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much).

For the assessment of participants' *identification with their leader*, an adapted version of Mael and Ashforth's (1992) organizational identification questionnaire was employed, using the participant's current leader as the target of identification (cf. van Dick et al., 2004). This scale contains items such as: ''If someone criticizes my leader, it feels like a personal insult,'' or ''I am very interested in what other people think about my leader.'' Degree of agreement was ranked for each item on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (do not agree at all) to 5 (agree completely).

Participants' *appraisal respect for their leaders* was assessed via six items (Graf and van Quaquebeke, 2007; van Quaquebeke and Brodbeck, 2008). The scale items were (1) ''For me, my leader represents a positive role model at the workplace.'', (2) ''I trust the judgment of my leader in work issues.'', (3) ''In a lot of matters concerning work I gladly seek advice from my leader.'', (4) ''At work I enjoy being able to learn from my leader.'', (5) ''Due to the influence of my leader I feel very constricted in my professional development.'' [reverse coded], (6) ''I owe respect to the way my leader accomplishes his/her professional functions.''. Degree of agreement was ranked for each item on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (do not agree at all) to 5 (agree completely).

Participants' perception of *self-determination* in the relationship with their leaders was assessed with the basic needs satisfaction in relationships scale (La Guardia et al., 2000). This scale assesses the extent to which a person perceives his/her basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness to be satisfied in the relationship with another person. It contains items such as: ''In the interaction with my current leader, I have a say in what happens, and I can voice my opinion'' (autonomy), ''In the interaction with my current leader, I am very capable and effective'' (competence), ''In the interaction with my current leader, I feel a lot of closeness and intimacy'' (relatedness). Degree of agreement was ranked for each item on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (agree completely).

Participants' *job satisfaction* was surveyed via Kunin's 7-point satisfaction scale (1955) ranging from very unhappy (1) to very happy (7) smiley faces. It covers seven aspects of job satisfaction, i.e., the satisfaction with one's colleagues, with one's

leader, with one's duties, with one's working conditions, with one's organization and management, with one's development opportunities, and with one's remuneration. As advised by Kunin (1955), the mean across these seven aspects is used as the score for general job satisfaction.

Results 2a and 2b

To reduce the 149 items (as depicted in Appendix A) to a more economic but also representative list of items regarding respectful leadership, we first investigated which of the 149 items was attributed at least an importance score of 6 on the scale from 1 (not important at all) to 7 (very important) in order to feel respected by a leader (see Table I, first column). Additionally, the items were supposed to highly correlate ($r > 0.6$) with the respectful leadership marker item ("If you think about your current leader, how strongly do you feel respected by him/her?"). Of the remaining items, and if more than one item within a category fulfilled the criteria, we subsequently chose that item within each category that applied to a wider array of situations and which at the same time indicated a concrete leadership behavior or attitude towards a subordinate. Using these criteria for the selection of the items, a total of 12 items were identified for the respectful leadership scale. The final items are: (1) "… trusts my ability to independently and self-reliantly perform well," (2) "… expresses criticism in an objective and constructive way," (3) "… recognizes me as a full-fledged counterpart," (4) "… recognizes my work," (5) "… shows a genuine interest in my opinions and assessments," (6) "… does not try to hold me responsible for his/her own mistakes," (7) "… unequivocally stands up for me and my work against third parties," (8) "… treats me in a polite manner," (9) "… provides me with any information that is relevant to me," (10) "… takes me and my work seriously," (11) "… interacts in an open and honest way with me," (12) "… treats me in a fair way."

Item 6 was selected from the category "Accepting criticism", despite the fact that it has a correlation below 0.6 with the marker item in study 2a (see Table I, fourth column). We chose to include it because participants generally rated items of this

TABLE I

Psychometric properties of each item of the respectful leadership scale in study 2a and 2b

Item	Mean importance rating		Items' psychometric properties when answered with regard to participants' current leader									
			M		SD		Correlation with marker item		Factor loading		Discriminatory power	
	2a	2b	2a	2b	2a	2b	2a	2b	2a	2b	2a	2b
1.	6.43	6.45	4.12	4.13	1.01	0.97	0.67★	0.70★	0.71	0.74	0.67	0.69
2.	6.41	6.49	3.50	3.61	1.28	1.24	0.70★	0.68★	0.81	0.80	0.77	0.76
3.	6.34	6.14	3.59	3.51	1.38	1.28	0.77★	0.76★	0.85	0.85	0.82	0.82
4.	6.11	6.17	3.52	3.70	1.25	1.11	0.75★	0.70★	0.84	0.83	0.81	0.79
5.	6.09	5.94	3.35	3.46	1.33	1.23	0.75★	0.72★	0.88	0.85	0.85	0.81
6.	6.42	6.37	3.57	3.68	1.38	1.36	0.55★	0.62★	0.70	0.78	0.65	0.73
7.	6.02	6.00	3.35	3.40	1.32	1.28	0.74★	0.69★	0.84	0.81	0.81	0.77
8.	6.07	6.00	3.96	4.04	1.06	0.99	0.66★	0.66★	0.80	0.79	0.76	0.75
9.	6.24	6.08	3.06	3.20	1.32	1.27	0.67★	0.60★	0.80	0.74	0.76	0.69
10.	6.28	6.14	3.63	3.74	1.22	1.14	0.81★	0.76★	0.90	0.89	0.87	0.86
11.	6.40	6.30	3.60	3.73	1.24	1.15	0.73★	0.73★	0.85	0.85	0.82	0.81
12.	6.47	6.31	3.68	3.77	1.22	1.13	0.81★	0.77★	0.90	0.87	0.88	0.84

Note: $N_{2a} = 228$, $N_{2b} = 412$.
★$p < 0.001$.

category as highly important in order to feel respected by their leaders. Without this inclusion, the entire category would not have been represented in the scale. Furthermore, in study 2b, the correlation meets the required criteria.

In a next step, we examined the psychometric qualities of the identified 12 items to ensure that our respectful leadership scale is of sound quality when applied with regard to actual leaders (see further in Table I). First, we employed a principal component factor analysis to explore the extent to which the 12 items represent a one-dimensional structure. Both studies confirm the one-dimensional nature of the scale, in that the principal component analyses revealed only one factor with an eigenvalue of above 1. In study 2a, this factor was responsible for 68.3% of the variance. In study 2b, it was responsible for 66.8% of the variance. In both studies, the separate factor loadings for each of the 12 items were higher than 0.6. Second, discriminatory power scores were calculated for all items. All 12 items exhibited sufficient discriminatory power (>0.5). Third, the scale's internal consistency was examined and shown to be very good in both studies (Cronbach's alpha = 0.96 in study 2a, and 0.95 in study 2b). Split-half reliability is similarly positive, at 0.95 for both studies. Together, these findings leave us confident to continue with these 12 items as a satisfactory scale to assess respectful leadership.

Further investigations within the present datasets show that this scale is neither skewed by participants' work experience nor gender issues. In both studies, female participants rated their leaders in a fashion similar to their male counterparts (study 2a: $t(226) = 1.08$, $p > 0.05$; study 2b: $t(410) = 1.52$, $p > 0.05$). This not only suggests the absence of a gender-based bias in perceptions of respectful behavior, but also that leaders' respectful behavior towards women and men does not differ. Likewise, female leaders received on average a similar respectful leadership rating as their male counterparts (study 2a: $t(226) = -0.19$, $p > 0.05$; study 2b: $t(410) = 0.21$, $p > 0.05$), which suggests that neither sex is perceived to behave more or less respectful than the other when in a leadership position.

Further investigations regarding participants' background and their perceptions of respectful leadership similarly reveal no effects. Participants' education also did not have an impact (study 2a: $F(8,219) = 1.75$, $p > 0.05$; study 2b: $F(9,402) = 0.44$, $p > 0.05$), nor were we able to find a correlation between participants' years of work experience and their perceptions of respectful leadership (study 2a: $r = 0.12$, $p > 0.05$; study 2b: $r = -0.08$, $p > 0.05$). The same holds true with regard to participants' dyadic tenure spent with the particular leader and perceptions of respectful leadership (study 2a: $r = 0.03$, $p > 0.05$; study 2b: $r = -0.08$, $p > 0.05$).

Finally, we find that respectful leadership as assessed by the 12 items is positively related to our surveyed dependent variables, i.e., to participants' identification with their leaders, their appraisal respect for their leaders, their feeling of self-determination, and their job satisfaction. The mean scores, standard deviations, inter-correlations, and internal consistency of the variables for these correlations are summarized in Table II.

Discussion

Previous studies have highlighted that a respectful treatment by authorities leads to beneficial employee behavior, such as increased cooperation or extra-role behavior (Boezeman and Ellemers, 2008a; Lind and Tyler, 1988; Simon and Stürmer, 2003; Tyler and Blader, 2000; Tyler and Lind, 1992; Tyler et al., 1997). Other studies have highlighted that respectful leadership is also highly desired by employees, yet rarely experienced in organizational practice (van Quaquebeke et al., 2008). This latter finding led van Quaquebeke and his colleagues to argue that much organizational potential currently lies idle because of a lack of respectful leadership at the workplace.

To date, however, the respective research on respect offered only limited insights into which specific leadership behaviors would lead to subordinates perceiving themselves as being treated respectfully. The objective of the present set of studies was therefore (a) to present insights as to what respectful leadership actually is, (b) to offer a feasible measure for the same to be used in organizational research, and (c) to explore some of the effects of such leadership on subordinates.

To accomplish point (a), we collected and content analyzed narrations of critical incidents of respectful leadership. Given the size and heterogeneousness of our sample ($N_1 = 426$) – from the perspective of

TABLE II

Mean scores, standard deviations, intercorrelations, and internal consistencies of the variables in study 2a and 2b

	M		SD		1		2		3		4		5	
	2a	2b	2a	2b	2a	2b	2a	2b	2a	2b	2a	2b	2a	2b
1. Respectful leadership	3.66	3.58	0.96	1.03	(0.95)	(0.96)								
2. Identification with the leader	2.08	2.12	0.88	0.89	0.50★	0.49★	(0.86)	(0.85)						
3. Appraisal respect for the leader	3.14	2.99	1.11	1.13	0.76★	0.81★	0.62★	0.56★	(0.92)	(0.91)				
4. Perceived self-determination	3.48	3.40	1.11	0.98	0.89★	0.88★	0.55★	0.48★	0.76★	0.75★	(0.93)	(0.91)		
5. Job satisfaction	4.47	4.58	1.18	1.28	0.62★	0.68★	0.45★	0.45★	0.63★	0.69★	0.63★	0.67★	(0.82)	(0.84)

Note: $N_{2a} = 228$, $N_{2b} = 412$.
Values written in brackets are each scale's Cronbach's α.
★$p < 0.001$.

qualitative studies – one can assume that the present study was able to establish a sufficiently broad spectrum of possible behaviors and attitudes of respectful leadership. Based upon these narrations, we were able to identify and standardize 149 statements about what respectful leadership entails (printed in full in Appendix A), which can be allocated to 19 categories of respectful leadership. In this respect, the behavioral inventory offers a well-structured overview on concrete leadership behaviors that are perceived as respectful from the perspective of a subordinate.

To accomplish point (b), we subsequently reduced the comprehensive list of respectful leadership behaviors to a more feasible one by means of further qualitative and quantitative analyses. These suggest that a scale of 12 items assesses the construct of respectful leadership well and with satisfactory psychometric properties.

To accomplish point (c), we finally explored how perceptions of respectful leadership along the developed measure relate to subordinates' identification with their leaders, their appraisal respect for their leaders, their job satisfaction, and their feeling of self-determination. As was expected, perceived respectful leadership correlated strongly with the degree to which participants identified with or felt appraisal respect for their leaders. Both are indicators for subordinates' vertical followership. These results thus suggest that the more subordinates feel respected by their leaders, the more they will "return the favor" by being open to their leader's influence. In addition, the positive correlation between respectful leadership and subordinates' perceptions of self-determination suggests that respectful leadership also entails a message about the subordinates' autonomy, competence, and relatedness – which are important prerequisites for subordinates' independent and proactive reacting to changing organizational circumstances (contextual followership, cf. Deci and Ryan, 2000; Gagné and Deci, 2005). Finally, these results are rounded off by the finding that perceived respectful leadership was also related to participants' job satisfaction. This lends more weight to previous findings in that employees not only highly desire respectful leadership (van Quaquebeke et al., 2008) but are also more satisfied when they perceive respectful leadership at the workplace (cf. Baard et al., 2004).

However, even though we believe that the present paper managed to fulfill the specified objectives, the

set of studies is not without limitations. In the present paper, we, for instance, did not investigate the relationship of respectful leadership and other established leadership constructs in the field. Indeed, a future line of research should investigate whether and to what extent respectful leadership might be represented as part of leader-member exchange (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995), transformational or charismatic leadership (Bass and Riggio, 2006), or the recently rediscovered aspects of consideration and task initiation in leadership (Judge et al., 2004). Such research should be able to pinpoint the distinctive specifics of each leadership style not only by investigating the respective intercorrelations but also by investigating and possibly differentiating different social functions underlying each leadership style.

Furthermore, while it is sensible from a theoretical standpoint to take a follower-centric perspective to investigate the contents and impact of respectful leadership, this approach is also prone for common source biases (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The exclusive use of the input from employees can be perceived as a methodical weak spot in the present paper. Indeed, the strength of our correlation in the second set of studies should be interpreted cautiously as some of the shared variance might be due to the present follower-centric design. For future studies, it would thus be interesting to complement followers' assessments of respectful leadership with self-assessments from their leaders. For one, this could be done in a qualitative design, to investigate whether definitions of respectful leadership might vary between subordinates and their leaders, but it could also be undertaken in a quantitative design to investigate when and why subordinates and leaders might differ in their assessments of respectful leadership behavior and the effects of such differences on subordinates' subsequent organizational behavior.

Finally, it should be noted that the present data were collected in Germany. As previous studies indicate that work practices differ considerably between countries (Chhokar et al., 2007; Hofstede, 1991; House et al., 2004), the here obtained results should only be seen as first evidence for what is considered respectful in Western cultures. Indeed, in light of studies that investigate leader prototypes (House et al., 2004), it seems possible that Eastern cultures might, for instance, also value "ensures my face saving", i.e., a leader who ensures that his/her subordinates never loose their face in public, as part of a respectful leadership. For future, more cross-culturally oriented research it thus seems interesting to explore on which aspects different cultures' understandings of respectful leadership match and on which they diverge.

Respectful leadership is certainly a fascinating topic to shed further light upon. Evidently, as employees often perceive their supervisors to lack respect for them, there is much potential waiting to be realized for the benefit of organizations and employees alike.

Appendix A

See Table III.

TABLE III

Inventory for respectful leadership behavior

The leader …	
Trusting	*Granting autonomy*
… shows trust in me as a person.	… grants me as much freedom as possible to organize my working hours.
… trusts my ability to independently and self-reliantly perform well.	… grants me as much freedom as possible for finishing my duties.
… trusts my skills and competencies.	… asks me before enlisting me in additional work.
… trusts in me that I do not abuse my degrees of freedom.	… discusses changes to my duties or deadlines with me.
… shows me as much trust as I deserve.	… allows me to arrange the content and structure of my work as far as possible according to my own wishes.

TABLE III

continued

Conferring responsibility
… confers responsibility for important duties on me.
… confers responsibility on me which is matched with my performance.
… confers responsibility for particularly challenging tasks on me.
… enables me to work autonomously.
…. confers adequate responsibility for my work tasks on me.
… quickly confers a lot of responsibility on me.
Considering needs
… responds to my wishes as far as possible.
… is aware of my interests and preferences.
… respects my personal needs.
… takes my wishes into account beyond what is typical.
… takes my individual particularities into consideration.
Maintaining distance
… accepts my opinion even if it differs considerably from his/her own.
… respects my privacy.
… maintains an appropriate level of distance in our professional relationship.
… never behaves inappropriately, even in jest.
… does not take his/her moods out on me.
Appreciating
… recognizes my work.
… praises me when I show a good performance.
… rewards me for good performance (e.g., a raise, award, or bonus).
… appreciates even very small successes.
… ensures a justified level of remuneration.
… appreciates my performance appropriately.
… rewards special successes or performance appropriately.
… rewards special commitment and does not presume it to be natural.
… shows appreciation even for routine work.
… is honest and genuine in his/her praise and appreciation.
… recognizes professional competence.
… gives me the feeling of doing valuable and worthwhile work in my function.
… praises me and my work to other people.
… does not sell my performance as his own, but acknowledges my role appropriately.
… makes sure that my good performance is also recognized in higher circles.
… gives me freedom to pursue my creative ideas.
… gives me the feeling of being free from control and supervision.
… promotes independent working.
… delegates the decisions relevant for my area of work to me.
Being error-friendly
… lets me explain myself first if he/she thinks that a mistake has been made.
… acknowledges that mistakes can happen at work.
… does not bring up old mistakes over and over again.
… does not criticize me in front of other people.
… does not denigrate me as a person when I have made a mistake.
… gives me the opportunity to learn from my mistakes and experiences.
… expresses criticism in an objective and constructive way.
Acknowledging equality
… perceives me as of equal worth.
… treats me as of equal worth on the professional level.
… displays at least as much commitment as he/she expects from me.
… adheres him-/herself to the rules and agreements he/she has set.
… creates a feeling of mutual dependence.
… does not stress his/her formally higher status.
… recognizes me as a full-fledged counterpart.
… awards me with the same rights and privileges.
… does not abuse his higher position.
Promoting development
… advises and actively supports me in my career.
… does not obstruct me in my career because of his/her own interests.
… supports me by gradually delegating more responsibility.
… offers me opportunities for professional development.
… fosters my career's progress by arranging important contacts.
… promotes my development even if it offers no tangible benefits for the company.
Excavating potential
… shows a genuine interest in my opinions and assessments.
… encourages me to express criticism and offer my own ideas.
… allows me to express my suggestions and ideas.
… challenges me to make full use of my skills and competencies.
… involves him-/herself seriously with my suggestions and ideas.

TABLE III

continued

Being open to advice
… asks for my help even in areas that he/she is familiar with.
… trusts my advice in certain areas.
… accepts good ideas and suggestions and puts them to use accordingly.
… allows him-/herself to be influenced by me.
… shows a basic readiness for learning from me.
… is ready to rethink his/her opinion if he/she is confronted with good arguments.
… accepts that I am more competent in certain areas than he/she is.

Accepting criticism
… accepts that I voice my criticism.
… accepts justified criticism.
… apologizes for inappropriate behavior towards me.
… changes his/her behavior accordingly if given justified criticism.
… admits to own mistakes.
… does not try to hold me responsible for his/her own mistakes.

Showing loyalty
… unequivocally stands up for me and my work against third parties.
… stands by my decisions and defends them, if necessary, towards other people.
… backs me up in critical situations.
… accepts responsibility for mistakes that were made because of a lack of support.
… defends my interests against other people.

Being attentive
… listens to me when I am speaking.
… prepares properly for talks with me.
… is interested in my work.
… does not interrupt me.
… gives me appropriate answers for my questions.
… is always available in urgent cases.
… takes enough time for me.
… takes me and my work seriously.
… can see my point of view.
… is open for my concerns.
… lets me be true to myself and does not force me to pretend anything.

Being reliable
… interacts in an open and honest way with me.
… enables me to learn new and interesting things at my work.
… uses me appropriately according to my skills and competencies.
… enables me to grow with my work and become more competent.
… accepts my input with no regard for my position or formal qualification.
… is ready for a professional discussion if there is a clash of opinions.

Seeking participation
… asks for my opinion before he/she takes crucial decisions.
… makes certain decisions only on the basis of my judgment.
… appropriately involves me in decisions that affect my work or work environment.
… is ready to rethink his/her ideas if he/she is given good reason to do so.
… gives me the opportunity to voice my opinion on decisions that affect me.

Taking interest on a personal level
… reacts appropriately to special incidents in my private life (e.g., a death in the family, marriage, etc.).
… is interested in my wellbeing.
… talks to me about private and personal matters.
… is ready for concessions in times of personal crisis.
… demonstrates genuine interest in me as a person and not just a worker.
… offers help in case of personal problems.
… maintains a personal relationship with me even outside of work.
… is interested in a good working relationship.

Supporting
… is available for my questions and problems.
… helps me solve difficult tasks on my own.
… helps me redress past mistakes.
… provides the required means and resources to enable me to produce good work.
… supports me when dealing with other people.
… reviews my work situation together with me.
… provides me with any information that is relevant to me.
… challenges, but does not overburden me.
… recognizes and promotes my strong points instead of being fixated on my weaknesses.
… asks regularly about my work without creating a feeling of having to justify myself.
… gets his/her hands dirty if it is necessary.
… is personally committed to me and my field of work.

TABLE III

continued

… gives comprehensible reasons and explanations for his/her decisions.	… promotes a good working climate.
… expresses his/her expectations clearly and transparently.	… tries to motivate me.
… is punctual.	… offers me honest feedback when I need it.
… treats me justly.	*Interacting friendly*
… does not have any unjustified favourites.	… is friendly towards me.
… adheres to agreements.	… treats me in a polite manner.
… treats me in a fair way.	… shows his/her empathy for me.
… behaves predictably so that I always know where I stand.	… has a sense of humour.
	… treats me in a constructive and cooperative way.
	… converses in a calm tone of voice.

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