Not All I-Deals Are Same: Examining A Process Model Linking Content-Specific I-Deals to Employee Performance Outcomes

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NOT ALL I-DEALS ARE SAME: EXAMINING A PROCESS MODEL LINKING CONTENT-SPECIFIC I-DEALS TO EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my father and mother for their unconditional love, guidance and support. I also dedicate this to my friends for their trust and support.
NOT ALL I-DEALS ARE SAME: EXAMINING A PROCESS MODEL LINKING CONTENT-SPECIFIC I-DEALS TO EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

by

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DISSertation

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Abstract

Integrating i-deals theory and job demands and resources (JD-R) theory, I propose to investigate whether and how content-specific i-deals differ in their effectiveness in individual performance outcomes. Consistent with the early conceptualization of i-deals contents, I specifically compare the impact of task and work responsibility, financial incentives, schedule flexibility, and location flexibility on employees’ engagement and performance outcomes. I suggest that content-specific i-deals have different relationships with physical-, emotional-, and cognitive-engagement, and the three types of engagement mediate the relationships between content-specific i-deals and performance outcomes (operationalized as task performance, organizational citizenship behaviors, and creativity). Multilevel modeling and relative weights analysis of the data from 276 employees nested in 38 workgroups showed that, of the four contents of i-deals, i-deals pertaining to task and work responsibility demonstrated the highest relative importance in terms of predicting emotional engagement, financial incentives were the most relevant to physical engagement, and schedule flexibility accounted for more variance explained in cognitive engagement. Moreover, mediation analyses demonstrated that physical engagement fully accounted for the relationship between financial incentives i-deals and task performance, and emotional engagement fully accounted for the relationship between task and work responsibility i-deals and OCBs. Supported by the findings, I assert that resources should be more efficiently utilized on certain practices aimed at improving employee attitudes and behaviors that fit to the organization’s requirement.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

In the contemporary environment, idiosyncratic deals, or i-deals, have received considerable attention as an effective means to compensate standardized employment practices for managing an increasing heterogeneous and diversified workforce (Rousseau, 2005). As non-standardized employment arrangements, i-deals are normally requested by individual employees and granted by their organizations, and they can take many forms based on their content, such as special training and development opportunities, customized compensation packages, flexible working hours and schedule, and telecommuting arrangements (Rosen, Slater, Chang, & Johnson, 2013; Rousseau, 2005; Rousseau, Ho, & Greenberg, 2006). Even though i-deals can refer to different types of individualized arrangements, in most of the previous research, i-deals have been studied as global or as an aggregate construct affecting employee attitudinal and behavioral outcomes (Liao, Wayne, & Rousseau, 2016; Rosen et al., 2013).

Previous research examining the impact of i-deals via the lens of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) has supported that i-deals foster employees’ obligations of reciprocity and, in so doing, promote favorable individual outcomes, including affective commitment (Liu, Lee, Hui, Kwan, & Wu, 2013), task performance (Anand, Hu, Vidyarthi, & Liden, 2018), and OCBs (Anand et al., 2018; Anand, Vidyarthi, Liden, & Rousseau, 2010). While social exchange theory is important to explain why i-deals recipients are likely to respond with positive attitudes and behaviors, i-deals scholars (Hornung, Rousseau, & Glaser, 2008; Liao et al., 2016) caution that social exchange theory may not suffice to explicate the processes between i-deals and consequences. This is because i-deals are not monolithic, and i-deals’ relationships with individual outcomes may depend on the content of the individualized arrangement (Liao et al., 2016; Rosen et al., 2013; Rousseau et al., 2006).
Rosen et al. (2013) employed a theoretical approach distinct from social exchange to examine relationships between i-deals and individual outcomes. Rosen and coauthors compared the relative predictive power of four distinct i-deals contents - task and work responsibilities, financial incentives, schedule flexibility, and location flexibility - on different employee attitudes. Drawing on the resources categories (Foa & Foa, 1975), they found solid evidence supporting Rousseau et al.’s (2006) claim that i-deals depending on their specific content exert different effectiveness on individual outcomes. Rosen et al.’s (2013) finding revealed that i-deals pertaining to task and work responsibilities demonstrated highest relative importance in explaining variance in job satisfaction, affective commitment, and normative commitment, and that financial incentives were not related to any work attitudes. Rosen et al. (2013) encouraged more research on complex relationships that may exist between the four contents of i-deals and outcomes.

To increase our understanding of i-deals’ effects beyond reciprocity, I respond to the call for more scholarly research (e.g., Hornung et al., 2008; Liao et al., 2016; Rosen et al., 2013) by examining the relative importance of different types of i-deals to individual performance outcomes. Specifically, I uncover which content of i-deals - task and work responsibilities, financial incentives, schedule flexibility, and location flexibility - plays a relatively more important role in predicting task performance, OCBs and creativity. Though the broad definition of employee performance can include a number of behaviors (Campbell, 1990; Rotundo & Sackett, 2002), I focus on only those three domains of performance that are vital to organizational success and have not yet been assessed with the four contents of i-deals.

To delineate the role that each type of i-deals plays in a particular employee performance, I develop a conceptual model to examine how and when employees respond to a specific content
of i-deals. Previous research (e.g., Hornung, Rousseau, Weigl, Müller, & Glaser, 2014) indicates that the mediating mechanisms vary according to the type of i-deals, and thus the process explaining how i-deals differentially influence various types of employee performance is complex. It would therefore be important to incorporate theories beyond social exchange to explicate the various pathways between different i-deals and performance outcomes (Liao et al., 2016). To this end I integrate job demands and resources (JD-R) theory into the resource perspective of i-deals theory. JD-R theory emphasizes both the “resources” and “demands” of the job (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001). While the resource perspective of i-deals theory helps distinguish i-deals components as relational (e.g., task and work responsibilities) or transactional (e.g., financial incentives) (Rosen et al., 2013; Rousseau, 2005; Rousseau et al., 2006), JD-R theory can further differentiate the four contents of i-deals based on their “demands”, which are inherent in the nature of i-deals as the individualized arrangement ultimately aims to benefit the organization through employees’ enhanced productivity (Rousseau, 2005; Vidyarthi, Chaudhry, Anand, & Liden, 2014).

Further, I propose that the three aspects of job engagement - physical, emotional, and cognitive engagement - mediate the i-deals-performance outcomes relationships. Kahn (1990) defined job engagement as an employee’s investment of physical, emotional, and cognitive energies to the job, and each of these personal resources uniquely contributes to the employee’s physical, emotional, and cognitive activities. Considering that i-deals should exert unique effectiveness based on their resource content, I argue that the three types of job engagement provide further explanations to the paths of influence from content-specific i-deals to individual performance outcomes.
I also propose that servant leadership and abusive leadership moderate the i-deals-job engagement relationships. Servant leadership and abusive leadership can create opposite working experiences to employees - servant leaders put followers first and care about their wellbeing (Anand, Hu, Liden, & Vidyarthi, 2011; Greenleaf, 1970; Greenleaf, 1977; Liden, Wayne, Liao, & Meuser, 2014), whereas abusive leaders display hostile behaviors and their subordinates tend to have a difficult time under their supervision (Tepper, 2000). Investigating the conditions under servant leadership and abusive leadership helps to understand when employees enjoy unique task and work responsibilities, financial incentives, and working flexibility, and respond with high level of physical, emotional, and cognitive engagement.

In this study, I strive to contribute to the i-deals literature in two ways. First, building on the stream of research focusing on effectiveness of various types of i-deals (e.g., Hornung, Rousseau, Glaser, Angerer, & Weigl, 2011; Rosen et al., 2013), the present study explores the relative importance of different types of i-deals on individual outcomes. In particular, I integrate the JD-R theory with i-deals theory to investigate whether i-deals recipients respond differently to resources and demands associated with a certain content of i-deals. By assessing the relative predictive power of task and work responsibilities, financial incentives, schedule flexibility, and location flexibility, I respond to calls for greater attention to specific resources involved in various contents of i-deals and their consequences (Liao et al., 2016).

Second, in the effort to advance the i-deals literature, this study proposes that the three types of job engagement, namely, physical, emotional, and cognitive engagement, act as mediators to the relationships between the four content-specific i-deals (task and work responsibilities, financial incentives, schedule flexibility, and location flexibility) and the three individual-level performance outcomes (task performance, OCBs, and creativity). The present study builds on i-
deals theory and JD-R theory to provide explanations for how a certain type of job engagement transfers the influence of a particular content of i-deals to an individual performance outcome. By identifying these mediating pathways, this study unpacks the complex processes through which each of the focal content of i-deals promotes task performance, OCBs, and creativity.

Besides the contributions to the i-deals literature, my study also contributes to the research on job engagement. The majority of research emphasizing relationships with antecedent conditions indicates that job resources lead to higher levels of job engagement (e.g., Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Crawford, LePine, & Rich, 2010). What remains unclear in the job engagement literature, however, is what resources are more important for job engagement, and under what conditions will employees become more engaged (Saks & Gruman, 2014). Proposing the four content-specific i-deals as antecedents of job engagement, I contribute by examining their relative importance in predicting physical, emotional, and cognitive engagement. Moreover, I investigate the moderating effects of servant leadership and abusive leadership on the i-deals-job engagement relationships. In doing so, this study adds to the body of knowledge on both job engagement and content-specific i-deals.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 I-Deals

2.1.1 Conceptualization of i-deals and comparison with similar constructs

Rousseau et al. (2006) defined i-deals as “voluntary, personalized agreements of a nonstandard nature negotiated between individual employees and their employers regarding terms that benefit each party” (p. 978). This definition reveals four noteworthy characteristics of i-deals. First, i-deals are individually negotiated between subordinates and their managers. Employees normally take a proactive approach to the negotiation (Anand & Vidyarthi, 2015), because they know what they need from the organization, and such needs are beyond the scope of the formal employment terms. Second, i-deals are granted to benefit both parties. Successful i-deals help organizations compensate the formal practices and motivate and retain valuable employees. Thus, managers will evaluate employee initiated i-deals on the organization’s behalf to ensure that the arrangements meet both parties’ interests. Third, i-deals can result in within-group heterogeneity and exacerbate team injustice climate. I-deals are legitimate because they create the “win-win” for both the organization and the recipients, but they can potentially become the source of peers’ belief of inequity. Fourth, i-deals vary in scope. I-deals can range from a specific single agreement to several aspects of employment.

Rousseau et al. (2006) underlined the uniqueness of i-deals as an employment-related construct. They compared i-deals with “cronyism” and “favoritism”. They suggested that, even though i-deals, and cronyism and favoritism are all preferential to employees, i-deals benefit the organization, while cronyism and favoritism are “self-serving” and “rule-bending” and are detrimental to the organization (Rousseau et al., 2006). Still, Rousseau et al. (2006) cautioned that in practice i-deals can share a “gray area” with favoritism. Similar to favoritism’s impact on
a manager’s propensity towards closed subordinates, a close manager-employee relationship can distort the manager’s objective judgement to grant i-deals, because he or she may hold overly positive beliefs in the employee’s contribution and value to the organization (Rousseau et al., 2006).

In their review of i-deals’ conceptualization, Liao et al. (2016) also differentiated i-deals from other constructs reflecting employee-initiated work arrangement. A notable one is job crafting. Job crafting refers to self-initiated physical and cognitive changes that employees make in their job related task or work relational boundaries to attain and optimize their personal goals (Tims, Bakker, & Derks, 2012; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). While the traditional job design follows a top-down approach, both i-deals and job crafting reflect the employee-initiated job designing process (Bruning & Campion, 2018; Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Liao et al., 2016). According to Liao et al. (2016), the key difference between i-deals and job crafting is whether the manager is jointly involved in this changing process. Employees do not need their manager’s approval to “craft” their jobs, but they do require their manager’s authorization when they bargain for i-deals from the organization. The involvement of managerial decision ensures i-deals’ effectiveness to serve both the recipient’s and the organization’s interests, yet the effectiveness of job crafting toward organization depends on the employee’s personal intention. If the employee’s personal goal is not aligned with the organization’s goal, job crafting then benefits only the individual but not the organization (Hornung, Rousseau, Glaser, Angerer, & Weigl, 2010b; Liao et al., 2016). In addition, i-deals are differentiated from job crafting in that they constitute objective changes of employment arrangement, whereas job crafting results in cognitive changes in an employee’s attitude and behavior at work (Liao et al., 2016; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).
2.1.2 Content of i-deals

In Rousseau et al.’s (2006) conceptualization of i-deals, i-deals can take many forms based on the timing of negotiation, and on the content of resources. In terms of timing, i-deals can be negotiated before the employment (i.e., *ex ante* i-deals) or on the job (i.e., *ex post* i-deals). The negotiation of *ex ante* i-deals occurs less often and concerns only applicants’ qualification and marketability, but *ex post* i-deals are inherent in daily practices and their negotiations take more considerations of employment history and relationships with employers. In line with most of the i-deals studies, I focus on *ex post* i-deals in the current study.

In terms of resources, i-deals can be “concrete and universal” or “abstract and particularistic” (Rousseau et al., 2006). Specifically, “concrete and universal” refers to tangible resources that are market driven and transactional, and examples are accommodations regarding pay and equipment. On the other hand, “abstract and particularistic” is more personalized and open-ended, and is often linked to the investment of time and effort. I-deals that provide a recipient with “abstract and particularistic” resources imply an employer’s socioemotional concerns of the individual, while i-deals that provide only “concrete and universal” resources indicate minimal interactions between an organization and an employee.

Rousseau and colleagues (Hornung et al., 2010b; Rousseau & Kim, 2006) developed an instrument of content-specific i-deals based on hospital and tax administration samples. Their instrument captures four commonly occurring i-deals: flexibility, developmental, workload-reduction, and task. Flexibility i-deals accommodate personal needs by allowing employees to reschedule their own working time; developmental i-deals facilitate individuals’ career advancement through knowledge and skills development; workload-reduction i-deals are granted to reduce recipients’ work demand and hours; and task i-deals enable individuals to customize
the content of their own work (Hornung et al., 2010b; Liao et al., 2016). Subsequent empirical research has focused on one or more of these four contents. For example, Hornung et al. (2010b) focused on job content and studied task i-deals from the employees’ perspective; Anand and colleagues (2010, 2018) focused on developmental i-deals and studied highly marketable software and mobile professionals; Hornung et al. (2008) and Vidyarthi, Singh, Erdogan, Chaudhry, Posthuma and Anand (2016) examined flexibility and developmental i-deals; Hornung, Rousseau Denise and Glaser (2009) investigated developmental, flexibility, and workload i-deals from the perspective of supervisors. Empirical evidence supports the notion that i-deals enhance the fit between job and employees’ skills and personal needs, and help employees achieve career development, and balance their work and personal life.

Based on Rousseau and colleagues’ arguments and past empirical work, Rosen et al. (2013) made further modifications by adding two other content-specific i-deals: location flexibility and financial incentives. They also combined developmental i-deals (Rousseau & Kim, 2006) and task i-deals (Hornung et al., 2010b) as a single content named “task and work responsibilities”. Adopting samples across different domains, Rosen et al. (2013) conducted four different studies to develop and validate their multidimensional i-deals scale. Consistent with Rousseau et al.’s (2006) theoretical arguments of i-deals, Rosen and coauthors’ i-deals scale captures four resources contents, including task and work responsibilities, financial incentives, schedule flexibility, and location flexibility, and offers better clarity in terms of identifying types of i-deals that are commonly negotiated between employees and organizations. Rosen et al.’s study made important contribution to the i-deals literature by providing empirical evidence to support that i-deals are made by distinct variables (Liao et al., 2016). In this proposed study, I plan to adopt Rosen et al.’s (2013) multidimensional i-deals scale to investigate the path of influence from the
four contents - task and work responsibilities, financial incentives, schedule flexibility, and location flexibility - to three individual performance outcomes - task performance, OCB, and creativity.

### 2.1.3 Underlying theory and mechanisms of i-deals

To date, social exchange theory has been the predominant theory used in the research on i-deals (Liao et al., 2016; Rousseau et al., 2006). The presence of i-deals generally reflects the high-quality social exchange relationship between the i-deals recipient and the organization (Liao et al., 2016; Rosen et al., 2013; Rousseau et al., 2006). In extensive literatures, social exchange theory has been well established through empirical replication and generalization. It has been suggested that employees who perceive high quality social exchange relationships with their organization exert better individual efforts towards task performance and extra role performance (e.g., OCBs), and commit to organizations with lower turnover (e.g., Anand et al., 2010; Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, & Rhoades, 2002).

In the context of i-deals, social exchange theory emphasizes the reciprocity between the recipient and the organization (Blau, 1964; Homans, 1958). The norm of reciprocity suggests that the transaction of social exchange is bidirectional and mutually contingent: for any two parties involved in the social exchange process, the “giving” by one party to benefit the other party generates the other party’s obligation to “return” the favor, and this process eventually reaches a fair equilibrium inherent in the social exchange relationship (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Gouldner, 1960). Thus, i-deals help develop the reciprocal relationship between the recipient and the organization. Employees who receive favorable i-deals from the organization are apt to create obligations to “return” the i-deals granted by the organization. In line with this
argument, extensive empirical findings on i-deals demonstrate that i-deals positively affect a wide array of work-related individual perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. For example, task and developmental i-deals have been found to have positive effects on employees’ job satisfaction (Rosen et al., 2013), affective commitment (Hornung et al., 2008; Liu et al., 2013; Rosen et al., 2013), and job performance (Anand et al., 2018; Vidyarthi et al., 2016) and OCBs (Anand et al., 2010).

However, i-deals scholars have also pointed out that i-deals may not always generate reciprocity, and they suggested that i-deals in their effects may not be monolithic on certain outcomes, and favorable attitudes and behaviors may vary based on specific resources involved in i-deals (e.g., Liao et al., 2016; Rosen et al., 2013). For instance, some empirical findings revealed that financial incentives i-deals and location flexibility i-deals are insignificantly and negatively related to job satisfaction and affective commitment, and workload-reduction i-deals are negatively related to social exchange (Rosen et al., 2013; Rousseau et al., 2006). Thus, i-deals scholars (e.g., Liao et al., 2016) warned of the limitation of using social exchange theory on i-deals studies, and urged i-deals researchers to go beyond social exchange theory and pay attention to contents of resources and explanatory mechanisms to bridge i-deals and outcomes.

### 2.2 Job Engagement

#### 2.2.1 Conceptualization of engagement

As an affective motivational state, engagement can be best understood from Ashforth and Humphrey’s (1995) metaphor, which delineates an individual’s concurrent inputs of “hands, head, and heart”. In work-related settings, fully engaged employees are described as being “psychologically present, fully there, attentive, feeling, connected, integrated, and focused” (Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010, p. 619). While the term “engagement” generally reflects an
employee’s investment of his or her personal resources to the work (Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011; Kahn, 1990; Schaufeli, Salanova, González-romá, & Bakker, 2002), scholars have not yet reached an agreement on the definition, because they have different interpretations on what engagement should be theoretically and statistically conceptualized. In this section, I review the concepts of engagement given by scholars and discuss their differences.

Scholars have inconsistently used the terms “personal engagement,” “job engagement,” “employee engagement,” “organizational engagement” and “work engagement” in their approaches to conceptualize engagement. Using the term “personal engagement”, Kahn (1990) provided the first and commonly accepted definition, and described engagement as “the simultaneous employment and expression of a person’s ‘preferred self’ in task behaviors that promote connections to work and to others, personal presence (physical, cognitive, and emotional), and active, full role performances” (p. 700). Building on Kahn’s description, Rich et al. (2010) used the term “job engagement” and depicted engagement as a “multi-dimensional motivational concept reflecting the simultaneous investment of an individual’s physical, cognitive, and emotional energy in active, full work performance” (p. 619). Similar to Kahn’s (1990) and Rich et al.’s (2010) definitions, Shuck and Wollard (2010) used the term “employee engagement” (also referred to as organizational engagement) as “an individual employee’s cognitive, emotional, and behavioral state directed toward desired organizational outcomes” (p. 103).

The second approach taken by scholars links engagement with burnout literature. For example, Maslach and Leiter (1997) depicted engagement as the positive antithesis of “burnout” that is characterized by exhaustion, cynicism, and lack of professional efficacy. In line with Maslach and Leiter’s (1997) argument, Schaufeli et al. (2002) defined engagement as a “positive,
fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption” (p. 74). In this stream of conceptualization, Harter, Schmidt and Hayes (2002) used the term “employee engagement” and described engagement as an “individual’s involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work” (p. 269). Last, engagement has been identified as a work role related concept: for example, Saks (2006) used the term “employee engagement” and depicted engagement as “the extent to which an individual is psychologically present in a particular organization role” (p. 604). In the current study, Kahn’s (1990) initial definition of engagement is employed as the theoretical foundation to support the related discussions of physical, emotional, and cognitive engagement.

2.2.2 Comparison of existing engagement measures

Since engagement scholars have interpreted “engagement” differently, several constructs of engagement have been developed to operationalize those concepts. Some of the constructs were operationalized to reflect physical, cognitive and emotional engagement derived from Kahn’s (1990) initial definition (e.g., Rich et al., 2010), while others were operationalized as a composite measure (e.g., Saks, 2006). In this section, I have identified five commonly used engagement constructs.

First, Rich and colleagues (2010) developed a multidimensional instrument of job engagement based on previously existing items to map physical, cognitive and emotional engagement described by Kahn (1990). For “physical engagement”, they drew from Brown and Leigh’s (1996) measure of “work intensity”, and modified items to promote greater conceptual correspondence with Kahn’s definition. Following the same approach, for “emotional engagement”, they rewrote items from Russell and Barrett’s (1999) “core aspect” to better reflect the “pleasantness” and “activation” of work-related emotions, and for “cognitive engagement”,
they modified Rothbard’s (2001) measures of “attention” and “absorption” to reflect the intensity of “focus” and “concentration” described in Kahn’s concept of cognitive engagement.

In their attempt to prove the predictive power of their job engagement instrument, Rich and colleagues compared job engagement with other similar constructs, including job involvement, job satisfaction, and intrinsic motivation. Results of their study on 245 firefighters and their supervisors supported the uniqueness of their measure of job engagement. After introducing job involvement, job satisfaction, and intrinsic motivation, they found out that those factors did not exceed job engagement in explaining relationships between antecedents (e.g., perceived organizational support) and individual outcomes (e.g., task performance and organizational citizenship behavior).

Second, Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) developed by Schaufeli and Bakker (2003) is consistent with Schaufeli et al.’s (2002) definition of engagement. Though grounded in the burnout literature, UWES is not designed to study engagement as the antipode to the experience of burnout. UWES captures the full spectrum of employees’ immediate work experience, and examines the work activity and work itself (Schaufeli et al., 2002; Shuck, Twyford, Reio, & Shuck, 2014). Also operationalized as a multidimensional construct, UWES has three engagement dimensions: vigor, dedication, and absorption. Some key items of UWES include “positive and fulfilling state,” “persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state,” “energy and mental resilience,” “enthusiasm and inspiration,” and “concentration” (Christian et al., 2011; Schaufeli et al., 2002; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). Despite its popularity and prevalence, UWES has been criticized by scholars (e.g., Rich et al., 2010) as being confounded, because the instrument includes items that tap respondents’ perceptions of the level of
meaningfulness and challenge of work (e.g., “To me my job is challenging”), which are the antecedents to engagement as Kahn (1990) suggested.

Furthermore, there are also alternative but less frequently used engagement scales. For example, developed as a composite measure, Saks’s (2006) organizational engagement scale (OES) emphasizes on employees’ organizational identification, and examines the extent to which an individual feels “captivating” and “exhilarating” for being a member of the organization (Khodakarami, Dirani, & Rezaei, 2018; Saks, 2006; Shuck, Adelson, & Reio Jr., 2017). Soane and colleagues’ (2012) Intellectual, Social, Affective Engagement Scale (ISA) is a conditional-oriented construct. Soane et al. (2012) claimed that their ISA captures an often neglected engagement component, namely, the relational component (i.e., social engagement) of employees’ engagement experience. Shuck and colleagues’ (2014) employee engagement scale (EES) measures an employee’s cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement. Shuck et al. (2014) argued that EES captures not only an employee’s engagement to the job, but also a broader full work experience influenced by environment conditions (e.g., teams and organizations).

In this study, I plan to use Rich et al.’s (2010) job engagement scale. Engagement scholars (e.g., Albrecht, 2010; Saks & Gruman, 2014; Shuck et al., 2017) suggested that, no existing instruments offer more unique measurement to capture the broad experience of employee’s engagement, because there is no consensus regarding the definition of engagement. I decided to use Rich et al.’s (2010) job engagement scale based on the consideration that it closely reflects Kahn’s (1990) description of physical, emotional and cognitive engagement. Also, i-deals are individualized job arrangements, and Rich et al.’s (2010) engagement scale emphasized on job
related experiences. Thus, it helps answer how different content-specific i-deals result in employees’ behavioral reactions to certain job related resources.

2.2.3 Comparison of job engagement with other constructs

Some scholars (e.g., Macey & Schneider, 2008) questioned the positioning of job engagement in competing with other concepts. They questioned its uniqueness and argued that the concept of engagement may be simply a repackaging of similar constructs. In this section, I discuss the boundary of job engagement and compare its conceptualization with other similar constructs in details.

As discussed in the previous section, Kahn (1990) defined job engagement as an individual’s simultaneous investment of physical, emotional, and cognitive energy. According to this mostly accepted definition, job engagement is multidimensional in nature (Kahn, 1990; Rich et al., 2010), and such nature differentiates engagement from other similar constructs that describe people’s experience at work, such as job involvement (Lawler & Hall, 1970) and organizational commitment (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979; Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974). Job engagement is developed to probe individuals’ psychological presence in particular moments and situations, and investigate an employee’s experiences with, and emotional reactions to, the discrete moments that make up his or her work contexts; in contrast, concepts like job involvement and organizational commitment are broad and context-free, and emphasize on the generalized state and average level that an organizational member maintains overtime (Kahn, 1990). Thus, different from concepts accounting all sorts of work related experiences as a summed one, job engagement is a multidimensional motivational concept that delineates an individual’s physical, emotional, and cognitive engagement at work (Law, Chi-Sum, & Mobley, 1998; Rich et al., 2010).
Furthermore, given that it is positioned to reflect a persistent and pervasive state that an individual is attentive and absorbed in the work (Saks, 2006; Schaufeli et al., 2002), engagement is not an attitudinal concept, and thus is theoretically merit (Newton & LePine, 2018; Saks, 2006). Scholars have compared the differences between job engagement and other general job attitudes, including job satisfaction, affective commitment and job involvement. For example, citing Erickson (2005), Christian et al. (2011) indicated that job engagement connotes “activation” and represents an individual’s experiences from the work, but job satisfaction connotes “satiation”, and is an evaluative description of the work. In comparison to the concepts of affective commitment and job involvement, scholars suggest that engagement focuses on an employee’s experience to the work itself (Christian et al., 2011), whereas affective commitment represents an individual attachment to the organization’s value as a whole (Brooke, Russell, & Price, 1988), and job involvement reflects the degree to which the general job situation affects an individual’s self-esteem or identity (Kanungo, 1982; Lodahl & Kejnar, 1965).

In addition, engagement is a motivational concept and is distinct from behavioral concept such as OCB. Newton and LePine (2018) suggested that, although both engagement and OCB refer to the degree to which an individual goes above and beyond the job requirement, engagement is a motivational construct and describes an employee’s willingness to invest personal resources to the work, but OCB is a behavioral construct and reflects an employee’s activities that facilitate the social and psychological functioning of an organization.

2.3 Servant Leadership and Abusive Leadership

2.3.1 Conceptualization of servant leadership

The theory of servant leadership was coined by Greenleaf (1970, 1977) and centers on the concept “serving others”. Servant leadership stresses leaders’ personal integrity, and depicts a
leader who prioritizes followers and the community (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009; Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012; Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008). In his seminal book “The Servant as Leader”, Greenleaf (1970) indicated that employees supervised by a servant leader are likely to be “healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous”, and develop themselves to become “servants” to benefit the community (p. 7).

As the concept demonstrates, servant leadership has a positive impact on employees’ behavior, because a servant leader puts followers first and brings out the best of their fullest potential (Greenleaf, 1977; Liden et al., 2008; van Dierendonck, 2010). According to Liden et al. (2008), servant leaders provide important resources to their followers – they gradually develop knowledge of their subordinates’ abilities, interests, desires, and goals, and based on each individual’s unique characteristics and needs, they provide resources, information, and feedback to assist and encourage followers’ growth.

Servant leadership scholars, drawing on Greenleaf’s (1970, 1977) original definition, have proposed various models to depict the detailed characteristics of servant leadership. A well-known theoretical framework is given by Spears (1995), the former director of the Greenleaf Center. Based on his extensive knowledge of Greenleaf’s perspectives, Spears distilled 10 critical qualities of servant leadership: (1) listening – listening receptively and getting in touch with the inner voice of people, (2) empathy – recognizing people and accepting how and what they are, (3) healing – helping make whole, (4) awareness – being aware of issues and situations from a more integrated position, (5) persuasion – convincing others rather than coercing compliance with authorities, (6) conceptualization – thinking beyond the present short-term goals and visioning possible future, (7) foresight – being intuitive to anticipate possible consequence of a decision for the future based on experience, (8) stewardship – holding something in trust and
serving others, (9) commitment to the growth of people – fostering growth professionally and spiritually, and (10) building community – prioritizing local community in life.

Following Spears’s work, Russell and Stone (2002) summarized 20 servant leadership characteristics. They first categorized 9 identified characteristics – vision, honesty, integrity, trust, service, modeling, pioneering, appreciation of others, and empowerment – as functional attributes of servant leadership, and based on extensive literature reviews, they added another 11 characteristics – communication, credibility, competence, stewardship, visibility, influence, persuasion, listening, encouragement, teaching, and delegation – as the accompanying attributes (p. 147).

Consistent with Greenleaf’s initial description, both Spears’s and Russell and Stone’s frameworks of servant leadership provided intuitive insights regarding to what characteristics represent servant leadership. However, those two frameworks are prescriptive and have not been operationalized empirically (van Dierendonck, 2010).

2.3.2 Comparison of existing servant leadership measures

Building on Spears’s (1995) and Russell and Stone’s (2002) frameworks, subsequent scholars have revised the characteristics of servant leadership and developed multidimensional constructs. One of the most used constructs was developed by Liden et al. (2008). Liden and coauthors distinguished 7 dimensions of servant leadership: emotional healing, creating value for the community, conceptual skills, empowering, helping subordinates grow and succeed, putting subordinates first, and behaving ethically (p. 162). They also contributed to the literature by conceptualizing the concept of servant leadership at the group level. Drawing on the relational model of social justice (Lind & Tyler, 1988), Liden et al. (2008) suggested that, when a follower perceives the leader’s overall “servant” behavior to rest of the members, he or she is confident in
the leader’s consistency to exert servant leadership across various situations. Liden et al.’s (2008) multidimensional measure, after validation in two samples, consists of 28 items that reflect the 7 dimensions of servant leadership. Liden et al. (2014) later created a shorter version that includes only the highest loading item from each of the 7 dimensions. They studied 961 employees across 71 restaurants, and their findings supported that servant leadership at the group level promoted both employee and unit performance.

Another frequently cited servant leadership construct is developed by van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011). This construct emphasizes both the “servant” side (e.g., being authentic and standing back) and the “leader” side (e.g., empowering and developing followers), and consists of 30 items to reflect 8 dimensions: empowerment, humility, standing back, authenticity, forgiveness, courage, accountability, and stewardship. Van Dierendonck, Sousa, Gunnarsdóttir, Bobbio, Hakanen, Verdorfer, Duyan and Rodriguez-Carvajal (2017) later introduced an 18-item shorter version to reflect servant leadership’s cross-cultural factorial stability.

Both Liden et al.’s (2008) and van Dierendonck and Nuijten’s (2011) servant leadership constructs have been proved for their robust psychometric validity, and recommended by servant leadership scholars (e.g., Eva, Robin, Sendjaya, van Dierendonck, & Liden, 2019) for related empirical studies. I plan to use Liden et al.’s (2008) servant leadership construct because it helps to capture the overall servant leadership phenomenon in a group setting.

2.3.3 Comparison of servant leadership with other constructs

Servant leadership has been compared by leadership scholars with positive leadership concepts. For instance, van Dierendonck (2010) distinguished servant leadership from transformational leadership, and suggested that both servant leadership and transformational leadership extoll leaders who develop their followers, but leaders reflected in these two concepts
have different priorities of focus: servant leaders put their followers’ needs first, whereas transformational leaders aim to serve the organizational goals and thus concentrate on their subordinates’ development. Eva et al. (2019) also acknowledged this key difference, and mentioned that servant leaders are more likely than transformational leaders to set the order of priorities in their focus as “followers first, organizations second, their own last” (p. 113).

Servant leadership has also been compared by scholars with authentic leadership and ethical leadership. Servant leadership has overlaps with authentic leadership and ethical leadership because they are all moral leaderships. However, their moral aspects have different emphases. Lemoine, Hartnell and Leroy (2019, p. 152) noted that authentic leadership emphasizes on “self-awareness and self-concordance”, and ethical leadership emphasizes on “compliance with normative standards”, but servant leadership stresses “benefiting multiple stakeholders”. Similarly, Eva et al. (2019) and van Dierendonck (2010) indicated that the moral aspect of servant leadership springs from the motivation of serving others, but both authentic leadership and ethical leadership are rooted in leaders’ innate normative rules.

2.3.4 Conceptualization of abusive leadership

Tepper (2000) defined abusive leadership as “subordinates’ perceptions of the extent to which supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical contact” (p. 178). While servant leaders “serve” their subordinates, abusive leaders normally manifest hostile behaviors towards their subordinates, including public criticism, loud and angry tantrums, rudeness, inconsiderate actions, and coercion (Bies, 2001; Tepper, 2000, 2007).

The concept of abusive leadership is more than just being “aggressive” (Baron & Richardson, 1994). Tepper (2000) initially conceptualized abusive leadership within the domain of willful
behavior. He argued that a supervisor executes abusive behaviors for certain purposes, but does not intend to cause any consequences to the subordinates. For instance, a leader aims to achieve high performance, and the message from the leader like “zero tolerance of mistakes” can be seen as mistreating subordinates. Since abusive leadership is conceptualized as “purposes” driven, rather than “outcomes” driven, abusive leaders’ behaviors are often not considered as being deviant from organizational policies or norms (Tepper, 2000, 2007). But still, abusive leadership gives subordinates a “tough time” and negative work experiences.

2.3.5 Comparison of abusive leadership with other constructs

As discussed above, abusive leadership is not outcome driven and does not depict behaviors that are deviant from organizational policies or norms. These features differentiate abusive leadership from other negative leadership related concepts, such as destructive leadership (Einarsen, Aasland, & Skogstad, 2007) and supervisor undermining (Duffy, Ganster, & Pagon, 2002).

First, abusive leadership is not destructive leadership. Even though both leadership styles hinder subordinates’ effectiveness, as Mawritz, Folger and Latham (2014) suggested, abusive leaders target at their subordinates, and their hostile behaviors do not include physical behaviors. In contrast, destructive leadership involves physical and verbal behaviors that are deleterious and sabotage not only the well-being of subordinates, but also the well-being of the organization (Einarsen et al., 2007).

Second, abusive leadership and supervisor undermining are different concepts. Duffy et al. (2002) depicted supervisor undermining as leaders’ behaviors intended to deter employees’ ability to develop and maintain positive interpersonal relationships, favorable reputation and job success. Thus, while abusive leadership is not led by a “bad intention”, supervisor undermining
assumes certain negative outcomes (e.g., “supervisor intentionally undermined your effort to be successful on the job”).

2.4 Integration of I-Deals Theory and JD-R Theory

2.4.1 Theory and findings of content-specific ideals

A major promise of i-deals theory is that i-deals, depending on their specific contents of work arrangements, can have different effects on employees. This is because the contents of i-deals can be transactional oriented or relational oriented. Transactional oriented i-deals (e.g., monetary i-deals) are “concrete and universal”, and are often attributed to market-related reasons; relational oriented i-deals (e.g., development and flexibility i-deals) are “abstract and particularistic”, and are likely to be justified by the high-quality employment relationship (Rousseau et al., 2006).

The above notion of content-specific i-deals has been supported by Rosen et al.’s (2013) study. As reviewed above, Rosen and coauthors categorized four content-specific i-deals based on whether they are “concrete and universal” or “abstract and particularistic”. According to their categorizations, “financial incentives” are transactional oriented i-deals, “task and work responsibilities” are relational oriented i-deals, and “schedule flexibility” and “location flexibility” are positioned in the middle of the “transactional versus relational” continuum. The findings of their study of 196 full-time employees supported that, i-deals pertaining to financial incentives demonstrated the weakest impact on recipients’ job satisfaction and affective commitment, and i-deals pertaining to task and work responsibilities are more significant than schedule flexibility in predicting employees’ job satisfaction and affective commitment.

From the “transactional versus relational” categorization of i-deals theory (Rosen et al., 2013; Rousseau et al., 2006), we are clear that nonmonetary i-deals signal the presence of high-quality
employment relationship, and are more likely than monetary i-deals to develop employees’ positive attitudes. What remains uncertain is whether content-specific i-deals have different impacts on employee performance outcomes (i.e., task performance, OCBs, and creativity). The current approach focusing on “transactional versus relational” i-deals offers limited support to explain the complex relationships between the four content-specific i-deals and the different employee performance outcomes (Liao et al., 2016). This approach might be useful to establish the financial incentives-task performance relationship, and the task and work responsibilities-OCBs relationship, but it is hard to tell what performance outcomes can schedule and location flexibilities predict, and which content-specific i-deals are more important to employees’ creativity. In this study, I argue that JD-R theory, together with i-deals theory, provide theoretical foundation to explain the complex content-specific i-deals and employee performance outcomes relationships.

2.4.2 Integration of i-deals theory and JD-R theory

JD-R theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001) suggests that all job characteristics can be classified as “demands” or “resources”: resources help employees achieve work goals and provide opportunities for personal development, and demands cost employees’ physiological and/or psychological energies.

JD-R theory provided important foundation for the study of job engagement, and servant and abusive leaderships. In relation to job engagement, it has been suggested that autonomy, development opportunities, and supportive environments provide resources and lead to engagement, and, physical demands, role conflict, overload, time pressure, and lack of job control exhaust employees’ physical and mental resources and cause disengagement (Nahrgang, Morgeson, & Hofmann, 2011; Saks & Gruman, 2014; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). In relation to
servant and abusive leaderships, it is noted that servant leaders “serve” their followers and indicate the availability of resources (Liden et al., 2008), and abusive leaders develop employees’ sense of deprivation and beliefs of resource loss (Xu, Huang, Lam, & Miao, 2012).

In this study, I plan to integrate JD-R theory into i-deals theory to study the relationships between the four content-specific i-deals and the three performance outcomes. I-deals theory views content-specific i-deals in terms of their resources (concrete and universal versus abstract and particularistic), and JD-R theory compensates i-deals theory by providing additional focus on potential demands inherent in content-specific i-deals. As the nature of i-deals is that the arrangement must benefit both employees and their organization, demands on i-deals recipient is inevitable. Therefore, in this study (see Figure 1), I plan to use i-deals theory and JD-R theory as the foundation to explicate the content-specific i-deals-performance outcomes relationships. Specifically, I will integrate the two theories to delineate the paths of influences from the four content-specific i-deals to the three performance outcomes via the three job engagement (i.e., physical, emotional, and cognitive engagement). I also plan to use JD-R theory to explain the strengths of influences that the four content-specific i-deals have on the three job engagement under different boundary conditions provided by servant leadership and abusive leadership.
Chapter 3: Theory and Hypotheses

3.1 An Integrative Model

The proposed conceptual model is illustrated in Figure 3.1. The basic premise of this model is that i-deals benefit employees’ personal needs (Rousseau et al., 2006), and thus enhance their job engagement, which further predicts employee performance (Kahn, 1990). The conceptual model also depicts servant leadership and abusive leadership as the two moderators to the i-deals and job engagement relationships.

As discussed above, the notion that i-deals in general are antecedents to favorable attitudes and behaviors is hardly novel and is consistent with social exchange theory (Anand et al., 2010; Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Rousseau et al., 2006). However, social exchange theory may not be sufficient to study the effects of content-specific i-deals because they are distinct variables (Liao et al., 2016). Drawing on the integration of i-deals theory and JD-R theory, I emphasize on the different effects of task and work responsibilities, financial incentives, schedule flexibility, and location flexibility, and identify the paths of influences from each of the four content-specific i-deals to an individual performance outcome (i.e., task performance, OCBs, and creativity) via a certain job engagement (i.e., physical, emotional, and cognitive engagement).

Grounded in the above described conceptual model, Figure 3.2 summarizes the hypothesized relationships. Specifically, of all the four contents of i-deals, “task and work responsibilities” is expected to demonstrate the highest relative importance in explaining “emotional engagement”,

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“financial incentives” is expected to demonstrate the highest relative importance in explaining “physical engagement”, and “schedule flexibility” and “location flexibility” i-deals are expected to demonstrate stronger predictive power in explaining “cognitive engagement”.

Further, in line with the conceptual model, servant leadership and abusive leadership are expected to moderate the hypothesized relationship between a specific content of i-deals and job engagement dimension: the positive relationship between the certain type of i-deals and job engagement dimension can accrue with supports from servant leadership, while abusive leadership can drain on the resources provided by i-deals and weaken the positive relationship between the certain type of i-deals and job engagement dimension.

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Insert Figure 3.2 about here

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Figure 3.2 also depicts the proposed mediating mechanisms: of the three job engagement dimensions, “emotional engagement” is expected to have the strongest mediating effect on the link between “task and work responsibilities” and “OCBs”, “physical engagement” is expected to show the strongest mediating effect on the link between “financial incentives” and “task performance”, and “cognitive engagement” is expected to display the strongest mediating effect on the link between “schedule/location flexibility” and “creativity”.

The following sections provide a more in-depth and integrative discussion of the complex mechanisms involving the four contents of i-deals, three dimensions of job engagement, and the three individual performance outcomes, as well as the boundary conditions that servant leadership and abusive leadership place on proposed relationships between the four contents of i-deals and the three dimensions of job engagement.
3.2 Relative Importance of I-deals’ Contents to Different Types of Job Engagement

As reviewed above, the key difference between “concrete and universal” and “abstract and particularistic” i-deals is that the latter is attributed to relational reasons and have stronger relationships with employees’ positive attitudes (Rosen et al., 2013; Rousseau et al., 2006). Rosen et al.’s (2013) study substantiated this view, and their results revealed that i-deals pertaining to “abstract and particularistic” demonstrate more relative importance in predicting job satisfaction and organizational commitment. In terms of job engagement, Kahn (1990) theorized that physical, emotional, and cognitive engagement each reflects an individual’s inputs of physical, emotional, and cognitive energies, respectively. The uniqueness of each type of job engagement was later empirically validated by Rich et al. (2010). To establish the paths of influences from different types of i-deals to individual performance outcomes, I begin by discussing the relative importance of the four content-specific i-deals in predicting the three types of job engagement.

3.2.1 An incomplete picture of the relationships between content-specific i-deals and job engagement

Existing literatures generally supported the positive connections between i-deals and job engagement. For example, Conway and Coyle-Shapiro (2016) and Davis and Van der Heijden (2018) pointed out that i-deals foster a wide range of outcomes including employee engagement. However, few studies have compared the relative importance of content-specific i-deals in predicting job engagement, while several others have only addressed the relationship between a single content-specific i-deals and job engagement. For example, Hornung et al. (2010b), from a job design perspective, suggested that i-deals pertaining to tasks and responsibilities positively relate to work engagement. Through the lens of employees’ quality of working life, Hornung et
al. (2011) revealed that developmental i-deals related positively to work engagement, and implied that flexibility i-deals foster employee engagement by reducing work-family conflict. To date, the existing empirical evidence has revealed some relationships between content-specific i-deals and job engagement, but no studies have investigated the relationships between financial incentives i-deals and job engagement.

Rosen et al. (2013) probably provided the only empirical evidence regarding the consequences of i-deals pertaining to financial incentives. With two different samples, Rosen et al. (2013) examined job satisfaction and the three dimensions of organizational commitment (i.e., affective, continuance and normative commitment) as the individual outcomes of financial incentives. With a student sample, their results revealed that financial incentives were positively related to job satisfaction and affective commitment, and with an employee sample, financial incentives were found to positively affect job satisfaction, affective commitment and normative commitment. Rosen et al. (2013) also compared financial incentives with the other three contents-specific i-deals: after introducing i-deals pertaining to schedule flexibility, location flexibility, and task and work responsibilities in their model, financial incentives were found to be only negatively related to employee continuance commitment.

In general, Rosen et al.’s (2013) findings were fairly consistent with what Rousseau et al. (2006) initially theorized about “concrete and universal” versus “abstract and particularistic” i-deals: task and work responsibilities i-deals that are more “abstract and particularistic” displayed the highest relative importance in predicting employee attitudes, whereas financial incentives i-deals that are more “concrete and universal” displayed the lowest relative importance. However, their study also yielded results that cannot be fully explained by Rousseau et al.’s (2006) categorization of i-deals: when accounting for all the four content-specific i-deals, i-deals
pertaining to task and work responsibilities demonstrated a negative impact on continuous commitment, and schedule flexibility and task and work responsibilities had a similar level of impact on job satisfaction.

Because “abstract and particularistic” i-deals are seemingly not better than i-deals with less “relational” arrangements to promote employees’ job satisfaction and continuous commitment, it calls into question whether there are other approaches that we should take to compare i-deals with different contents. Here I propose that considering the “demands” aspect inherent in the four types of i-deals can offer a richer understanding to the consequences resulting from different contents of individualized arrangement.

### 3.2.2 Relative importance of the four content-specific i-deals in predicting physical, emotional and cognitive engagement

In i-deals theory, demands are a neglected but defining component. As Rousseau et al. (2006) discussed, the reason why an employer agrees to grant an employee i-deals is that the organization is involved in the arrangement as the beneficiary of the recipient’s subsequent contributions. Put differently, demands are always bundled with granted i-deals on the organization’s behalf.

Rousseau et al. (2006) also linked “concrete and universal” i-deals with an employer’s consideration of a recipient’s market values, and “abstract and particularistic” i-deals with the consideration of employer-employee relationships. Then, a specific content of i-deals should be linked to a particular expectation, and thus, a particular demand that an employer imposed on an individual. Based on this logic, I argue that “abstract and particularistic” i-deals signal an employer’s demands on a recipient’s continuous relational inputs (e.g., loyalty and obligations),
and “concrete and universal” i-deals signal an employer’s demands on a recipient’s inputs of market-related values (e.g., task performance).

JD-R theory assumes that “demands” cost an individual’s physical and psychological resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001), and Kahn (1990) indicated that, personal resources are a necessary prerequisite for an individual to be physically, emotionally, or cognitively engaged at work. However, this does not mean that job engagement will be depleted by demands inherent in i-deals.

As JD-R scholars suggested (e.g., Demerouti et al., 2001; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), high job demands foster disengagement when an individual lacks resources and feels incapable to deal with such demands. Because i-deals are developed on the agreement between the employer and the employee, the demands of i-deals unlikely overtax the recipient’s personal resources, and then, will not obstruct engagement. Research on job demands and job engagement (e.g., Crawford et al., 2010; Fried & Ferris, 1987; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Macey & Schneider, 2008) also indicated that, when employees perceive demands as opportunities for personal growth, mastery, or future gains, they are willing to invest their personal resources to meet these demands. Therefore, I argue that both resources and demands of i-deals will foster job engagement: the resources of i-deals (i.e., financial gains, developmental opportunities, and personal supports) prepare an employee’s energies for engagement, and the demands of i-deals trigger the individual’s efforts to meet the organization’s requirements.

Thus far, I have explained why a specific content of i-deals signals an employer’s particular demands on an employee’s investment of personal resources, and why demands, with the presence of equivalent resources, do not diminish, but facilitate a recipient’s job engagement. Taking together, I propose that, in responding to both the resources and demands of content-
specific i-deals, a recipient is prone to contribute to the organization with a certain type of job engagement.

First, I propose that the content of task and work responsibilities, as compared to the other three contents (i.e., financial incentives, schedule flexibility and location flexibility), has the strongest impact on a recipient’s emotional engagement. According to i-deals theory, i-deals pertaining to task and work responsibilities fulfill the employee’s socioemotional needs (Rosen et al., 2013; Rousseau et al., 2006). Also, i-deals pertaining to task and work responsibilities reflect an employer’s recognition of a recipient’s relational values (e.g., loyalty and obligation) and thus the expectation of the individual’s further relational inputs (Rosen et al., 2013; Rousseau et al., 2006). Hence, the “resources” of task and work responsibilities more likely complement and augment an employee’s emotional resources for his or her emotional engagement, and the “demands” more likely set an employer’s particular requirements on a recipient’s emotional engagement. Altogether, I hypothesize the following:

**Hypothesis 1a:** Task and work responsibilities will demonstrate the highest relative importance in terms of explaining emotional engagement.

Second, I propose that i-deals pertaining to financial incentives have the strongest impact on a recipient’s physical engagement. The content of financial incentives, in contrast to the contents of task and work responsibilities and schedule- and location flexibilities, is less relational and more concrete (Rousseau et al., 2006). The arrangement of financial incentives allows a recipient to obtain “concrete” resources, such as budgetary support, materials, and equipment (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Liden & Maslyn, 1998; Saks & Gruman, 2014). Given that people need physical energies to be physically engaged (Kahn, 1990), financial incentives provide concrete resources that directly replenish people’s resources pools and enrich their physical energies, and
thus facilitate the recipient’s physical engagement. Furthermore, the content of financial incentives indicates more “concrete” demands on an employee’s market value than the contents of task and work responsibilities and schedule- and location flexibilities do. Considering that inputs of physical energies have been linked to “work intensity” and “energy exerted per unit of time” (Brown & Leigh, 1996), I expect that a recipient granted for financial incentives is more likely to be physically engaged to meet such transactional related demands. Accordingly, I hypothesize the following:

**Hypothesis 1b**: Financial incentives will demonstrate the highest relative importance in terms of explaining physical engagement.

Last, I propose that i-deals pertaining to schedule- and location flexibility have stronger influences on a recipient’s cognitive engagement. Rosen et al. (2013) conceptualized contents of schedule- and location flexibility as being more relational but less transactional than financial incentives, and more transactional but less relational than task and work responsibilities. Consistent with Rosen et al.’s perspective, I further argue that schedule- and location flexibility, different from task and work responsibilities and financial incentives, consist of resources and demands that are both relational and transactional; however, via schedule- and location flexibility, an employer provides a recipient with less relational resources and imposes lower relational demands than via task and work responsibilities, and with less transactional resources and imposes lower demands on the recipient’s market value related contributions. In JD-R theory, the assumption is that low demands tax fewer individual resources, and flexibility to carry out work constitutes valuable resources to an individual (Demerouti et al., 2001; Nahrgang et al., 2011; Schaufeli, Bakker, & Van Rhenen, 2009). In i-deals theory, flexibility related i-deals still reflect an employer’s consideration of employee’s needs and thus trigger a recipient’s
obligation, and with less relational and transactional demands, the recipient likely has more personal resources to concentrate on job related goals, which is described by Kahn (1990) as cognitive engagement. Therefore, I hypothesize that:

**Hypothesis 1c**: Schedule flexibility and location flexibility will demonstrate higher relative importance in terms of explaining cognitive engagement than will task and work responsibilities and financial incentives.

### 3.3 Moderating Roles of Servant and Abusive Leadership

In this section, I emphasize the interacting effects of servant- and abusive-leadership on the relationships between the four content-specific i-deals and the three types of job engagement. Examining the conditions in which the above hypothesized relationships may change is critical to further substantiate the relative importance of content-specific i-deals on a particular type of job engagement. At the team level, servant- and abusive-leadership have been theorized as ambient behaviors directed at the leader’s entire workgroup, and it has been argued that subordinates can form shared perceptions resulted from the overall pattern of those leaderships (Liden et al., 2014; Priesemuth et al., 2014). Drawing on i-deals theory and JD-R theory, I hypothesize that servant leadership will strengthen, and abusive leadership will weaken, the effect of task and work responsibilities on emotional engagement, the effect of financial incentives on physical engagement, and the effects of schedule- and location flexibility on cognitive engagement.

Regarding the moderating effect, I argue that servant leadership and content-specific i-deals interact to predict the type of job engagement (as proposed in the conceptual model) by shaping a recipient’s perceptions of the “resources” and the “demands”. As I have reviewed, servant leadership is defined as leader behaviors that prioritize the followers’ needs (Greenleaf, 1977). In
the case of i-deals, an individual’s needs are met by the “resources”, and an organization’s interests are expected to be fulfilled by the “demands”. So, when supervised by a servant leader, a recipient likely believes that the leader will put subordinates’ interests ahead of the organization’s interests. Such perception further amplifies the motivating effects of “resources” and “demands”, because both the “resources” and servant leadership center on the individual’s interests, and with a servant leader’s help, the recipient likely perceives the “demands” as less difficult and more promising to be met. The following hypothesis summarizes the discussed moderating roles of servant leadership:

**Hypothesis 2**: Servant leadership will moderate the positive relationship between (a) task and work responsibilities and emotional engagement, (b) financial incentives and physical engagement, (c) schedule flexibility and cognitive engagement, (d) location flexibility and cognitive engagement, such that the relationship will be stronger at high (vs. low) levels of servant leadership.

In contrast, I argue that abusive leadership weakens the hypothesized positive relationships between the four content-specific i-deals and the three types of job engagement. Abusive leadership has been linked to hostile behaviors toward subordinates (Tepper, 2000). Different from servant leaders who serve followers’ personal needs, abusive leaders are less compassionate toward subordinates (Foulk, Lanaj, Tu, Erez, & Archambeau, 2018). Furthermore, abusive leaders rarely give subordinates credit for their good efforts, but ridicule them and make negative comments about them (Tepper, 2000, 2007). Consequently, subordinates do not tend to expect help from their abusive leader, and feel incompetent to accomplish work related goals. The same beliefs may also influence an i-deals recipient, and I expect that the recipient likely becomes less confident to meet the demands of i-deals, and holds
the belief that help is not available from the abusive supervision and thus feel less resourceful. This reasoning leads to the following:

**Hypothesis 3**: Abusive leadership will moderate the positive relationship between (a) task and work responsibilities and emotional engagement, (b) financial incentives and physical engagement, (c) schedule flexibility and cognitive engagement, (d) location flexibility and cognitive engagement, such that the relationship will be weaker at high (vs. low) levels of abusive leadership.

### 3.4 The Mediating Roles of Physical, Emotional and Cognitive Engagement

Existing empirical evidence suggests that the mechanisms via which i-deals influence employee outcomes can vary based on the specific content, and thus are complex (e.g., Hornung et al., 2009; Rousseau, Hornung, & Kim, 2009). Echoing i-deals scholars’ call for greater attention on explanatory mechanisms underlying the different effects of content-specific i-deals on relevant individual outcomes (e.g., Liao et al., 2016), in this section, I focus on the mediating roles of physical, emotional and cognitive engagement in linking financial incentives i-deals, task and work responsibilities i-deals, and schedule- and location flexibility i-deals to task performance, OCBs and creativity.

Evidence of the mediating effects of engagement shows that contextual factors related to employees’ engagement, and employees’ investments of their personal energies led to positive work outcomes (Christian et al., 2011). Following this rationale, i-deals should enhance employees’ engagement, which further increase their performance. However, i-deals should exert different effects based on their contents (Rousseau et al., 2006), and employees’ engagement involves inputs of distinct personal resources (i.e., physical, emotional and cognitive engagement) (Kahn, 1990), and performance consists of different ways to contribute to the
organization (Campbell, 1990). Note that because individuals have different understandings of their roles, some may divert their efforts from social environment to tasks for work accomplishment, while others may seem less absorbed to tasks but are considered to be good citizens (Newton & LePine, 2018), I expect that employees likely respond to the four content-specific i-deals with different emphases on their inputs of physical, emotional, or cognitive energies, and the emphasis on a particular engagement will transfer the influences of a content of i-deals to a specific job performance.

Specifically, I propose that physical engagement will have the strongest mediating effect on the link between financial incentives and task performance, emotional engagement will have the strongest mediating effect on the link between task and work responsibilities and organizational citizenship behaviors, and cognitive engagement will have stronger mediating effects on the links between schedule/location flexibility and creativity. Below, I start with the discussion of the relative importance of physical, emotional, and cognitive engagement in explaining an employee’s task performance, OCBs, and creativity.

3.4.1 Relative importance of the three types of job engagement in predicting task performance, OCBs, and creativity

Although researchers have not yet compared the effectiveness of different types of job engagement on employee performance, existing empirical research has shown repeatedly that job engagement can translate into positive workplace outcomes, including higher job satisfaction and commitment (Christian & Slaughter, 2007; Saks, 2006), better individual task performance and more citizenship behaviors (Christian et al., 2011; Rich et al., 2010; Saks, 2006), and lower turnover intensions (Saks, 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Furthermore, a number of studies have linked a specific type of job engagement to a specific form of employee performance. For
example, Ng, Butts, Vandenberg, DeJoy and Wilson (2006) and Shuck et al. (2017) argued that emotional engagement can lead to citizenship-like behaviors, such as employees’ loyalty to the organization, and Shalley (1995) and Zhang and Bartol (2010) indicated that when individuals are absorbed and cognitively engaged, they more likely use cognitive resources for creative activities. To sum up, it has been suggested that job engagement increases employee performance, and a single type of job engagement can be essential to a certain form of employee performance.

Job engagement leads to positive employee outcomes because engaged employees are willing to invest personal energies to contribute to their organizations (Kahn, 1990). Contributions can take several forms, and employees’ high levels of task performance are recognized by their organization as valuable contributions to the “technical core” – the production of a good or the provision of a service of business (Rotundo & Sackett, 2002, p. 67). Physical engagement is characterized by “work intensity” and “working hard”, and it reflects an individual’s increased levels of effort over extended periods of time (Kahn, 1990, 1992; Rich et al., 2010). In contrast to inputs of emotional and cognitive energies, an individual’s investments of physical energy directly facilitate the accomplishment of the organization’s core job tasks, and thus are more likely to result in higher levels of task performance.

**Hypothesis 4a:** Physical engagement will demonstrate the highest relative importance in terms of explaining task performance.

On the other hand, employees’ OCBs are discretionary and contribute to the organization’s “social and psychological environment”, and employees who perform citizenship-like behaviors demonstrate altruism, facilitate cooperation and communication, spread good will, and support and defend their organizations (Rotundo & Sackett, 2002, pp. 67-69). As emotionally engaged
employees are described as being enthusiastic, and investments of emotional energy help employees promote their connections with coworkers (Rich et al., 2010), emotional engagement should be more important than physical and cognitive engagement in facilitating employee OCBs.

**Hypothesis 4b**: Emotional engagement will demonstrate the highest relative importance in terms of explaining organizational citizenship behaviors.

Last, creativity refers to the generation of novel and useful ideas (Amabile, 1988; Oldham & Cummings, 1996). Creative individuals are considered to be important contributors to their organization because they find new ways to improve the work situation or procedures, and resolve work related problems with creative methods (Zhang, Kwan, Zhang, & Wu, 2014; Zhou & George, 2001). Creative performance involves a great deal of mental activities; it has been suggested that an individual needs to be absorbed and concentrated, or, in other words, to be cognitively engaged, to achieve creative breakthroughs (Rich et al., 2010; Shalley, 1995). It has also been argued that social interactions, which require a worker to be physically present and input emotional energy, help employees collect information for idea generation and form creative synthesis in groups (e.g., Harvey, 2014). Nevertheless, social or contextual factor may divert an individual’s concentration from producing creative outcomes (Shalley, 1995). Therefore, I expect that cognitive engagement may have the strongest influence on employee creativity.

**Hypothesis 4c**: Cognitive engagement will demonstrate the highest relative importance in terms of explaining creativity.
3.4.2 Paths of influences from the four content-specific i-deals to task performance, OCBs, and creativity via physical, emotional and cognitive engagement

Research on i-deals has not explicitly examined the mediating effects of job engagement on the relationships between i-deals and individual performance outcomes. Yet, numerous studies (e.g., Christian et al., 2011; Nahrgang et al., 2011; Rich et al., 2010; Saks, 2006) have documented that job engagement serves as the mechanism that links a wide range of antecedents (e.g., job characteristics, social support, and reward and recognition) to employee performance (e.g., job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intention to quit, and OCBs). Although they have provided some support for my mediating hypotheses, most of these studies rely on reciprocity to explain the general mediating role of job engagement, and thus fall short of articulating a clear account of how engaged employees vary in their inputs of energies to transfer the influence of a specific content of i-deals to a particular individual performance.

Integrating i-deals theory and JD-R theory, I have proposed that, via a specific content of i-deals, an employer provides a recipient with one type of resources (e.g., financial incentives), and places demands on a recipient’s related inputs of personal energy, namely, engagement (e.g., physical engagement). I have also suggested that a certain type of engagement (e.g., physical engagement) indicates the availability of personal energy (e.g., physical energy) and a recipient’s willingness to input the energy to related performance (e.g., task performance). In my last set of hypotheses, I posit that physical, emotional and cognitive engagement, each serves as a key mediating mechanism explaining the hypothesized financial incentives-task performance relationship, task and work responsibilities-OCBs relationship, and schedule- and location flexibility-creativity relationships, respectively.
First, I hypothesize that, of the three types of job engagement (i.e., physical, emotional, and cognitive engagement), physical engagement is the strongest mediator to the financial incentives-task performance relationship. Financial incentives, as a general concept, has long been recognized as an antecedent to task performance, especially those with concrete measures (Campbell & Pritchard, 1976; Jenkins Jr, Gupta, Gupta, & Shaw, 1998). Earlier I have also discussed that, to task performance, physical engagement is a prerequisite more important than emotional- and cognitive engagement. Based on the assumption that an employee’s engagement to input physical energies is essential to task performance, and that financial incentives provide “concrete and universal” resources enriching employee’s physical energies, and signal the demands for the employee’s “hard work” to produce market values, I argue that i-deals pertaining to financial incentives increase task performance by enhancing the recipient’s physical engagement.

**Hypothesis 5a: Physical engagement will have the strongest mediating effect on the link between financial incentives and task performance.**

Second, I propose that emotional engagement exerts the largest mediating effect on the relationship between task and work responsibilities i-deals and OCBs. Prior research has shown the positive effects of relational based i-deals on employees’ OCBs (e.g., Anand et al., 2010). I have posited that emotional engagement is essential to OCBs, because emotionally engaged individuals likely contribute their emotional energies (e.g., being enthusiastic) to perform citizenship-like behaviors (e.g., altruism and spreading good will) (Rich et al., 2010; Rotundo & Sackett, 2002). Employees’ emotional energies can be strengthened by task and work responsibilities, as the resources provided via this content of i-deals are “particularistic” and relational based and fulfill an individual’s socioemotional needs (Rosen et al., 2013; Rousseau et
In addition, since arrangement of task and work responsibilities is attributed to employment relationship (Rousseau et al., 2006), the content indicates an employer’s demands on an recipient’s continuous relational efforts (e.g., obligation and loyalty). Considering the above, I argue that i-deals pertaining to task and work responsibilities most likely foster employees’ OCBs by engaging them to input their emotional energies.

**Hypothesis 5b**: Emotional engagement will have the strongest mediating effect on the link between task and work responsibilities and organizational citizenship behaviors.

The last mediating hypothesis concerns the relative weight of cognitive engagement compared to other types of engagement (i.e., physical and emotional engagement) in explaining the relations between schedule- and location flexibility i-deals and employee creativity. Research on creativity suggests that, constraints on performance (e.g., restrictions on process or outcomes) can detrimentally affect employee creativity (Shalley, 1995; van Knippenberg & Hirst, 2020). Flexibility i-deals, in contrast to financial incentives i-deals and task and work responsibilities i-deals, impose lower demands on a recipient’s relational and market valued related contributions, and thus have less constraints and more likely foster employee creativity. Flexibility i-deals as relatively more important contents in predicting employee creativity can be further explained via cognitive engagement.

I have suggested that cognitively engaged individuals tend to devote their personal resources to creativity related mental activities (e.g., problem solving), and flexibility i-deals lower the job demands and help employees save more personal resources. Flexibility i-deals likely foster engagement, because the content’s relational nature triggers the recipient obligation to the organization. Given that flexibility i-deals do not impose demands on relational or market value
related contributions, the recipient of flexibility i-deals is expected to be cognitively engaged to contribute to the organization. Integrating these lines of reasoning, I hypothesize:

**Hypothesis 5c**: Cognitive engagement will have stronger mediating effects on the links between schedule/location flexibility and creativity than will physical engagement and emotional engagement.
Chapter 4: Methods

4.1 Sample and Procedures

Data were collected from two organizations located in a northern city of China. One organization was a marketing research and consulting company, and the other one was a high school. Those organizations are selected because they have comprehensive plans for individual development and allow their employees to negotiate for contents of tasks, flexible working schedule, and arrangements that accommodate legitimate needs. I contacted those two organizations and explained the purpose of the study. After obtaining permissions, I distributed online surveys with the assistance of coordinators working in their respective organizations. I attached a cover letter to explain the independence of the research from the management and to stress the voluntary nature of participation and confidentiality.

To reduce potential for common source and common method biases, data were gathered from employees and their corresponding supervisors via separate online surveys spaced two weeks apart (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). At Time 1, employees were asked to complete measures of content-specific i-deals, three types of job engagement, and servant- and abusive-leadership. At Time 2, employee performance ratings were obtained from their immediate managers. Time 1 and 2 surveys were administered to 381 employees and 45 supervisors respectively for the two organizations. The surveys were coded to match each employee’s response and that of the corresponding immediate manager.

For Time 1 and 2 surveys, I received responses from 294 employees (response rate = 77.17%) and 38 supervisors (response rate = 84.44%). After matching the employee surveys with the supervisor surveys, and excluding participants because of incomplete data, the final sample consisted of 276 employees (response rate = 72.44%) and 38 supervisors (84.44%) representing
38 teams. The demographic makeup of this sample indicated that 70.7% of employee respondents were female, and the average age was 33.50 years ($SD = 6.66$). Most of the employees (94.2%) had a college education. The average employee organizational tenure was 8.79 years ($SD = 6.87$), and the average dyadic tenure was 3.58 ($SD = 5.04$). Workgroup sizes ranged between 3 and 18 members, and the average group size was 9.98 ($SD = 3.95$).

4.2 Measures

Employees provided data on four content-specific i-deals, three types of job engagement, their team manager’s servant leadership and abusive leadership, and their demographic information. Managers provided ratings on their subordinates’ task performance, OCBs, and creativity. All measures were originally developed in English and then translated into Mandarin Chinese following Brislin’s (1980) translation back translation procedure. First, as a bilingual speaker, I translated the questionnaire from English to Mandarin. Second, the preliminary Chinese translation was back translated to English by a bilingual native Chinese speaker, who is not aware of the purpose of the proposed study. Third, the back translated English version was then compared with the original questionnaire written in English, and modifications were made to resolve the discrepancies. Finally, the translated surveys were sent to two professionals for review, and small modifications were made based on their feedbacks. Unless otherwise noted, responses to survey questions were measured on 7-point scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), and scale items were averaged with higher scores representing a higher value of the underlying construct.

Four contents of i-deals. The four contents of i-deals - task and work responsibilities, financial incentives, schedule flexibility, and location flexibility - were assessed with the scale developed by Rosen et al. (2013). There are six items reflecting i-deals pertaining to task and
work responsibilities (e.g., “Following my initial appointment, my supervisor assigned me to a desirable position that makes use of my unique abilities”) ($\alpha = .90$), five items reflecting financial incentives (e.g., “After my initial appointment, I negotiated with my supervisor to develop a compensation plan that rewards my unique contributions”) ($\alpha = .90$), three items reflecting schedule flexibility (e.g., “Outside of formal leave and sick time, my supervisor has allowed me to take time off to attend to non-work-related issues”) ($\alpha = .83$), and two items reflecting location flexibility (e.g., “Because of my individual needs, I have negotiated a unique arrangement with my supervisor that allows me to complete a portion of my work outside of the office”) ($\alpha = .78$).

**Three types of job engagement.** Physical engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement were measured with the instrument developed by Rich et al. (2010). A sample item from the physical engagement scale (six items) is “I devote a lot of energy to my job” ($\alpha = .81$), a sample item from the emotional engagement scale (six items) is “I am enthusiastic in my job” ($\alpha = .90$), and a sample item from the cognitive engagement scale (six items) is “At work, I concentrate on my job” ($\alpha = .84$).

**Servant leadership.** I measured servant leadership with Liden et al.’s (2014) shortened seven-item scale. A sample item is “My manager puts my best interests ahead of his/her own” ($\alpha = .90$). Servant leadership was aggregated to the team level. Prior to this aggregation, I calculated interrater agreement using three indices. The $r_{wg}$ score (James, Demaree, & Wolf, 1984) for servant leadership was .90, suggesting high levels of within-group agreement; ICC(1) and ICC(2) were respectively 0.29 and 0.75 for servant leadership, indicating adequate agreement and between-group differences (Bliese, 2000).
**Abusive leadership.** To assess abusive leadership, I used the five-item scale developed by Priesemuth, Schminke, Ambrose and Folger (2014), which was adopted from Mitchell and Ambrose’s (2007) modification of Tepper’s (2000) 15-item scale to capture a supervisor’s active-aggressive abuse. A sample item is “My supervisor makes negative comments about members of my work group to others” (α = .88). Abusive leadership was also aggregated to the team level. The $r_{wg}$ score for abusive leadership was .86, the ICC(1) score was .36, and the ICC(2) score was .81. These indices supported the aggregation of individual ratings to create group scores for abusive leadership.

**Task performance.** Employees’ task performance was rated by their immediate supervisors using seven items from the in-role performance scale developed by Williams and Anderson (1991). A sample item is “This employee meets the formal performance requirements of the job” (α = .76).

**OCBs.** The ten-item scale developed by Moorman and Blakely (1995) was used to assess employees’ OCBs and completed by their supervisors. A sample item is “This employee goes out of his/her way to help co-workers with work-related problems” (α = .83).

**Creativity.** Employees’ creativity was rated by their immediate supervisors using four items adopted from Tierney, Farmer and Graen (1999). A sample item is “This employee tries out new ideas and approaches to problems” (α = .82).

**Control variables.** To rule out alternative explanations, following previous related studies (e.g., Anand et al., 2018; Hornung, Glaser, & Rousseau, 2010a; Vidyarthi et al., 2016), I included age, gender, education level, organizational tenure, and dyadic tenure with supervisor, as control variables. I also controlled for organizations by creating a dummy code because two
organizations were surveyed in the study. At the group level, I controlled for group size because it could affect employees’ interactions with other members (Anand et al., 2018).

4.3 Analyses

Because this study used a nested research design, such that employees were nested within workgroups, I used multilevel path analyses to simultaneously assess the paths specified in the theoretical model (see Figure 5.1). I also included servant leadership and abusive leadership as cross-level moderators of the hypothesized relationships between four content-specific i-deals and three types of job engagement. To test mediation hypotheses, I followed guidelines set forth by Preacher, Zyphur and Zhang (2010) and used a Monte Carlo simulation with 10,000 iterations to estimate 95% confidence intervals (CIs) for proposed indirect effects. Moreover, I conducted relative weights analyses (LeBreton, Hargis, Griepentrog, Oswald, & Ployhart, 2007) to evaluate the relative importance of four content-specific i-deals (i.e., task and work responsibilities, financial incentives, schedule flexibility, and location flexibility) and three types of job engagement (i.e., physical engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement) in predicting individual outcomes.
Chapter 5: Results

Before testing the hypotheses, I performed a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to validate the factor structure of the proposed twelve-factor model. The proposed model consists of four content-specific i-deals (i.e., financial incentives, task and work responsibilities, schedule flexibility, and location flexibility), three types of job engagement (i.e., physical engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement), two types of leadership (i.e., servant leadership and abusive leadership), and three types of performance outcomes (i.e., task performance, OCBs and creativity). I constrained each item to fall under a single factor and allowed the factors to correlate. CFA results indicated that the proposed twelve-factor model fits the data well, $\chi^2 (2078) = 2651.07$, comparative fit index (CFI) = .94, Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) = .93, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .03, and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = .05. In order to establish discriminant validity, I conducted additional CFAs to compare the twelve-factor model with alternative models (see Table 5.1). Because data were collected from employees and their immediate supervisors, I report results of models in which employee-rated four content-specific ideals were combined (model 2, 3 and 4), three types of job engagement were combined (model 5 and 6), and servant leadership and abusive leadership were combined (model 7), and results of models in which manager-rated three types of performance outcomes were combined (model 10 and 11) in sequence. I also report results of two models in which i-deals variables, job engagement variables, and servant and abusive leadership were combined (model 8 and 9), and results of one-factor model with all items included (model 12). The statistics and fit indices in Table 5.1 show that none of the alternative models fit the data as well as our hypothesized twelve-factor model. Chi-square difference tests indicated statistically significant differences in model fit favoring model 1.
Table 5.2 reports the descriptive statistics, internal consistencies, and correlations among individual- and group-level variables.

As expected, i-deals pertaining to financial incentives were related to physical engagement \( (r = .41, p < .001) \), emotional engagement \( (r = .34, p < .001) \), and cognitive engagement \( (r = .27, p < .001) \); task and work responsibilities were related to physical engagement \( (r = .36, p < .001) \), emotional engagement \( (r = .40, p < .001) \), and cognitive engagement \( (r = .31, p < .001) \); schedule flexibility i-deals were related to physical engagement \( (r = .39, p < .001) \), emotional engagement \( (r = .40, p < .001) \), and cognitive engagement \( (r = .35, p < .001) \); and location flexibility i-deals were related to physical engagement \( (r = .12, p < .05) \), emotional engagement \( (r = .18, p < .001) \), and cognitive engagement \( (r = .14, p < .05) \). Also, significant associations were observed between three types of job engagement and performance outcome variables: physical engagement related positively to task performance \( (r = .45, p < .001) \), OCBs \( (r = .51, p < .001) \), and creativity \( (r = .32, p < .001) \); emotional engagement related positively to task performance \( (r = .41, p < .001) \), OCBs \( (r = .60, p < .001) \), and creativity \( (r = .37, p < .001) \); and cognitive engagement related positively to task performance \( (r = .40, p < .001) \), OCBs \( (r = .49, p < .001) \), and creativity \( (r = .33, p < .001) \).
Multilevel path analysis (see Figure 5.1 and Table 5.3) was conducted to further delineate relationships among four content-specific i-deals, three types of job engagement, and three types of performance outcomes. When examined together, physical engagement was predicted by i-deals pertaining to financial incentives (standardized effect = .19, \( p < .01 \)) and task and work responsibilities (standardized effect = .18, \( p < .01 \)), and emotional engagement was predicted by task and work responsibilities (standardized effect = .19, \( p < .05 \)). Of the three types of job engagement, physical engagement was the only significant predictor for task performance (standardized effect = .18, \( p < .01 \)). Results of path analysis also indicated that employees’ OCBs was predicted by physical engagement (standardized effect = .14, \( p < .05 \)), emotional engagement (standardized effect = .31, \( p < .01 \)), and cognitive engagement (standardized effect = .15, \( p < .05 \)). Finally, employees’ creativity was predicted by physical engagement (standardized effect = .17, \( p < .05 \)), emotional engagement (standardized effect = .28, \( p < .01 \)), and cognitive engagement (standardized effect = .15, \( p < .05 \)).

Next, I conducted relative weights analysis to evaluate the relative importance of the four content-specific i-deals in predicting three types of job engagement (Hypotheses 1a, 1b and 1c), and the relative importance of the three types of job engagement in predicting three types of performance outcomes (Hypotheses 4a, 4b and 4c). Relative weights analysis helps researchers
to determine the unique contribution of each antecedent (e.g., task and work responsibilities) to the overall variance accounted for in a given outcome (e.g., emotional engagement) while taking into consideration the other predictors (LeBreton et al., 2007).

Results of the relative weights analysis of the four content-specific i-deals are presented in Table 5.4. For physical engagement, these results indicated that financial incentives i-deals were the most important predictor (relative weight [RW] = .096), followed by schedule flexibility (RW = .074), task and work responsibilities (RW = .063), and location flexibility (RW = .004) i-deals. Also reported are rescaled relative weights (i.e., RW divided by overall variance accounted for), which indicated the percentage of predicted criterion variance that is attributed to each predictor. In this case, financial incentives i-deals accounted for 40.6% of the variance explained in physical engagement, and schedule flexibility i-deals accounted for 31.2% of the variance explained in physical engagement, and i-deals pertaining to task and work responsibilities accounted for 26.5% of the variance explained in physical engagement, and location flexibility accounted for 1.7% of the variance explained in physical engagement.

In terms of emotional engagement, task and work responsibilities (RW = .085, 36.8% of the explained variance) and schedule flexibility (RW = .081, 35.0%) contributed to the majority of the variance explained by i-deals, followed by financial incentives (RW = .052, 22.5% of the explained variance), and location flexibility i-deals were the least important predictor of emotional engagement (RW = .013, 5.8%). Finally, schedule flexibility i-deals were the most important predictor (RW = .069) of cognitive engagement, contributing to 43.8% of the variance.
explained. Task and work responsibilities, though less important than schedule flexibility i-deals, contributed to 30.8% (RW = .048) of the variance explained cognitive engagement. Financial incentives were the third important predictor (RW = .032, 20.3% of the explained variance), and location flexibility i-deals were the weakest (RW = .008, 5.07% of the explained variance) in terms of predicting cognitive engagement.

Table 5.5 summarizes the relative weights analysis results of the three types of job engagement. Physical engagement accounted for 39.9% of the explained variance in task performance (RW = .111), followed by emotional engagement (RW = .089, 32.1% of the explained variance) and cognitive engagement (RW = .078, 28.0% of the explained variance). For OCBs, task and work responsibilities were the most important predictors (RW = .224, 48.5% of the explained variance), accounting for about half of the variance explained by the four content-specific i-deals, whereas physical engagement (RW = .124, 26.9% of the explained variance) and cognitive engagement (RW = .114, 24.6% of the explained variance) together contributed to about half of the variance explained. Finally, the relative weights analysis revealed that emotional engagement accounted for a larger proportion of the total predicted variance in employees’ creativity (RW = .082, 44.5% of the explained variance) compared to cognitive engagement (RW = .055, 29.8% of the explained variance) and physical engagement (RW = .048, 25.8% of the explained variance).

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Insert Table 5.5 about here
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Taken together, the above results from multilevel path modeling and relative weights analysis suggested considerable differences among effects of four content-specific i-deals on
three types of job engagement, and among effects of three types of job engagement on performance outcomes. Hypotheses 1a and 1b predicted that i-deals pertaining to task and work responsibilities would demonstrate the highest relative importance in terms of explaining emotional engagement, and financial incentives would have the strongest impact on physical engagement. After controlling for the effects of other content-specific i-deals, the results showed that task and work responsibilities had a significant, positive relationship with emotional engagement, and were the strongest in terms of predicting physical engagement. Results also showed that, while both financial incentives i-deals and task and work responsibilities i-deals had clear relationships with physical engagement, financial incentives primarily served to improve an individual’s physical engagement. Thus, these findings provide support for Hypotheses 1a and 1b. Turning to Hypothesis 1c, while results of relative weights analysis showed that schedule flexibility i-deals accounted for the largest proportion of the total predicted variance in cognitive engagement, results from the multilevel path analysis did not reveal significant effects of schedule- and location-flexibility on cognitive engagement, and thus Hypothesis 1c was partially supported.

Furthermore, regarding relative importance of three types of job engagement in predicting performance outcomes, the above results provide support for Hypotheses 4a and 4b, but not for Hypothesis 4c. In general, results of multilevel path modeling were consistent with predictions made on relationships between three types of job engagement and performance outcomes: all three types of job engagement were significantly related to OCBs and creativity, and physical engagement was the only significant predictor of task performance. Results of relative weights analysis further revealed that physical engagement was the most important predictor of task performance, and emotional engagement demonstrated the highest degree of relative importance
in terms of explaining OCBs. Therefore, both Hypotheses 4a and 4b were supported. Finally, Hypothesis 4c posited that cognitive engagement would have the greatest effect on creativity. Although the path from cognitive engagement to creativity was positive and significant, results of relative weights analysis indicated that the emotional engagement accounted for more proportion of variance explained in creativity than cognitive engagement. Thus, Hypothesis 4c was not supported.

Hypotheses 2 and 3 predicted interactions between four content-specific i-deals and servant- and abusive leadership. That is, high as opposed to low levels of servant leadership will strengthen impacts of financial incentives i-deals on physical engagement (H2a), impacts of task and work responsibilities on emotional engagement (H2b), and impacts schedule- and location flexibility i-deals on cognitive engagement (H2c), whereas high as opposed to low levels of abusive leadership will weaken impacts of financial incentives i-deals on physical engagement (H3a), impacts of task and work responsibilities on emotional engagement (H3b), and impacts of schedule- and location flexibility i-deals on cognitive engagement (H3c). As Table 5.6 illustrates, after controlling for the main effects of four content-specific i-deals, and the effects of servant- and abusive leadership and other control variables, servant leadership and abusive leadership did not significantly moderate the proposed impacts of four content-specific i-deals on three types of job engagement. Thus, Hypotheses 2 and 3 were not supported.

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Insert Table 5.6 about here

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In Table 5.7 I report statistical significance using unstandardized estimates for indirect effects through physical engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement. In
support of Hypotheses 5a and 5b, i-deals pertaining to financial incentives exhibited statistically
significant indirect effects on task performance only through physical engagement
(unstandardized effect = .026, 95% CI = [0.002, 0.058]), and i-deals pertaining to task and work
responsibilities exhibited statistically significant indirect effects on OCBs only through
emotional engagement (unstandardized effect = .047, 95% CI = [0.010, 0.087]). However, results
showed that there were no statistically significant indirect relationships between schedule
flexibility and creativity (unstandardized effect = .010, 95% CI = [-0.002, 0.028]) and between
location flexibility and creativity (unstandardized effect = -.002, 95% CI = [-0.013, 0.007])
through cognitive engagement, failing to support Hypothesis 5c.

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Insert Table 5.7 about here

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Chapter 6: Discussion

I-deals have been theorized to represent various forms of non-standardized employment arrangements that comprise heterogeneous contents of resources (Rousseau, 2005; Rousseau et al., 2006). However, i-deals researchers have adopted an isolated focus on the reciprocity that i-deals generate, and they assumed that i-deals recipients would respond similarly to all kinds of i-deals contents. In an attempt to explore the differences among various contents of i-deals, I built on Rosen et al.’s (2013) early work and investigated relative predictive power of task and work responsibilities, financial incentives, schedule flexibility, and location flexibility. In the only study of which I am aware that directly compared those four contents of i-deals, Rosen and colleagues (2013) found that task and work responsibility i-deals, which represented abstract and particularistic resources, generally demonstrated the strongest relationships with employee job satisfaction and affective commitment. I responded to Rosen and colleagues’ call for more empirical studies on specific resources involved in i-deals. Specifically, integrating i-deals theory and JD-R theory, I examined the relative impacts of the four content-specific i-deals on the three types of job engagement (i.e., physical engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement), and boundary conditions that servant leader and abusive leader served to moderate the influences of content-specific i-deals on engagement. In doing so, I also extended job engagement research by identifying what contents of resources were more important for a specific type of job engagement and when employees became more engaged (Saks & Gruman, 2014). Finally, by testing the three types of job engagement as mechanisms through which different content-specific i-deals affected an employee’s task performance, OCBs, and creativity, this study uncovered which type of job engagement was of greater importance in explaining the content-specific i-deals-performance outcomes relationships.
The results of this study confirm the notion that i-deals are not monolithic in their effects, and their relationships with certain outcomes depend on their contents of resources. Supporting Rousseau et al.’s (2006) view that i-deals recipients are more likely to attribute “abstract and particularistic” resources to the quality of relationships with their employers, the results of this study demonstrated that, of the four contents of i-deals, task and work responsibility had the strongest effectiveness in terms of promoting an employee’s emotional engagement. These results are similar to Rosen et al.’s (2013) findings that task and work responsibility had stronger relationships with an employee’s positive attitudes. Further exploring the effectiveness of content-specific i-deals, especially the ones that are more “concrete and universal” (i.e., financial incentives and flexibilities), I went beyond the above resources perspective and employed JD-R theory to consider employers’ demands inherent in different contents of i-deals. I argued that, while task and work responsibilities fulfill their socioemotional needs and financial incentives directly replenish their physical energies, i-deals recipients are likely to perceive task and work responsibility i-deals as a signal of their employers’ demands on their relational inputs, and financial incentives as the demands on their market value related inputs. Consistent with this line of reasoning, I found that task and work responsibility demonstrated the highest relative importance in terms of predicting emotional engagement, and financial incentives were the most relevant to physical engagement. Regarding schedule flexibility i-deals, I contended that those arrangements impose lower relational and transactional demands on recipients, and that being flexible in scheduling and carrying out work constitutes valuable personal resources for employees to utilize and concentrate. And the findings of the relative weights analysis demonstrated that i-deals pertaining to schedule flexibility, in comparison to task and work
responsibility and financial incentives, accounted for more variance explained in cognitive engagement.

Another purpose of this study was to explain how content-specific i-deals facilitate employees’ performance outcomes. Although some research has identified mechanisms connecting i-deals and outcomes (e.g., Hornung et al., 2010b), i-deals researchers have not adequately explored mechanisms explaining the complex relationships among different contents of i-deals and a variety of individual outcomes. To address this issue, I established three types of job engagement as explanatory mechanisms linking content-specific i-deals to performance outcomes. The results discussed above indicated that different contents of i-deals had unique effects on a specific type of job engagement. I further explored the relative effects of different types of job engagement on performance outcomes. Because criteria of performance are different, I expected that inputs of physical energy would better help an employee accomplish more formal and quantifiable tasks, and inputs of emotional energy to workplace social environment would be more recognizable and indicative of citizenship-like behaviors. Consistent with these expectations, employees’ physical engagement demonstrated the highest relative importance in terms of explaining task performance, and emotional engagement was the strongest predictor to employees’ OCBs. Finally, the examination of proposed mediating pathways demonstrated that physical engagement fully accounted for the relationship between financial incentives i-deals and task performance, and emotional engagement fully accounted for the relationship between task and work responsibility i-deals and OCBs. These findings attested to my contention that a specific content of i-deals likely is granted to promote employees’ readiness and willingness to engage in a particular domain of performance favorable to organizations.
The data did not provide support for the proposed location flexibility-cognitive engagement relationship. It is believed that i-deals pertaining to location flexibility should account for a larger proportion of the total predicted variance in cognitive engagement compared to i-deals pertaining to task and work responsibility and financial incentives. However, the results indicated that location flexibility was the weakest in terms of predicting cognitive engagement. One explanation is that granting location flexibility i-deals might be the norm in sampled organizations. This could be the case that pandemic related practices in China required organizations to provide more flexible work location options for their employees. Hence, location flexibility i-deals would likely be perceived by i-deals recipients as less rare and distinctive than the other three content-specific i-deals are.

I also found no support for the indirect effects of schedule- and location-flexibility i-deals on creativity via cognitive engagement. This was not unexpected, however, because I estimated physical, emotional, and cognitive engagement simultaneously in the multiple mediation model, and found cognitive engagement less important than emotional engagement in predicting employee creativity. Although it was anticipated that flexibility i-deals would help employees conserve personal energies and be cognitively engaged at work, it could be the intrinsic motivation that drove employees to dispense their mentally laden energies toward creative related-activities (Amabile, 1983). Thus, one explanation for these findings is that emotional engagement was the prerequisite for creativity.

Lastly, the results showed that neither servant leadership nor abusive leadership moderated the positive relationships between four content-specific i-deals and three types of job engagement. One reason was that the sample size of 276 employees nested in 38 groups was not adequate to test the hypothesized cross-level moderating effects of servant leadership and
abusive leadership. Another reason could be that workgroup managers in the two sampled Chinese organizations were in the lower management levels and did not hold resources to grant i-deals, and therefore, their leaderships would have less impact on their subordinates’ perceptions of the content-specific i-deals.

The current study advanced existing theory and research in at least three ways. First, building on the stream of research focusing on effectiveness of various types of i-deals (e.g., Hornung et al., 2011; Rosen et al., 2013), I examined the relative importance of task and work responsibilities, financial incentives, schedule flexibility, and location flexibility on physical engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement. Integrating the JD-R theory with i-deals theory, I found that the four content-specific i-deals, depending on the types of resources and demands inherent in the arrangement, have different impacts on a certain engagement variable. In doing so, I responded to calls for greater attention to the types of contents involved in i-deals and extended the current understanding of the effectiveness of content-specific i-deals on individual outcomes (Liao et al., 2016).

Second, I advanced the i-deals literature by introducing physical engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement as mediators to the relationships between the four content-specific i-deals (task and work responsibilities, financial incentives, schedule flexibility, and location flexibility) and the three individual-level performance outcomes (task performance, OCBs, and creativity). This presents an important step in i-deals research, as relatively few studies have examined the underlying mechanisms concurrently in terms of explaining why the relationship between a type of i-deals and a particular performance outcome is stronger than others. By identifying these mediating pathways, this study unpacked the complex processes
through which each of the focal content of i-deals promotes task performance, OCBs, and creativity.

Finally, my study also contributed to the research on job engagement. A majority of studies have indicated that job resources lead to higher levels of job engagement (e.g., Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Crawford et al., 2010), but it remains unclear what resources are more important for job engagement (Saks & Gruman, 2014). By examining the relative importance of the four content-specific i-deals in predicting the three types of job engagement, I identified the content of task and work responsibility as a more important resource for employees’ emotional engagement, the content of financial incentives as a more important resources for physical engagement, and the content of schedule flexibility as a more important resources for cognitive engagement. Thus, this study added to the body of knowledge of job engagement by adopting the resource perspective of i-deals theory.

6.1 Strengths, Limitations, and Future Directions

The current study has both strengths and limitations. The first strength was the use of multilevel path modeling for data analyses. This analytical strategy allowed me to account for the nested nature of the data while examining hypothesized relationships that included three types of job engagement as mediators at the individual level and servant-/abusive-leadership as moderators at the team level. Second, I adopted a time-lagged design and data from multiple sources. I gathered the dependent variables (i.e., task performance, OCBs, and creativity) two weeks after measuring the predictor variables. This temporal separation allowed for stronger inferences of causality and helped minimize the influence of common method variance bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003).
Despite these strengths, the current study also has some limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results. First, the design of this study was non-experimental in nature and thus limited the ability to make definite causal inferences. Employee and manager surveys were conducted at separate times, but the data on four content-specific i-deals and three types of engagement were collected at the same time from employees. Regardless of my theoretical rationale that supported four content-specific i-deals as the predictors of three types of job engagement, this measurement strategy made it difficult to ascertain whether the reverse is also a possibility. For example, cognitively engaged employees would be more likely to successfully negotiate i-deals, because they have better understandings of their organizations, and tend to identify i-deals that are mutually beneficial to themselves and their employers (Davis & Van der Heijden, 2018; Rousseau, 2005). Future research should incorporate experimental design and/or longitudinal research design to rule out the possibility of reverse causality among these variables.

Second, I acknowledge that there were limitations to the generalizability of my findings. The sample used in the analyses was composed primarily of high school teachers and business consultants. The study may not provide an accurate estimate of the meaning attributed to different content-specific i-deals, because the occurrence of different i-deals likely varies across occupations and organizations. For example, flexibility i-deals are more likely applicable in certain occupations such as professors, but hardly available in highly structured occupations, such as manufacturing jobs and emergency room nurses (Hornung et al., 2014; Rosen et al., 2013). Considering that my findings may not generalize beyond the settings of high school teachers and business consultants, I urge future research to test my hypotheses using a larger data set from a wide variety of industries and occupations to augment the generalizability of my findings.
Furthermore, the nonsignificant findings involving servant leadership and abusive leadership as moderators must be interpreted with caution. As in the case of the high school and the consulting company in my Chinese sample, it is often the human resource managers or the department leaders who make decisions regarding i-deals. In other types of organizations or other cultural contexts where workgroup managers could have the final say in granting i-deals (e.g., store managers), servant leadership and abusive leadership would be more influential in affecting how employees respond to content-specific i-deals. Hence, I call for future research to replicate my current findings of the moderating roles of servant- and abusive-leadership by collecting data from different industries and in other cultural settings. It is also important to note that, cultural differences have been suggested to impact how i-deals function (Liao et al., 2016; Rousseau, 2005). For example, employees in China may be more appreciative of relational based i-deals and exhibit more trust and commitment toward their organizations (Anand et al., 2018; Liu et al., 2013; Ng & Feldman, 2015). Therefore, including different cultural values as moderators would further advance our understanding of how employees interpret and respond to the granting of different contents of i-deals.

6.2 Practical Implications

The findings of this study have some important implications for the management of employees. Although at a very general level i-deals can indeed supplement standard HR practices in developing favorable employee job attitudes and performance, managers should note that the content of i-deals varies, and how employees perceive and react to i-deals depends on resources and demands involved in the arrangement. The content of i-deals involving task and work responsibilities helps convey employers’ expectation of recipients’ long-term growth and ongoing relational commitment. The findings of this study suggest that providing developmental
support to focal employees can directly elicit their relational efforts. On the other hand, financial incentives are explicitly linked to the economic value, and shown to enable recipients to work productively in exchange for more concrete resources. This pattern of findings suggests that resources should be more wisely utilized. Instead of targeting a variety of individual outcomes, it would be more efficient to direct resources on certain practices aimed at improving employee attitudes and behaviors that fit to the organization’s requirement.

6.3 Conclusion

I-deals are distinctive non-standardized arrangements that mutually benefit both organizations and employees (Rousseau, 2005). While i-deals are different in terms of their contents and effects, only limited research has empirically compared their relative effectiveness. This study extends beyond affirming the general positive impact of i-deals on employee attitudes and behaviors by demonstrating that i-deals’ effects on certain outcomes depend on the specific resources and demands inherent in their contents. Drawing on i-deals and JD-R theory, I found that recipients of financial incentive i-deals were most likely to invest their physical energies into task performance, and i-deals pertaining to task and work responsibility were especially effective in eliciting employees’ emotional engagement, and in turn their organizational citizenship behaviors. The findings also suggested that employees working with more flexible schedule arrangements tend to be more cognitively concentrated at work. Taken together, the current study deepens our understanding of i-deals by further elucidating the mechanisms through which different content-specific i-deals influence specific employee outcomes.
References


Appendix

Appendix A. Surveys

A.1 Employee Survey

Section A: The following statements ask about your customized work arrangements. Employees in similar jobs can negotiate different employee arrangements, such as different work schedules (e.g., different times to start and end the work day) or work responsibilities (e.g., tasks different from coworkers) to better fit their personal needs and preferences. We are interested in any customized arrangements you have negotiated to accommodate your individual needs and preferences. For each of the following statements, please select your response from **Strongly Disagree** = 1 to **Strongly Agree** = 7 presented below, and enter the corresponding number in the space to the left of each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>7</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task and work responsibilities</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>I have successfully asked for extra responsibilities that take advantage of the skills that I bring to the job.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>At my request, my supervisor has assigned me tasks that better develop my skills.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I have negotiated with my supervisor for tasks that better fit my personality, skills, and abilities.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>My supervisor has offered me opportunities to take on desired responsibilities outside of my formal job requirements.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>In response to my distinctive contributions, my supervisor has granted me more flexibility in how I complete my job.</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Following my initial appointment, my supervisor assigned me to a desirable position that makes use of my unique abilities.</td>
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<td><strong>Financial incentives</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>My supervisor has ensured that my compensation arrangement (e.g., hourly vs. salaried) meets my individual needs.</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Because of my personal circumstances, my supervisor has created a compensation arrangement that is tailored to fit me.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Because of my unique skills and contributions, my supervisor has been willing to negotiate my compensation.</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Beyond formal policies, my supervisor has raised my pay because of the exceptional contributions that I make to the organization.</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>After my initial appointment, I negotiated with my supervisor to develop a compensation plan that rewards my unique contributions.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Schedule flexibility</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>My supervisor considers my personal needs when making my work schedule.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>At my request, my supervisor has accommodated my off-the-job demands when assigning my work hours.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Outside of formal leave and sick time, my supervisor has allowed me to take time off to attend to non-work-related issues.</td>
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<td><strong>Location flexibility</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Because of my individual needs, I have negotiated a unique arrangement with my supervisor that allows me to complete a portion of my work outside of the office.</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Because of my particular circumstances, my supervisor allows me to do work from somewhere other than the main office.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

77
Section B: The following statements ask about how you feel at work. Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way about your job. Please select your response from Strongly Disagree = 1 to Strongly Agree = 7 presented below and enter the corresponding number in the space to the left of each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

About your physical engagement at work...
1. I work with intensity on my job.
2. I exert my full effort to my job.
3. I devote a lot of energy to my job.
4. I try my hardest to perform well on my job.
5. I strive as hard as I can to complete my job.
6. I exert a lot of energy on my job.

About your emotional engagement at work...
1. I am enthusiastic in my job.
2. I feel energetic at my job.
3. I am interested in my job.
4. I am proud of my job.
5. I feel positive about my job.
6. I am excited about my job.

About your cognitive engagement at work...
1. At work, my mind is focused on my job.
2. At work, I pay a lot of attention to my job.
3. At work, I focus a great deal of attention on my job.
4. At work, I am absorbed by my job.
5. At work, I concentrate on my job.
6. At work, I devote a lot of attention to my job.

Section C: The following statements ask about your manager. Please select your response from Strongly Disagree = 1 to Strongly Agree = 7 presented below, and enter the corresponding number in the space to the left of each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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</thead>
</table>

1. My manager can tell if something work-related is going wrong.
2. My manager makes my career development a priority.
3. I would seek help from my manager if I had a personal problem.
4. My manager emphasizes the importance of giving back to the community.
5. My manager puts my best interests ahead of his/her own.
6. My manager gives me the freedom to handle difficult situations in the way that I feel is best.
7. My manager would NOT compromise ethical principles in order to achieve success.
8. My supervisor ridicules members of my work group.
9. My supervisor tells members of my work group their thoughts or feelings are stupid.
10. My supervisor puts members of my work group down in front of others.
11. My supervisor makes negative comments about members of my work group to others.
12. My supervisor tells members of my work group they are incompetent.
Section D: This section asks questions that will be used to describe general characteristics of the survey participants. This information will not be used to identify you.

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<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What is your age?</td>
<td>_______ years</td>
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<td>2. What is your sex?</td>
<td>☐ Male ☐ Female</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. What is your education level?</td>
<td>_______</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. How long have you been employed with this organization?</td>
<td>_______ years and _______ months</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. How long have you been working with your current supervisor?</td>
<td>_______ years and _______ months</td>
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</table>
### A.2 Manager Survey

**Section A**: The following statements ask about your subordinates. Please select your response from 1 to 7 presented below and enter the corresponding number in the space to the right of each statement under each subordinate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task Performance</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Adequately completes assigned duties</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Fulfills responsibilities specified in job description</td>
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<td>3 Performs tasks that are expected of him/her</td>
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<td>4 Meets formal performance requirements of the job</td>
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<td>5 Engages in activities that will directly affect his/her performance evaluation</td>
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<td>6 Neglects aspects of the job he/she is obligated to perform (r)</td>
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<td>7 Fails to perform essential duties (r)</td>
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<td><strong>Interpersonal Helping</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Goes out of his/her way to help co-workers with work-related problems</td>
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<td>2 Voluntarily helps new employees settle into the job</td>
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<td>3 Frequently adjusts his/her work schedule to accommodate other employees' requests for time-off</td>
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<td>4 Always goes out of the way to make newer employees feel welcome in the work group</td>
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<td>5 Shows genuine concern and courtesy toward co-workers, even under the most trying business or personal situations</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Loyal Boosterism</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Defends the organization when other employees criticize it</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Encourages friends and family to utilize organization products</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Defends the organization when outsiders criticize it</td>
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<td>4 Shows pride when representing the organization in public</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Actively promotes the organization's products and services to potential users</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>2 Seeks new ideas and ways to solve problems</td>
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<td>3 Generates ground-breaking ideas related to the field</td>
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<td>4 Is a good role model for creativity</td>
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Table 5.1: Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFA) Results

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<tr>
<th>Proposed and alternative factor structures</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>$\Delta\chi^2(\Delta df)$</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>TLI</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
<th>SRMR</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1. Twelve-factor</td>
<td>2651.07</td>
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<td>0.94</td>
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<tr>
<td>Model 2. Eleven-factor (Schedule + location)</td>
<td>2820.34</td>
<td>2089</td>
<td>169.27 (11)**</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.91</td>
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<tr>
<td>Model 3. Ten-factor (Task/work + schedule + location)</td>
<td>3048.63</td>
<td>2099</td>
<td>397.56 (21)**</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.89</td>
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<tr>
<td>Model 4. Nine-factor (Task/work + schedule + location + finance)</td>
<td>3633.97</td>
<td>2099</td>
<td>982.90 (21)**</td>
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<td>Model 5. Eight-factor (I-deals, emotional + cognitive)</td>
<td>4068.87</td>
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<td>1417.80 (38)**</td>
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<td>0.77</td>
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<td>0.07</td>
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<tr>
<td>Model 6. Seven-factor (I-deals, physical + emotional + cognitive)</td>
<td>4288.54</td>
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<td>1637.47 (45)**</td>
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<td>0.74</td>
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<tr>
<td>Model 7. Six-factor (I-deals, engagement, servant + abusive leaderships)</td>
<td>4692.36</td>
<td>2129</td>
<td>2041.29 (51)**</td>
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<td>0.70</td>
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<td>Model 8. Five-factor (I-deals + engagement, servant &amp; abusive leaderships)</td>
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<td>Model 9. Four-factor (I-deals + engagement + servant &amp; abusive leaderships)</td>
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<td>Model 10. Three-factor (Task performance + OCBs)</td>
<td>6303.68</td>
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<td>3652.61 (63)**</td>
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<td>0.51</td>
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<td>0.09</td>
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<tr>
<td>Model 11. Two-factor (Task performance + OCBs + creativity)</td>
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<td>2143</td>
<td>3824.97 (65)**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Model 12. One-factor (I-deals + engagement + servant &amp; abusive leaderships + performance)</td>
<td>6805.09</td>
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<td>4154.02 (66)**</td>
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<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. $n = 276$. CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis index; RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation; SRMR, standardized root-mean-square residual.
Table 5.2: Descriptive Statistics, Intercorrelations, and Reliabilities

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<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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**Group level variable**

<table>
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<tr>
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Notes. Individual level \( n = 276 \); team level \( n = 38 \). Cronbach’s alpha reliabilities are reported along the diagonal. * \( p < .05 \). ** \( p < .01 \).
Table 5.3: Multilevel Path Modeling for the Prediction of Three Types of Job Engagement and Three Types of Performance Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control variables</th>
<th>Physical engagement</th>
<th>Emotional engagement</th>
<th>Cognitive engagement</th>
<th>Task performance</th>
<th>Organizational citizenship behaviors</th>
<th>Creativity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
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<td>-.02</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.15</td>
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<td>.14</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.14</td>
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<td>.10</td>
<td>.15</td>
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<td>-.00</td>
<td>.01</td>
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<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.06</td>
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<td>Organizational tenure</td>
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<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.02</td>
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<td>Dyadic tenure</td>
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<td>-.00</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.04</td>
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<td>Job type</td>
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<td>-.05</td>
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<td>.20</td>
<td>.04</td>
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<td>-.33</td>
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<td>.08</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.18**</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task and work responsibilities</td>
<td>.18**</td>
<td>.19*</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.13*</td>
<td>.19**</td>
<td>.16**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule flexibility</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
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<td>Location flexibility</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.00</td>
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<td>.05</td>
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<td>.15*</td>
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</table>

Notes. Individual level n = 276; team level n = 38. Path coefficients are standardized. Group size is the team level control variable. * p < .05. ** p < .01.
Table 5.4: Relative Weights Analysis of the Four Content-specific I-Deals

<table>
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<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Physical engagement</th>
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<th>Emotional engagement</th>
<th></th>
<th>Cognitive engagement</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RW</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>RW</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>RW</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
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<td>30.78</td>
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<td>0.013</td>
<td>5.77</td>
<td>0.008</td>
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<td>.23</td>
<td>.16</td>
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</table>

Notes. Individual level $n = 276$. 
Table 5.5: Relative Weights Analysis of the Three Types of Engagement

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<th>Organizational citizenship behaviors</th>
<th>Creativity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>RW</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>RW</td>
</tr>
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<td>0.124</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>.19</td>
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</table>

Notes. Individual level $n = 276$. 
Table 5.6: Results Involving Servant Leadership and Abusive Leadership as Moderators

<table>
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<th>Cognitive engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<td>.03</td>
<td>-.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education level</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Organizational tenure</td>
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<td>.01</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dyadic tenure</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group size</td>
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<td>.01</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial incentives</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task and work responsibilities</td>
<td>.15**</td>
<td>.13*</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule flexibility</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location flexibility</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servant leadership</td>
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<td>.40**</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abusive leadership</td>
<td>-.33</td>
<td>-.36**</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servant leadership*Financial incentives</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.36**</td>
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<td>Servant leadership*Location flexibility</td>
<td>-.00</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abusive leadership*Location flexibility</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. Individual level n = 276; team level n = 38. Estimates are unstandardized. Servant leadership and Abusive leadership are the group level variables.
* p < .05. ** p < .01.
Table 5.7: Tests of Indirect Relationships through Three Types of Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Physical engagement</th>
<th>Emotional engagement</th>
<th>Cognitive engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial incentives → task performance</td>
<td>0.026 [0.002, 0.058]</td>
<td>0.006 [-0.007, 0.028]</td>
<td>0.007 [-0.008, 0.030]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task and work responsibilities → organizational citizenship behaviors</td>
<td>0.018 [0.000, 0.042]</td>
<td>0.047 [0.010, 0.087]</td>
<td>0.008 [-0.011, 0.029]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule flexibility → creativity</td>
<td>0.011 [-0.003, 0.030]</td>
<td>0.025 [-0.005, 0.059]</td>
<td>0.010 [-0.002, 0.028]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location flexibility → creativity</td>
<td>-0.004 [-0.017, 0.006]</td>
<td>-0.010 [-0.035, 0.012]</td>
<td>-0.002 [-0.013, 0.007]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. Individual level $n = 276$. Estimates are unstandardized.
Figures

Figure 3.1 Conceptual Model
Figure 3.2 Hypothesized Model
Notes. Individual level $n = 276$; team level $n = 38$. Path coefficients are standardized. Results of the structural model fit are: $\chi^2 (38) = 119.35$, CFI = .91, RMSEA = .09, and SRMR = .05.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Figure 5.1: Path Model of Relationships among Four Content-specific I-Deals, Three Types of Engagement, and Three Performance Outcomes
Vita

Yilu Wang earned his Bachelor of Business in Management in 2008 and Master of Business in Management in 2010 from Victoria University in Melbourne, Australia. In 2017, he joined the doctoral program in Business Administration with the concentration in Management at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), from which he graduated in Spring 2022. He also has seven years of industrial experience.

While pursuing his PhD at UTEP, Yilu Wang taught seven sections of organizational behavior and organization development classes. Moreover, he has one publication at the Journal of Organizational Psychology, and four papers presented at management conferences.

Yilu Wang’s dissertation entitled, “Not All I-Deals Are Same: Examining A Process Model Linking Content-Specific I-Deals to Employee Performance Outcomes,” was supervised by Dr. Prajya Vidyarthi.