

Seeking an "i-deal" balance: Schedule-flexibility i-deals as mediating mechanisms between supervisor emotional support and employee work and home performance

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Abstract

Requests for flexible work practices have become commonplace in order to help employees perform more effectively in both their private and work lives. One approach is for employees to negotiate individualized work arrangements (i-deals). This study provides valuable insights into the nomological network of schedule-flexibility i-deals by drawing on conservation of resources (COR) theory. We propose that, via resource accumulation, schedule-flexibility i-deals are a mechanism through which the emotional support of supervisors promotes employees' family performance and reduces deviant work behaviors. Drawing further on the COR framework, we examine two boundary conditions, family-friendly environment and prosocial motivation, that guide employees' resource investment. We collected multi-source data from South America and tested our hypotheses using structural equation modeling. Our results provide support for the key mediating role of schedule-flexibility i-deals. Moreover, the indirect relationship between supervisors' emotional support and family performance through schedule-flexibility i-deals is stronger in a context of family friendliness at work, as well as when employees are prosocially motivated. Our results also show that, contrary to the expected effect, when prosocial motivation is high, employee supervisors' emotional support is positively linked to deviant behaviors. We contribute to the literature by emphasizing the roles of perceived resources at the levels of leaders (i.e., supervisors' emotional support), context (supervisors' perceptions of family-friendly environment), and individuals (employees' prosocial motivation). We demonstrate the importance of these resources in establishing and sustaining schedule-flexibility i-deals.

Keywords: supervisor emotional support; schedule-flexibility i-deals; family performance; deviant behaviour; prosocial motivation.

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Seeking an “i-deal” balance: Schedule-flexibility i-deals as mediating mechanisms between supervisor emotional support and employee work and home performance

Employees are facing new challenges at the interface of work and home because of societal change. The demographic makeup of the workforce is changing, with individuals marrying (Beaujouan & Ní Bhrolcháin, 2011) and having children later in life than previous generations (Ní Bhrolcháin & Beaujouan, 2012). These trends, coupled with women’s increasing participation in the labor force and tertiary education, have led to novel challenges for employees at work and at home. For instance, many employees now need to care for both children and aging parents (Ingersoll-Dayton, Neal, & Hammer, 2001) and, in some cases, without help from a partner or relative (OECD, 2017). As individuals need to actively manage and balance these demands, the importance of individualized access to flexible work arrangements has grown and is likely to become increasingly pressing (Bal & Rousseau, 2015). One way employees are addressing their need for flexibility is by negotiating idiosyncratic deals or “i-deals” with their employers (Rousseau, Ho, & Greenberg, 2006).

I-deals are “voluntary, personalized agreements of a nonstandard nature negotiated between individual employees and their employers regarding terms that benefit each party” (Rousseau, et al., 2006, p. 978). Among other things, these agreements can give employees a higher amount of flexibility in terms of the scheduling of work, which helps them balance their work and private lives, leading to more favorable attitudes to work (Hornung, Rousseau, & Glaser, 2008; Rosen, Slater, Chang, & Johnson, 2013). From a practical point of view, flexibility i-deals represent an important intervention tool for managers and human resource (HR) practitioners in managing the work and non-work dilemmas of their workforce. Given these benefits, organizations will find it increasingly worthwhile to understand the antecedents and consequences of such i-deals. Surprisingly, however, research on factors that facilitate flexibility i-deals and render them effective for both recipients and organizations is scarce.

Existing studies have focused mainly on employee characteristics and behaviors, such as political skills, personal initiative and achievement motivation, or on job and organizational characteristics, such as the internal labor market system, group size and job constraints, that increase the number of flexibility i-deals (Hornung et al., 2008; Hornung, Rousseau, & Glaser, 2009; Ng & Lucianetti, 2016; Rosen et al., 2013). At the supervisor level (a prime actor in negotiating i-deals; Dany, Guedri, & Hatt, 2008), only leader–member exchange (LMX) has been examined and consistently associated with the negotiation of flexibility i-deals (Hornung et al., 2014; Rosen et al., 2013). This leaves us largely blind to the role that leaders’ behaviors play in the successful negotiation of flexibility i-deals, as well as to the interplay between different actors (i-dealer, leader and organization) in the negotiation (Liao et al., 2016).

With these arguments in mind, the aim of this study is to explore the nomological network of schedule-flexibility i-deals, focusing on factors that facilitate the negotiation of such deals as well as their impact in the work and non-work domains. To do this, we take into account the triad in which i-deal negotiations occur – that is, examining the role of the i-dealer, the supervisor, and perceptions of the broader organizational context in which negotiations occur. Specifically, we highlight the role of supervisors’ emotional support as a key influence (Hammer, Kossek, Yragui, Bodner, & Hanson, 2009), supervisors’ perception of the family-friendly nature of the work environment as a key organizational indicator, and employees’ prosocial motivation as an individual-level factor. By doing so, we emphasize the relational elements inherent in negotiating these deals as well as perceptions of the broader organizational context in which negotiations occur.

Because i-deals are proactively sought by employees as a way to gain resources and more favorable working conditions, our conceptual model is guided by conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989). COR theory provides a framework for understanding how individuals seek to conserve and invest resources in order to reach personally valued goals

(Halbesleben, Neveu, Paustian-Underdahl, & Westman, 2014). In this paper, we propose that an interaction between supervisors’ emotional support and their perceptions of a family-friendly environment will positively influence schedule-flexibility i-deals. When supervisors are emotionally supportive and perceive the work environment as being family-friendly, employees discern that the investment of resources toward schedule-flexibility i-deals will likely result in success, and this can induce an accumulation or upward spiral of resources.

Our study contributes to research on i-deals in three key ways. First, by focusing on supervisor emotional support, our findings emphasize the role of managers in facilitating schedule-flexibility i-deals and thus expands on prior studies that explored i-deals within a manager–subordinate dyad (Las Heras, Van der Heijden, De Jong, & Rofcanin, 2017; Rofcanin, Kiefer, & Strauss, 2017). This is important because managers are the key parties who hold resources to grant i-deals and are best placed to acknowledge and address employees’ needs at work (Bal & Rousseau, 2015). We also consider how managers’ perceptions of the organizational context influence this process by examining perceptions of family-friendly environments as a contextual characteristic influencing such deals. We expand on existing studies of family-supportive organizational culture (e.g. Rofcanin, Las Heras, & Bakker, 2017; Straub, 2012) by viewing support as a resource that enables schedule-flexibility i-deals, an approach that integrates the managers’ behavior and their perceptions of the organizational context to cast light on the factors that drive the creation of schedule-flexibility i-deals. Secondly, we provide a more nuanced understanding of how i-deals unfold by focusing on schedule-flexibility i-deals. This is crucial because the nature, content and characteristics of the many types of i-deals are unique and research is needed to explore how these i-deals operate in a work setting (Ng & Lucianetti, 2016). Third, we conceptualize schedule-flexibility i-deals within COR theory and thus go beyond previous research, which draws mainly on the norm of reciprocity in exploring the nomological network of i-deals (Liao, Wayne, Liden, & Meuser,

2017; Liao et al., 2016). Applying a resource perspective to i-deals is important because these deals represent unique, valuable, and personalized arrangements for employees and can thus be salient ingredients for enhanced employee work performance (Rousseau et al., 2006), above and beyond the signaling or reciprocity functions of i-deals. The importance of this approach has been established in a small number of recent studies (e.g. Kong et al., 2018, Zhang et al. 2018), and we seek to extend this by examining the effects of flexibility i-deals rather than task i-deals, the influence of supervisor behaviour and the simultaneous effects on both work and home domains.

In addition, we expand research on COR theory and prosocial motivation in a number of ways. We focus on the idea of gain cycles and enrichment, and thus build on COR theory which is concerned with gain and loss cycles (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Mäkikangas et al., 2010; Xanthopoulou et al., 2009). Furthermore, our emphasis on contextual conditions (i.e., family-friendly environment and prosocial motivation) corroborate COR theory’s principle that environmental and individual characteristics are contextual elements that shape gain cycles (Halbesleben et al., 2014). Our main contribution in regard to prosocial motivation is to provide empirical support for recent research on the “less bright side” of prosociality (e.g., Rofcanin, de Jong, Las Heras, & Kim, 2018). We show that employees that are high in prosociality may allocate much of the resources gained from schedule-flexibility i-deals into the family domain, rather than the work domain, and may thus feel less well-resourced at work. This corresponds to the notion that prosocial motivation may be double-edged in nature (Bolino & Grant, 2016).

Our conceptual model, which includes matched supervisor and subordinate data, is depicted in Figure 1 and, in what follows, we develop our theory and hypotheses.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

I-deals

I-deals represent unique and individually negotiated work arrangements between an employee and their employer; typically, via negotiations with the employee’s direct supervisor (Rousseau, 2005). The scope of such deals can vary from a single component of the employment relationship, such as flexible working hours, to a complete set of idiosyncratic working conditions, potentially including remuneration, development opportunities, flexibility, and job content (Rosen et al., 2013; Rousseau, 2005). Since Rousseau (2001) introduced the concept of i-deals, research on both its antecedents and its consequences has emerged and grown steadily. In this regard, a recent meta-analysis (Liao et al., 2016) concluded that i-deals deliver benefits to both their recipient and the employer. From a theoretical and practical point of view, research on the antecedents of such i-deals is important to advance insights into how organizations can stimulate the negotiation of i-deals and reap the benefits thereof (Liao et al., 2016).

In this study, we focus specifically on schedule-flexibility i-deals. Not only are schedule-flexibility i-deals among the most prevalent type of i-deals negotiated in organizations, but schedule flexibility also has strong potential to influence employees (as compared to location flexibility and financial incentives, for example; Rosen et al., 2013). Consequently, there is a developing body of research on the antecedents of schedule-flexibility i-deals, focused mainly on employees, leaders, and structural/contextual characteristics. Employees’ personal initiative, achievement and status striving, political skills, tenure, and firm-specific human capital have all been found to positively influence the process of negotiating and obtaining schedule-flexibility i-deals (Hornung et al., 2008; 2015; Ng &

Lucianetti, 2016; Rosen et al., 2013). At the supervisor level, a high-quality leader–member exchange relationship is consistently shown to increase the odds of securing schedule-flexibility i-deals (Hornung et al., 2014; Rosen et al., 2013). Finally, structural/contextual characteristics (e.g., the internal career management system, team heterogeneity and size) have been shown to influence the space and necessity for such i-deal negotiations (Bal, 2018; Hornung et al., 2009).

In this study, we bring these three perspectives of employee, supervisor and context together, noting the triad in which schedule-flexibility i-deals are typically negotiated: the i-dealer, the supervisor, and the perceived organizational context in which the negotiation occurs (Bal & Rousseau, 2015). Specifically, we look at how schedule-flexibility i-deals are negotiated and influence employees in terms of supervisor behaviour (supervisor emotional support), perceptions of the organizational context (family-friendly work environment), and an important resource inherent within individual employees (prosocial motivation).

Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory

Our theoretical framework draws on COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 2002), which, despite being widely applied in research on work–life balance, has received little attention in the i-deals literature (for an exception, see Kong, Ho, & Garg, 2018). COR theory states that “people strive to retain, protect, and build resources and that what is threatening to them is the potential or actual loss of these valued resources” (Hobfoll, 1989, p. 516). In line with COR theory, resources are anything perceived by the individual to help them attain desired goals (e.g., related to work–life balance) (Halbesleben et al., 2014). In this regard, we conceptualize schedule-flexibility i-deals as resources that employees value, seek, maintain, and invest in to address their work needs and goals.

When individuals do not experience or anticipate resource loss or threat, they seek to increase their pool of resources and invest in existing resources in order to accrue more.

Investing in resources to gain further resources may thus give rise to a gain spiral (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2012), whereas loss of resources, and the strain generated by such loss, causes further resource loss, thereby creating a downward spiral of resources (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Hobfoll, 2002). In an attempt to protect their remaining resources, individuals experiencing resource loss or threat may also avoid activities that require investment of more resources (e.g., Halbesleben, Wheeler, & Paustian-Underdahl, 2013).

COR theory also stresses the importance of two overarching resources that help employees protect and strategically invest their existing resources. These are referred to as macro-resources (which are contextual, e.g., culture) and key resources (which are personal in nature, e.g., self-efficacy) (Halbesleben et al., 2014). Both macro-resources are contextual aspects of work that may help explain how employees transform one resource into another and subsequently benefit from a gain spiral. This suggests that these resources help minimize resource losses and maximize resource gains (Halbesleben et al., 2014). We address this particular process by: (i) conceptualizing supervisors' perceptions of family-friendly environments as a macro-resource that helps transform supervisors' emotional support in schedule-flexibility i-deals; (ii) conceptualizing prosocial motivation as a key personal resource that guides how employees invest the gains resulting from their schedule-flexibility i-deals in order to improve their performance in the home domain and drive their effectiveness at work through reduction of deviant behaviors. We address all of this more specifically in our hypotheses below.

Hypothesis Development

Supervisor Emotional Support and Schedule-Flexibility I-deals

To understand what facilitates the provision of schedule-flexibility i-deals, we examine an important supervisor characteristic in the context of work–life balance: supervisor emotional support. Emotional support is a crucial type of family-supportive supervisor behavior that

focuses on the supervisor’s expressions of care and concern toward the challenges faced by workers in their non-work life (Hammer et al., 2009). Supervisors who are emotionally supportive are well-positioned to understand the unique work–life balance needs of their subordinates and, in most cases, possess the power to grant i-deals to their subordinates (Farndale & Kelliher, 2013). Given its emphasis on helping employees balance their work and private lives, supervisor emotional support represents a particularly interesting leadership behavior in comparison to more general behaviors that focus on the degree to which supervisors express their value of, and care about, employees’ well-being (Casper et al., 2011).

Building from the rationale that resource accumulation creates a gain spiral (Hobfoll, 2002; ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012), we posit that employees whose supervisors provide emotional support for work–life issues are more likely to gain further resources in the form of schedule-flexibility i-deals. Emotional support, conceptualized as a volatile, contextual resource, has been associated with the accumulation of further resources, such as psychological flexibility (Russo, Buonocore, Carmeli, & Guo, 2015). Emotionally supportive behaviors are likely to be volatile contextual resources, insofar as they are likely to vary depending on the capacity and capabilities of the supervisor. Thus, an employee will be motivated to translate the emotional support available from a volatile resource into a more stable contextual resource in the form of a schedule-flexibility i-deal.

The process of translating volatile resources into stable resources (i.e., acquiring schedule-flexibility i-deals) entails proactive efforts by motivated individuals who wish to obtain these resources to address their work-related needs and preferences (Bal & Rousseau, 2015), and thus make investments of time and energy to this end (Las Heras et al., 2017a). Furthermore, according to COR theory, individuals are cautious about investing their resources, and look for guidance in their environment in order to direct their investment behaviors toward goals that are likely to result in successful accumulation of resources

(Halbesleben et al., 2014). Accordingly, a supervisor providing emotional support signals that they care about an employee’s needs and well-being, particularly in relation to family issues (Koch & Binnewies, 2015), will be deemed receptive to providing further resources in the form of a schedule-flexibility i-deal.

In line with this, we suggest that employees are more likely to gain schedule-flexibility i-deals when their supervisor is perceived to be emotionally supportive:

H1: *Supervisor emotional support is positively related to schedule-flexibility i-deals.*

The Impact of Schedule-Flexibility I-deals on (Non-)Work Domains

Prior research on i-deals has largely focused on the way in which i-deals relate to individual effectiveness within the work domain only (e.g., Guerrero, Bentein, & Lapalme, 2014; Ng & Lucianetti, 2016). Such work has neglected a key tenet of i-deals theory: that the positive impact of these deals is intended to go beyond the work domain, enabling individuals to function more effectively in non-work domains too (e.g., family performance; Rousseau, Tomprou, & Simosi, 2016). However, the relationships between i-deals and outcomes in the home domain are now being investigated empirically (see, for a recent example, Las Heras et al., 2017b). Our paper adds to this growing literature by investigating the mediating role of schedule-flexibility i-deals in the relationship between supervisors’ emotional support and outcomes in both the work and home domains. As the prime focus of schedule-flexibility i-deals is to improve the balance between employees’ work and private lives, as well as their performance in both domains, we focus on two critical outcomes from these domains. First, we focus on family performance as a key outcome in employees’ private lives; second, we consider employees’ deviant work behaviors as an important outcome in employees’ working lives, not least because reduced deviant behaviors benefit the organization both directly, through unit performance, and indirectly, via organizational citizenship behaviors (Dalal, 2005; Dunlop & Lee, 2004). Despite a growing body of research on the consequences of i-deals, researchers

have mainly focused on approach-oriented behaviors within the work domain, such as helping colleagues (OCBs), affective commitment, and work engagement (e.g., Liao et al., 2016). While this body of research is important in understanding the impact of i-deals, it is also crucial to understand the potential role for i-deals in functioning as a resource that reduces negative outcomes, such as deviant behaviors. Drawing on COR theory, we argue that employees may apply schedule-flexibility i-deals as a bridging resource to achieve a gain spiral of resources and improved work and home outcomes.

Family performance. COR theory specifies that individuals invest resources to gain further resources and to protect themselves from resource loss (Halbesleben et al., 2014). Further, according to Corollary 3 of COR theory, as individuals gain resources they are in a better position to gain further resources and invest these in related domains. This is likely to be driven by the motivation of maintaining and acquiring further resources. In line with this principle, we argue that schedule-flexibility i-deals represent valued resources that the recipients are likely to draw on and invest into their home domains with the aim of obtaining more in the future (Halbesleben et al., 2014). Schedule-flexibility i-deals are particularly relevant because they give employees more control over when they undertake their work (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), thus allowing them to optimize the use of resources in their personal lives (Rousseau et al., 2016). For example, through a schedule-flexibility i-deal, a parent who would otherwise be unable to balance work demands and the school schedules of dependents can free up additional financial resources that would otherwise be spent on childcare needs. These financial resources could, in turn, be channeled into offsetting other household needs and minimizing the demands on their personal life. In this way, schedule-flexibility i-deals may improve performance at home:

H2: *Schedule-flexibility i-deals are positively related to family performance.*

Deviant Behaviors. A key tenet of COR theory is that resource loss is more salient than resource gain (Hobfoll, 1989, 2002). This suggests that individuals are likely to be highly reactive to a lack of resources. These reactions can take the form of deviant behaviors (Lee & Ok, 2014). While much of the research on workplace deviance has focused on justice and retribution as a driver of deviance (e.g., Bordia, Restubog, & Tang, 2008), the availability of resources are also linked to deviance in the workplace (e.g. Kong, Ho, & Garg, 2018). The relationship between resources and deviant behavior may be driven by a number of forces: individuals engaging in resource protection through withdrawal of effort, individuals lacking the energy to avoid deviant behavior via ego depletion, and individuals using deviant behaviors to deliberately retaliate against an organization for providing them with insufficient resources (Kong et al., 2018; Lin, Ma, & Johnson, 2016). The corollary of this is that resource accumulation behaviors, such as learning something new at work, can also *reduce* the impact of resource loss on deviant work behaviors (Zhang, Mayer, & Hwang, 2018). Guided by this logic, we suggest that gaining resources in the form of i-deals reduces problematic resource protection behaviors. More specifically, we suggest that flexibility i-deals are a resource which allows individuals to reduce the number of simultaneous demands on their time and energy, such as team meetings coinciding with school collection times. COR theory suggests that when resources are no longer threatened by such conflicts that resource protection behaviours will no longer be necessary (Hobfoll, 2002). We focus specifically on withdrawal-oriented deviant behaviours as these activities reduce the time and effort invested in the work role and are therefore particularly likely to be affected by changes to flexibility.

H3: *Schedule-flexibility i-deals are negatively related to deviant behaviors.*

COR theory suggests that resource gains lead to further resources, that is, a gain cycle (Hobfoll, 2002; Halbesleben et al., 2014). The starting point of resource gains in our conceptual model is supervisor emotional support, which signals that an employee is valued and their

family life is important. Then, employees are likely to invest time and energy to translate this volatile resource into a more stable resource, such as a schedule-flexibility i-deal. The recipients of schedule-flexibility i-deals are likely to invest these resources in relevant domains, with the aim of preserving these resources and maintaining the gain cycle. This is likely to be reflected in enhanced family performance (e.g., spending more time and engaging with family members) and fewer deviant behaviors in the workplace, helping the organization achieve greater productivity levels. Our mediation hypothesis, which is grounded in the gain cycle of COR theory, is formulated as follows:

H4: *Through schedule-flexibility i-deals, supervisor emotional support has: (a) a positive indirect relationship with family performance; (b) a negative indirect relationship with deviant behaviors.*

Supervisors’ Perception of Family-friendly Environment and Prosocial Motivation as Boundary Conditions

Supervisors perception of family-friendly environment. Recent developments in COR theory highlight the importance of the environment in accumulating resources or limiting their loss (Halbesleben et al., 2014). We expand our conceptual model by integrating the notion of the family-friendly environment, focusing on supervisors’ perceptions of the extent to which the work environment is characterized by norms that are congruent with employees’ personal and family time (Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999). We propose that perceptions of the family friendliness of the work environment moderate the effect of supervisor emotional support on flexibility i-deals. According to COR theory, a family-friendly environment constitutes an important contextual resource because it reduces the potential cost, for both the employee and supervisor, of allocating time and energy to family matters (rather than working life). Supervisors who perceive the importance of the broader work environment as being

family-friendly are likely to encourage and support employees in expanding their resource reservoir. Employees are encouraged to maximize the resources available, such as supervisor support, in pursuit of additional resources (i.e., schedule-flexibility i-deals) and in achieving valued workplace and family performance outcomes.

Recent studies that have adopted a resource perspective provide indirect support for our argument that employees will experience greater increases in positive outcomes in a favorable environment (e.g., Paustian-Underdahl & Halbesleben, 2014; Rofcanin, Las Heras, & Bakker, 2017). We extend these studies by proposing that supervisors' positive perceptions of a family-friendly environment amplify the relationship between supervisor emotional support, schedule-flexibility i-deals, and work and home outcomes.

H5: *The degree to which the work environment is positively perceived by supervisors as being family-friendly strengthens the positive indirect relationship between supervisor emotional support and family performance through schedule-flexibility i-deals.*

H6: *The degree to which the work environment is positively perceived by supervisors as being family-friendly strengthens the negative indirect relationship between supervisor emotional support and deviant behaviors through schedule-flexibility i-deals.*

Prosocial motivation. Our model positions positive employee outcomes, such as improved home performance and reduced deviant behaviors, as resulting from increased availability of resources, in this case through schedule-flexibility i-deals. Two defining features of prosocial motivation are relevant to our argument: (a) that, for prosocially motivated individuals, effort is based on the desire to benefit significant others (Grant, 2008); (b) prosocially motivated individuals are outcome-focused in that they use their work skills and competencies as instruments to contribute to the functioning of the organization (Grant, 2008).

COR theory argues that individuals with more resources are best positioned to accrue further resources. In other words, for individuals endowed with more resources, the gain cycle is likely to be strengthened (Halbesleben et al., 2014). Prosocial motivation can be considered as a key personal resource, characterized by altruism and placing importance on protecting and enhancing the well-being of others (Schwartz & Bardi, 2001). COR theory also suggests that individuals are active and strategic in their resource investment behaviors (Halbesleben et al., 2014), and that personal resources can be a factor that guides an individual’s choices regarding where they direct their efforts to accrue further resources. Following this rationale, we propose that prosocially motivated employees are likely to invest more of their newly acquired i-deal resources into activities that will positively impact the people in their lives. Prosocially motivated employees are likely to transfer the benefits of schedule-flexibility i-deals into their family domain, thereby strengthening the gain cycle. This is because for these employees, contributing to the lives of others is a key motivator; thus, such employees are potentially more willing to share the benefits gained from the use of schedule-flexibility i-deals with their family members (e.g., spending more time with their children during the day or taking care of elderly parents). Caring for family members and engaging in activities with them is likely to lead to the accumulation of further resources, including but not limited to positive affect, increased levels of energy, home engagement, and enhanced well-being, all of which are likely to induce further resource gains (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006).

Moreover, prosocially motivated employees put conscious and persistent effort into contributing to the effective functioning of the organization (Sheldon & Marko, 2001), one such way being the avoidance of deviant behaviors that may harm the organization and/or their co-workers (Fox, Spector, Goh, Bruursema, & Kessler, 2012). By engaging in fewer deviant behaviors, these employees are more likely to accrue resources from the use of schedule-flexibility i-deals, such as helping a colleague with a task, or covering the work of a colleague

who needs to be absent, thus spreading the positive consequences of resource availability and increasing the possibility of gaining further resources (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2011).

Drawing on these points, we thus argue:

H7: *The degree to which employees are prosocially motivated strengthens the positive indirect relationship between supervisor emotional support and family performance through schedule-flexibility i-deals.*

H8: *The degree to which employees are prosocially motivated strengthens the negative indirect relationship between supervisor emotional support and deviant work behaviors through schedule-flexibility i-deals.*

Methodology

Sample

Participants were recruited from two companies based, respectively, in Chile and Colombia¹. The Chilean company has around 600 employees and operates within the media and entertainment industry. Employees of this company are located throughout Chile, with most based in Santiago, the Chilean capital. The Colombian company has around 300 employees and operates within the health industry, providing products for laboratories. It provides services nationally and its headquarters are in Bogota, the Colombian capital. The two

¹ We selected these two countries on the grounds of common historical heritage (as Spanish colonies from the 16th to the 19th centuries), Catholicism, a focus on maintaining very strong family values and ties, and a working life characterized by long working hours. Specifically, both of these countries are characterized by conservative and patriarchal social attitudes, reinforced by traditionalist religious and family-centered values (Carlier et al., 2012; UN, 2014). This leads to employees engaging heavily in family life (e.g., taking care of children, families and elderly). Yet, at the same time, Chile and Colombia rank among countries where, because of long working hours, employees suffer from exhaustion (OECD, 2017). These points illustrate the main purpose of collecting data in these two countries to explore how schedule-flexibility i-deals, a form of individualized HR practice, are likely to impact on work/family consequences for employees.

companies were approached as part of a larger research project carried out by a European business school in collaboration with local business schools in Chile and Colombia. The research project, including the process of data collection, the study goals, measures and potential publications, was explained by a member of the research team to the HR manager of each company. As an incentive to participate, each company was offered a report and a presentation of the results from our data collection. To protect individual participants' data, these reports contained information only at an aggregate level and, as such, no individual participant's data could be discerned from the reports.

We collected data from supervisor–subordinate dyads in 2015, for the Chilean sample, and 2017, for the Colombian sample. Questionnaires for both supervisors and subordinates were back-translated from English and administered in Spanish (Brislin, 1986). Email addresses were used to match the data for supervisor and subordinate dyads. Only the researchers had access to participant data, maintaining confidentiality of responses. Participation was entirely voluntary and participants were informed of their right to retrieve and/or withdraw their information from the study at any time.

Our sample consisted of 64 supervisors and 327 subordinates in Chile, and 30 supervisors and 185 subordinates in Colombia. The response rate was 84% for supervisors and 64% for subordinates in Chile, and 88% for supervisors and 85% for subordinates in Colombia. On average, supervisors evaluated 5.10 employees in Chile and 6.36 in Colombia. In the Chilean sample, the average age was 42 years ($SD = 7.1$) for supervisors and 37 years ($SD = 7.4$) for subordinates, and the average tenure for both supervisors and subordinates was 4 years ($SD = 2.3$ for supervisors and $SD = 3.1$ for subordinates). In the Colombian sample, the average age was 39 years ($SD = 7.0$) for supervisors and 34 years ($SD = 8.2$) for subordinates, and the average tenure for supervisors was 8 years ($SD = 3.6$) and for subordinates was 4 years ($SD = 3.7$).

Measures

All responses were collected using a seven-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly disagree* to 7 = *Strongly agree*). Supervisors provided information on their perception of the family-friendly environment, subordinates' prosocial motivation, and subordinates' deviant behaviors. Subordinates provided data on supervisor emotional support, schedule-flexibility i-deals and family performance.

Supervisor emotional support. Employees rated the extent to which their supervisors provided emotional support to subordinates. The emotional support dimension (4 items) of the family-supportive supervisor scale developed by Hammer et al. (2009) was utilized. A sample item was: “My supervisor is willing to listen to my problems in juggling work and non-work life” ($\alpha = .96$).

Schedule-flexibility i-deals. Employees evaluated the extent to which they obtained schedule-flexibility i-deals using the three items from the schedule-flexibility subdimension of the i-deals scale of Rosen et al. (2013). The same set of items has been utilized in previous research (e.g., Marescaux et al., 2017). A sample item was: “Outside of formal leave and sick time, my supervisor has allowed me to take time off to attend to non-work-related issues” ($\alpha = .81$).

Family performance. Employees evaluated their family performance using the abridged five-item version (Las Heras et al., 2017) of the family performance scale of Chen et al. (2014). The abridged scale covers task and relationship-oriented tasks within the home and requires participants to rate the extent to which they fulfil what is expected of them in relation to these aspects of your current family life, for example “Providing emotional support to family members” ($\alpha = .94$).

The following three constructs, deviant behavior, family friendly environment and prosocial motivation were rated by supervisors.

Deviant behavior. Supervisors rated employee deviant behaviour using five items adapted from the scale developed by Bennett and Robinson (2000). We selected items reflecting behaviors that we felt the supervisors would be most likely to witness. To this end, we focused on those behaviors that involved the withdrawal of effort rather than actively harmful actions (e.g. taking additional or longer breaks than is acceptable in the workplace versus discussing confidential company information with an unauthorized person). This included the use of an additional withdrawal-based item: “Left their work for someone else to finish”. We focused on withdrawal-based items because these behaviors may be regarded as less serious infringements and therefore employees may engage in them more openly than other types of deviant behavior, such as theft, that would demand immediate reprimand. Our five-item scale showed good psychometric qualities, both from a reliability point of view ($\alpha = 0.83$) and a validity perspective (the factor loadings for these items ranged from 0.57 to 0.84). To further verify the psychometric properties of these items, we tested the bivariate correlation between this five-item scale and the original 12-item scale of deviant behavior, based on data collected from companies operating in Spain ($N = 381$). This analysis showed a high correlation between the two scales ($r = 0.88$, $p < 0.001$).

Family-friendly environment. Supervisors evaluated the family friendliness of their organization using the shortened six-item measure of Rofcanin, Las Heras, et al. (2017), derived from the scale originally developed by Thompson et al. (1999). An example item was: “In this organization, employees who participate in available work–family programs (e.g., job sharing, part-time work) are viewed as less serious about their careers than those who do not participate in these programs” (reverse item; $\alpha = .87$).

Prosocial motivation. We used three items adapted from Grant (2008) to capture the supervisor’s perception of the employee’s prosocial motivation. We used a reduced-item scale

to limit the response burden on supervisors. Two sample items were: “To help others through their work” and “To do good to others through their work” ($\alpha = .92$).

Control variables. Researchers have considered a variety of variables, such as marital status, gender, age, education, and working hours, as possible factors influencing work–family processes (Byron, 2005; Kim & Gong, 2017; Major et al., 2002; Yang et al., 2000). Marital status, for example, might indicate the extent to which individuals can effectively manage the potential spillover effect of their work responsibilities into the non-work domain. Gender might influence the work–family dynamic given that the family role tends to have a greater salience for females than males, with females therefore more likely to request and use flexible work arrangements (e.g., Kim & Gong, 2017). Research has also emphasized the importance of job characteristics such as employment contract and working hours as factors influencing employees’ work and non-work experiences. It is argued, for example, that the number of hours expended in work activity determines the extent to which employees are able to balance their work and family roles effectively (Major et al., 2002). Finally, age has been shown to be related to family demands (Yang et al., 2000), therefore potentially affecting the work–family dynamics of employees. Taking these considerations into account, we controlled for the following variables, which were recoded as dummy variables: contract type (1 = Part-time; 0 = Full-time); the amount of hours spent at the office; gender (1 = Male; 0 = Female); marital status (1 = Married; 0 = Other); age (five bands: 20–29; 30–39; 40–49; 50–59; 60 or over; reference 30–39), and highest qualification (1 = Bachelor’s, Master’s or PhD; 0 = Other).

Analytical Procedure

We analyzed our data using structural equation modeling (SEM). All analyses were performed with Mplus statistical software using the robust maximum-likelihood estimator (MLR) because it adjusts for skewness in the data and provides parameter estimates with robust standard errors (Asparouhov & Muthen, 2006). Although all of our predictions were made at

the individual level of analysis, our sample contains matched supervisor–subordinate data. To correct for the non-independence of subordinates’ responses associated with the same supervisor, we used the TYPE=COMPLEX syntax in Mplus, which adjusts for standard errors in clustered data when parameters are estimated at the individual level.

We first examined the measurement component of our model to verify the factorial structure of observed items and ensure adequate fit with the data. Our measurement model consists of six latent variables: supervisor emotional support, schedule-flexibility i-deals, family performance, deviant behaviors, family-friendly environment, and prosocial motivation. The overall goodness-of-fit for this model was adequate: chi-squared (χ^2) = 557.39; df = 284; $p < 0.001$; comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.96; Tucker–Lewis index (TLI) = 0.95; root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.04; standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = 0.05. All factor loadings (range: 0.50 to 0.95) were significant and in the hypothesized direction. The validity of all measurement items was further verified by tests for composite reliability (range: 0.82 to 0.96) and average variance extracted (range: 0.52 to 0.86).

Our research design helped to reduce the likelihood of common method bias by drawing data from multiple sources (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012), specifically supervisors and subordinates. In addition, we applied two analytical techniques to statistically control for common method bias. We first applied the unmeasured latent method construct technique to test whether the shared variance among all measurement items is explained by a common latent factor (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). To this end, our original measurement model was adjusted as follows: (i) the measurement items for all six factors were specified on their corresponding latent constructs, as well as on a common latent factor; (ii) regression paths from the measurement items to the common latent factor were constrained to be equal; (iii) the variance of the common latent factor was fixed at one. The differences in model fit indices between this adjusted model and our original measurement

model were assessed and determined to be considerably above the recommended cutoff value of 0.001 ($\Delta\text{CFI} = 0.008$; $\Delta\text{TLI} = 0.008$; $\Delta\text{RMSEA} = 0.004$, $\Delta\text{SRMR} = 0.002$). The differences in standardized regression weights between the original measurement model and the adjusted model were also relatively small (the largest value being 0.45). These estimates indicate that our data were unlikely to be affected by common method bias.

We also applied Harman’s single factor test by specifying all measurement items as indicators of a single latent variable. As expected, this model failed to fit the data: $\text{CFI} = 0.32$; $\text{TLI} = 0.26$; $\text{RMSEA} = 0.17$; $\text{SRMR} = 0.21$. To ensure convergent validity of our constructs, we further examined a three-factor measurement model, including supervisors’ emotional support and schedule-flexibility i-deals as one factor, the outcomes (family performance and deviant behaviors) as a second factor, and the moderators (family-friendly environment and prosocial motivation) as the third factor. This model also failed to fit the data adequately: $\text{CFI} = 0.70$; $\text{TLI} = 0.67$; $\text{RMSEA} = 0.11$; $\text{SRMR} = 0.25$.

Hypotheses H1 to H4 were examined simultaneously by estimating a structural equation model involving the following regression paths: (i) from supervisor emotional support to schedule-flexibility i-deals; (ii) from schedule-flexibility i-deals to family performance and deviant behaviors; (iii) from supervisor emotional support to family performance and deviant behaviors. The control variables were also regressed on family performance and deviant behaviors. We specified the Mplus command for estimating indirect paths from supervisors’ emotional support to family performance and deviant behaviors via schedule-flexibility i-deals. This command is based on the product-of-coefficient ($\alpha\beta$) approach, whereby indirect effects are examined by the product of α , the regression path between the predictor and mediator, and β , the regression path between the mediator and outcome (MacKinnon, Lockwood, Hoffman, West, & Sheets, 2002).

Hypotheses H5 to H8, concerned with the respective moderating effects of family-friendly environment and prosocial motivation, were examined by two separate moderated indirect-effects models (Edwards & Lambert, 2007). These models were examined by means of SEM with latent variables for all substantive variables and the interaction terms. The first model comprised the following structural equations: (i) the regression paths for schedule-flexibility i-deals on supervisors’ emotional support, family-friendly environment, and their interaction terms; (ii) the regression paths for family performance and deviant behaviors on schedule-flexibility i-deals, supervisor emotional support, and the control variables. The second model involved the following structural equations: (i) the regression path for schedule-flexibility i-deals on supervisor emotional support; (ii) the regression paths for family performance and deviant behaviors on supervisor emotional support, schedule-flexibility i-deals, prosocial motivation, the interaction term between schedule-flexibility i-deals and prosocial motivation, and the control variables.

Results

Bivariate correlations among study variables are presented in Table 1. Apart from the non-significant correlation between family-friendly environment and prosocial motivation, all correlations are consistent with our expectations. The results for multivariate relationships are reported in Table 2. The table shows standardized regression coefficients and residuals representing all direct, indirect, and moderated paths in our models. The table also shows corresponding 95% confidence intervals for these relationships.

 Insert Table 1 about here

 Insert Table 2 about here

As shown in Table 2, supervisor emotional support is positively related to schedule-flexibility i-deals ($\beta = 0.65$, $p < 0.001$), which supports hypothesis H1. Schedule-flexibility i-

deals are directly and positively related to family performance ($\beta = 0.17, p < 0.01$), but not significantly related to deviant behaviors. Thus, while hypothesis H2 is fully supported, H3 is not. Of the two indirect paths reported in Table 2, only the path involving supervisor emotional support and family performance through schedule-flexibility i-deals was significant ($\beta = 0.11, p < 0.01$). This supports hypothesis H4a. However, we do find a direct relationship between supervisor emotional support and family performance ($\beta = 0.19, p < .0001$), suggesting a partial mediation. By contrast, the indirect path from supervisor emotional support to deviant behaviors via schedule-flexibility i-deals is not statistically significant (i.e., no support for hypothesis H4b).

Results of the moderated indirect effects are also reported in Table 2. Supervisor emotional support and family-friendly environment interact positively by influencing the indirect path to family performance through schedule-flexibility i-deals. Specifically, the indirect relationship is stronger when a greater context of family friendliness exists within the work unit (supporting hypothesis H5). Figure 2, which illustrates this graphically, depicts the significance of the moderated effect using three conditional values (low, medium and high) of the moderator. By contrast, the indirect path from supervisor emotional support to deviant behaviors through schedule-flexibility i-deals was not significantly moderated by family-friendly environment. We therefore found no support for hypothesis H6.

Finally, although prosocial motivation moderated the indirect paths through schedule-flexibility i-deals to family performance and deviant behaviors respectively, only one of these results was in the direction expected. Specifically, at higher levels of prosocial motivation, we found a stronger positive indirect path from supervisor emotional support to family performance through schedule-flexibility i-deals (see Figure 3). This supports hypothesis H7. However, contrary to our expectation, at higher levels of prosocial motivation (Figure 4) the

indirect relationship between supervisor emotional support and employees' deviant behaviors through flexibility i-deals became positive, contradicting hypothesis H8.

Post Hoc Analyses

Building on COR theory, we tested hypotheses H5 to H8 by examining two moderated indirect-effects models, one involving an interaction between supervisor emotional support and family-friendly environment, and the other between schedule-flexibility i-deals and prosocial motivation. However, to be consistent with the broader literature on workplace resources, particularly the question of whether resources inherent within the individual might induce similar effects as resources operating within the social or organizational context (Nielsen et al., 2017), we examined two alternative moderated indirect-effects models, one involving an interaction between supervisor emotional support and prosocial motivation (on schedule flexibility), and the other between schedule-flexibility i-deals and family-friendly environment (on the two outcomes).

The results paint an interesting picture in relation to our principal analyses. For example, supervisor emotional support and prosocial motivation interact positively to influence the indirect path for family performance through schedule-flexibility i-deals ($\beta = 0.08$, $p < 0.01$). By contrast, the indirect path from supervisor emotional support to deviant behaviors through schedule-flexibility i-deals was not significantly moderated by prosocial motivation. These results mirror our main analysis, given that the indirect effect of supervisor emotional support on family performance tended to increase with greater levels of family friendliness, whereas the indirect effect on deviant behaviors was not significantly affected. Unlike our main analysis, however, the interaction between schedule-flexibility i-deals and family-friendly environment generated no significant indirect effects, neither for family performance nor deviant behaviors. Therefore, these results indicate that, as we anticipated, much of the variance in employees' deviant behaviors is driven by an interaction between schedule-flexibility i-deals and prosocial

motivation (i.e., our main analysis), rather than an interaction between schedule-flexibility i-deals and family-friendly environment. It may be that higher levels of prosocial motivation among employees may actually intensify rather than offset the negative indirect relationship between supervisor emotional support and deviant behaviors through schedule-flexibility i-deals. Our findings highlight the need for more contingency-driven models to better understand how and when resources inherent within the individual may be most effective in comparison to resources operating within a social context.

Discussion

Our main goal in this study was to explore the mediating role of schedule-flexibility i-deals in relation to supervisor emotional support and employee outcomes (i.e., family performance and deviant behaviors). Drawing on COR theory, we also examined how family-friendly environment and prosocial motivation, contextual and personal resources respectively, influenced our hypothesized relationships. As an overall result, we contribute to the literature in a number of important ways, set out below.

Contributions to the i-deals literature. A core contribution of our study lies in adopting COR theory and expanding the nomological network of schedule-flexibility i-deals. We bridge the literatures on i-deals and COR theory and underline the importance of schedule-flexibility i-deals as resources that help employees improve their performance, especially within the non-work domain. By adopting such a resource-based perspective, we go beyond prior research on how i-deals can lead to better performance only through norm reciprocity (Anand, Vidhyarthi, Liden, & Rousseau, 2010) or their signaling functions (Ho & Kong, 2015). Based on COR theory, we consider employees as agents who actively manage their resources across both their work and home lives. Our focus on schedule-flexibility i-deals also addresses recent calls for research to disentangle different types of i-deals and integrate them with relevant theoretical frameworks (e.g., Las Heras et al., 2017b; Bal & Rousseau, 2015).

Second, the fact that i-deals are typically negotiated within a leader–follower relationship makes it crucial to consider the relational context within which they are created (Liao et al., 2016). Only recently has research started revealing the key role of managers in this process, showing i-deals to be related to supervisors’ emotional reactions (Rofcanin, Kiefer, et al., 2017), managers’ caregiving responsibilities at home (Las Heras, Van der Heijden, et al., 2017), and managerial support for employee careers (Bal & Jansen, 2015). We add to this literature, showing supervisor emotional support to be related to schedule-flexibility i-deals and, further, to home performance. Our results support the notion that employees can draw on emotional support as a resource and in doing so can begin to accumulate resources through schedule-flexibility i-deals that in turn facilitate improved home performance. Therefore, we provide a new theoretical approach to the understanding of the relationship between supervisor behavior, i-deals, and employee behavior, which considers the motivational aspects of resources in relation to employee behavior.

Third, from a contextual perspective, recent research revealed that perceptions of an overall supportive work environment (Las Heras, Rofcanin, et al., 2017), congruence of employee values within a team (Anand, Hu, Vidyarthi, & Liden, 2018), and managers’ differentiated relationship with employees (Liao et al., 2017) all shape the extent to which i-deals are effective, leading to better outcomes within work and non-work domains. We expand this growing body of research by focusing on family-friendly work environment as a contextual variable that is relevant and corresponds to the key function of schedule-flexibility i-deals, that is, to help employees perform well in both their work and private lives.

Finally, we found no evidence for a direct association between schedule-flexibility i-deals and deviant work behavior. This is in line with a recent study (Kong et al., 2018) that revealed that task i-deals did not have a significant relationship with the recipients’ deviant work behaviors. The absence of a direct relationship may reflect the importance of certain

boundary conditions on a given relationship. This is confirmed by our finding that prosocial motivation moderates the indirect relationship between supervisor emotional support, schedule-flexibility i-deals and deviant work behaviors, such that deviant work behaviors are reduced when employees have a low prosocial motivation, and are increased when prosocial motivation is high. We discuss this in more detail below, where we consider our contributions to the prosocial motivation literature.

Contributions to COR theory. Our main contribution to COR theory lies in focusing on and expanding gain cycles and resource enrichment (Halbesleben et al., 2014). From a resource perspective, a majority of studies have examined resource losses, with the ambition of reducing stress and exhaustion among employees (e.g., Westman et al., 2008; ten Brummelhuis, ter Hoeven, Bakker, & Peper, 2011). Conceptualizing supervisor emotional support as a volatile contextual resource that helps employees acquire more stable resources (i.e., through schedule-flexibility i-deals), we contribute to a growing body of research that emphasizes gain spirals (e.g., Mäkikangas et al., 2010; Xanthopoulou et al., 2009). Moreover, the results of our moderation hypotheses provide empirical support for the roles of the perceived environment and an individual’s characteristics in guiding resource-seeking and investment behaviors (Halbesleben et al., 2014), thus adding to our understanding of the way individuals utilize the resources available to them.

Contributions to the prosocial motivation literature. Our findings concerning the impact of prosocial motivation contribute to a body of research that studies the double-edged nature of this motive (Bolino & Grant, 2016). Given that COR theory aims to explain what drives people to acquire, invest or lose resources (Halbesleben et al., 2014), prosocial motivation occupies a key role in this framework. Conceptualized as an individual characteristic, our findings showed that for employees high in prosocial motivation, the positive association between schedule-flexibility i-deals and family performance is

strengthened. This supports the enriching role of prosocial motivation and extends recent research that has revealed the amplifying effect of prosocial motivation on the relationship between task-oriented i-deals and employees' work outcomes (Rofcanin et al., 2018). We expand and extend our knowledge of the impact of prosocial motivation by focusing on schedule-flexibility i-deals and broadening employee outcomes to include the family domain.

However, we also found that when prosocial motivation is high, schedule-flexibility i-deals result in higher levels of deviant behavior. This result was counter to our hypothesized effect, and may indicate a darker side to prosocial motivation (Bolino & Grant, 2016) in an i-deals context. One potential explanation is that employees characterized by high prosocial motivation are more likely to spread the benefits of schedule-flexibility i-deals to family members and their family domain (e.g., by spending more time with children and/or spouses or engaging in other family-related activities); while this is in line with an underlying aim of schedule-flexibility i-deals, it may also deplete work-specific resources, such as time, energy, focus, or attention, which can increase deviant behaviors (Lee & Ok, 2014). Our findings align with the original characterization of prosocial motivation by Brief and Motowidlo (1986), who argued that prosocial employees may help others in ways that diverge from or even undermine organizational goals. Overall, our findings paint an interesting but complex picture, which requires future research to disentangle how and why prosocial motivation works as a boundary condition in translating the impacts of different types of i-deals into domain-specific outcomes.

Limitations and Future Research

As with all studies, ours had limitations that should be noted. The use of cross-sectional data prevents us from making definitive causal claims. However, the direction of our hypotheses was informed by COR theory, lending weight to our interpretations. We suggest the use of longitudinal designs for future research, with predetermined time lags between

variables (e.g., six months to a year, which would be consistent with i-deals research; Ng & Feldman, 2014). This would enable researchers to explore the processual nature of the model.

A second limitation of our research is that some of the underlying processes and contingencies, including the motivation and proactivity of employees and their time and energy investments in translating supervisor emotional support into schedule-flexibility i-deals, have not been directly measured. Therefore, a fruitful avenue of future research would explicitly test and unravel the process of acquiring i-deals. One potential avenue could be to include personality and investment of personal resources as motivators for different types of i-deals, and to address the question of whether negotiating i-deals depletes or accumulates resources for the recipients.

Our measure of prosocial motivation was based on supervisor ratings and therefore could differ from an employee’s own assessment of their motivation. However, because it is desirable to be perceived as prosocial, individuals may report inflated prosocial motivation scores on their own account (Sedikides, Meek, Alicke, & Taylor, 2014), suggesting that managers may provide a more accurate appraisal. Similarly, we also used supervisor ratings to measure the family friendliness of the organizational environment, which we did for two main reasons: first, because supervisors are the linchpins and implementers of various HR practices and thus play a key role in shaping the culture of an organization (McDermott, Conway, Rousseau, & Flood, 2013; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007); second, because supervisors are regarded as dominant figures (i.e., paternalistic leaders) in Chilean and Colombian contexts and play a huge role in shaping the culture of the organizations they oversee (Carlier et al., 2012). However, future research could include an aggregate measure of multiple organizations’ family friendliness to capture the group-level nature of this construct.

In considering the contributions of our study, it is also worth noting that schedule-flexibility i-deals share common characteristics with flexible working arrangements, such as

addressing employees’ non-work needs by providing them with time- and location-based flexibilities (Leslie, Manchester, Park, & Mehng, 2012). Yet, a key difference exists: schedule-flexibility i-deals are individualized to the unique needs of a focal employee, while flexible work practices are usually made available to everyone (Hammer et al., 2009). The divergence of schedule-flexibility i-deals and flexible working arrangements has also been empirically demonstrated, with schedule-flexibility i-deals contributing to employee outcomes above and beyond those of flexible working arrangements (Las Heras et al., 2017b). Our study therefore broadens the understanding of *individualized* approaches to work flexibility.

With regards to future research, the role of managers in facilitating i-deals has recently been recognized and a few empirical studies have been carried out on it (e.g., the emotional reactions of managers as facilitators of i-deals; Rofcanin, Kiefer, et al., 2017). Future research in this area could build on our findings regarding supervisor emotional support as a facilitator of schedule-flexibility i-deals by examining other key aspects of the manager’s role. Managers’ leadership styles, work motivations, and personalities could constitute other factors to explore as facilitators of i-deals.

Our research shows that individual characteristics, in this case prosocial motivation, could influence or guide individuals’ choices of how to invest resources such as schedule-flexibility i-deals. Future research might further consider how individuals’ skills, such as their ability to actively manage their resources (Ellen, Kiewitz, Garcia, & Hochwarter, 2017), might also dictate their ability to translate i-deals into positive outcomes.

Looking above and beyond the focal employees and their managers, recent research on i-deals has started to emphasize a triadic approach to understanding how i-deals unfold (e.g., Marescaux & De Winne, 2015). Thus, a third key stakeholder in this process are co-workers, who constitute important enablers of these arrangements. Our findings show that higher supervisor perceptions of a family-friendly work environment and higher employee

perceptions of supervisors’ emotional support encourage the granting of schedule-flexibility i-deals. These findings emphasize that i-deals do not occur in a dyadic vacuum and future research could explore the extent to which co-worker support and reactions also play a role in making i-deals effective. Co-worker reactions (e.g., their justice appraisals and voice behaviors; Marescaux, De Winne, & Sels, 2019) could be considered as contextual variables that impact on how a focal employee’s i-deal translates into desirable work outcomes.

Practical Implications

Our findings show that the emotional support exhibited by supervisors and their perceptions of the family-friendly supportiveness of the organization lead to the granting of schedule-flexibility i-deals to subordinates. In a context in which i-deals yield more benefits when they supplement, as opposed to substitute for, existing HR practices, organizations should invest in training and development for supervisors. This is fundamental because supervisors are the linchpins for and key enablers of i-deals (McDermott et al., 2013). Such training and development interventions might include how to exhibit emotional support to subordinates (e.g., Hammer et al., 2011), and ways of supporting the family-friendly instincts of supervisors (e.g., Las Heras et al., 2017b) such that they develop enhanced perceptions of a family-friendly organization and can better empathize with the family-related needs of their subordinates. Supervisors may have periodic meetings to identify individualized support, mentoring and coaching for their subordinates in addressing their family needs, and to initiate policies to strengthen the family supportiveness of the overall organization.

We demonstrated that schedule-flexibility i-deals were associated with family performance but not with deviant behaviors of subordinates. Furthermore, these associations were conditional on the extent to which subordinates were prosocially motivated. Regarding the impact of schedule-flexibility i-deals on family performance, organizations could adopt these deals as HR tools to enable employees to achieve better work–life balance. However, the

findings regarding the impact on deviant behaviors produced some unexpected results. In order to avoid the problematic consequences of prosocial motivation, we suggest that organizations proactively help employees to balance demands at work and home so that they do not feel resource-depleted. One such approach is to develop periodic interventions to assess and ensure the availability of personal and job resources for all employees, so that prosocially motivated employees do not necessarily consume their own limited resources through assisting their co-workers (e.g., van Wingerden, Bakker, & Derks, 2016; Stollberger et al., 2019). Such interventions might take the form of an initial assessment of the baseline prosocial motivation levels of employees, before determining the extent to which they expend working time and personal resources in helping colleagues. After face-to-face workshops, which might be delivered by HR executives and senior managers, on the importance of balancing family and work, follow-up procedures might track employees with high versus low prosocial motivation, for example, through self-monitoring tools or cards (as developed by Hammer et al., 2009), to explore how they perform in their home and work domains. This is likely to help employees conserve and manage their limited resources in both domains and thus maximize the benefits of schedule-flexibility i-deals.

Conclusion

Our study used COR theory to position employees as active and agentic decision-makers, connecting their behaviors across multiple life domains. By taking a resource perspective we have identified new antecedents and outcomes for schedule-flexibility i-deals and, in doing so, have highlighted the combined importance of the supervisor, organizational context, and the individual in the creation and management of schedule-flexibility i-deals.

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Table 1: Means, standard deviations (SD), Cronbach’s alpha (in **bold** on the diagonal), and correlations among study variables.

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1 Supervisors’ emotional support	5.23	1.73	0.96													
2 Schedule-flexibility i-deals	5.30	1.51	.60*	0.81												
3 Family performance	5.64	1.27	.28*	.26*	0.94											
4 Deviant behaviors	5.83	1.07	-.25*	-.12*	.02	0.83										
5 Family-friendly work environment	1.48	0.77	.13*	.16*	.01	-	0.87									
6 Prosocial motivation	6.00	1.17	.18*	.18*	-.09	-	.02	0.92								
7 Employment contract	-	-	-.01	-.06	-.00	.10	-	-	-							
8 Working hours	-	-	-.05	.04	.03	.12	-	.11	-.23*	-						
9 Gender (Male)	-	-	.06	.08	.04	.01	.07	.01	-.12*	-.11*	-					
10 Age 20–29	-	-	-.01	.01	-.03	.06	-.06	-.09	-.05	.30*	.06	-				
11 Age 40–49	-	-	-.01	-.01	.06	-.03	.06	.04	-.02	-.17*	-.05	-.23*	-			
12 Age 50–59	-	-	-.01	-.02	.05	-.07	.04	.03	.06	-.11*	-.03	-.11*	-.16*	-		
13 Age 60 or over	-	-	-.03	-.05	.03	.04	.02	-.05	.01	.02	.01	-.05	-.07	-.04	-	
14 Education	-	-	-.02	-.01	.05	-.04	.06	.06	-.14*	.25*	-.11*	-.08	-.01	-.06	-	-
15 Marital status	-	-	.05	.12*	.09*	.05	.03	.01	-.08	-.06	.16*	-.17*	.14*	.08	-	.10*
																.03

Sample size: 513 subordinates and 67 supervisors.

* = $p < 0.05$.

Table 2: Results of SEM model.

Path	Standardized	Error	CI (95%)	
	Beta		Lower limit	Upper limit
<i>Direct effects (Standardized coefficients)</i>				
Supervisor emotional support → Schedule-flexibility i-deals	0.65***	0.04	0.58	0.73
Supervisor emotional support → Family performance	0.19***	0.05	0.09	0.29
Supervisor emotional support → Deviant behaviors	-0.21	0.12	-0.44	0.03
Schedule-flexibility i-deals → Family performance	0.17**	0.06	0.05	0.28
Schedule-flexibility i-deals → Deviant behaviors	-0.09	0.08	-0.25	0.07
<i>Indirect effects</i>				
Supervisor emotional support → Schedule-flexibility i-deals → Family performance	0.11**	0.04	0.03	0.19
Supervisor emotional support → Schedule-flexibility i-deals → Deviant behaviors	-0.06	0.05	-0.16	0.04
<i>Moderated effects</i>				
Supervisor emotional support*Family-friendly environment → Schedule-flexibility i-deals → Family performance	0.06**	0.02	0.02	0.10
Supervisor emotional support*Family-friendly environment → Schedule-flexibility i-deals → Deviant behaviors	-0.03	0.02	-0.08	0.02

Supervisor emotional support → Schedule-flexibility i-deals*Prosocial motivation → Family performance	0.14*	0.06	0.02	0.26
Supervisor emotional support → Schedule-flexibility i-deals*Prosocial motivation → Deviant behaviors	0.08*	0.03	0.01	0.14

*Sample size: 513 subordinates and 67 supervisors. Significance: * = $p < 0.05$; ** = $p < 0.01$; *** = $p < 0.001$. CI: Confidence interval.*

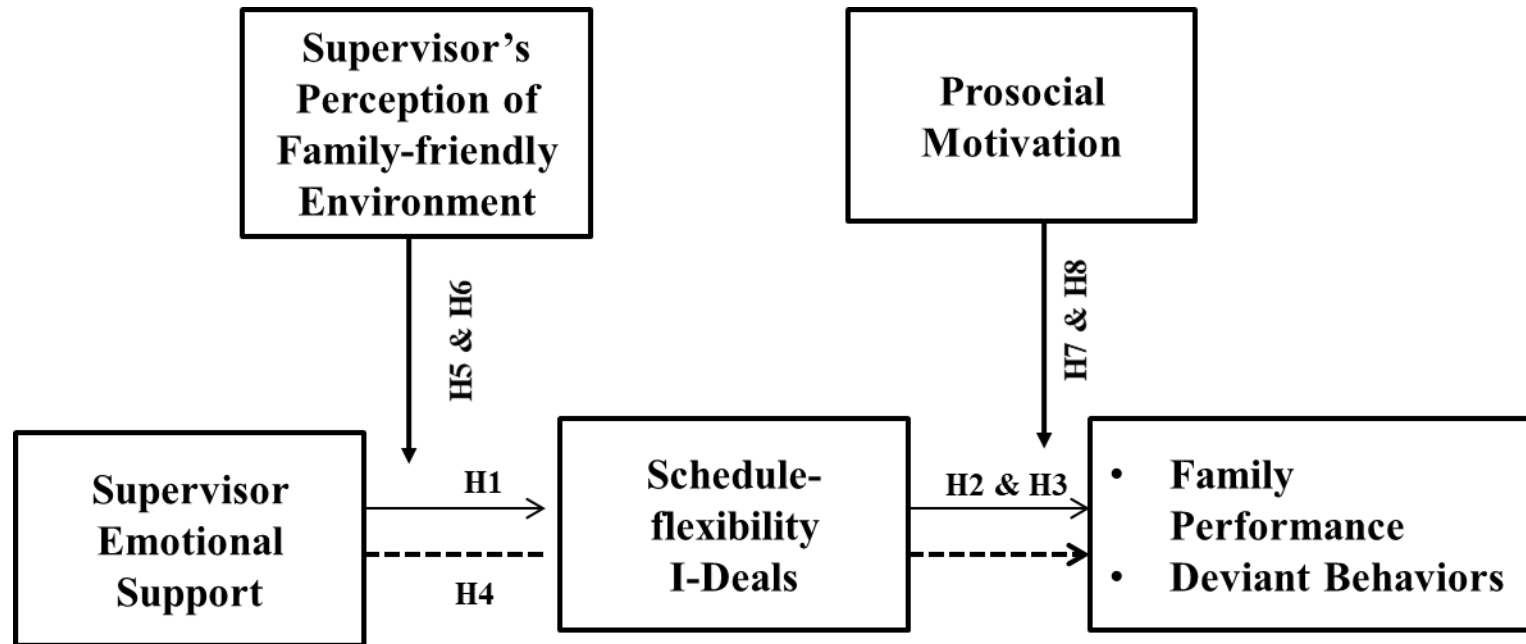


Figure 1: Conceptual model.

Note. Dotted lines represent the mediation of flexibility i-deals between supervisor emotional support and employee outcomes.

H5 & H6: Represent the moderation of the supervisor's perception of the family-friendly work environment on the indirect effects of supervisor emotional support on employee outcomes through schedule-flexibility i-deals.

H7 & H8: Represent the moderation of prosocial motivation on the indirect effects of supervisor emotional support on employee outcomes through schedule-flexibility i-deals.

Figure 2. Moderated effect of family friendly environment

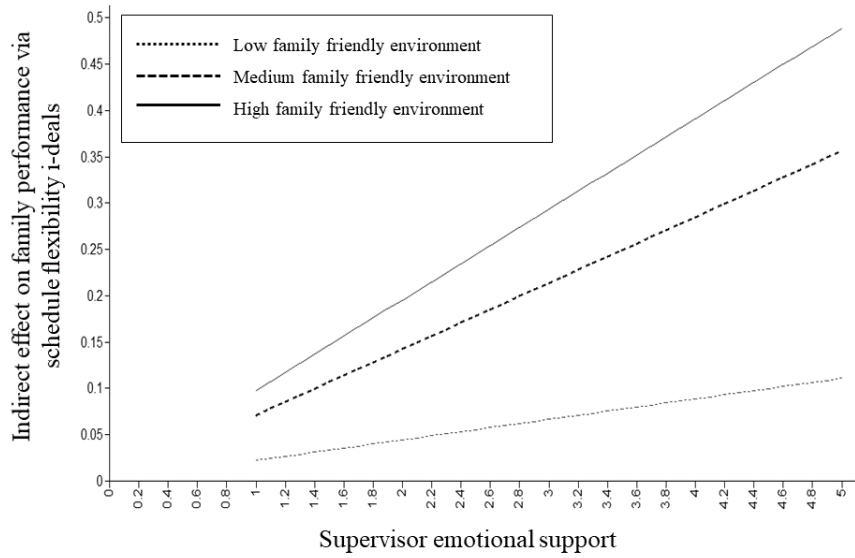


Figure 3. Moderated effect of prosocial motivation

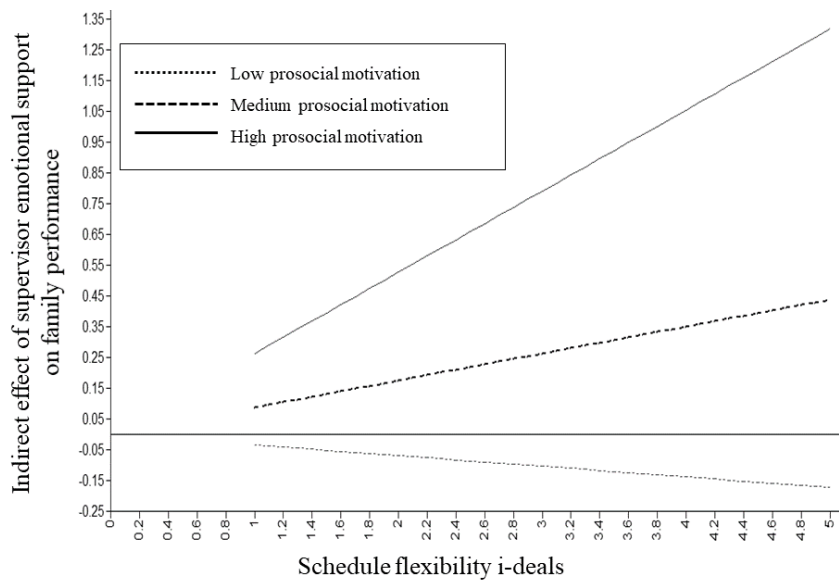


Figure 4. Moderated effect of prosocial motivation

