CHAPTER 10

TO BE ONE OF US, YOU HAVE TO FEEL LIKE ONE OF US: HOW LEADERS’ EXPRESSED EMOTIONS INFLUENCE FOLLOWERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF LEADER SELF-SACRIFICE INTENTIONS AND EFFECTIVENESS IN A CRISIS SITUATION

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ABSTRACT

Displaying appropriate emotions enhances followers’ perceptions toward a leader. The present study examined the moderating effect of leader group-prototypicality on the relationship between leader’s emotion appropriateness and followers’ perceptions toward the leader (i.e., self-sacrifice intentions and effectiveness). Based on a set of 366 Malaysian students’ experimental survey responses, leader group-prototypicality...
emerged as a significant moderator. Specifically, the effect of leader’s emotion appropriateness was stronger for group-prototypical leaders than non-group-prototypical leaders. Hence, to enhance their perceived effectiveness, leaders should portray appropriate emotions and ensure that they are viewed as representative by their followers.

**Keywords:** Emotions; leader prototypicality; social identity; emotions; crisis

**OVERVIEW: EMOTIONS IN GROUP LEADERSHIP**

The emerging interest in affective processes in organization research indicates that scholars no longer assume organizational processes to be dictated and driven solely by rational, cognitive processes (Brief & Weiss, 2002; George, 2000). In particular, the role of affect, both emotions and moods, has been prevalent in the scholarly research of charismatic leaders (Bass, 1985; Conger & Kanungo, 1998). Studies of leader charisma thus highlight the importance of emotional appeals as key drivers of perceived leader effectiveness, and that such leaders appeal not only to followers’ minds, but also their hearts. Research in both laboratory and field settings indicated that leaders’ expressions of affect toward their followers also impacts followers’ perceptions of the leader’s effectiveness. Erez, Misangyi, Johnson, LePine, and Halverson (2008) conceptualized leader charisma revolving around the transfer of positive affect from leaders to followers. These authors find that charismatic leaders influenced followers through the transfer of positive affect, causing followers to feel more positive affect themselves. Bono and Ilies (2006), likewise, demonstrate that charismatic leaders’ expressions of positive emotion impacted followers’ own mood and their perceptions of the leader’s effectiveness, and their attraction toward the leader.

The majority of leadership research, however, tends to be leader-centric in that it focuses on the impact of leaders and leader-centered effect on leadership outcomes. Followers, however, are far from the passive, subservient parties in the leadership process that traditional leadership theory assumes. Followers themselves are active, influential parties that may also influence leadership outcomes. The call for more follower-centric research on leadership is surprisingly not new, and has been again suggested as an avenue for future research in a recent review of leadership inquiry (see Gooty, Connelly, Griffith, & Gupta, 2010; Hollander, 1992; Lord & Hall, 1992).
Despite these calls, most of leadership research remains primarily leader-centered, with less attention devoted toward understanding how followers’ perceptions (and subsequent behaviors) toward their leaders determines the effectiveness or outcome of the leadership process. In the context of our present study, we also argue that the effectiveness of leaders’ expressed affect (and perhaps, attempts to influence using affective displays) may hence hinge on how followers perceive such displays of emotion.

Recent theorizing further suggests that scholars also need to consider contexts or situations in which the expression of negative affect to followers may be seen not only as justified, but also as appropriate. Gooty et al. (2010) statement emphasize the omission of negative affect influences on leadership processes, stating that “The impact of specific leader emotional displays is contextually dependent,” and that “blanket statements regarding the drawbacks of negative leader emotion are dangerous” (p. 993). In this regard, we consider how such contextual influences impact leadership outcomes associated with the leader’s expressed emotions. Specifically, we consider how leader group-prototypicality (i.e., representativeness of their group) affects how followers perceive their expressed emotions. We examine this effect in a situation where demands on leader group-prototypicality and their relevant emotional expressions are particularly important — that is, within a crisis situation. We begin by first reviewing the role of emotions within a group-level context, and the role of leaders in affirming and upholding group identity through expressions of emotions. We then review the social identity model of leadership, focusing specifically on how leader group-representativeness (i.e., leader group-prototypicality) moderates the relationship between leaders’ expressed emotions and followers’ perceptions of their leader.

EMOTIONS AS AN ELEMENT OF GROUP IDENTITY: THE ROLE OF LEADER EXPRESSED EMOTIONS

Conceptual and empirical evidence suggest that group-level emotion forms an important part of group identity and is distinct from individual-level emotion (Bettencourt & Hume, 1999; Smith, Seger, & Mackie, 2007). Within the context of social interactions, the sharing and collective expression of similar emotions forms an important part of one’s social identity (Rimé, 2007). Further, collective expressions of the same emotions lead individuals to experience emotional communion, which contributes to
feelings of unity and similarity, enhancing feelings of belongingness to the
group (Rimé, 2007). In a leadership context, leaders may thus “set the emo-
tional tone” of their groups, and this influences how followers are expected
to feel within the group context (Pescosolido, 2002). Followers might look
to leaders as a reference point on which to assess the appropriateness of
their emotions when operating in groups. Further, the leader’s own
emotional responses serve as a particularly important reference point for
followers’ expected behaviors under conditions of uncertainty and ambigu-
ity (Pescosolido, 2002). Expressions of such situationally appropriate
emotions are thus overt expressions of a leader’s orientation and concern
for their group’s welfare (Haslam et al., 2001).

Numerous studies highlight the impact of leader emotional expressions
on leadership outcomes and followers’ perceptions toward their leaders
(Dasborough & Ashkanasy, 2002; Lewis, 2000; Newcombe & Ashkanasy,
2002). Recent research continuing this line of inquiry focuses on the context-
tual factors influencing the appropriateness of leaders’ expressed emotions
within a given situation. Bucy (2000) examined how followers process,
perceive, and interpret emotional expressions of political leaders, and
whether such displays of leader emotion were deemed to contribute to
perceptions of the leader’s effectiveness. Bucy (2000) suggests that followers
employ an “emotional appropriateness heuristics” to judge a political
leader’s nonverbal behavior and make inferences about the leader’s traits,
suggesting that the leader’s expression of emotions must be compatible
with the situation and context in which the leader is conveying the message.
In two experimental studies, Bucy (2000) found that followers rated leaders
as being more honest and trustworthy if they were seen to be expressing
emotions appropriate to the situation in question. Conversely, the lack of
appropriate emotional expressions by these leaders resulted in followers
evaluating these leaders negatively. Bucy (2000) suggests that when leaders
violate followers’ expectations of normative, situationally appropriate
emotional expressions, followers experience lowered confidence toward the
leader and rate the leader more negatively than if the leader expressed
situationally appropriate emotions.

Stewart, Waller, and Schubert (2009) also illustrate the importance of
situationally appropriate emotional expressions in the context of political
leaders’ speeches. Contextualizing their study within a crisis situation, these
authors found that even brief, fleeting, and sparsely expressed facial micro-
expressions had a strong impact on viewers’ perceptions of the leader and
their emotional state. Stewart et al. (2009) argued that their impact of emo-
tional expressions would be especially important during a crisis, as viewers
rely on the leaders’ emotional expressions as an overt indicator of the leader’s credibility in a demanding situation. The authors manipulated the presence of leader facial micro-expressions in their experimental study, and found that followers judged their leader to be more credible and trustworthy when such micro-expressions were present, than when such micro-expressions were removed from the leader’s speech. Stewart et al. (2009) study hence crucially highlights the subtle, yet important influence that such brief emotional expressions have on how followers form judgments about their leaders.

Madera and Smith’s (2009) recent study sheds further light on the importance of situationally appropriate emotions in influencing perceptions of a leader. However, rather than focusing on the presence or absence of situationally appropriate emotions, they examined how leader expressions of anger and sadness during a crisis situation and how these expressions impacted followers’ perceptions of the leader’s effectiveness. The authors examined whether anger or sadness were equally perceived as being appropriate or otherwise in the context of an organizational crisis. Results from this study were that in a crisis situation, leaders expressing either sadness or a combination of sadness/anger emotions were perceived to be more effective than leaders expressing anger alone. In explaining their results, Madera and Smith (2009) stated that the expression of sadness toward the crisis situation was perceived to be appropriate by the followers, who deemed that the leader expressed sympathy and concern for the organization’s welfare. More importantly, these results suggest that leader expressions of negative emotions may at times be deemed appropriate or perhaps even desired by followers.

Taken together, these studies suggest the importance of leaders expressing situationally appropriate emotions in relation to the context of the groups they lead. Hence, leaders expressing situationally appropriate emotions may in fact be conveying their group-orientation, and intention to act for the benefit of the groups they lead. Followers may in fact be using observable emotions-based cues to assess the extent to which the leader is willing to engage in group-serving behavior. As is consistent with the emotions-as-social-information (EASI) model (Van Kleef, De Dreu, & Manstead, 2010), individuals may judge others’ intentions and expected behaviors based on their evaluations of the expresser’s emotions. Indeed, research shows that a leader’s emotional expressions are typically more important in influencing followers’ judgments of a leader’s sincerity than the objective content of the leader’s communication (Dasborough & Ashkanasy, 2002; Newcombe & Ashkanasy, 2002). In this regard, we
propose that followers will look to a leader’s expressed emotions as a way to judge the leader’s trustworthiness and in-group-orientation. Further, having a leader to express situationally appropriate emotions in a crisis (a heightened uncertainty and ambiguity situation) helps followers reduce subjective uncertainty, effectively signaling to the followers that the leaders are orientated toward the interests and welfare of the groups they lead, and as a way to guide the group under conditions of stress and uncertainty (Grieve & Hogg, 1999; Schaubroeck & Shao, 2012). However, the preceding studies did not consider the influence of the leader’s group-relevant attributes on how effective or impactful their expressed emotions will be in influencing follower perceptions. In this study, we examined the effect of emotion appropriateness on followers’ perception of the leader self-sacrifice intentions and leader effectiveness on varying levels of leader group-prototypicality.

SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY OF LEADERSHIP: LEADER PROTOTYPICALITY AND EFFECTIVENESS

The social identity model of leadership (SIMOL) proposed by van knippenberg and Hogg (2003) suggest that leadership effectiveness is dependent on how leaders affirm and create a distinct, social identity for their followers. Followers’ social identity is enacted in a collective context, where followers identify themselves as followers of a certain group, with a distinct leader, and this identity is distinct from that of their idiosyncratic, individual-level identities (Bettencourt & Hume, 1999; Hogg, Cooper-Shaw, & Holzworth, 1993; Hogg, Hardie, & Reynolds, 1995). Followers’ social identity serves to distinguish followers of a certain group from members of a different group. According to the SIMOL, an effective leader is one who leads their groups in a manner that fulfills the group members’ need for positive distinction and enhances their self-esteem through affiliation with a particular group (Reicher, Haslam, & Hopkins, 2005). Followers’ social identity, therefore helps reduce followers’ feelings of uncertainty brought upon by contextual and environmental influences by allowing followers to identify with a particular group and/or toward a leader who affirms the group’s values, goals and ideals (Hogg, 2000, 2001; Hogg & Terry, 2000).

The premise of the SIMOL revolves around a key leader characteristic — the extent to which the leader is representative or prototypical of the group.
Group-prototypical leaders, according to the SIMOL, are leaders who are seen to embody and represent a group prototype different from that of other groups. These group prototypes are essentially fuzzy sets of attributes that in a social context represent the essence of a group and differentiate it from other groups (Hogg, 2001; van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). Being prototypical of their group’s ideals, values, and norms therefore creates a positive distinctiveness between the leader’s own groups from that of other groups.

Leader group-prototypicality has been consistently shown as the central element in determining leader effectiveness under the SIMOL. In Hains, Hogg, and Duck’s (1997) experimental study, the authors found that group-prototypical leaders were more likely to be accepted and perceived by followers as being more effective than non-group prototypical leaders. Fielding and Hogg’s (1997) subsequent field study replicated this finding, showing that followers based their evaluations of leader effectiveness on how group-prototypical they perceived their leader to be. Similarly, Hains, Hogg, and Mason (1998) found that when group identity was salient, followers supported, endorsed, and evaluated leader effectiveness based on the leader’s group-prototypicality. Results from these studies suggest that group prototypical leaders are more likely to be perceived as being “in tune” with their followers, and more likely to uphold the group’s identity. Hogg and van Knippenberg (2003) suggest that this may stem from two underlying follower-based cognitive mechanisms: (1) Followers’ perceptions that since group prototypical leaders have a greater degree of referent and information power stemming from them being prototypical, they are more likely than non-group-prototypical leaders to engage in actions that will benefit the group, and (2) positive attributions of a leader’s prototypicality as indicative of his/her group-orientation. In view of this, there is one particular avenue for further research within the SIMOL that has not yet been fully examined. While the SIMOL has prescribed that prototypical leaders exemplify and represent the group’s values, expectation of behaviors and norms, fewer studies have examined how prototypical leaders uphold and represent the group’s collective emotions. Brown and Capozza (2006) note this oversight, stating that the affective processes inherent in social identity theory have been largely overlooked. To our best knowledge, the present study is the first to examine the relationship between emotion appropriateness and followers’ perception toward the leader (i.e., self-sacrifice intentions and leader effectiveness) proposing leader group-prototypicality as a moderator.
Linking both streams of study — the appropriateness of leader expressed emotions and the social identity theory — leads us to propose that leader’s expressed emotions will serve as an indicator of their self-sacrifice intentions and effectiveness. The leader’s group-prototypicality may be a potentially important moderator that influences followers’ perceptions of whether a leader’s expressed emotions serves as an accurate indicator of their self-sacrifice intentions and effectiveness. Specifically, we predict that the effect of expressed emotions on followers’ perception toward the leader (self-sacrifice intentions and effectiveness) will be stronger for prototypical leaders than non-prototypical leaders. We argue that this will be the case given that group-prototypical leaders are expected to engage in actions (and in this context, express emotions) that are deemed appropriate for the group’s current situation, in comparison with non-group-prototypical leaders. Likewise, we expect that followers are less likely to infer such expectations from non-group-prototypical leaders. The expression of appropriate emotions by prototypical leaders is therefore likely to carry more weight than if the appropriate emotions are expressed by non-group-prototypical leaders. Our study’s model is depicted in Fig. 1 and we hypothesize that:

**Hypothesis 1.** There will be a two-way interaction effect between the appropriateness of the leader’s expressed emotions and leader prototypicality on followers’ perceptions of leader self-sacrifice intentions.

**Hypothesis 2.** There will be a two-way interaction effect between the appropriateness of the leader’s expressed emotions and leader prototypicality on followers’ perceptions of the leader’s effectiveness.

![Fig. 1. Proposed Relationships among Study Variables.](image-url)
METHOD

Scenario Development and Validation

We developed a crisis scenario that would suitably and realistically depict an organizational crisis situation to suit a laboratory experiment context. To do this, we enlisted the assistance of an experienced male actor who has 2 years experience in local theatrical productions, and has previously been cast in roles requiring explicit displays of emotion. We asked the same actor to play the role of a leader involved in the crisis situation. The hypothetical scenario created for the present study was of a university society engaged in social work and community welfare (The Society for Social Work and Community Welfare, henceforth referred to as the “Society”) that is presently undergoing a serious crisis. The leader was to give the members of the university society (i.e., the followers) a speech to his followers. We chose this particular scenario on the basis that this hypothetical situation would be one that our undergraduate participants can relate to easier within the context of an experimental setting.

We tested the suitability of our crisis scenario with a sample of 30 undergraduate psychology students. To do so, we first presented the students with the scenario of the Society in crisis, suffering funding cutbacks and members deserting the Society, and then informed the participants that the Society’s leader would be holding a video conference to detail the crisis situation further. In developing this scenario, we aimed to be consistent with Boal and Bryson’s (1988) definition of crisis, which is defined by these authors as a situation where necessary resources are in short supply, and a threat to organizational standing. Upon reading this scenario, participants were then asked the following question, “Which of these emotions are appropriate for the leader to express during the video conference?” Participants then rated the appropriateness of the specific leader emotions on a 7-point scale, where 1 = extremely inappropriate and 7 = extremely appropriate. The seven-answer options presented to them are based on Ekman’s (2003) basic emotions (sadness, fear, surprise, disgust, anger, contempt, and joy).

Results indicated that participants rated sadness being the most appropriate leader emotional expression for this scenario ($M = 5.07$, $S.D. = 0.96$), whereas joy ($M = 2.07$, $S.D. = 1.13$) was seen to be the most inappropriate emotional expression for the leader to display in the video conference. Dependent $t$-tests indicate that the means of both these emotions were significantly different from one another ($t(28) = 5.44, p < 0.001$).
Actor Training and Video Recording

We conducted training sessions with the actor to ensure that the portrayal of both sadness and joy expressions for the study was as accurate and authentic as possible. Rehearsals and training sessions were conducted over a course of 6 weeks in one-hour blocks. We asked that the actor referred to pictorial references in Ekman’s (2003) book as a guide, along with material from the Research and Development at the Institute of Animation at Filmakademie Baden-Wuerttember, Germany (see http://research.animationsinstitut.de/9.0.html, accessed on May 28, 2011). The website hosts a series of pictures of emotional expressions based on psychological research, namely Paul Ekman and Wallace Freisman’s FACS (Facial Action Coding System) Manual. Upon completion of the training, we recorded the actor verbally detailing the crisis scenario through a video recording. The actor portrayed either appropriate (sadness) or inappropriate (joy) emotions while detailing the crisis scenario. This serves as our manipulation for the appropriateness of leader emotions. We also asked the actor to state the extent to which he is similar (group-prototypical) or dissimilar (non-group-prototypical) to his followers, serving as the manipulation for leader prototypicality.

Sample

Three hundred and sixty-six undergraduate psychology students from a large private institution in Malaysia participated in this study in exchange for course credit. The sample consisted of 83 males and 283 females aged 18–56 with an average age 20.71 years. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four experimental treatment conditions (see procedures below). The study was conducted over the course of one month.

Procedure

Participants took part in this experiment under the premise that this was a study of leadership, identity, and emotions. No mention was made regarding “appropriateness” of emotions in the information letter or consent forms. Once participants indicated their consent to participate in the study, they were given three minutes to read a description of the situation:

You are a team member of your university’s Society for Social Work and Community Welfare. Every semester, your Society plans and engages in nationwide community
work such as helping build low-cost housing for less fortunate individuals in rural communities. Your Society has also recently been involved in raising funds for young children in East Malaysia, which will be used to build a school close to their community.

Due to recent cutbacks in university funding support, however, you have had to scale back on the types of projects and services you can provide to those in need. University funding support for the Society has been cut from $8000 to $3000 a year. To make matters worse, many members are also leaving the Society to seek out other better-funded clubs to join. The cutback in university funding also means that you have had to make the difficult decision with other Society members to reduce the number of community engagements you can be a part of. The situation looks bleak, and you wonder how long it will be before the Society needs to disband — both due to a lack of funding, and lack of interest from university students. It is clear to you that this situation is a crisis.

Your Society’s leader has decided to hold an online video conference to discuss the Society’s crisis situation with you. The online video conference will now be streamed to you, and the leader will address you as team members of the Society for Social Work and Community Welfare.

The scenario above is designed to prime the participants’ into assuming their roles as team members for the purposes of this experiment. Following suggestions by Halverson, Holladay, Kazama, and Quiñones (2004), we developed a crisis situation that would not be attributed to poor leader performance. The scenario above hence refers to a crisis that is in no way attributable to the leader’s prior actions or decisions. After reading the scenario, the experiment facilitator then plays one of four videos with the leader (as portrayed by the actor) addressing the participants in relation to the issues above. In the appropriate condition, the leader describes the situation using emotion-laden words related to sadness such as “discouraging,” “disappointed,” “worried,” and “grim,” while also portraying facial expressions indicative of sadness throughout his speech. Conversely, in the inappropriate condition, the leader related the crisis situation word-for-word, but instead portrayed facial expressions that hinted on subtle joy and contentment. We were cautious ensuring that the actor did not portray the joyful expression in an exaggerated manner, which may have caused participants to perceive the emotion as being inauthentic. Rather, we intended that the leader’s the expression of joy in the inappropriate condition to subtly suggest that the leader was lackadaisical toward the Society’s crisis and problems.

We manipulated leader group-prototypicality (non-prototypicality) by having the leader describe how similar or different he is to the participants using the following verse:

I hope we can work together to bring our society back and running to the way it was before. As you know, as your leader, I (closely/do not always) represent the society’s
culture and norms. I have a very (similar/different) background with all of you in terms of work experience with social and welfare groups in the country. I also have many (similar/different) values in terms of life and work with you as the society’s members. I hope you (see this/do not see this) to be a (positive/negative) point when working with me in restoring the society.

We asked the leader to portray an emotionally neutral expression when describing the extent of his prototypicality above. Our rationale for this is to limit the likelihood of the leader’s emotional expressions overriding the believability of the leader’s claims that he is similar (i.e., group-prototypical) to the participants. The leader would then conclude the video conference while portraying the required emotions (joy or sadness) while saying:

Please take a moment to reflect on the challenges facing our society at present. I will return next week to discuss these issues with you in further detail. More importantly, I would be interested in hearing ideas and suggestions that might help pull our society through this difficult time. Thank you for your attention during this meeting.

Thus, only the leader’s statement on the extent of his group-prototypicality/non-group-prototypicality is portrayed in an emotionally neutral manner. All other statements in relation to the crisis are conveyed to the participants with either sad or joyous facial expressions. Once participants viewed a video, they were then instructed to complete the questionnaire to assess their perceptions of the leader in the video. Upon completion of the questionnaire, participants were thanked for their participation and sworn to secrecy on the items on the questionnaire.

Measures

The two outcome variables in the present study (i.e., leader self-sacrifice intentions and leader effectiveness) were measured using two continuous scales, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). There were no reverse-coded items in both scales. Thus, a higher score of the scale indicates a higher score on the construct.

Leader Self-Sacrifice Intentions

Participants’ perceived leader self-sacrifice intentions were measured using a four-item measure adapted from van Knippenberg and van Knippenberg (2005) study. A sample item of this scale was “The leader is likely to make a personal sacrifice for the Society.” Changes were made to reflect ratings of the leaders in relation to the society (as opposed to “team”) in the scenario. This scale shows a reliability of 0.81 in the present study.
Leadership Effectiveness

Participants’ perceived leader effectiveness was measured based on the items used in van Knippenberg and van Knippenberg study (2005). A sample item of this scale was “My Society leader is effective as a leader.” This four-item scale shows a reliability of 0.89 in the present study.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics and Zero-Order Correlations

Means and standard deviations of the study variables are presented in Table 1. The significant positive relationship between the two outcome variables (i.e., self-sacrifice intentions and perceived leader effectiveness) indicated leaders who are perceived as having greater self-sacrifice intentions are more likely to be perceived as effective leaders ($r = 0.67$, $p < 0.001$). Further, the significant negative relationship between leader group-prototypicality and self-sacrifice intentions suggested that non-group-prototypical leaders are more likely to be perceived by followers as having less self-sacrifice intentions than group-prototypical leaders ($r = −0.12$, $p < 0.05$).

Hypothesis Tests

Two parallel two-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were conducted to test the study hypotheses. In both analyses, emotion appropriateness and leader group-prototypicality were entered as independent variables whereas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Leader prototypicality</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Emotion appropriateness</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>−0.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Self-sacrifice intentions</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>−0.12*</td>
<td>−0.06</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Perceived leader effectiveness</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>−0.06</td>
<td>0.67***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: $n = 366$.
Leader prototypicality: 1 = prototypical, 2 = non-prototypical.
Emotion appropriateness: 1 = appropriate emotion, 2 = inappropriate emotion.
*p < 0.05; ***p < 0.001.
self-sacrifice intentions (or perceived leader effectiveness) was entered as the dependent variable.

For Hypothesis 1, we predicted that there will be a two-way interaction effect between emotion appropriateness and leader group-prototypicality on self-sacrifice intentions. Results from the factorial ANOVA shows that the main effect of leader group-prototypicality on self-sacrifice intentions was significant $F(1, 362) = 5.18, p < 0.05$; however, the main effect of emotion appropriateness on self-sacrifice intentions was nonsignificant $F(1, 362) = 1.83, ns$. Specifically, the effect of leader group-prototypicality on self-sacrifice intentions was stronger when the leader displays appropriate emotions than when the leader displayed inappropriate emotions; however, regardless of whether the leader displays appropriate or inappropriate emotions, the leader’s self-sacrifice intentions were rated similarly by the followers.

Further, the ANOVA analyses showed that the interaction effect of leader group-prototypicality and emotion appropriateness on self-sacrifice intentions was significant $F(1, 362) = 6.94, p < 0.01$. To follow up on this interaction effect, we performed a simple effect analysis. The simple effect analyses showed that the effect of emotion appropriateness on self-sacrifice intentions was significant when the leader is portrayed as group-prototypical, $F(1, 362) = 7.51, p < 0.01$ but nonsignificant when the leader is portrayed as non-group-prototypical $F(1, 362) = 0.88, ns$. This result suggests that leader group-prototypicality is a significant moderator in the relationship between emotion appropriateness and self-sacrifice intentions. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is supported. Fig. 2 illustrates the significant moderating effect of leader prototypicality on the relationship between emotion appropriateness and self-sacrifice intentions.

A parallel two-way ANOVA was performed to test Hypothesis 2. Hypothesis 2 states that there will be an interaction effect of emotion appropriateness and leader group-prototypicality on perceived leader effectiveness. The ANOVA results showed that the main effect of leader group-prototypicality on perceived leader effectiveness was nonsignificant $F(1, 362) = 0.05, ns$. Hence, regardless of whether the leader is perceived as being group-prototypical or non-group prototypical, followers gave similar rating on the leader’s effectiveness. Further, the main effect of emotion appropriateness on perceived leader effectiveness was also nonsignificant, $F(1, 362) = 1.45, ns$. Hence, ratings of the leader’s effectiveness was unaffected by the appropriateness of leader’s emotions.

In contrast, the ANOVA results showed that the interaction effect of leader group-prototypicality and emotion appropriateness on perceived
leader effectiveness was significant, $F(1, 362) = 5.92, p < 0.05$. To follow up this interaction effect, we performed a simple effect analysis. The simple effect analysis showed that the effect of emotion appropriateness on leader effectiveness was significant in the group-prototypical leader condition, $F(1, 362) = 6.25, p < 0.05$ but nonsignificant in the non-group-prototypical
leader condition $F (1, 362) = 0.80$, $ns$. This result suggests that leader group-prototypicality significantly moderated the relationship between emotion appropriateness and perceived leader effectiveness. Hence, Hypothesis 2 is supported. Fig. 3 illustrates the significant moderating effect.

As a whole, the effect of a leader’s expressed emotions on whether they are perceived as having self-sacrifice intentions and being effective by followers is moderated by the extent to which they are perceived as being group-prototypical. That is, the impact of a leader’s expressed emotions on followers’ ratings was greater for a prototypical than for a non-prototypical leader.

**DISCUSSION**

The aim of our study was to investigate the moderating effect of leader group-prototypicality on the relationship between the leader’s expressions of situationally appropriate emotions and followers’ perception toward the leader (i.e., self-sacrifice intentions and leader effectiveness). We found that the effect of emotion appropriateness expressed by the leader on perceptions of self-sacrifice intentions and leader effectiveness was moderated by leader group-prototypicality. Specifically, the relationship between appropriate emotions and followers’ perception toward the leader (i.e., self-sacrifice intentions and leader effectiveness) was significant and stronger when the leader is perceived by followers as being prototypical than when the leader was perceived as non-group-prototypical.

The significant moderating effect of leader group-prototypicality highlights the importance of examining individual difference variables in terms of the leader’s group-prototypicality with regards to the appropriateness of their expressed emotions and perceived leader intentions/effectiveness. Further, the moderated relationship signals the need for more complex research design that is able to tap more than a direct relationship between emotion appropriateness and leader effectiveness which has been established in previous research (Bucy, 2000; Connelly & Ruark, 2010; Madera & Smith, 2009). Despite the significant interactive effect, the present study did not find significant main effect of emotion appropriateness. This comes as a surprise yet intriguing pattern of results. In the present study, the significant moderating effect justifies the absence of significant main effect of emotion appropriateness. That is, the effect of emotion appropriateness only occurs when the leader is perceived as representative of the group. This pattern of
finding is consistent with the Hogg and van Knippenberg’s (2003) proposition in which group prototypical leaders are more likely to be perceived by followers to engage in behavior that will benefit the group. We discuss these findings in greater detail in the following section.

Theoretical Contributions

The present study findings contribute to the literature in several ways. First, we extend on social identity theory by providing some evidence to illustrate the importance of considering emotion as an integral component of group identity. This is in line with Brown and Capozza’s (2006) suggestion that social identity theory has overlooked group emotional experience as an important part of group identity. In particular, our findings emphasize the role of leader emotional expression in communicating their commitment to their group. We show that a leader’s emotional expressions are an important mechanism for reducing followers’ experience of situational ambiguity within a group context.

Second, consistent with the central SIMOL proposition on the importance of leader group-prototypicality, group-prototypical leaders are more likely to be perceived as effective as compared to non-group-prototypical leaders (Fielding & Hogg, 1997; Hains et al., 1997, 1998). However, the present study found that leader group-prototypicality may not only directly influence leader effectiveness, but also act as a moderator, influencing the strength of the relationship between emotion appropriateness and leader effectiveness. The significant moderating findings shed light on social identity and leadership literature as well as emotion literature. Previous research has found that followers use leaders’ expressed emotions as a means to reduce uncertainty (Grieve & Hogg, 1999; Schaubroeck & Shao, 2012) and as a cue to evaluate the leader’s in-group-orientation and trustworthiness. However, our findings showed that followers may only use leader’s emotions as a cue in judging the effectiveness and self-sacrificial behavior when the leader is perceived as prototypical. Our findings provide support for a more integrated model of social identity theory – one which also considers the role of affective processes in relation to leader group-prototypicality.

Third, our study also adds to recent research on the leeway and leniency afforded toward group-prototypical leaders. Termed the “license to fail” effect, recent studies by Giessner, van Knippenberg, and Sleebos (2009) and Giessner and van Knippenberg (2008) show that followers are
generally more forgiving of a group-prototypical leader’s failure to achieve group or organizational outcomes. In both studies, the authors highlight that it is the element of trust shared between the group-prototypical leader and the followers that provides this “buffer,” allowing group-prototypical leaders more leeway in their actions, more leniency by which they are judged by their followers, and the extent to which followers attribute failures to the leader. We show in our study, however, that while this leeway is given toward instances where the group-prototypical leader has failed on a task, group-prototypical leaders are still not immune from being judged negatively if they are perceived as expressing inappropriate emotions. This may be because expressions of inappropriate emotions effectively the trust and negatively impact the positive attributions given toward group-prototypical leaders, leading them to be evaluated negatively by followers.

Lastly, we add to leadership theory by considering the impact of leader emotions within a different situational and cultural context. Most of the preceding research on the impact and appropriateness of leader emotion were conducted using leadership in Western political contexts (Bucy, 2000; Stewart et al., 2009) whereas the present study is conducted outside within the context of organizational leadership in an Asian culture. Despite this difference, we find that the propositions of “emotional appropriateness heuristics” (Bucy, 2000) and the EASI model (Van Kleef et al., 2010) are generalizable in explaining the effect of emotion appropriateness within a context that is different from that of the political arena. To date, emotion research on organizational behavior in non-Western societies is still in its infancy. To the best of our knowledge, our study is among the first to examine the moderation model between emotion appropriateness and leader effectiveness (and sacrifice intentions) relationship, while considering leader group-prototypicality as an important moderator of this relationship. This contributes not only to the mainstream management literature, which is dominated by studies conducted in the West, but also to the research in Asian cultures as a whole.

Practical Implications

Findings from our study highlight several important implications for leaders and managerial personnel in organizations. First, leaders may need to engage in behaviors that are consistent with group values or representative of group norms. By acting according to group norms, leaders are
perceived as representative of (or prototypical to) the group and as a result, they are more likely to be trusted and believed to engage in behaviors that benefit the group (Hogg & van Knippenberg, 2003). This suggestion links with van Knippenberg’s (2011) argument that leader group-prototypicality is not a constant, static trait, but one that is malleable and can be actively managed by leaders. Hence, leaders should ensure that they are viewed as representative of the group if they would like to be influential through their emotional expressions. Based on our findings, emotions that are displayed by the leader will only have an effect on the followers’ rating toward the leader when the leader is seen as prototypical to the group. Our findings here also underscore the importance of expressing the right emotions for the right situation for leaders who are representative of their groups.

Given that it is beneficial for leaders to display situationally appropriate emotions, particularly for group-prototypical leaders, it follows that leaders who are better able to manage their emotions tend to reduce the ambiguity of the work situations and hence, gain the credibility and trust from their subordinates (Grieve & Hogg, 1999; Schaubroeck & Shao, 2012). This may be of particular importance for leaders in an industry that requires intensive emotional labor (e.g., services industry), as these leaders may be more likely to be perceived as supportive to group norms and culture (and thus, seen as prototypical to the group) when they display appropriate emotions. The expression of appropriate emotion is likely to result in the leaders being more likely to be perceived as effective and engaging in in-group behaviors. Our practical recommendations here also underscore suggestions by Humphrey, Pollack, and Hawver (2008) that the leadership role is one that involves emotional labor. Effective leaders who are aware of the role of emotions in influencing follower behaviors are also those that are able to regulate their emotions to fit those of their current group’s status and situation.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The present study has several limitations. First, we did not measure participants’ baseline group identity. Participants may use their race, for example, as a salient social identity than other group membership (Chattopadhyay, Tluchowska, & George, 2004). Thus, participants who do not view the membership to the Society as part of their salient identity may be less likely to be affected by the affective and behavioral responses of the leaders than
those who value the group membership of the Society. We attempted to limit the influence of other social identities in this study by priming participants to assume roles that they could relate to in this study. This informs our reason to develop a university society scenario of which many of our participants could easily relate to. Future research can nonetheless replicate this study by sampling actual work teams, perhaps through a survey study. We do not, however, anticipate the findings from our experimental study to be severely undermined by threats to external validity, as the dynamics of social identity have been found to be consistent regardless of whether conclusions are drawn from laboratory settings or from the field (van Knippenberg & van Knippenberg, 2005). Moreover, preceding social identity research on which is study is based on has employed both laboratory and survey methods, obtaining comparable and complementary results (see Giessner & van Knippenberg, 2008; Giessner, van Knippenberg, & Sleebos, 2009).

Second, the brief exposure to a leader through the video may not be sufficient for participants to make concrete judgment about the leader. Participants might base their judgment on the general impression and information that they were able to recall from the video, rather than on the emotions and text that are expressed by the “leader.” Further, the fictional scenario of our crisis in our experimental study meant that the participants are interacting, or viewing the leader for the very first time. We argue, however, that our use of the video recording is an improvement over the use of “paper leaders” (i.e., fictional leaders described solely through a scenario) for similar experimental studies. Further, as De Cremer (2006) states, communications in contemporary organizations need not always take the form of face-to-face interactions. Rather, it is plausible to suggest that interactions between leaders and followers may make use of more technologically based communication channels. We agree, nonetheless, that the constraints and aspects of the experimental study’s artificiality mean that future studies can improve on the present experimental design and complement the findings here using a different research design.

Lastly, the present study only examined a stressful situation (i.e., crisis) in which unpleasant emotions are deemed appropriate. While we add to research on leadership emotions calling for more attention to be paid toward the effect of negative emotions (Gooty et al., 2010), future studies should consider neutral and happy situations in which unpleasant emotions are deemed inappropriate. It will be fruitful to investigate if the effect of emotion appropriateness and leader prototypicality can be extended to noncrisis and pleasant situations.
CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the moderating effect of leader group-prototypicality on the relationship between emotion appropriateness and followers’ perception toward their leader (i.e., self-sacrifice intentions and leader effectiveness). We found that leader group-prototypicality is a significant moderator in these relationships. Specifically, the effect of emotion appropriateness on self-sacrifice intentions and leader effectiveness was stronger when the leader was portrayed as group-prototypical than when the leader was portrayed as non-group-prototypical. Findings of this study supported and extended the SIMOL and EASI models used in the social identity, emotion, and leadership literature. In summary, leaders should display appropriate emotions to enhance their perceived effectiveness and favorableness as a whole, particularly for leaders who are perceived as representative of the group.

REFERENCES


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