

Multilevel Investigation of Leadership Prototype Perception: Political Behavior in Relation to Effectiveness and Trust

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Background/Purpose: Empirical evidence suggests that a leader's political skills may act as a moderator that might decrease the effect of prototypicality's impact on trust and on leadership effectiveness. The study investigated leading political skills as second-level regulatory variables in connection to leader effectiveness and trust with the purpose of testing a cross-level moderated mediation model within a traditionally collectivist culture like Turkey in efforts to contextualize and expand understanding of leadership prototype perception.

Methods: A total of 442 service sector employees and 28 executive managers were interviewed. Two surveys in two separate time periods were conducted. Multilevel path analysis was used to evaluate the hypotheses.

Results: The findings suggest that there is a strong and significant impact of leader prototypicality on leadership effectiveness and a direct impact on trust. Results indicate that leaders who are trusted by their subordinates are perceived as more effective in their leadership roles. Lower levels of trust from subordinates are negatively associated with leader effectiveness.

Conclusion: If leaders cannot provide their followers a contextualized sense of empowerment and development, they are perceived to not provide high levels of emotional trust. Therefore, there is greater need for multilevel contextualized studies taking account of collective, two-sided, embedded experiences within groups.

Keywords: *Leader political behavior, Political skills, Leader effectiveness, Trust, Social identity theory, Turkiye*

1 Introduction

The volatile and unpredictable conditions of today's complex world expose businesses to deal with increasingly difficult conditions. These challenging circumstances require effective leaders (Hasel 2013), and effective leadership in return requires the ability to create trust-based relationships (Colquitt et al. 2007). Leadership skills such

as persuasion and negotiation along with being frank, and the ability to use social relationships with skill are effective in achieving leadership goals and developing the trust in doing so (Ferris et al. 2005). Moreover, leaders who are effective in understanding others within the organization, and influencing them while aligning personal or organizational goals in accordance stand out as resourceful leaders. This carries connotations of being political in one's

leadership (Hochwarter et al. 2020). In some studies, it is reported that leaders who can successfully maintain political maneuvers appear to be effective leaders and these behaviors can sometimes result in a positive favoring the organization and its employees (Hochwarter 2012; Ellen III 2014; Kapoutsis and Thanos 2016; Hochwarter et al. 2020). However, leadership literature has often conceptualized political leadership behavior as self-serving and as productivity-hindering negative behaviors. These conceptualizations out way the positive outcomes and have caused negative perceptions (Hochwarter et al. 2020). Yet, organizations by nature are political arenas (Mintzberg, 1985 as cited in Ferris et al. 2005), in which factors such as sharing of scarce resources within the organization, degrees of centralization and formalization are organic issues that need to be led (Ellen III et al. 2013). Therefore, political skills carry weight in achieving organizational goals and should be viewed as a resourceful skill rather than a negative expression (Hochwarter et al. 2020).

Drawing from implicit leadership and social identity theory, our research assumes that positive thoughts about the leader's effectiveness can be formed through the perception of trust in the leader. Leadership prototype schemes are formed in the cognitive schemes of employees that show the characteristics of leadership within their organizations (Giessner et al. 2009). It is possible to see the effect of leadership prototypes largely determined by this cognitive affinity in the formation of a perception of trust in the leader (Barth-Farkas and Vera 2019). In addition, the perception of the leader prototype can be influenced by the political skills of the leader, which can further increase perceptions. Therefore, it may have a positive effect on the confidence of the leader. In fact, the same regulatory variable model used in this study had previously been used by Giessner et al. (2009). Similarly, the relationship between leadership prototypicality and leadership effectiveness has been the subject of previous research.

In this study, mutual data from both employees and the leaders of these employees is collected and examined. The sample consists of service sector employees and managers in Ankara, the capital of Turkey, and the surrounding provinces and districts. Unlike the Giessner et al. (2009) study, we have modeled leading political skills as second-level regulatory variables and created a cross-level moderated mediation model. We tested whether the model also works in a collectivist culture like Turkey (see Hofstede 1980, 2011), in which a leader's political skills may act as a moderator that might decrease the effect of prototypicality's impact on trust and on leadership effectiveness. Within the framework of organizational management, we conceptualize political behavior used to describe the behavior of individuals in order to have, develop and use power and other necessary resources to achieve desired results in uncertain or conflictive situations. We acknowledge that political leaders often involve tactics outside of formal processes,

such as persuasion, negotiation, coalition building, and leveraging social networks. With this said, to a larger extent, many studies have focused on the perception of managers' political behavior of employees (e.g., Mehmood et al. 2019; Landells and Albrecht 2019; Hochwarter et al. 2020) without examining both the sense of trust in the leader and the role of the mediator. To fill this gap, a scale of trust was used to measure leader's cognitive and emotional dimensions that are thought to be compatible with social identity theory. Within the framework of the propositions of social identity theory, it is suggested that the leading prototypes formed in the cognitive schemes of individuals reflect the values and norms of the organization, which can build trust in the leader (Hogg 2001; Barth-Farkas and Vera 2019). Moreover, in a collectivist society like Turkey, leadership usually entails social cohesion and compliance; in individualistic societies, it may give autonomy and personal success top priority (Hofstede, 2011). Understanding these cultural subtleties is crucial as they affect the impression of political actions and leadership models, therefore affecting trust and efficacy. This study investigates these dynamics in the Turkish environment, offering insights that could have more general relevance for leadership in cultural environments. The study is important in three respects and provides the following contributions to the relevant literature: (1) Contributing to the research stream positive aspects of leader political skills, such as whether it increases confidence or not. Here, the perception of effective leadership may be due to the perception of the leader prototype rather than the leadership behavior (Mahon and Greenwald 2018). (2) Combining two points of view within the literature, leadership effectiveness and leadership political behavior, that are seen as contradictory and studied as serving opposite sides. A lack of multilevel studies, as argued by Mahon and Greenwald (2018) state that the perception of the leading prototype if well understood by organizations, can have many positive contributions for employees, from the quality of leader-member interaction to being good at work. Claiming that this may be overcome with more studies exploring leadership effectiveness and political leadership skills together as a resource for leadership development. (3) Clearing the vagueness in relation to the argument regarding the perception of leadership within a group by using a multilevel model that permits evaluating within- and between-level variance. Currently, many studies within organizational sciences have evaluated the effects of political constructs at the individual level (Ferris et al. 2019), whereas the use of aggregation and multilevel modeling will allow the means to better evaluate the collective, dyadic, nested, and within-person effects that have been sparse within the literature.

In the following section, we outline a brief review of the literature on social identity theory, leader prototype, the role of trust in the leader, and political leader behavior and skills as we develop the theoretical foundation. Next,

we describe the methodology used, followed by the findings. In the discussion section we discuss the theoretical implications and contributions of our findings. Lastly, we wrap up with a brief conclusions section and describe some limitations of our study.

2 Literature Review and Hypotheses

2.1 Social Identity Theory

Leadership is about how some individuals or cliques have disproportionate power and influence to set an agenda, define identity, and mobilize people to achieve collective goals (Hogg 2001). However, activity and performance in social contexts such as organizations can increase based on the dynamic interaction of the leader and its members (van Knippenberg 2011). Only personal characteristics of leaders or only social or situational factors alone will be inadequate in achieving effectiveness (Hallevy et al. 2011). Tajfel (1972) introduced the idea of social identity to theorize how people conceptualize themselves in intergroup contexts, how a system of social categorizations “creates and defines an individual’s own place in society” (p. 293). He defined social identity as “the individual’s knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership” (Tajfel 1972: 292). When examining the determinants of the leader’s effectiveness, it has been revealed in many studies that social identity formation occurs through multilateral and dynamic processes (Hogg 2001), based on social categorization and prototypes within groups. Within the framework of SIT, it is suggested that leadership is shaped by dynamic interactions between leaders and followers (Hogg 2001). Due to the direct and indirect influence of the group on the individual, it is also reported that individuals adapt cognitively and behaviorally to the dominant identity characteristics formed in the group (van Knippenberg 2011). This process can occur as a result of the strengthening process of leader over time, depending on their personal characteristics or as a result of the proactive behavior of the leader. However, the influence of the leader alone is not enough in this interaction. Influence must also mobilize followers and begin to support the status and power of their leaders (Fiske and Depret 1996). The leader’s creativity and particular behaviors, and their acceptance by followers’ affect how much the leader can push the boundaries (idiosyncrasy credit) depending on the group norms (Hogg 2001).

Within the extant literature, it can be seen that this interactive process is initiated by the leader’s charismatic, innovative perspective with vision and mission. Hence, followers are also influenced by the leader, strengthening this process and therefore the status of the leader (Guillen et al. 2015, Greenberg et al. 2007). It is also claimed that

followers develop leadership behavior schemes specific to their group through their past experiences and interactions within the group (Ridgeway 2001). It is within the framework of these schemes that employees act according to the norms of the group they are in, they create expectations about the behavior of leaders (Hogg 2001; Ibarra et al. 2010). However, social identity plays a guiding role in the behavior of followers and also leads the organization to prioritize its interests (van Knippenberg 2011). In this context, this research model has been formed by considering that the leaders who behave in accordance with the norms of the group will gain the trust of the employees and will be supported and thus carry out their duties effectively. According to this theoretical model, it is suggested that the perception of the leader prototype shaped in the followers can be considered as “one of us” (Lord and Hall 2003:57) and this interaction can create a sense of trust in the leader over time. Through this sense of trust, it is estimated that the leader’s perceptions of his effectiveness would increase. In addition, in this relationship, it is thought that the leader can make a positive contribution to the effect of the leader prototype by showing political behavior skills in accordance with the norms of the group and thus increase the level of trust.

2.2 Leader Prototype

Today, when we look at the studies that deal with the dynamics of leadership, we see that the leader emphasizes interaction within the group more (van Knippenberg 2011). It is revealed in studies that successful leaders have high interaction within the group, and that high interaction shows compliance with group norms (Mahon and Greenwald 2018; Barth-Farkas and Vera 2019). Therefore, success of leaders in adapting to group norms, may bring about effectiveness of the leader and organization (Barth-Farkas and Vera 2019).

Indeed, leadership behaviors in accordance with group norms form the basis of the ideal leader prototype perception in employees and are used as the main criterion for positioning the leader (Jacquart and Antonakis 2015). The leader prototype reflects the characteristics of the schemes formed in the followers, and develops in accordance with the norms of the group (organization). (van Knippenberg 2011). Leaders who act in accordance with the norms of the organization and the schemes of the followers form the ideal leader prototype, which shapes the attitudes and behaviors of the employees towards the leader and the organization (Giessner et al. 2009). Leaders who reflect important values and norms for the organization in their attitudes and behaviors emphasize that these values and norms are even more important and create awareness in employees in this direction (Mayer et al. 1995). When employees see the norms and values of relatable social identity in the leader’s

behavior, identification process with the leader and the organization can take place (Dirk and Ferrin 2002). In this process, it may also be effective for the leader to set goals and objectives that may coincide with the group values and norms. This process enables the leader to convey his or her vision to their followers and to connect emotionally. Ultimately, the perception that “we are one” and that “we can only succeed if we are one” begins to form in the followers. This can make followers see the leader as a team player, strengthening their sense of belonging, attachment and trust over time.

The general framework of the leader schemes consists of the leading figures who are loved and connected (Mayseless 2010). These cognitive descriptions can also create a framework for an effective leader, either directly or indirectly. A recent meta-analysis revealed that prototypicality accounted for 24% of variance in leader evaluation (Barreto and Hogg, 2017). The concept of leader effectiveness or effective leader is defined differently in the literature. For example, de Vries et al. (2015) refers to contingency and defines leader’s effectiveness as being able to adapt easily to any situation. Barreto and Hogg (2017: 45). measured the effectiveness with observing “how successfully they achieve group goals” in their meta-analysis. On the other hand, Giessner et al. (2009) simply defines it as organizational success/failure, while in other studies (Fein et al. 2020) it is defined as the success of motivating followers to achieve organizational goals and managing the expectations and needs of followers while doing so. Since both the first and fourth definitions refer to a relational process, they are suitable for our research model in this article. In alignment, Stevens et al. (2019) argues that the leader effectiveness is caused by the sense of identity shared by its group members.

Within frames of findings presented beyond;

H1: Leader prototypicality has a direct impact on leadership effectiveness.

2.3 The Mediating Role of Trust in the Leader

The role of trust in leadership literature is referenced thoroughly throughout the literature (Goodwin et al. 2011) and emphasized repeatedly (Liden et al., 2015). Trust in leadership is studied as an outcome, a moderator, and as a mediator variable in research models within the literature. Trust is accepted as one of the most important aspects of leadership qualities (Platow et al. 2003). As claimed by Podsakoff et al. (1996), trust seems to be an important variable that has the power to mediate the effectiveness of transformational leadership. Likewise, our suggestion is that it is a significant mediator of leader effectiveness. The model is based on the triggering effect of leader behavior on followers’ perception of trust and respect to their leaders and in return a feeling of enhanced motivation. Additional-

ly, when leaders are seen as group members, i.e. as “one of us” (Steffens et al. 2018), they are “trusted as the most reliable source of identity-related information” (Barreto and Hogg 2017: 42). Consequently, followers endorse, support and allow leaders to be effective” (p.42). Furthermore, they believe that prototypical leaders are usually seen as highly trustworthy (Barreto and Hogg 2017; Steffens et al. 2018). However, due to its referral to a follower perception (e.g. personality, leadership style), effectiveness could not be directly related to prototypicality. The concept of group prototypicality is defined as having a very close psychological relationship with trust than effectiveness (Barreto and Hogg 2017), which implies an indirect relationship.

From the perspective of the classifications of Hofstede (1980, 2011) and Schwartz (2006) it is unclear whether trust in individualistic societies can produce the same results in a collectivist society’s (Shavitt et al. 2008, 2011). This issue has not been the subject of research. The undeniable effect of the perception of trust in the leader on the performance of organizations (Morgeson et al. 2010) requires more studies on trust in the leader in societies with different cultural characteristics. Especially considering the importance of trust within organizations and the wider business context. New studies are needed in collectivist societies where distinguishing “us” versus “them” has the effect of identifying others who can be trusted or not. This may be particularly relevant in the context of collective societies where social and collective identity is essential (Hogg 2001; Hogg et al. 2004).

Within frames of literature review;

H2a: Trust in leader is a mediator between leader prototypicality and leadership effectiveness.

H2b: Trust in leader is a moderator between leader prototypicality and leadership effectiveness.

2.4 Leader Political Behavior and Skills

Political behavior is a form of informal influence that is a foundational element of leadership (Ferris and Hochwarter 2011). Politically skilled leaders are able to adapt themselves to the environment through their social intelligence, allowing them to read interpersonal relationships with the power of intuition, and influence those around them, in return establish new relationships (Özdemir and Gören 2015). Hochwarter et al. (2020) reveals that organizational policy perceptions can affect the stress, performance and health status of employees in the workplace requiring a different perspective on the subject. Within the framework of the extant literature, it can be said that the concepts of organizational politics, political skills and political behavior interact with each other and develop together (Ferris and Treadway 2012). When we look at this interaction from the point of view of the leader, one of the factors affecting the political ability of the leader is seen as organizational policy perceptions (Chang et al. 2009). This

relationship from the perspective of employees reveals that organizational policy perceptions may vary according to the value perceptions of the societies they live in (Zibenberg 2017). The fact that the value perceptions of societies in terms of employees affect the behaviors of employees, such as emotional intelligence and extra-role behavior (Lvina et al. 2012). Hence, facilitating the political skills of the leaders to be shaped and developed. In addition, considering that employees' perceptions are constructed according to cultural codes (Kastanakis and Voyer 2014), one might think that culture can shape both organizational policy and political skill. Cultural codes, and therefore perceptions of value, may lead to the leader's development of political behavior and skills through employees' perceptions of policy.

Although the perception of organizational policy in different cultures has been compared with the concept of ethics (Zibenberg 2017), as stated above, there is a need for cultural studies in which organizational policy, organizational skills and political behaviors are examined together and contextualized from the point of view of both the leader and the employee's social and cultural perceptions.

Within frames of literature review;

H3a: Leader political skill act as a moderator and decreases the impact of leader prototypicality on trust in leader.

H3b: Leader political skill act as a moderator and decreases the impact of leader prototypicality on leadership effectiveness.

3 Methods

3.1 Procedures

The participants of the study consist of service sector employees and managers in Ankara, the capital of Turkey, and the surrounding provinces and districts. The HR managers of the organizations. Two of these were mid-sized and three were large sized organizations. They were particularly chosen because of their team structure working environment. Each team was run by a team leader and members vary from 4 to 42. They were contacted and the necessary permissions were obtained. The questionnaires were sent to the contacted HR managers. The researchers then visited the institutions one by one in order to administer and collect the filled-out questionnaires by hand. The surveys were conducted in two separate time periods, the first on January of 2022 and the second on the month of February of 2022. A survey of managers (Leader Political Skills) and employees (Trust in leader) were conducted in the first visit. In the second, the remaining two questionnaires were filled. A total of 445 employees and 32 executive surveys were filled in. However, as a result of the surveys that were removed for incomplete or other reasons,

442 employee and 28 manager surveys were used and included in the analysis. All the scale items were measured using a five-point Likert scale from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree." Whereas political skills were measured at the leader level, leadership prototypicality, trust in leaders, and leadership effectiveness were assessed using several employees' ratings of the same manager.

To account for the nested nature of the data (i.e., subordinates were nested inside supervisors), we utilized multilevel path analysis to evaluate the hypotheses. The variance of a Level-1 variable is decomposed within a component (within-group variance). and a between component (between-group variance). The definition of structural linkages may be used to describe the relationships between these variance components at each level (Muthén and Asparouhov 2009).

The intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC). is commonly used in multilevel research to assess the extent of variability between groups. In this study, the ICC was calculated using variance components derived from a one-way random effect ANOVA (LeBreton et al. 2023). Specifically, the ICC(1) statistic was employed to understand the discrimination between groups based on the aggregation of scores using unit-level means. For interpreting the ICC values, a significant ICC(1) value falling within the range of 0.05-0.20 is considered noteworthy (Bliese 2000). Additionally, the ICC(2) statistic, which also relies on variance components obtained from the one-way random effects ANOVA, provided insight into the discrimination between groups based on means (LeBreton et al. 2023). A recommended cut-off value for ICC(2) is 0.60 (Glick 1985; Schneider et al. 1998). To assess within-group concordance, rwg(j) values were utilized (James et al. 1984). Specifically, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine if responses from multiple direct reports converged and could be aggregated. The ANOVA yielded a significant result, $F(27, 393) = 6.89, p < 0.000$. The calculated ICC(1) and ICC(2) values were 0.28 and 0.85, respectively, indicating moderate and high levels of discrimination between groups. Furthermore, the average Rwg (multi-item scale) was found to be 0.86, suggesting acceptable within-group concordance (Klein and Kozlowski 2000).

Multilevel path analysis was utilized, as suggested by Preacher et al. (2010) due to it being more suited for assessing multilevel mediations in comparison to the hierarchical linear modeling technique. It is also believed that it extends Baron and Kenny's (1986) multi-step regressions to the multilevel situation. Sun et al. (2012:60). put forth the strengths of multilevel path analysis as follows; "a multilevel path model can (1) avoid the potential problem of conflating between-group and within-group relationships, (2) directly estimate indirect effects and the multiple paths that are components of these indirect effects, and (3) provide fit indices for the overall model". Thus, we em-

played SPSS 23 and MLMED - BETA VERSION 2 for multilevel path analysis.

3.2 Measures

Political Skill Inventory: Subordinates' perceptions of their leaders' political skill were measured by this 18 item-inventory, developed by Ferris and his friends (2005). Items assessed leaders' social astuteness (e.g. "He/she has good intuition or "savvy" about how to present him/herself to others"), perceived interpersonal influence (e.g., "He/she is good at getting people to like him/her"), apparent sincerity (e.g., "He/she tries to show a genuine interest in other people"), and networking ability (e.g., "He/she is good at using his/her connections and networks to make things happen at work"). Both coefficient alpha ($\alpha = .92$) and composite reliability estimates ($CR = .82$) for the higher order construct were adequate. The four-factor model had acceptable fit indices ($X^2=386$, $df=129$; $RMSEA=.07$; $CFI=.93$; $TLI=.91$).

Leader Group Prototypicality Scale: The participants were asked to rate their agreement on six items developed by van Knippenberg and van Knippenberg (2005). It was adapted to Turkish by Ömür (2018). Items assessed leader prototypicality through statements such as "The team leader shares a lot of similarities with the members of my team". To determine the composite leader group prototypicality score, the responses to each item were summed.

Both coefficient alpha ($\alpha = .89$). and composite reliability estimates ($CR = .93$) for the higher order construct were adequate. The one-factor model had acceptable fit indices ($X^2=0.002$, $df=1$; $RMSEA=.00$; $CFI=.1$; $TLI=.1$).

Trust in Leader Scale: The scale consisted of two factors and ten items. Originally it was developed by McAllister, 1995 and adapted to Turkish by Ari (2003). Items assessed Cognition-based (e.g. "This person approaches his/her job with professionalism and dedication") and Affect-based (e.g. "We would both feel a sense of loss if one of us was transferred and could no longer work together"). The reliability of this score was high, with a Cronbach's Alpha of .96 so is the composite reliability estimate ($CR=.94$). Additionally, cognitive-based trust's reliability score was .92 and Affect-based trust was .93. Lastly, both factors' CR estimates ($CR=.93$ and $CR=.93$) were adequate. The two-factor model had acceptable fit indices ($X^2=95.7$, $df=32$; $RMSEA=.07$; $CFI=.98$; $TLI=.97$).

Leadership Effectiveness Scale: Incorporating nine items, the scale was developed by Ng & Chan (2008) and adapted into Turkish by the authors. The scale assesses the leadership effectiveness through items such as "planning ability" and "setting direction". Both coefficient alpha ($\alpha = .97$) and composite reliability estimates ($CR = .96$) for the higher order construct were adequate. The one-factor model had acceptable fit indices ($X^2=66.8$, $df=23$; $RMSEA=.07$; $CFI=.99$; $TLI=.98$).

Table 1: Confirmatory factor analysis of key variables in the study

Factor structure model	$\chi^2(df)$	χ^2/df	GFI	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA	$\Delta\chi^2(\Delta df)$
Three factor (hypothesized): Leader group prototypicality, leader effectiveness, trust in leader	326.4(146)	2.235	0.923	0.928	0.024	0.054	
Two factor							
Model 1 (alternative): Leader group prototypicality and leader effectiveness constrained as one factor	1122.7(187)	6.003	0.808	0.901	0.060	0.109	796.3(41)
Model 2 (alternative): Leader effectiveness and trust in leader constrained as one factor	1755.6(188)	9.338	0.577	0.833	0.067	0.141	1429.2(42)
Model 3 (alternative): Leader group prototypicality and trust in leader constrained as one factor	1156.7(188)	6.152	0.798	0.897	0.045	0.111	830.3(42)
One factor (alternative): All three scales together as one factor	2167.6(189)	11.469	0.554	0.790	0.074	0.158	1841.2(43)

* Note: N = 420, All χ^2 and $\Delta\chi^2$ values are significant at $p < 0.05$, χ^2 =Chi-Square, df =Degree of Freedom, GFI=Goodness of Fit Index, CFI=Comparative Fit Index, SRMR= Standardized Root Mean Square Residual, RMSEA=Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

Controls: We accounted for several demographic variables related to employees. Gender orientation was categorized as 0 for Male and 1 for Female. Additionally, we controlled for employees' age, education level, and tenure (number of years spent working with supervisors).

4 Findings

From the 420 subjects, 237 were women and 183 were men. Their age cohorts were as follows: 18% varied 18-25; 25% varied 26-30; 31% varied 31-40; 18% varied 41-50; 9% varied > 51. Additionally, 11% completed secondary education and 38% high school education; 21% obtained a vocational school diploma; 24% got a bachelor degree; and 6% had a master's degree. On average, they have worked in their current organizations for about 17 years. The average age of the 28 managers was 43 years with a tenure of 25 years; There were 5 women and 23 men. Approximately 21% of the sample of managers had a high

school education; another 11% had a vocational school diploma; 57% got a bachelor's degree and 11% had a master's degree.

4.1 Confirmatory Factor Analyses

To begin, we carried out an omnibus confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to confirm that the three employee-reported variables were distinct: Leader group prototypicality, trust in leader, and leadership effectiveness. Individually, we compared the CFA models. The three-factor model performed better than the null model and the one-factor model (see Table 1). The comparative fit index (CFI) and root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) of the three-factor model were also higher than those of the one-factor model (CFI=.92, RMSEA=.054). As a result, we treated these three measures as distinct constructs as we proceeded with our analyses.

Table 2: Means, standard deviations, and correlations between study variables

	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Individual Level											
1. Gender	0.436	0.496	1								
2. Age	2.75	1.20	-.143**	1							
3. Education	2.76	1.12	-0.028	0.079	1						
4. Tenure w. supervisor	2.77	1.47	-0.156**	0.630***	0.292***	1					
5. Organizational tenure	14.4	6.75	0.063	0.070	0.027	-0.002	1				
6. Trust in leader	3.81	0.974	-0.041	-0.059	-0.120*	-0.165***	0.053	(.96)			
7. Group Prototypicality	3.45	1.12	-0.017	-0.019	-0.045	-0.120*	0.108*	0.593***	(.89)		
8. Leadership effectiveness	3.84	1.12	-0.025	-0.054	-0.087	-0.160***	0.014	0.790***	0.515***	(.97)	
Group Level											
9. Leader political skill	4.29	0.317	0.058	-0.158**	-0.340***	-0.204***	0.020	-0.009	-0.041	-0.003	(.92)

(1) Individual level N=420; group level N=28

(2) Coefficient alphas are listed in parentheses along the diagonal

(3) Gender is coded as 0=female; 1=male

(4) Age is coded as "1" = 18-25, "2" = 26-30, "3" = 31-40, "4" = 41-50, "5" = above 51.

(5) Education is coded as "1" = primary, "2" = High school, "3" = associate degree, "4" = bachelor's degree, "5" = master's degree.

(6) Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table 3: The Results of Multi-level Regression Analyses

Model 1:	Multilevel Regression Model for Trust in Leader		
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
Level 1	Estimate	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
constant	4,55*** (0,53)	3,46	5,65
Leader Political Skill X Leader Prototypically	-0,24* (0,12)	-0,47	-0,01
Leader Prototypically	0,46*** (0,03)	0,40	0,53
Gender	-0,07 (0,07)	-0,21	0,08
Age	-0,01 (0,04)	-0,09	0,06
Education level	(0,05)	-0,23	-0,04
Level 2		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
	Estimate	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Leader Political Skill	-0,23 (0,28)	-0,80	0,35
Gender	-0,30 (0,53)	-1,40	0,79
Age	-0,15 (0,15)	-0,46	0,15
Tenure with manager	-0,2 (0,12)	-0,45	0,05
Organizational tenure	0,03 (0,05)	-0,07	0,13
Education level	0,08 (0,15)	-0,22	0,38
Model 2	Multilevel Regression Model for Leader effectiveness		
Level 1		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
	Estimate	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
constant	-0,38 (0,52)	-1,49	0,74
Leader Political Skill X Leader effectiveness	-0,23* (0,10)	-0,43	-0,03
Leader Prototypically	0,07 (0,04)	-0,01	0,14
Trust in leader	0,68*** (0,04)	0,59	0,76
Gender	0,01 (0,06)	-0,11	0,13
Age	-0,04 (0,03)	-0,10	0,03
Tenure with manager	-0,06 (0,03)	-0,11	0,00

Table 3: The Results of Multi-level Regression Analyses (Continues)

	Estimate	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Organizational tenure	0,00 (0,00)	-0,01	0,01
Education level	-0,05 (0,04)	-0,13	0,03
Level 2		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
	Estimate	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Leader Political Skill	0,15 (0,15)	-0,16	0,45
Trust in leader	1,04*** (0,10)	0,83	1,25
Gender	0,02 (0,27)	-0,53	0,57
Age	0,03 (0,07)	-0,12	0,19
Tenure with manager	0,02 (0,06)	-0,12	0,15
Organizational tenure	0,00 (0,03)	-0,05	0,05
Education level	0,05 (0,07)	-0,10	0,20
-2LL	1766,412		

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$ $n = 420; n = 28$

Estimates are non-standardized

Standard errors in parenthesis

4.2 Common Method Bias

In order to mitigate the potential influence of common method bias, data for the variables in this study were collected from two different sources. This approach helps to address the issue of common source variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The results of the confirmatory factor analysis provided evidence that the four-factor measurement model ($\chi^2 = 2167.6$, $df = 189$, $GFI = 0.55$, $CFI = 0.79$, $RMSEA = 0.16$) outperformed the one-factor measurement model. This indicates that the presence of common source variance was not a significant concern in the present study (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

Table 2 below exhibits means, standard deviations and intercorrelations of the study variables. At the individual level, trust in leader was positively related to group prototypicality ($r = .59$, $p < 0.001$) and leadership effectiveness

($r = .79$, $p < 0.001$), group prototypicality was positively correlated to leadership effectiveness ($r = .52$, $p < 0.001$). At the group level, leader political skill had no significant relationship with the other variables. However, it was negatively related to subordinates' age ($r = -.16$, $p < 0.01$), education level ($r = -.34$, $p < 0.001$), and tenure with supervisor ($r = -.20$, $p < 0.001$). Organizational tenure was only correlated to group prototypicality ($r = .11$, $p < 0.05$).

We asserted that leader prototypicality affects leader effectiveness in our first hypothesis, stating 'leader prototypicality has a direct impact on leadership effectiveness'. A regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between leader prototypicality and leader effectiveness. The standardized coefficient for leader prototypicality is 0.515, indicating that for a one-standard-deviation increase in leader prototypicality, the dependent variable, leader effectiveness, increases by 0.515 standard deviations. This finding suggests a strong and significant impact, thus supporting our first hypothesis.

Relooking at Table 3 for our second hypothesis, we claimed a mediation effect of trust in the leader at Level 1.

Before reaching a conclusion, we checked the sub-hypotheses. For H2a, we posit that leader prototypicality has a direct impact on trust in the leader. This assertion is supported ($b = 0.46$, $SE = 0.03$, $p < 0.000$, 95% CI [0.40, 0.53]).

Our second sub-hypothesis, H2b, posits that trust in the leader has a direct impact on leader effectiveness. The results of this assertion is presented in Model 2. We find support for this hypothesis as well ($b = 0.67$, $SE = 0.04$, $p < 0.000$, 95% CI [0.59, 0.76]). Leaders who are trusted by their subordinates are perceived as more effective in their leadership roles.

The last checkpoint is to examine if the prediction of the independent variable on the dependent variable is non-significant. Again, in Model 2, our analysis reveals a non-significant effect for this ($b = 0.07$, $SE = 0.04$, n.s., 95% CI [-0.01, 0.14]). Thus, we can conclude that a mediation effect exists at Level 1, and H2 is also supported.

Our second model is also a multilevel regression analysis that examines the factors influencing leader effectiveness. The Level 1 results indicated that several variables significantly predicted leader effectiveness. At Level 1, the constant term was found to be -0.38 ($SE = 0.52$, 95% CI [-1.49, 0.74]), suggesting that the average level of leader effectiveness was -0.38. However, none of the Level 1 predictors, including leader prototypicality, trust in the leader, gender, age, tenure with manager, organizational tenure, and education level, had statistically significant associations with leader effectiveness.

4.4 Moderations

In our first model, at Level 2, we conducted the first interaction analysis to examine how leader political skill moderates the relationship between leader prototypicality and trust in the leader. The interaction between leader political skill and leader prototypicality was negatively associated with trust in the leader ($b = -0.24$, $SE = 0.12$, $p < 0.05$, 95% CI [-0.47, -0.01]). This suggests that when leaders with high political skill were also perceived as more prototypical, they tended to have lower levels of trust from their subordinates. Thus, we find support for H3a.

As seen in Figure 1, when the employees perceive low level of political skill, and higher levels of leader prototypicality, trust in their leader increases.

In the second model, at Level 2, the analysis revealed that the interaction between leader's political skill and leader effectiveness was negatively associated with leader effectiveness ($b = -0.23$, $SE = 0.10$, $p < 0.05$, 95% CI [-0.43, -0.03]). This suggests that leaders with high political skill who also demonstrated effectiveness had lower overall levels of leader effectiveness (See Figure 2). This supports our H3b.

The -2LL for the model was 1766.412, indicating a good fit to the data. Please note that the all estimates provided, except for the first analysis of hypothesis one, are non-standardized.

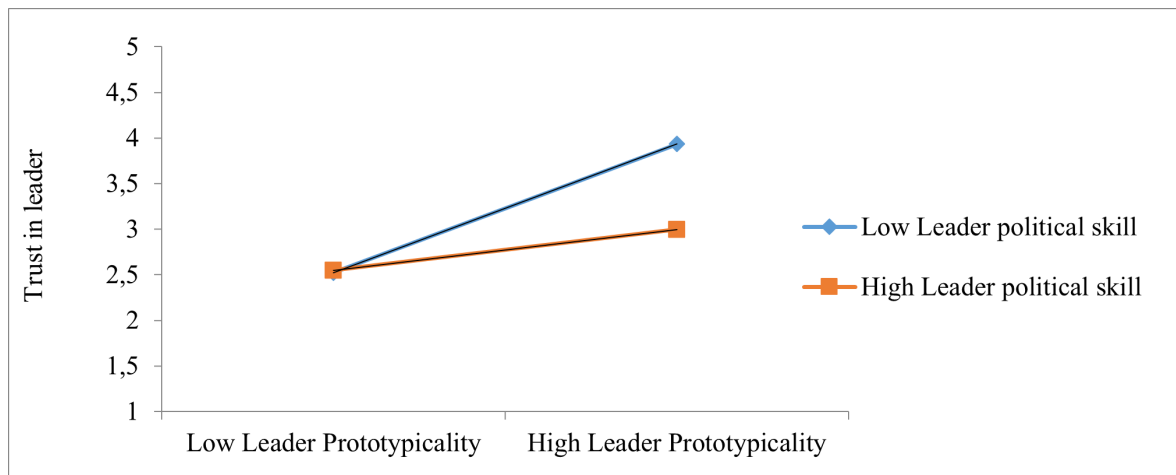


Figure 1: First Moderation Results

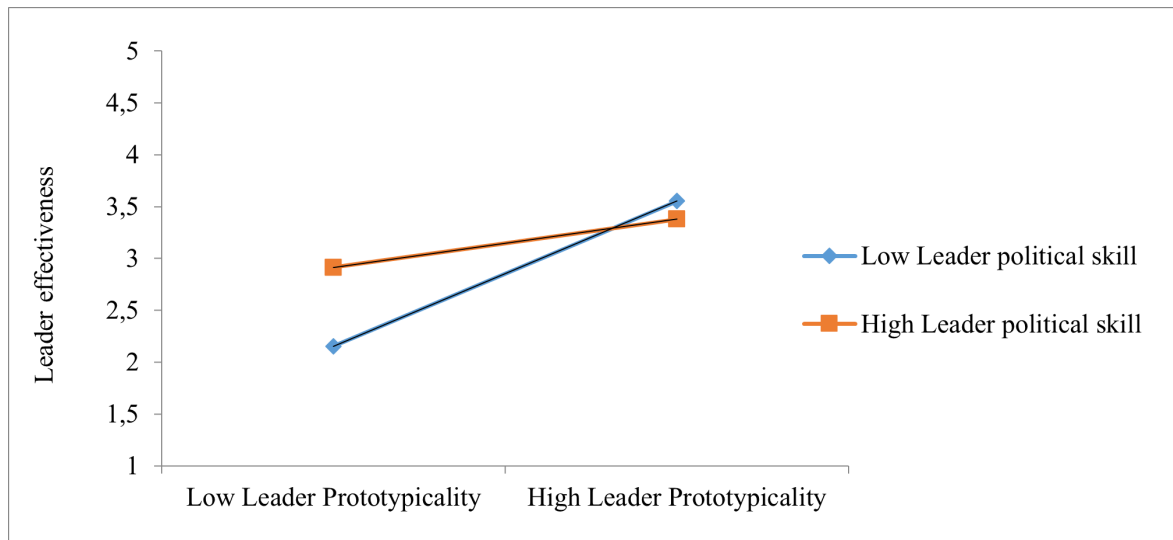


Figure 2: Second Moderation Results

5 Discussion

The paper has examined leading political skills within the framework of social identity theory, in which internal interactions within the organization may impact the attitudes and behaviors of leaders and the perception of the leader prototype of the employees. The study employed second-level regulatory variables and created a cross-level moderated mediation model to test the model within a collectivist culture like Turkey. In general, different leader skills and perception of the leader prototype may occur in different organizations. Therefore, with this in mind, data obtained in this study was collected from the employees of different organizations, and samples were compared with the data obtained from the leaders of the same employees. In doing so, the study measured subordinates' perceptions of their leader's political skills (Giessner et al. 2009) in order to assess their social astuteness in terms of how they perceived their leader's interpersonal influence, sincerity and networking ability. In addition, the study examined ratings in relation to the leader's prototypicality, as well as both cognition-based (i.e. professionalism and dedication to job) and affect-based (i.e. sense of loss of transferred or could no longer work together). trust in the leader. Lastly, leadership effectiveness was measured through perceived 'planning ability' and 'setting direction'. The combining of leadership effectiveness and leadership political behavior within the study showed that no matter how much emotional relationship is established, if leaders who do not provide their followers a sense of empowerment and development, they do not produce a high level of emotional trust. More precisely, a strong and significant impact of leader prototypicality on leadership effectiveness was

found to also have a direct impact on trust in the leader and their perceived leader effectiveness. Thus, demonstrating that leaders trusted by their subordinates are also perceived as more effective in their leadership roles. To add on, leaders with high political skills are perceived to be more prototypical, with lower levels of trust from their subordinates. Their leader effectiveness also was negatively associated with leader effectiveness.

The contributions of the study are threefold. Firstly, contributing to the leadership literature positive aspects of leader political skills in comparison to a large extant of literature presenting the negative aspects (Hochwarter et al. 2020) of political behavior of leaders. More particularly, the perception of effective leadership is revealed as a perception of the leader prototype rather than to the behavior of the leader (Mahon and Greenwald 2018). The study revealed that leaders adopted and aligned their leadership behavior to the organizational culture in order to influence their followers and direct them to accomplish the goals and objectives of the organization. Although Steffens et al. (2021) draws attention to the difference between group prototypicality and leader prototypicality in that the notion of leader prototypicality is used in works focusing on implicit leadership theories, this study took a different perspective. The study confirmed that at the individual level trust in leader was positively related to group prototypicality and leadership effectiveness, indicating that the average group prototype represented the perceived characteristics or qualities that are most commonly associated with leadership within a particular group or organization. Moreover, it reflected the collective perception of what constitutes effective leadership based on the experiences, norms, and values prevalent within the group (Shavitt et al.

2008, 2011). The study conjectures that the average group prototype may emerge from observing and generalizing the behaviors and traits displayed by leaders who have been successful in that particular context. Moreover, it represents the common expectations and standards held by group members regarding leadership, serving as a benchmark for evaluating leaders within the group. Hence, the average group prototype of leadership is perhaps shaped by various factors such as organizational culture, historical leadership practices, and the shared beliefs and values of group members.

Secondly, the study combines leadership effectiveness and leadership political behavior in cooperation to one another rather than as contradictory and opposite sides of organizational and leadership collaboration. In doing so, we demonstrate the positive contributions in confirmation to Mahon and Greenwald (2018). In contrast to a large number of studies within the extant literature focused solely on the political behavior in respect to the perception of managers' without examining other relations (e.g. Mehmood et al. 2019; Landells and Albrecht 2019; Hochwarter et al. 2020). There are studies that attempt to cover both theoretically as well as empirically to better understand the mechanism regarding the relationship between the political skills and the effectiveness of leaders. Treadway et al. (2004) argue that the idea of leader political skill is fundamentally multi-layered. This approach is in line with current requests for leadership theory that more truly portrays the nested character of organizational phenomena. Additionally, they (Treadway et al. 2004:493) elaborate "that political skill is one of the most important competencies leaders can possess, contributing to effectiveness in organizations". In a meticulous recent meta-analysis, it is claimed that obtaining relevant political skill appears to be advantageous for leaders to enhance their effectiveness by either obtaining or developing it (Ferris et al. 2019). But interestingly, it is concluded that to yet, no empirical study has been undertaken to evaluate theories about the implications of a leader's political competence on employees (Treadway et al. 2004).

Thirdly, we contribute to the argument on the perception of leadership within groups a multilevel model that evaluates within- and between-level variance, helping to better understand the collective, dyadic, nested, and within-person effects that have been noted by Mahon and Greenwald (2018) to be sparse within the literature. The study provides that leader prototype perceptions of employees increased their perceptions of trust in the leader; moreover, the perceptions of trust in the leader had a full mediating effect between the leader prototype perception and the leader effectiveness perceptions. The inclusion of leader's political skills utilizing a multilevel analyzes added great value to the findings and to the originality of the research. As so, the findings provide validity of social identity theory outside of individual western societies (van

Dick and Kerschreiter 2016). The validity of social identity theory is proven in Turkish society, in which leader's political skills compatible with norms and cultures are functional. Therefore, it is important to note that cultural influences on the perception of leader political behavior are complex and multifaceted. Cultural dimensions interact with individual differences, organizational factors, and situational factors, creating a dynamic context for interpreting and evaluating leader political behavior. Understanding these cultural influences can help leaders and organizations navigate cross-cultural contexts and adapt their leadership behaviors accordingly. When propositions of social identity theory are examined in the light of Zibengerg's (2017) studies, it can be thought that organizational politics, political skills and perceptions of leader prototypes can be influenced not only by organizational culture, but also by the characteristics of society.

Culture plays a significant role in shaping the perception of leader political behavior within an organization. These cultural norms influence how leader political behavior is perceived. In some cultures, political behavior may be viewed as acceptable and even expected, while in others, it may be seen as unethical or detrimental to trust and cooperation. The findings through multilevel analyzes in this study demonstrated that the initial predictions that political skill affects both cognitive and emotional confidence in a similar way, was not realized. Although Turkish society exhibits vertical collectivist traits (emphasizing hierarchy), cultural differences and their implications for persuasive appeals (Shavitt et al. 2008), we conjecture that these tend to lean towards vertical individualist behaviors, where people tend to be concerned with improving their individual status and with distinguishing themselves from others via competition (Shavitt et al. 2011). In addition, the study reveals that political skills were found to affect both cognitive and emotional confidence. As so, the assumption that individuals in organizations will have high perceptions of trust towards each other was not found depending on emotional components and/or on events in societies showing collectivist characteristics, the study found no significant difference between cognitive trust and emotional trust perceptions. The reason for this may be that Turkish society no longer has dominant vertical collectivist characteristics as claimed in past studies, in which people focus on complying with authorities and on enhancing the cohesion and status of their in-groups, even when this entails sacrificing their own personal goals (Shavitt et al. 2011). Findings show that individuals tend to develop the perception of trust based on the constructive and developing behaviors of leaders (personal empowerment), towards the employees despite the leader's political discourse and behavior. The causes of this is conjectured to the lack of dominant vertical collectivist characteristics in Turkish society and to individual tendency to develop perception of trust based on the leader's actions and their sense of

personal empowerment, despite the leader's political discourse and behavior. Consequently, cultural characteristics of Turkish society can be a reference for effective solutions in business management. In collectivistic cultures like Turkey, group harmony and conformity are prioritized, leader political behavior that benefits the group may be seen as more acceptable, even if it involves strategic maneuvers or power plays. Whereas in individualistic cultures, where individual autonomy and personal interests are emphasized, leader political behavior may be viewed more skeptically, as it may be perceived as self-serving or manipulative. Particularly for managers and companies running in collectivist societies like Turkey, the findings of this study have important pragmatic consequences. Leaders should understand that their performance and the confidence they inspire from their subordinates depend much on their political abilities and conformity with organizational standards. These findings allow managers to create training courses improving political awareness and promoting a trusting society. Furthermore, companies can consider cultural aspects in planning leadership development programs to fit the particular requirements and expectations of their employees.

6 Conclusion

In this paper, empirical evidence dealing with how a leader's political skills may act as a moderator that might decrease the effect of prototypicality's impact on trust and on leadership effectiveness was investigated. The study employed a scale of trust used to measure leader's cognitive and emotional dimensions, accepted to be compatible with social identity theory. The findings put forth utilizing social identity theory demonstrates how the leading prototypes formed in the cognitive schemes of individuals reflect the values and norms of the organization, which can build trust in the leader, contributing towards positive aspects of leader political skills rarely observed or studied within the field. Through the combining of leadership effectiveness and leadership political behavior, implications from a multilevel study towards the need to have more leadership effectiveness and political leadership skills investigations as a resource for leadership development has been concluded and brought to light. Furthermore, the use of aggregation and multilevel modeling has allowed evaluating and studying collective, dyadic, embedded, and within-person effects within the literature. This study showed leader's emotional relationship on its own does not provide their followers a sense of empowerment and development nor does it produce a high level of emotional trust. In this respect, values related to support, development and guidance of employees by leaders within Turkish organizational culture compares to western organizational norms (Steffens et al. 2014), and appears to have a part in

developing trust.

This research is subject to some potential limitations. First, the study results may be susceptible to same-source bias because all variables were collected from the study participants, consisting of service sector employees and managers in Ankara through site visit surveys. However, the study's design minimized the potential for this bias given that we implemented data collection to multiple organizations, two mid-sized and three large sized organizations from the surrounding provinces and districts of Ankara. In addition, the surveys were conducted in two separate time periods, using time lag and variables from multiple sources can reduce the threat of common source and method variance (Podsakoff et al. 2003). Second, this research was conducted in Turkey, which allows us to examine leadership prototype perception in context characterized by high context values and its citizens are traditionally accustomed to collectivist, high power distance schemas (Hofstede 1980, 2011); however, there are vastly different constraints and experiences in the diverse socio-cultural and geo-political contexts of countries classified as high context cultures. Generalizing the findings of this study to other high context cultures would require caution as there are vast differences between them. Future research may examine the study model in other cultural contexts.

Future studies should investigate, in different cultural settings, the long-term effects of political behaviors and leadership prototypes on organizational outputs. Furthermore, looking at how various forms of trust—cognitive and affective—as well as leadership effectiveness interact in various cultural contexts would help one to grasp the fundamental processes. Research might also look at how views and behaviors of leaders are shaped by outside environmental elements such as society standards and economic situation. All things considered, this paper offers insightful analysis of how political skills and leadership prototypes shape leadership effectiveness and confidence in the Turkish setting. We have shown using a multilevel moderated mediation model that political skills are a major moderator influencing trust and effectiveness of leader prototypicality. These results challenge mostly negative opinions and emphasize the good features of political conduct in leadership, therefore augmenting the body of knowledge already in use. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the need of cultural background in leadership research and provides useful consequences for managers and companies trying to improve the trust in collectivist societies by means of leadership effectiveness enhancement. As a concluding thought with no revelation intended, leaders in Turkish organizational life and we conjecture elsewhere as well benefit when leaders develop their political skills aligned to the goals of the organization and the people they lead, in which their followers' expectations and needs take forefront.

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