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**Article**

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## Individualized HR Practices and Idiosyncratic Deals (I-Deals) and the Expected Positive Individual and Organizational Outcomes\*

Eda Çalışkan<sup>1</sup> , Alev Torun<sup>2</sup> 

### Abstract

Idiosyncratic deals (I-deals), which can be defined as individualized work agreements between an employee and a manager, have emerged as one of the most important tools of differentiation perspective in Human Resource Management Practices. In this study, the positive contribution of individualized human resources practices and more specifically, the contribution of I-deals to individual and organizational outcomes were examined through a qualitative research carried out with employees working in private sector, Turkey. Findings revealed that propositions of past research on I-deals mainly hold in Turkey. As a result of the qualitative analysis, agile and authentic leadership styles are proposed to be required for successful I-deal negotiations. From the employee side, self-esteem and self-efficacy are also proposed to have a positive impact on I-deals. It is recommended that through a Team Deal, team members may set their own team dynamics with the leader and can have an agreement with other team members on supporting each other when schedules are tough, or they can also strike different agreements. Employee resilience is suggested as a positive outcome of I-deals, and Team Deal is recommended as a solution to co-workers' reactions.

### Keywords

I-Deals • Individualized HR Practices • Resilience • Authentic leadership • Agile leadership

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## **Individualized HR Practices and Idiosyncratic Deals (I-Deals) and the Expected Positive Individual and Organizational Outcomes**

Information economy and workplace democratization along with individualization of employees have been pushing organizations to change their human resource management practices (HRM). The new era has brought a differentiation approach in human resource management practices instead of traditional perspective's standardization approach. Idiosyncratic deals (I-deals), which can be defined as individualized work agreements, have emerged as one of the most important tools of differentiation perspective. I-deals are individually negotiated to identify employees' personal needs and preferences and to differentiate them from their peers (Rousseau, 2005). Idiosyncratic arrangements may be negotiated Ex-ante during the recruiting process or Ex-post as well in an on-going employment relationship (Rousseau et al., 2009).

In the current business environment, a multinational firm operating in both a European Union member country and in China is not able to apply the same HRM practices for all its employees. Likewise, a sales company has to offer personal contracts to attract better sellers. The workforce is also diversified in terms of age, gender, and ethnicity. On the other hand, from the employee perspective, need satisfaction is important. If the organization does not satisfy individual needs, talented employees would be lost. Such challenges are the main drivers behind the systemic shift from the standardization approach to the individualization approach (Murphy et al., 2017). The rapid transformation of employees also forces organizations to differentiate their HRM practices to attract a more qualified workforce (Rosen et al., 2013). The success of differentiation in increasing the effectiveness of HRM practices made it the most common perspective among all kinds of organizations (Anand et al., 2010).

In this study, the positive contribution of individualized human resources practices and more specifically, the contribution of I-deals to individual and organizational outcomes were examined through a qualitative research on employees from Turkish private sector companies. As expanding the true understanding of the dynamics of I-deals is expected to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of employees and organizations (Rousseau et al., 2006), this study aims to contribute to the literature by means of a geographical expansion into Turkey and by offering a new concept, team deals, to navigate the reactions of co-workers.

Idiosyncratic deals (I-deals) which can be defined as individualized work agreements have emerged as one of the most important tools of differentiation perspective. I-deals are individually negotiated to identify employees' personal needs and preferences, and to differentiate them from their peers (Rousseau, 2005). I-deals provide employees with specific conditions such as individualized duties, personalized career paths, flexible work hours or reduced workload (Rousseau et al., 2006). However, I-deals should also be differentiated from other kinds of individualized contracts. I-deals do not include favouritism or cronyism-

related contracts, and also, they do not include unauthorized arrangements. Favouritism-related individualized contracts could occur as a result of personal relations or political views, but they do not contribute to the organizational performance. Although unauthorized contracts have also individualized terms, they could cause legal damage to the organization (Rousseau et al., 2006).

Several distinct features characterize I-deals. I-deals are individually negotiated initiatives such that an I-deal arises when an individual worker negotiates arrangements with an employer or prospective employer that differ from the corresponding arrangements of the individual's co-workers. Either an employer or a worker can initiate an I-deal, and both may shape its actual terms. I-deals are quite heterogeneous so that at least some of the terms of an I-deal are specially provided to that individual, differing from the conditions created for other employees in similar positions or in the same workgroup. They are mutually beneficial arrangements that are intended to serve the interests of both employers and employees. The I-deals individuals enjoy are differentiated in terms of scope, from a single idiosyncratic element in a larger standardized employment package to a completely idiosyncratic employment arrangement. For example, one worker with an I-deal might have more flexible hours than his or her peers but another worker may negotiate to attend an MBA program (Rousseau, 2005). Trying to make working conditions standard for everyone (such as compensation structures, bonuses, benefits, etc.) facilitates trust in the organization. However, at the same time, employers may come across with some pressures to make special arrangements in order to acquire and retain some valuable individuals. As a result of this, some workers may acquire more special conditions comparing to other colleagues.

### **Literature Review**

Traditional human resources management practices involve the main perspective of standardization which had been the best practice for a long time. Literature includes articles examining organizations from a resource-based perspective since the beginning of the 1970s (Wernerfelt, 1984). However, changing conditions have dispelled the grounds for the implementation of a "one size fits all" approach (Kreiner et al., 2006).

These perspectives are based on three dominant approaches of universalism, contingency, and configuration. All three traditional approaches evaluate the effectiveness of human resource management practices at the organizational level. Recent trends, however, have brought an individualistic perspective for the measurement of the results of human resource management practices (Ng & Feldman, 2010).

Differentiation of HRM practices through individualization has brought the concept of the psychological contract. Via psychological contracts, employees and organizations both

balance their obligations to each other. When the balance is lost on both sides, it would create a fluctuation on the opponent's side which would result in the deterioration of performance. As a result, human resource practices adopted a new approach to consider employees' specific conditions and demands in terms of signing and more importantly sustaining work agreements (Rousseau, 1995).

Rousseau & Kim (2006) introduced an exchange perspective which was based on a consideration of all kinds of labour agreements as an exchange of resources between employees and organizations. The perspective introduced by Rousseau & Kim (2006) is based on Foa & Foa's (1974) exchange wheel theory which categorizes resources in exchange as money, information, services, goods, status, and love. Rousseau & Kim (2006) see the relationship between employees and organizations as an exchange of employees' time, effort, and work competence with organizations' economic and social resources.

Hornung et al. (2008) suggested that Flexibility and Developmental I-deals have different impacts on employees' performance in terms of work-family conflict, unpaid overtime work, performance expectations, and affective commitment. It has also been indicated that the individualization of work conditions via personal initiative and personal agreements is positively related to the facilitation of I-deal negotiation process. As a result, individualization has contributed to the literature through bringing a valuable perspective of researching individual antecedents of I-deals as well as the variety of the outcomes of I-deals.

Ng & Feldman (2010) proposed I-deals as an important tool to deal with the threat of losing employee loyalty. I-deals can be defined as voluntary and personalized agreements that are mutually negotiated between organizations and employees. I-deals provide employees with training, development, career growth, flexibilities, and personal financial packages. The timing of I-deal negotiations may be held before or after the recruitment. I-deals are being used by a wide range of employees from sports stars to regular workers. One of the most common usage fields of I-deals is related to the transfer of valuable employees from other organizations (Ng & Feldman, 2012).

The widespread usage of I-deals led employees with flexible schedules and remote working schemes to develop their career paths faster. I-deals, meanwhile, provide the opportunity of increasing the efficiency of employees with lower costs. Organizations which can personalize their human resource management practices properly enjoy the advantage of hiking their employees' job satisfaction with zero costs. While one I-deal can fulfil an employee's demand for flexible working hours, another can enhance an employee's training and development opportunities. Some employees may demand to reduce their workload while some other employees may demand new career opportunities. I-deals provide organizations the flexibility to fulfil differentiating demands of employees (Rosen et al., 2013).

Anand et al. (2010) pointed out that the employee's intrinsic self-motivation is an important individual factor affecting the success of an I-deal. Self-motivation refers to an employees' ability to challenge his/her tasks and achieve his/her goals without needing to be motivated by someone else. Self-motivation depends on both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Intrinsic factors refer to intrinsic motivators such as feeling fun while performing the task, being interested in the issue or feeling a personal challenge; while extrinsic factors could be financial benefits, satisfaction or job ratings (Pierce & Gardner, 2004).

Ng & Feldman (2010) proposed that the employee's perceived overqualification and underemployment are also important factors in terms of attracting I-deal offers. Perceived overqualification occurs when employees think that their education, experience or skills are beyond the necessities required to perform their job (Maynard & Parfnoya, 2013). Underemployment, on the other hand, can basically be defined as the organization's inability to make the employee use his/her skills at maximum capacity with the aim of adding the maximum value to the organization's performance (Maynard, 2011).

## **Purpose**

This research aims to contribute to the conceptual clarity of I-deals. Different measures have been developed to measure the construct. It is likely that employees negotiate I-deals through terms and conditions that go beyond the previously discussed nature of I-deals. Hence, this study aims to contribute to the literature via interviews to define the various dimensions of I-deals taking into account solid real-life examples. Thereby it is expected to understand the process of I-deals between employees and employers in Turkey. Research findings are presented in a manner to emphasize the similarities with and distinctions from the current literature as well as to demonstrate the dynamics of I-deals processes.

The contributions of this study are four-fold: First, this study brings clarity to the conceptualization of I-deals by defining and delineating different types of I-deals. Second, in relation to the first point, this study discusses different examples and types of I-deals employees achieve and thus sheds light on I-deals literature. This is important because HR departments and employees may limit their focus to some types of I-deals (such as reducing workload) which may help employees work under better conditions. Third, this study discusses the important role of managers and HR in delivering I-deals and underlines their roles as enabling agents in such deals especially by emphasizing leadership styles that may operate better during I-deals processes. Fourth, the research recommends a new concept of "team deal" as a response to co-worker reactions which is the most challenging part of the I-deals process.

## Method

### Research Design

In the present study, as part of a qualitative research, semi-structured interviews have been conducted with participants including employees, managers, and human resources managers of the respective organizations from retail, construction, telecommunication, healthcare, IT, and media industries. During the study, dyadic relations and perception differences among managers and employees are also examined deeply in three different cases chosen from the IT sector where such I-deals negotiations are very common. Besides the dyadic relations, the perspective of managers about other team members was examined as well. Dyadic relations between the manager and the employee help us understand the different perspectives of managers and employees during the I-deal making process and how viewpoints in this dyadic relationship influence the outcomes of I-deal negotiation.

### Sample

The researcher used “Combination or Mixed Purposeful Sampling” methodology (Patton, M. Q., 2001) that combines two or more strategies which involves multiple methods such as: a) Critical Case sampling that looks at cases that will produce critical information; b) Snowball or Chain Sampling that identifies cases of interest from individuals who know people who would be a good interview participant; as such you would ask for nominations until the nominations snowball, getting bigger till the answers become repetitive; c) Opportunistic or Emergent Sampling which follows new leads during fieldwork, takes advantage of the unexpected, and is flexible. This strategy takes advantage of whatever unfolds as it is unfolding and may be used after the fieldwork has begun and as a researcher becomes open to sampling a group or person they may not have initially planned to interview. For example, in this research, although the researcher was studying I-deals, she also gained additional understanding in terms of observing differences of potential outcomes by also including people who have not experienced the I-deals process.

The researcher reached out either Human Resources professionals or leaders who are managing people at leading companies either through written channels, phone or face to face contact to introduce the research purpose in the first place. Afterward, she officially introduced the purpose of the research with an introductory letter for an invitation for the interviews. The researcher interviewed Human Resources professionals and leaders at managerial positions with a semi-structured interview form and asked them also to reach other potential employees who have a minimum of 3 years of work experience. These potential interviewees were approached in the same way with an introductory letter to conduct an interview for the research. The researcher extended the participant list with a snowball effect through references from Human Resources professionals and managers. She

reached out to other potential employees as well in leading companies by applying Snowball and Opportunistic or Emergent Sampling methods. These employees were asked about potential managers and leaders that may have shared their experiences and observations for I-deals processes. (The sample of questions for semi-structured interviews are presented in the appendix.)

The sample is formed of 30 participants, including 12 HR Executives, 8 managers, and 10 employees. Of the participants, 46% are female, 54% are male; 88% are married, 12 % are single. Average age is 36 and average tenure in the current company is 5 years.

### **Qualitative Method for Data Analysis**

In-vivo coding was used to support induction analysis and theory-building approaches defined in Grounded Theory (ex; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). During the analysis process, both new codes were created based on the literature (Gibbs, 2014; Lewins & Silver, 2008) and “in-vivo” coding was made through MAXQDA 11 program.

### **Findings**

The qualitative analysis in this research revealed that traditional HR practices with “one size fit all” approach and without any flexibility do still exist in addition to I-deals in forms such as attending higher level management programs, band promotion, negotiating for becoming a team leader, pursuing long-term career negotiation by threatening to resign, demands of some extra roles for high performers, assuming some responsibilities of a higher role, and employer-initiated offers for another role that have been observed to exist in this research. Such examples are like I-deals reported in the literature (Conway & Coyle-Shapiro, 2015; Murphy et al., 2017; Rousseau, 2005; Rousseau et al., 2009).

Employer-initiated deals, crucial for employees’ future leadership paths, are the most common I-deals and they are seen in multinational companies. Especially “senior executive development programs” are considered as very strategic in terms of enabling the company to increase its competitive advantage via making employees feel that the right executives are in the right places within the organization and it is also possible for them to move up.

High performers are more likely to attract higher goals and challenging assignments. As a result, they are also more likely to assume higher roles in a certain period. Training programs constitute the second most common I-deals. The most striking topic is about training demands for accelerated leadership programs. Both technical and non-technical employees are interested in attending leadership training.

Skill development is a topic that involves specific conditions. It could be part of a bubble assignment or rotations. Selected employees/leaders are temporarily assigned to another



position to overcome communication barriers or to learn about different cultures, etc. Managers are likely to invest in talented employees and employers are usually selective due to high costs. Employers rarely invest in low performers' training because the training is most likely to be successful if the request comes from an employee who displays initiative and motivation.

### **Timing of I-deals**

Findings of Ex-ante I-deals were mostly parallel to those observed in the literature. The main topics that are negotiated during a recruitment process vary from compensation and benefit related issues (some additional bonuses to compensate the person's severance payment, aligning other benefits such as bonus structure and stock options, health insurance, company car, etc.) to flexibility in the workplace such as working from different cities or commuting between different countries, part-time work for retired employees or employees with special conditions (Rousseau et al., 2009; Rousseau & Tomprou, 2016). As also emphasized in the literature (Ho & Tekleab, 2016; Rousseau & Tomprou, 2016), Ex-ante I-deals for expats were the toughest negotiations for HRM community since the expectation of expats are high.

The results indicated that negotiation for compensation related Ex-ante I-deals mostly proved to be successful whereas benefit related negotiations mostly failed. Most of the companies have very strict rules and policies regarding the usage of the benefits. Even though some companies launch flexible benefit practices they are not flexible beyond a defined benefit budget for an employee.

Some examples during the recruitment process have been encountered which involve the negotiation for a title or career band. Negotiation for title and band is not common in the literature during the recruitment process rather it is reported to exist after working for a couple of years in the company. (Participant 17).

Another remarkable example is about an I-deals negotiation that can serve the diversity goals of the company. (Participant 18). A regional talent leader also gave examples around flexible work arrangements that have been negotiated during the offer process with internal candidates. She stated that especially women are likely to negotiate flexible hours with them after maternity leave and due to the company's diversity strategy; these kinds of negotiations mostly end up successfully. (Participant 13)

There are also discussions around the impact of the I-deals when they are given just at the beginning of an employment agreement during the recruitment process. An employee from the construction sector says that: "I-deals given during the recruitment process do not create a huge impact on my commitment to the organization because it is just the baseline for everything; the things that you obtain afterward complete the whole picture." (Participant 2).

It appears that Ex-ante I-deals may not bring the long-term commitment if they are not supported by additional mechanisms. Ex-post I-deals, however, is based on the work-related context and business justification more significantly.

Ex-post I-deals include an employment relationship history. Though market forces may influence Ex-post I-deals, especially monetary ones, it is more likely that Ex-post I-deals are relationally attributed. That is, Ex-post I-deals are more likely to communicate information regarding the strength and the quality of the employee-employer exchange relationship (Rousseau et al., 2006). Such I-deals will focus exclusively on ex-post bargaining in an already existing employment relationship. This mode of negotiation timing has been identified as more relevant. It allows individuals to draw on insider-knowledge on their work and employment conditions and adapt their jobs to changing personal needs over time (Rousseau et al., 2006; Rousseau et al., 2009).

The trends, the negotiation frequencies, and the timing of I-deals vary from one generation to another. Young talents and the Y generation are more likely to negotiate I-deals for themselves. A manager from the healthcare sector says that: “I observed that especially Y generation employees negotiated a lot about new career opportunities after a short time of their hiring process.” (Participant 5).

### **Content of I-deals**

Regarding the content of I-deals, it may be stated that Developmental I-deals, Flexibility I-deals, and Financial I-deals exist in different versions. Career development, Task I-deals, skills development, training, performance goals are listed under the Developmental I-deals while location flexibility, schedule flexibility, reducing workload, reducing work hours are listed under the Flexibility I-deals. Besides, compensation and benefits are listed under the Financial I-deals.

**Developmental I-deals.** There are 18 incidents wherein participants mentioned about career development as a topic. Examples were seen which also exist in the literature such as attending higher level management programs, band promotion, negotiating for becoming a team leader, pursuing long-term career negotiation by threatening to resign, demands of some extra roles for high performers, assuming some responsibilities of a higher role, and employer-initiated offers for another role.

A senior recruitment manager gave an example for Ex-ante I-deals that candidates negotiate to obtain more senior titles in the market. (Participant 10).

It is very important to make the right communication about future career development opportunities for the candidates during the recruitment process in order not to create frustration afterward.

A regional HR Director in IT sector shares the challenges while they were striving to grow leaders as successors of country managers for several countries. To address this problem, she has mentioned the country manager path program that they have implemented as one of the solutions. (Participant 20)

An HR professional in the telecommunication sector has stated that negotiating for an I-deal is almost impossible due to their company policies and standards. She shares that this can happen in a very rare situation if they are trying to attract a strong talent from the market or looking for one or two position(s) at the executive level. (Participant 3)

Maxqda qualitative analysis revealed that the negotiation process for a career development I-deal is very critical with several positive and negative outcomes. The success of a career development I-deal also depends on some prerequisites that some employees may be able to meet whereas others may not.

**Task I-deals.** Regarding task I-deals, examples like those in the literature are, taking extra responsibility in another area, implementing extra roles for job enrichment, assuming some extra tasks for cost efficiency, performing a trainer role as a different branch of expertise, expanding the job during on the job training, working in different areas as a senior employee. Also, different examples exist such as negotiating to have an extra leadership responsibility, pursuing a more visible project, and negotiations conducted by employers to move the employee to another department.

Task I-deals are impactful especially after an unsuccessful career negotiation as they help employees to move on to the next level. It is also critical to manage an I-deal request not as just a one-time event but with an on-going approach to assure valuable employees are not demotivated and disengaged after an unsuccessful I-deals process if the company does not want to lose them to the competitors.

Additional leadership responsibilities are more common Task I-deals which would help an employee to develop leadership capabilities. If managers and HR departments of the companies are aware of their employees with leadership capacity, they can build leadership preparation programs for their potential employees to assess, select, and train them for future leadership roles. Thus, it will be possible to develop, retain, motivate, and engage their valuable employees.

In a related example, it was seen that an employee's negotiation process for career development then turned into a negotiation for taking extra responsibilities for a leadership role. The employee has been working in the telecommunication sector with a total of 12 years work experience and has 8 years of experience in the same company where he has been in the negotiating process for career development. After working on several challenging assignments and proving his leadership skills in an approximately one-year period, he managed to take

extra leadership roles. However, the employee yet expects to move on to the next roles. Meanwhile, he still does not have the impression that his company will help him to get there. He became so disengaged and unhappy that he started to think about other alternatives outside the company. He says that: “The reason that I continue now is only my responsibilities to my family. I believe that I need to continue until I find another job. If I find a more attractive job elsewhere, I will definitely use that opportunity.” (Participant 7). Thus, the company can make sure that valuable employees are not demotivated and disengaged after an unsuccessful I-deals process if the organization does not want to lose them to the competitors.

One effective task I-deal is about conducting visible projects which help employees to show their impact to top management. It is observed that employees are promoted to a more senior role after completing visible projects.

**Flexibility I-deals.** Flexibility I-deals generally involve a standard practice of applying flexible work hours to all employees. However, in some companies, flexible work hours are only applied for a specific reason with a solid justification such as attending a master course. Companies do not want to lose employees due to work hours only so they try to find solutions through several programs especially when the employee provides a rational justification.

Differentiation practices and flexibility for females aiming to support female diversity in organizations are significantly increasing. Flexible work arrangements are being negotiated especially after maternity leave period and negotiations mostly end up successfully thanks to the companies’ diversity strategies. Maternity leave rights are also negotiated during the recruitment process. Flexibility for women really creates value and extra impact on women contribution and it is also seen important as part of the corporate social responsibility.

Sales and commercial people are given more flexibility by their managers and the negotiation is mostly arranged through a confidential process between the manager and the employee. High performers are granted more flexible hours as compared to low performers. This is because managers have concerns that low performers may abuse the system via not working enough and not delivering results.

Another important dimension of flexibility I-deals is location flexibility. In some companies, it is given to all employees regardless of their positions or conditions. In some cases, it depends on the role and job content or special condition of the employee. Location flexibility depends on the nature of the work and expected outcomes.

Schedule flexibility and reducing work demands and work hours are other dimensions of flexibility which also vary according to the content and scope of the job. Some employees tend to ask for additional resources to decrease their own work demands. Such opportunities are also provided to female employees mostly to support their career.

**Financial I-deals.** Regarding financial I-deals, during the recruitment process, it is seen that candidates ask for additional amounts to justify their severance payment and, they ask questions about the bonus structure. Within the context of Ex-post financial I-deals, there are cases related to salary negotiations, inflation increase, salary adjustment etc. Sometimes the process for expats becomes exhausting as they question every detail and they do not accept each condition. So, some companies create very special conditions beyond the standard practices to attract talented expats.

The strength of a financial negotiation by an employee is mostly determined by the market power. If the employee is a strong profile in the market, especially coming from a competitor, during the hiring process, his/her range can be higher than that of a regular candidate. Besides, if the candidates are also aware of their competitive advantages including being in the talent pool of their current company, then they do not move to another company before making sure that they are taking the equivalent of what they deserve.

**Other I-deal Contents.** During the study, other interesting I-deal contents were detected as negotiating for the approval mechanism, empowerment, something regarding a co-worker, and innovative ideas. Another concept was about having fun in the team environment and in the company with more social activities. Individuals desired more team events to get connected with others to expand their network.

Threat-based I-deals were rarely found, however, some big companies used them as part of their official processes. There are some incidents where employees asked for higher conditions especially when they received a transfer offer. One company has a special retention program for such situations where employees are given a higher salary increase, promotion, role change etc. when they want to retain the employee.

### **I-deal Negotiations**

The process for an I-deal is crucial to prevent exhaustion while employees are trying to communicate their needs and negotiate for them. So, employees need to be resilient during the negotiation process and if alternatives are proposed to them, they may feel more strong and resilient. Companies and managers should be aware that when I-deals are managed well they may increase organizational engagement. But, on the other hand, if the negotiation process takes too long, exhaustion on the part of employees may cause burnout in the long-term.

The present research also revealed that an organization should have some fundamental processes to assure employee awareness about what is negotiable and what is not. Employees need benchmarking with the market and with their peers to expect I-deals to negotiate further.

## **Goals of I-deals**

Conceptually, I-deals are purported to attract, retain, and motivate employees by improving the quality of work life, promoting work-family balance, providing recognition of one's value, and allowing employees to customize jobs around their skills and career aspirations (Greenberg et al., 2004; Rousseau, 2005; Rousseau et al., 2006).

During the interviews, participants were asked about the goals of I-deals from the employee, manager, and organization perspectives. From the employee perspective, the purpose is the utilization of one's competencies and skills, being more satisfied with the career, being more efficient, and feeling more satisfied with the job. From the management perspective, it is mostly applied to increase performance, engagement for the job, and career satisfaction of the employee. From the organization perspective, the goal is retaining the key talent, building future leaders, and aligning with the competition in the market.

## **Role of Leadership Behaviour in the Success of I-deals**

The importance of leadership behaviour, more specifically, authentic leadership and agile leadership characteristics were emphasized most frequently.

Authentic leadership also seems to create a positive impact on transparency within the organizations (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Organizations that have employees with a high perception of organizational transparency would respond to I-deals more positively. Meanwhile, authentic leadership increases organizational commitment via sustaining positive organizational behaviour which would help managers in dealing with co-worker reactions. Besides, authentic leadership increases work engagement of employees (Avolio et al., 2004). Most of the participants addressed authentic leadership as an instrument to focus on ethics to ensure confidence and hope in the manager-employee relationship. Thus, it would be possible to develop employees to achieve organizational goals as mentioned by Miniotaite and Bucuniene (2013)

Agile leadership improves the interaction among employees as well as employees' organizational commitment and work engagement (Ferreira et al., 2012). Sustaining a healthy communication environment among employees would be helpful for dealing with co-worker reactions to I-deals (Parker et al., 2015). Agile leadership also contributes to the success of I-deals via increasing employees' self-awareness (Collyer and Warren, 2009).

Agile leadership was presented as a solution to eliminate the weaknesses of traditional management practices in terms of identifying team members' perception of goals and performance requirements. As a result, managers with agile leadership skills are expected to be more aware of employees' perception of organizational goals and performance expectations. Thus, agile leaders are expected to manage I-deal negotiations more properly.

## **Role of HR in the Success of I-deals**

The role of HR during an I-deals process is mostly emphasized as an independent third party. Participants informed that HR generally joins the negotiation process. They agree that HR could participate but they also demand standardized assessment rules to limit HR's intervention and cynicism. Some of them, on the other hand, think that HR should not be involved in situations related to flexible working hours, schedule, and task management as they believe this should be managed by managers since it is work-related. Some participants also said that HR's intervention is important since the manager could stop an employee's promotion if it becomes evident that the employee has better qualities than the manager.

Also, it is reported by some participants that HR's participation depends on the case; HR should contribute by ensuring the culture for open communication. Majority of the participants think that HR should take the responsibility and guide employees, and HR should act proactively to promote talented employees.

HR role is also emphasized frequently as part of organizational support. According to mostly used statements by participants, HR's four main roles were emphasized as "Coach" role, "Advisor" role, "Facilitator" role and "Counselling" role.

The coach role is found crucial in terms of implementing on-going coaching sessions which are valued by employees especially for career development, work-life balance, engagement etc. These are deemed significant by employees particularly when they are conducted proactively by HR with talent employees to coach them about the above-mentioned issues. HR also assumes a role in coaching managers to identify, keep, and engage talent employees.

The advisor role is found useful especially for guidance and improvement for overall company policies and procedures which would also be helpful for decreasing the fairness-related concerns of co-workers. Most of the managers and employees have emphasized that they have limited knowledge about company policies and procedures related to granting/asking for an I-deal topic. It is said that some of the topics are already covered by company policies and procedures and HR can advise related parties about such policies and procedures. Also, if the topic does not exist, HR can promote new ways of establishing the issue and aligning it with new policies and procedures that mean to reduce fairness related concerns of co-workers.

The facilitator role is found valuable and helpful for the organization especially if any I-deal topic creates a conflict between a manager and an employee. Some participants emphasized that during an I-deal negotiation process, HR can assume the facilitator role between the two parties by facilitating the conversation to have better solutions for both sides. Especially if a conflict arises during the conversations, HR can be the independent party to facilitate the desired outcomes for the organization, individuals, and managers.

The counselling role is found to be particularly helpful for employees who had gone through unsuccessful I-deal processes. The role is expected to help them to recover and to be engaged again. I-deals do not always end with a desired outcome for the two sides. This may mostly be true for individuals who had started the process to ask for an I-deal topic. Under such circumstances, some participants openly shared their experience of unsuccessful I-deals outcomes such as stress, exhaustion, feeling not valued, and disengaged. For such situations, some employees stated that HR can implement the “counselling” role to follow up and provide counselling to those employees to make them feel better and engaged again.

### **Outcomes of I-deals**

Regarding the outcomes of I-Deals, it is reported that deals accepted by the company are likely to create positive emotions and those rejected are likely to create negative emotions (Conway & Coyle-Shapiro, 2015). If I-deal negotiations are not accepted by the company, on the other hand, withdrawal behaviours may be displayed by employees.

Some employees stated that their self-motivation and self-engagement with the organization increased when their I-deal offers were accepted. Employees whose I-deals were accepted felt like a valuable and successful employee. Some had the impression that organizations accepted I-deals only suggested by employees with self-discipline and sense of responsibility. In some examples, it was found that I-deals increased employees’ job satisfaction, work engagement, and desire for retention. It is reported that I-deals also help employees develop their skills and increase their individual performance.

Consequently, companies benefit from I-deals through improving performance, increasing the prestige of the organization for newcomers, decreasing employee turnover, increasing sustainability, increasing the organization’s ability to adapt to changing conditions in a short time, increasing efficiency and effectiveness of the organization, and increasing organizational health. I-deals also help organizations raise senior leaders and next-generation employees. They also assist in building an organizational culture and a fair organizational environment, and, as a result, be a market leader.

Some participants said that they thought that they had already deserved the I-deal when their I-deals were accepted by the company and they did not feel great happiness. After waiting for a long time to receive the desired I-deal, the person says that he/she became exhausted meanwhile, so, when he received it, it did not have the same meaning as before.

It was also said that they were too demotivated until the I-deal negotiations resulted and they did not believe that the outcome would be positive during the process. However, the successful deal made them so happy and improved their confidence in the organization.



Regarding the situations where I-deals were not accepted, it was observed that employees felt disappointed and they thought of seeking a new job. Most participants emphasized negative feelings and poor relations with the manager. They lost their trust to the manager and felt hate, anger, and distrust. Besides, negative experiences like losing hope and optimism, fear for future, and decreased motivation and engagement towards the organization were reported.

Majority of the participants said that they felt bad in the workplace after an unsuccessful I-deal negotiation. Employees' reactions depend on the manager's accountability and on their self-confidence. Employees with low self-confidence are affected more negatively.

Co-worker reaction is another side of the picture and co-workers' negative reactions could risk other employees' willingness for retention or they could decrease the team's trust in the manager (Conway & Coyle-Shapiro, 2015). If the manager falls short of properly managing the I-deal processes, co-workers may feel worthless and think that they are not good enough to attract an I-deal.

It is also said that the manager has the responsibility to explain the justification of the I-deal and convince co-workers for its fairness. This has crucial importance in terms of limiting co-workers' negative reactions. I-deals should play a role with respect to filling the gap between employee and organization perspectives concerning the issue of fairness. Co-workers' perception of unfairness could be seen in forms such as perceiving the salary scale as unfair, sensing a lack of transparency within the organization, and spreading cynicism/favouritism within the organization.

However, despite concerns about co-worker reactions, when managed properly by the manager and HR, I-deals can also be assumed as a good tool during tough times of the organizations.

### **Dyadic Relations Side of I-deals**

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory focuses on the relationships between managers and individual subordinates and the development of these relationships over time (Cashman, Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1976; Graen & Cashman, 1975). This conceptualization purports that differences in a manager's treatment of individual workers are due to differing levels of trust. Some workers form part of a highly trusted ingroup that has greater latitude over duties and responsibilities, finding their manager highly responsive to their needs and interests. In contrast, other workers, considered as part of the outgroup, are denied this special treatment. High-LMX workers enjoy more opportunities for idiosyncratic behaviour—and, presumably, the creation of I-deals—than their low- LMX counterparts.

Importantly, whether the LMX relationship is based on an employer's regard for a particularly competent worker or merely on a friendship with a less impressive performer

determines whether these individually distinct arrangements constitute legitimate I-deals or merely preferential treatment. Nonetheless, having a good relationship with one's manager or another representative of one's employer is likely to make proposing an I-deal easier. As such, a manager who may have been reluctant to negotiate an I-deal early in a relationship with a worker may become open to the possibility of such an arrangement over time, to the extent that he or she comes to value that worker.

During the research, dyadic relations of managers and employees were also explored in a deeper context through three case studies to understand the different perspectives of managers and employees in the course of an I-deal making process and to identify how perceptual differences in this dyadic relationship influence the outcome of the I-deal negotiation.

The first case of dyadic I-deals relations among managers and employees revealed a perception difference between the manager and the employee in terms of what matters most at work and the priorities of the employee. Manager 1 is an experienced manager whose tenure was more than 14 years in the business (Male, 39 years old). In his role, he has been managing a team of 5 people in the sales department of the organization. The manager defines himself as a very disciplined, structured, open, and honest person who always likes to have direct communication with his direct report employees. He has been also defined as "A constructive manager who always tries to solve problems" by Employee 1 who has been interviewed within this context.

Employee 1 is an experienced sales expert in the sector with more than 10 years of experience (Female, 36 years old). She defines herself as an employee who is overperforming and delivering good results and thus gives confidence and trust to her manager so that the manager would believe that she can deliver results in all conditions. The manager defines this person as a high performing, disciplined, structured, result oriented, and trustworthy employee. The manager says, "She has the highest credibility in the team such that I can give wide flexibility for any topic without hesitation knowing that she will deliver results even during tough times". Employee 1 states that they have a very open and honest relationship with his manager. In below section, the perspective of the manager about the negotiation process for a Flexibility I-deal process with Employee 1 is summarized.

Employee 1 as a female employee has difficulty in terms of arranging her schedule aligned with work hours due to her child's school times. Manager 1 gave permission to Employee 1 to come to team meetings late for 2 months to drop her child to school. The result was a successful negotiation from manager perspective as the outcome was increased performance and productivity, a happy employee, and positive business results.

After the interview process with Manager 1, Employee 1 was also interviewed on a different day and time without giving any background information about the initial manager

interview. Employee 1 was feeling herself behind the market peers in terms of training and development, so she wanted to request an offer from her manager about this issue. Employee 1 wanted to join global training to gain competitive advantage and a vision which was very important for her. The result for her was unsuccessful she was demotivated, unhappy and was feeling that the company did not invest in her. Regarding the reaction of co-workers, she believes that as the request was unsuccessful, there was no impact on co-workers.

The factors that affect the decision to give her that I-deals was budget restrictions and the fact that it was an uncommon practice in the company to attend such training. Although the employee defined her relationship with the manager as very open, honest, and comfortable relationship, this did not have positive effect on achieving the Developmental I-deal from employee perspective. The employee was also perceiving her manager as a constructive person who always tried to solve problems. The employee also believed that he gave the confidence to her manager and the manager believes that the employee could deliver results.

There was an obvious perceptual difference between Manager 1 and Employee 1 about the negotiated I-deals. The main difference was that Manager 1 promoted an I-deals process where he had given the flexibility to the employee to attend the team meetings late, whereas Employee 1 put an emphasis on a developmental I-deal that she could not receive and was disappointed about. So, Employee 1 described an unsuccessful negotiation about the training courses that she wanted to take which was number one priority for her. The manager did not mention about that situation at all. Also, when Employee 1 was asked at the end of the interview whether she had anything else to tell, she hardly remembered the example that her manager mentioned about coming to meetings late.

When asked in detail, Employee 1 emphasized the location flexibility issues such as home office work and remote working as opportunities for making her life easier. She felt certain that she could collaborate well with her manager under such conditions. She emphasized that the accountability of the person is crucial in a situation like this as it might be abused by someone else. She stated that she arranged her customer meeting times based on different locations of home and office. Instead of going to the office every day, she was saving time by directly going to the customer. She stated that her manager never questioned where she was and what she was doing, knowing that she would deliver her results eventually. So, she believes that this type of flexibility significantly increased her productivity. Thus, it seems that the employee is pleased about the consequences of this arrangement but she does not appreciate it as a deal.

As a result, although both sides mentioned that they had a very open and transparent communication, the perception of both sides about the I-deal process they conducted and where they put the emphasis was very different from each other.

The perception of the manager on how he motivated a female employee via providing more flexibility and what the employee was thinking as a priority (attending training courses) was totally different. So, it is very important for the managers to really understand what matters most for their employees through identifying deeply what really motivates them.

The second case of dyadic I-deals relations among managers and employees exhibited how the manager and the employee may have different views, especially about an employer-initiated I-deal process. Manager 2 and Employee 2 have worked together for almost 4 years and since Employee 2 has moved to a new role, the two almost became peers. Manager 2 was managing a diverse team of 3 people and had the opportunity to discuss and negotiate some I-deals topics with her direct reports during her tenure.

In this case, the I-deals process between Manager 2 and Employee 2 was realized for employer-initiated I-deals. So, both Manager 2 and Employee 2 were asked about the prior criteria for an employer-initiated I-deals process. When the manager was asked about the criteria that the organization considered for an employee, several qualities were emphasized. The talent person was expected to be innovative, a trusted advisor, have good 360-degree feedback, have a proven track record of accomplishment, conduct good relations with customers and co-workers, and display high performance. Employee 2, on the other hand, only emphasized delivering results, discipline and rigor, and performance. The common thing that both sides mentioned was the “performance”. This clearly shows us that managers and employees have different perspectives on how they formulate talent criteria. Besides, managers have higher expectations than employees in terms of the qualities required for being selected as a talent employee.

Both the manager and the employee had similar perspectives in relation to the fairness aspect of I-deals. Describing himself as a trusted advisor person, the employee shared his perspective that other colleagues had no issue with his transition to the new roles and taking place in the talent pool as they all believed that he deserved it. Similarly, the manager stated that if your justification is good, then it is easy for everyone to understand the rationale behind your actions. However, if you do it without any baseline and with no justification, then it may create a fairness issue. Therefore, managers should handle and communicate the process very carefully.

In the third case of dyadic I-deals relations among managers and employees, it became apparent that if the manager has good leadership skills and he shows how much he cares for employee expectations, the employee does not take a refusal as negative, given that the manager shows his best to make the employee feel comfortable in other areas that he can influence.

Manager 3 is managing a homogenous team of 18 technical employees. In the team, each member has a different technical expertise. The manager was defined as supportive, open,

and inclusive by Employee 3. The manager himself also has deep technical expertise derived from his previous team membership. Due to his high seniority, the team members respect both his technical expertise and democratic leadership style.

Employee 3 is a young female employee who joined the company with an early career program after a 1-year internship. Manager 3 mentioned the I-deals content that was initiated by Employee 3 as developmental opportunities, performance goals, and schedule flexibility. Manager 3 referred to a request from Employee 3 related to financial support for an MBA program. However, Manager 3 said that due to company policies, they could not meet this request of the employee. So, he was a bit sorry while telling this story. On the other hand, during the interview, Employee 3 did not mention at all about this MBA request. She was usually appreciative of other benefits that the manager provided her such as location flexibility and working remotely and flexibly at different hours. She said that sometimes she had the opportunity to go and stay with her family who was out of the city and she could work from there.

Both sides also talked about performance goals. They both emphasized that as she was in a special program, her performance targets were also arranged accordingly. They were not as strict as those of other members of the team.

## Discussion

As a result of the qualitative analysis, two models are proposed. The first model includes elements of both those covered by the literature and those revealed in the current study. It shows that employees' intrinsic motivation, perceived overqualification or underemployment, impression management, assertiveness, self-esteem, and self-efficacy are related to attracting Ex-ante and Ex-post I-deals. Additionally, employees' affective commitment, trustworthiness, and performance level are proposed as being related to attracting Ex-post developmental I-deals. Intrinsic motivation, commitment, trustworthiness, and performance level as antecedents of I-deals are aligned with the literature (Rosen et al., 2013), while impression management, assertiveness, self-esteem, and self-efficacy are new contributions to the literature.

Employees with high impression management skills like good self-promotion or self-marketing are more able to display an image of contribution to organizational performance via properly promoting even their smallest contribution (Kim & Lee, 2012). During I-deal processes, employees with high impression management skills may achieve higher chances to attract an I-deal compared to high performers with low impression management skills, if the managers fail to evaluate performance contributions correctly.

Assertiveness in the context of business relations refers to an employee's skills to be self-assured and self-confident while avoiding aggression in social communication at the same

time. Employees with high assertiveness skills would be able to smoothly keep their own benefits during negotiations with managers. Employees who can not show required assertiveness in negotiation processes are more likely to fall short of striking beneficial deals (Twenge, 2001).

Professional self-esteem is closely related to an employee's ability to challenge his/her professional tasks and achieve his/her career goals (Pierce & Gardner, 2004). According to Self-Evaluations Theory (Judge et al., 2007), self-esteem is among the most important factors determining an employees' perception of the work environment. Self-esteem, consequently, has a direct impact on I-deal processes. Employees with higher self-esteem are more likely to receive I-deal offers and to successfully implement the deals. Employees without self-confidence generally tend to be restricted to standardized human resources management practices and they are less likely to gain success through I-deals (Innocenti et al., 2017).

Bandura (1997) puts self-efficacy into the core of his Social Cognitive Theory. From the perspective of Social Cognitive Theory, self-efficacy is crucial for controlling the elements of the environment (Guillon et al., 2004). Employees with higher self-efficacy have higher self-confidence in terms of timely and properly reacting to environmental stimuli (Salanova et al., 2002). Self-efficacy, as a result, is an important individual factor affecting the success of I-deals.

I-deals are naturally personal and individual processes. In respect to this, self-awareness appears as a positive factor affecting employees' success in I-deals. Thus, employees' individual ability to manage and successfully implement the deals is crucial (Ng & Feldman, 2010).

The first model also proposes that leadership is related to both the acceptance of I-deals and co-workers' reactions. If the I-deals are accepted, they are expected to increase normative commitment, productivity, extrinsic motivation, work engagement, and retention, while they are also anticipated to reduce work-family conflict in parallel with the literature. If I-deals are not accepted, they are predicted to increase work-family conflict and burnout while decreasing trust to the manager, in parallel with the literature. The model contributes to the literature via proposing resilience as an outcome of I-deals for both cases of acceptance and refusal.

The second model proposes a recommendation for future research. The model emphasizes that leadership style is quite essential for the success of an I-deal. The concepts of authentic and agile leadership suggested by the second model contribute to the I-deals literature. It is proposed that authentic and agile leadership styles are required to pursue successful I-deals negotiation processes to satisfy employees and, meanwhile, to avoid co-worker reactions. Managers with authentic and agile leadership skills would have the ability to suitably manage

co-worker's reactions. Authentic leadership will be required mostly for balancing the team via understanding individuals' needs or via establishing empathy with employees. Agile leadership, on the other hand, will be required when the leader grants flexibility I-deals to adjust to the situation, especially in an uncertain environment which necessitates acting fast.

The second model also aims to prove that both flexibility I-deals and developmental I-deals increase the resilience of the employee. Employees would tend to keep more hopeful and optimistic views regarding their future in the company thanks to I-deals. They would raise expectations that the organization would also offer them I-deals and, as a result, I-deals would increase organizational resilience via increasing employees' hope and optimism to solve their problems within the organization. If I-deals are not granted, it will trigger exhaustion and hopelessness for the employee, which will decrease their resilience then. As the employees become more resilient, however, they will obtain more opportunities to receive other I-deals as their credibility will increase after tough times.

According to the second model, I-deals may be useful tools for all resilience development strategies. Especially for solving employees' perceived overqualification and underemployment problems, I-deals could play a beneficial role in building the individual and organizational level resilience capacity via increasing hope and optimism within the organization. Resilience would also contribute to the struggle with uncertainties in the workplace. Employees would feel confident that even the risks are realized, they and the organization can bounce back.

Resilience can be defined as employees', managers' or organizations' ability to rebound from adversities, conflicts, and failures to positive events, progress, and increased responsibility. It also refers to proactive learning via challenges in addition to reactive rebounds. Masten & Reed (2002) proposed that resilience could be developed through asset-focused, risk-focused, and process-focused strategies, while Bonanno (2005) suggested that state-like resilience could be developed through training interventions. Youssef & Luthans (2007), on the other hand, showed that resilience has a positive impact on employee performance. Resilience in the organizational behavior context is also seen as related to hope and optimism (Luthans et al., 2007).

Compared to the roles of relationships with the leader and the organization, empirical evidence to date has supported that co-worker relationship plays an equally important role in predicting various employee attitudes and performance indicators (Anand, Vidyarthi, Liden, & Rousseau 2010; Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008; Ng & Sorensen, 2008). However, in I-deals literature, the co-worker reaction is still one of the weakest points of I-deals (Singh et al., 2014). Without properly managing co-worker reactions, I-deals would negatively affect organizational performance rather than increasing it (Conway & Coyle-Shapiro, 2015). The solution may also be found in the past organizational behavior research regarding teams. The

team concept can be defined as the ability to bring employees with different skills together to cooperatively achieve certain goals (Mannix & Neale, 2005). Employees would enjoy using and developing their skills as part of a team. The relationship among the team members is quite substantial in terms of conducting efficient teamwork. Rooted from the concept of reciprocity of interpersonal and social interactions from Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) and LMX, Team- Member Exchange (TMX) was proposed as a way to access the reciprocity between a member and the peer group. TMX has been defined as an individual's "perception of his or her exchange relationship with the peer group as a whole". TMX was developed as one way in which to measure the level of exchange quality among co-workers. High-quality TMX reflects focal employees' perceptions of high levels of openness and support between members in their peer group (Kahn, 1992; Seers, 1989). TMX involves a member's perception of his or her willingness to assist other members, to share ideas and feedback, and in turn, how readily information, help, and recognition are received from other members (Keup, Burning & Seers, 2004; Liden, Wayne & Sparrowe, 2000). Therefore, Team Deal is recommended as a new concept to handle co-worker reactions, especially for Flexibility and Developmental I-deals. This issue can be another focus for future research. As a weakness to mention, however, the Team Deal concept would not be valid for Financial I-deals since such deals should be kept confidential. In teams where high-quality team-member exchange (TMX) is observed, it is more likely to reach a "deal" based on team agreement with more open communication, trust, and support to each other, as compared to the teams with less quality team-member exchange.

The relationship among the team members is quite substantial in terms of conducting efficient teamwork. Team leaders play a key role in aligning team members to achieve a common goal through establishing effective communication among them. Besides bringing individual skills together, the team leader has a crucial role in solving possible conflicts among team members. It has to be emphasized that the team concept should also involve rewards granted for every team member when the goals are achieved (Kozlowski & Bell, 2003).

Through a Team Deal, team members may set their own team dynamics with the leader via addressing how they can work flexibly as a team. Team members can have an agreement with other team members on supporting each other when schedules are tough, or they can also strike different agreements. Also, for Developmental I-deals, they can help each other to identify certain issues about which they feel strong, and an employee who was given a training may teach similar concepts to his/her colleagues.

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## APPENDIX-1

### SEMI-STRUCTURED QUESTION FORM FOR INTERVIEWS

#### I-DEALS – BRIEF (1):

Idiosyncratic deals (or I-deals) are mutually beneficial, personalized agreements of a nonstandard nature that are negotiated between individual employees and their employers. In a rapidly changing work environment, the strategic need to attract and retain a qualified workforce have caused organizations to adopt more flexible human resource practices. This trend toward qualified and valued employees created special conditions for individuals with flexible schedules, remote working, more development options, and career paths. I-deals are examples of individualized human resource management practices. They involve training, developmental opportunities given to employees (e.g., developmental I-deals) as well as flexibilities involving location, timing, and schedules (e.g., flexible I-deals). They are different than what co-workers already possess and they are intended to be mutually beneficial.

#### General Questions for HR Professionals & Managers & Employees:

1. Given the brief explanation of I-deals (1), do you think you have such practices in your organization?
2. If yes, what kind of I-deals topics are negotiated in your organization? (Follow up questions such as “*In which functions and roles do you think such a process is more common?*”)
3. Have you ever been involved in such a process for yourself? (Followed by questions such as; “*Would you please explain which topics you have negotiated?*” “*How was the process?*” “*Was it successful/unsuccessful?*” “*How did the I-deals process influence you based on the outcome?*” Please explain with reasons for your individual situation.”)
4. How does the I-deals negotiation process evolve in your organization? (Follow up with questions such as; “*Please specify the situations that either the employer /employee initiated the process?*”)
5. Which leadership behaviours would support such a negotiation process to be more common?

6. What are the characteristics of employees who initiate such processes with their managers/ employers? (Follow up with questions such as; “What are the characteristics of employees who negotiated successfully vs unsuccessfully?”)
7. What are the roles of HR and managers in the organization during an I-deals process?
8. What are the benefits and the adverse consequences of having I-deals negotiations in organizations?
9. If you have not experienced/observed a negotiation before, what do you think about the reasons that you did not pursue such a negotiation process in your organization?

### **Questions to Explore Dyadic Relations Between Managers & Subordinates:**

#### **For managers only:**

1. Have any of your subordinates ever negotiated such I-deals with you? If yes, How / when was the process initiated? (Ex-ante or ex-post) What was the result? (successful, not successful)
2. What kinds of I-deals did you provide to your employee (s)?
3. What influenced your decision in giving these I-deals? (such as the performance of the employee, departmental cost structures, etc.)
4. How did you manage the co-workers’ reactions? Would you give the same I-deals if others from the same department came and asked?
5. Do you think the provision of I-deals is a violation of fairness?
6. What would you do to ensure that such I-deals become fair for everyone in the team, for the future?
7. What would you do to motivate employees who did not obtain I-deals?
8. If you have not experienced before, what do you think about the reasons that you did not pursue such a negotiation process?

#### **For employees-specific who negotiated at least one I-deals item:**

1. What motivated you to go and ask for I-deals in the first place?
2. How did your co-workers react to it?
3. Do you think I-deals affect your performance and effectiveness positively?
4. Is it a criterion for you to be committed and stay in an organization?

#### **For successful and unsuccessful I-deals of employees:**

1. Do you think your relationship with your manager influenced your success or failure of negotiating I-deals?
2. Even if you failed, will you try and ask for such conditions again in the future?