Impact of identity fusion and pro-group motivation on employees' productivity: experimental survey

Samaranayake, Don Isuru and Jayarathna, Dhammika and Mithursan, Asokkumar

Faculty of Management, University of Peradeniya

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Impact of identity fusion and pro-group motivation on employees' productivity: experimental survey

D. I. J. Samaranayake[1*], H.G.D. Jayarathna[2] and A. Mithursan[3]

[1,3]*Department of Management Studies, Faculty of Management, University of Peradeniya*
[2]*Inqube Global (pvt.) Ltd., Ranala, Sri Lanka*

Corresponding Author: Email: dijs@mgt.pdn.ac.lk https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1300-4524

Abstract

This study observes the potential of identity fusion and pro-group motivation to improve employees' productivity in the textile manufacturing industry in a time of health crisis. This follows explicitly to observe whether the identity-fused employees are pro-group motivated and exert more effort than non-identity-fused employees. The mode of inquiry of this study is a real effort experiment with pre-determined incentives and conducted as an online experiment for 152 employees selected randomly from one of the major Sri Lankan apparel industry networks. The findings from the experimental survey revealed that the majority of employees with fused identities are more pro-social, and pro-group motivated and those who are pro-group motivated exerted more effort than the subjects who are not motivated. Also, identity-fused subjects exert more effort than non-identity-fused subjects. Therefore, the outcomes prove that identity fusion and pro-group motivation are effective in improving the productivity of employees.

Keywords: *Identity Fusion; Pro-group Motivation; Employees' Effort; COVID-19*

Introduction

The widespread outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19) has escalated into a global crisis, resulting in a devastating impact on both human lives and the world economy. Numerous countries have been forced into emergency response mode, contending with a multitude of challenges as they work to address the severe consequences of the pandemic. The business landscape has been profoundly affected, with organizations facing a complex set of challenges stemming from the pandemic. One of the most significant obstacles has been the management of their workforce. Many businesses have had to downsize due to reduced demand for their products and services, presenting them with the formidable task of devising strategies to maximize productivity and motivation among their remaining employees.

Industry experts have identified a range of challenges, including the scarcity of raw materials and labor, disruptions in transportation and staffing, diminished demand, production deficiencies, increased machinery failures, extended working hours, and various regulatory constraints imposed by local and central authorities. In Sri Lanka, the manufacturing sector has been particularly hard-hit, with employees experiencing pronounced effects on their motivation, task-based efforts, and overall well-being. In this context, it is essential to explore potential applications and strategies aimed at improving employee motivation and effort during the health crisis. An approach that carefully considers organizational norms and makes appropriate adaptations to align with the current crisis or "new normal" conditions could result in substantial enhancements to organizational performance. Research suggests that organizational norms can shape individual preferences (Kimbrough & Vostroknutov, 2016; Lipari, 2018), and fostering a sense of identity fusion within the workplace has the potential to elevate employee motivation and task-based performance. (Swann et al., 2010; Newson et al., 2016; Leon, 2023).

This line of research may yield valuable insights into aligning organizational norms with employees' preferences, ultimately mediating through identity fusion and positively influencing motivation and task-based performance. Therefore, this study investigates the potential impact of identity fusion and pro-group motivation in bolstering employee efforts within the textiles manufacturing industry in the time of health crisis in Sri Lanka.

Review of literature

Identity encompasses an individual's sense of self, representing their qualities, beliefs, personality, looks, and expressions. This concept extends to the collective identity of a group or society in a larger context. It is crucial to recognize that identity can encompass both positive and destructive traits. According to Swann et al. (2009), Swann et al. (2010), Newson et al. (2016), and Chinchilla et al. (2021) identity encompasses a spectrum of behaviors, ranging from enduring loyalty to harmful acts such as terrorism, known as 'the measures of identity fusion'. In this context, 'fusion' refers to the extent of alignment between an individual's identity and that of a group or society (Varmann et al., 2023). When both identities perfectly align, it is referred to as a 'fused identity'
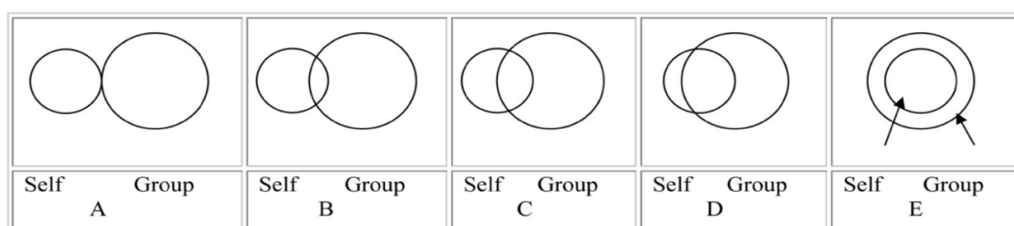
Figure 1: The measure of identity fusion (Source: Retrieved from Swann et al., 2009)

Swann et al. (2009) described this spectrum (see Figure 1) by considering the degree to which individuals felt connected to the group they were asked to engage with and how they perceived their relationship with the group. Cluster 'A' depicts individuals who feel that their identity does not align with the characteristics of the group, representing the least fused situation. On the other hand, cluster 'E' represents individuals who believe their identity is perfectly aligned with the group characteristics, referred to as 'fused identity.' When individuals and groups experience such fused identities, it can lead to extreme group behaviors such as unwavering loyalty, self-sacrifice, and pro-group fighting (Swann et al., 2009; Swann et al., 2010; Newson et al., 2016; Varmann et al., 2023; Leon, 2023). The degree of identity fusion also influences the level of commitment, with studies showing that fusion strengthens commitment to the group and impacts pro-group behavior (Swann et al., 2010; Bortolini et al., 2018).

Furthermore, identity fusion has the potential to elicit varying degrees of commitment, from regular acts of kindness towards the group to extraordinary acts of self-sacrifice (Swann et al., 2010; Gomez et al., 2015; Newson et al., 2016; Varmann et al., 2023). Then the economic phenomenon of identity discussed in Akerlof & Kranton (2000) appeared as an imperative tool to reflect more rationale related to identity fusion. Akerlof & Kranton (2000) introduced the following utility model to describe the identity of an individual or entity.

$U_j = U_j(a_j, a_{-j}, I_j)$ [Equation 1]

Where the utility depends on j's identity 'I_j' as well as j's actions 'a_j' and others actions 'a_{-j}'. Further, a person's identity is determined through the following factors,

$I_j = I_j(a_j, a_{-j}; C_j, \varepsilon_j, P)$ [Equation 2]

Where a person's identity depends on *j*'s assigned social categories C_j, *j*'s own given characteristics ε_j, as well as the prescriptions 'P'. Here the 'P' indicates the extent to which *j*'s own given characteristics (ε_j) match the ideal of *j*'s assigned social categories (C_j). Therefore, these factors are supposed to impact people's utility where higher utility provides higher satisfaction and economic gains. Hence, the prescription (P) for a measure to the degree of identity fusion as own given characteristics (ε_j) and assigned social categories (C_j) represent individual and group identities accordingly.

This model is a valuable tool given the growing significance of identity fusion and its behavioral implications in the modern workplace. According to Knippenberg (2000) Ellemers et al. (2004); and Vo et al. (2022), the relationship between self and organizational identities plays a crucial role

in work motivation, as well as task and contextual performances. Ellemers et al. (2004) suggested that concerns related to self-categorization and social identity processes have the potential to influence the motivation and behavior of individuals and groups at work. Then work motivation plays a vital role in the development of organizations, as it increases employee productivity and effectiveness (Vo et al., 2022). Moreover, self-categorization is indicative of individuals' identities and is influenced by the level of self-shapingness (Newson et al., 2016). The impact of self-shapingness is further influenced by the positivity or negativity of individual experiences, with a greater impact on extreme group behaviors when identities are fused (Leon, 2023). Therefore, an employee's sense of self and organizational identity significantly influences their motivation, efforts, and task-based performances. It also affects the motivational processes of both leadership and group performances within an organization (Ellemers et al., 2004; Vo et al., 2022).

The impact of prosocial behavior on employee performance and productivity is a widely discussed subject in academic literature. Prosocial behavior involves actions intended to benefit others or society as a whole, encompassing good citizenship and extra-role behaviors in the workplace (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986; Baruch et al., 2004; Bolino & Grant, 2016; Haller et al., 2022). According to Baruch et al. (2004), individuals with a strong desire for achievement are willing to assist colleagues in the workplace, provided it does not impede their own success. This suggests that employees motivated by greater success tend to exhibit more prosocial behaviors. Similarly, Boundenghan et al. (2012) focused on both pro-organizational and pro-individual behaviors and found a strong correlation between affectivity, commitment to work, and prosocial behavior. Haller and colleagues (2022) highlighted in their research that even in the face of complex challenges arising from a global crisis, individuals continue to engage in acts of prosocial behavior, demonstrating a consistent pattern of altruism and cooperation on a global scale.

The correlation between pro-social behavior and employee performance driven by motivation and commitment has been examined by Banuri & Keefer (2012). Their study found that employees in the public sector demonstrated significantly more pro-social behavior compared to those in non-governmental organizations. This was corroborated by a subsequent phase of their experiment involving a different subject pool (Banuri & Keefer, 2016). Furthermore, it was observed that individuals with higher pro-social motivation put in greater effort in tasks, while those motivated by high pay exhibited less pro-social behavior. Additionally, Samaranayake & Banuri (2020) noted that individuals with similar levels of pro-sociality showed improved effort in different tasks. Furthermore, individuals who were strongly committed to their group were more likely to maintain their connection with other group members over time, despite external contextual factors (Vazquez et al., 2017). Once an individual becomes strongly committed to a group, both their

personal and social selves are activated simultaneously, resulting in a deep personal investment in group activities (Swann et al., 2012).

The study focuses on the correlation between identity fusion/group identification and a specific support for extreme pro-group behavior, particularly the willingness to fight and die for ingroup members. The relationship between fusion and self-sacrifice has been a consistent finding since the theory was developed. While identity fusion reliably predicts self-sacrifice for one's group, recent research has shown that individuals can also be fused with a value or cause, such as religious or non-religious affiliations, for example, Judaism (Fredman et al., 2017).

Scholars have also examined the potential impact of identity on organizational performance during the COVID-19 pandemic. Abrams et al. (2021) argue that the intergroup dynamics within an organization or society have significant implications for individuals' perceptions of their own and others' situations, the political management of the pandemic, how people are influenced, and the resolution of identity uncertainty. Therefore, a collaborative cross-group effort is proposed as a solution to achieve the objective of surviving and recovering from the pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on corporate sustainability, encompassing social, economic, and environmental aspects and emphasizing the responsibilities of organizations to meet the needs and expectations of various stakeholders. Within organizations, the pandemic has raised significant social concerns such as market stability, safeguarding the health of employees and clients, implementing health protocols, layoffs, and salary reductions (De-la-Calle-Duran & Rodriguez-Sanchez, 2021). It has also brought forth economic challenges including reduced activities, the risk of organizational bankruptcy, management of financial implications, and market fluctuations. Additionally, environmental issues, such as the impact of habitat destruction and global climate change on the emergence and spread of social environment-altering events like COVID-19, and the potential effects of pollution on virus transmission, have come to the forefront. Addressing these interconnected issues effectively necessitates a strengthening of organizations' social responsibility. Furthermore, corporate leaders are now tasked with minimizing the risks of virus transmission related to company operations, such as raw material procurement, production and distribution logistics, business travel, and talent acquisition (Li et al., 2023). The COVID-19 crisis has also led stakeholders to expect proactive engagement from organizations in collective efforts to combat the pandemic (Myeza et al., 2024).

In a study by Krug et al. (2021), the significance of leaders' and team members' identities in organizations was examined in the context of addressing issues such as job satisfaction, burnout, and loneliness during the pandemic. The researchers suggested an inclusive approach involving both leaders and team members to promote well-being during this challenging time. This is

particularly crucial as remote work during the pandemic has had a substantial impact on various aspects of identity and cognitive processes, including social and professional identity, leadership, intuition, mentoring, and creativity (Riva et al., 2021).

It is crucial to consider potential applications and strategies for enhancing employee satisfaction and productivity at work during the pandemic. Recognizing the significance of identity fusion in driving extreme and pro-group behaviors (Swann et al., 2010; Newson et al., 2016; Chinchilla et al., 2021 and Leon, 2023), it is important to carefully review organizational norms and make necessary adjustments to align with the pandemic or new normal conditions, as this could lead to substantial improvements in organizational performance. Research has shown that norms have the ability to influence individual preferences (Kimbrough & Vostroknutov, 2016; Lipari, 2018). Thus, by transforming organizational norms into employees' preferences through identity fusion, it is possible to enhance motivation and task-based performances. It is worth examining whether identity fusion can indeed boost employees' efforts in an organization amidst the ongoing global health crisis.

Materials and methods

This study draws upon the theoretical frameworks and empirical research conducted by Akerlof & Kranton (2000), Swann et al. (2009), Newson et al. (2016), Kimbrough & Vostroknutov (2016), and Leon (2023) to investigate the impact of identity fusion on employees' performance within an organization during a crisis. The proposed path diagram in this study is based on the standard principal-agent model, in which the employer offers a wage contract and the employee determines the level of effort to exert. Various modifications are then introduced to align with the specific objectives of this study. Therefore, this study presents the following conceptual framework, which incorporates new variables within the foundational structure established by the standard principal-agent model.
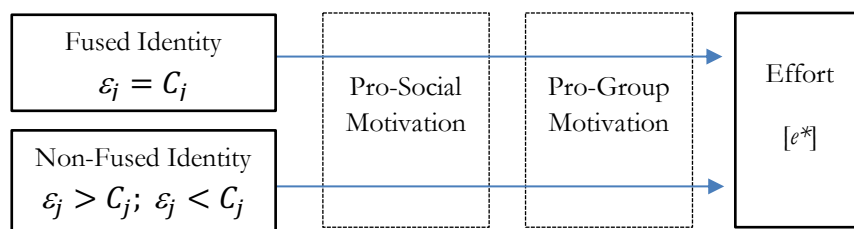
Figure 2: The Conceptual Framework (Source: Authors' preparation)

The conceptual framework includes all anticipated effects that can be utilized in this research. A cohesive identity leads to a favorable pro-social drive, positively influencing the employee and
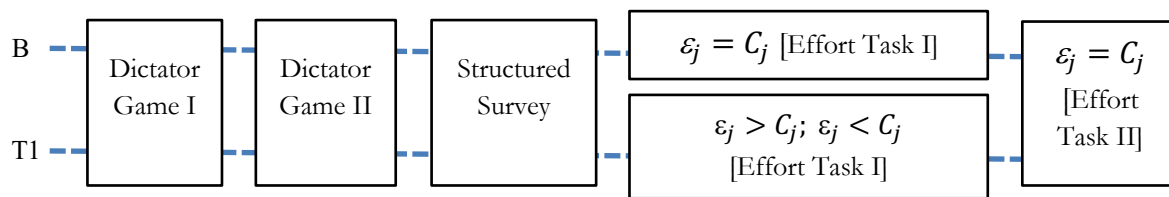
increasing their level of effort. When the organization's norms create discrepancies between the employee and the organizational identities, it has a negative impact on motivation and leads to a decrease in effort. Also, the level of effort is indicative of the employee's job satisfaction with regard to their needs. Hence, the expected outcomes are outlined below:

H1: Identity-fused subjects are pro-group motivated.

H2: Pro-group-motivated subjects will exert more effort than those who are not motivated.

H3: Identity-fused subjects will exert more effort than non-identity-fused subjects.

As per the established framework and relevant literature, this study adopts a real-effort experiment with predetermined incentives, as discussed by Banuri & Keefer (2016); Carpenter & Gong (2016), and Samaranayake & Banuri (2020). The experimental design encompasses three treatments, including "dictator games" and "real effort rounds". The initial rounds of each treatment in the experiment consist of a modified version of the standard dictator game, matching a subject with a charity or organizational mission to ensure the engagement of the two players in the game (Banuri & Keefer, 2016).

| B | Dictator Game I | Dictator Game II | Structured Survey | $\varepsilon_j = C_j$ [Effort Task I] | $\varepsilon_j = C_j$ [Effort Task II] |

With $\varepsilon_j > C_j$; $\varepsilon_j < C_j$ [Effort Task I] for T1 row.

Figure 3: Structure of the Experiment.
(Source: Adopted from Banuri & Keefer (2016); Samaranayake & Banuri (2020).

The first dictator game assesses the pro-social motivation of subjects through donation tasks to a charity, while the second dictator game evaluates the pro-group motivation of subjects through fund transfer tasks to support a specific organizational mission or objective. Subsequently, the first real effort task examines the distinction in effort levels between fused and non-fused respondents in a given task, and the second effort task presents a hypothetical scenario of perfectly fused identities to measure variations in effort. Finally, a survey gathers demographic data and explores responses to transformations in organizational norms and their impact on identities.

Simple Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regressions, Binary Logistic Models (BLM) and descriptive tools will be used to analyze the experimental data. Regressions are arranged to test all hypotheses following the treatments of the online experiment. They consisted of the key observations from each session such as total real effort (T_EFF_i) the measures on the pro-social motivation

($SMOTIV_i$), and pro-group motivation ($GMOTIV_i$) of the subjects, Identify Fusion (IF_i), concerns on COVID-19 ($COVID_i$) and the controls such as demographic characteristics, *i.e.* gender, age ($CONT_i$).

Thus, the following regressions are proposed separately for the baseline and the treatment.

Baseline

$$AT\_EFF\_B_i = \alpha + \beta SMOTIV\_B_i + \delta GMOTIV\_B_i + \rho IF\_B_i + \eta COVID\_B_i + \gamma CONT\_B_i + \varepsilon$$

Treatment

$$AT\_EFF\_T_i = \alpha + \beta SMOTIV\_T_i + \delta GMOTIV\_T_i + \rho IF\_T_i + \eta COVID\_T_i + \gamma CONT\_T_i + \varepsilon$$

The dependent component of the OLS regression represents the total real effort (T_EFF_i) by the respondent at the experimental session by adding both donations to the national and organizational funds, and effort made at both effort tasks for COVID-19 prevention.

Then $\beta SMOTIV\_B_i, \delta GMOTIV\_B_i$ are for the measures from the dictator games from the donations to the national and organizational COVID funds for the baseline. ρIF_i represents the degree of identity fusion of the respondent, and $COVID_i$ represents the perceived concerns such as direct impacts and threats from COVID-19. The demographic characteristics ($CONT_i$) will be collected through the simple questionnaire provided to the subjects at the end of the experiment. The data obtained from the debriefing questionnaire will be utilized for further analysis on the subjects' performance and characteristics. This study focuses on examining the influence of identity fusion on employee effort. The regressed outcomes, descriptive statistics, and graphical representations will facilitate comparisons between the effects of different treatments.

The study involved 152 employees from the Sri Lankan apparel industry, randomly selected from a total employee population of 3973, covering all employee categories from two major textile manufacturers located in Girithale & Polonnaruwa districts.

Results and discussion

The fluctuations seen in the fusion measure can be used to examine the dynamics of pro-social and pro-group behavior as measured in the dictator games. Figure 4 illustrates the significance of fusion measures, as employees with fused identities exhibit a greater intention to donate to both national and organizational COVID funds. This suggests that the majority of employees with fused identities are inclined towards being more pro-social and pro-group-oriented individuals.
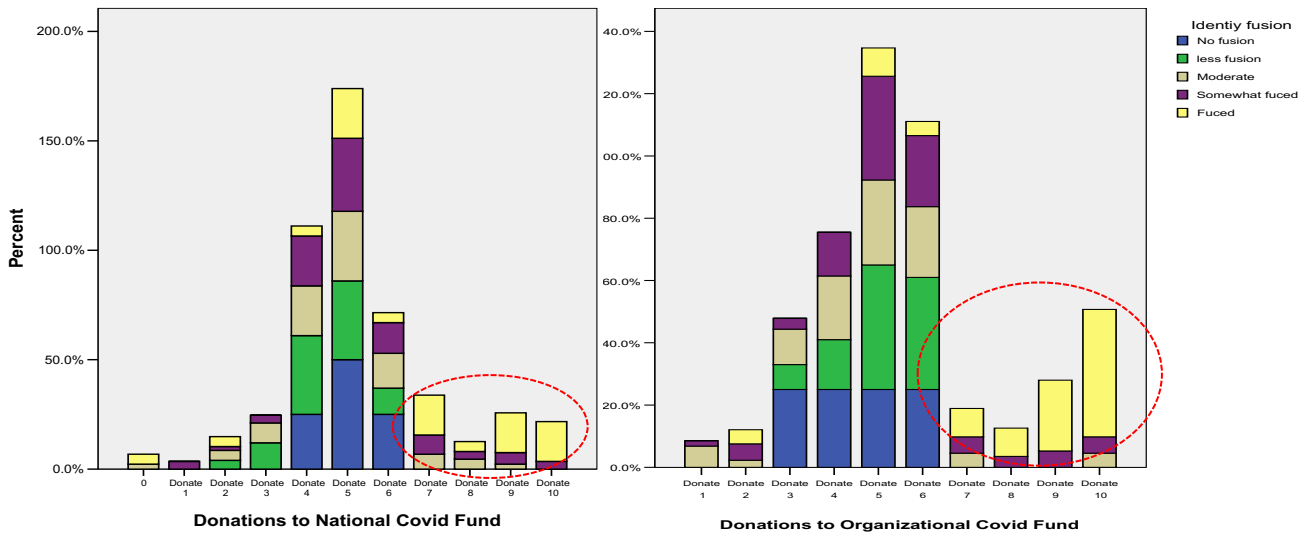
Figure 4: Comparing Pro-social and Pro-group behaviour with Identity Fusion
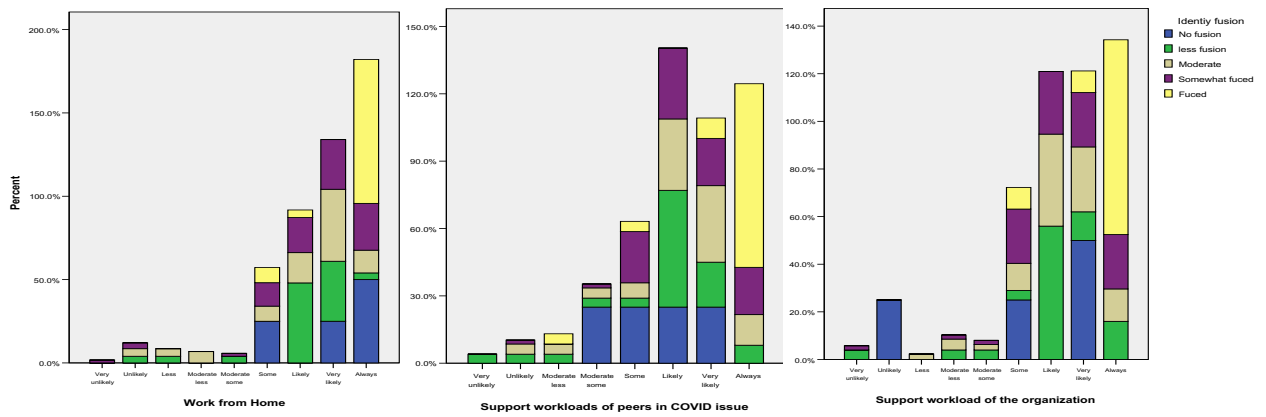(Source: Authors' preparation)

The data depicted in Figure 5 illustrates that COVID-19 prevention measures, such as wearing face masks, practicing social distancing, and using hand sanitizer, are more effectively observed by employees who strongly identify with their workplace compared to those who don't. Employees with a strong sense of identity adhere more diligently to these guidelines to minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Furthermore, this observation supports the first hypothesis, as it shows that a majority of those who generously contributed to national and organizational COVID funds are those who strongly identify with their workplace.
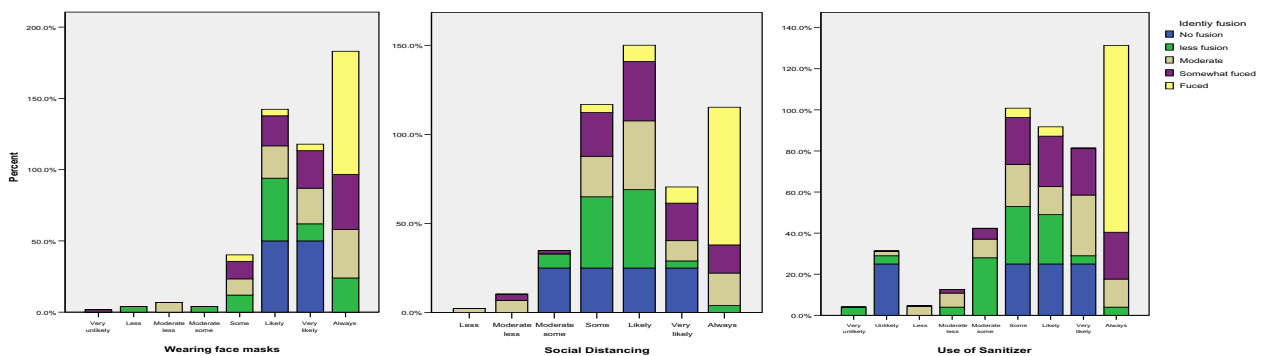
Figure 5: Comparing COVID-19 Prevention with Identity Fusion (Source: Authors' preparation)

Then Some productivity measures of employees encompass the effort put forth by individuals to complete tasks, including working remotely, assisting colleagues during the COVID-19 pandemic, and helping the organization cope with the challenges posed by the current situation. The responses to these tasks illustrate the dedication of employees who are fully committed and willing to give their best to achieve their targets.

Figure 6: Comparing Employees' Effort with Identity Fusion (Source: Authors' preparation)

In addition, the examination of testing two hypotheses involves extending regressions that consider effort as a measure of employee productivity and satisfaction. The first step in the analysis was to conduct a normality test to determine the parametric nature of the dataset. Both the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests yielded statistically significant results, indicating non-normal distributions for both the baseline and treatment models. Consequently, the analysis proceeded to utilize non-parametric regression to assess the behavior of both models.

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov	Shapiro-Wilk
Total Effort [Treatment]	0.123***	0.953***
Total Effort [Baseline]	0.097***	0.934***

Table 1: Test for Normality (Source: Authors' preparation)

Ordinary regressions were employed to analyze the treatment effect. The fitness statistics of both the baseline and treatment models were found to be significant, indicating that the models are robust enough to interpret the statistical impact of the causal variables' coefficients on the variations of the dependent variable, total effort expressed.

|	Chi-Square	Negelkerke R-Square
Model 1 [Treatment]	136.601***	0.594
Model 2 [Baseline]	125.779***	0.564

Table 2: Model Fitness – Ordinary Regressions (Source: Authors' preparation)

The information in Table 3 displays the regression results for both the baseline and treatment models. In the baseline model, all participants were directed to temporarily adopt an identity-fused state, representing an abstract scenario. Subsequently, the treatment allowed participants to freely behave and respond according to their actual status by relaxing the controlled environment.

Dependent Variable: Average Total Effort Expressed at the Experimental Survey		
Subject	**Baseline**	**Treatment**
Donations to the National COVID Fund	0.012 (0.109)	0.155 (0.105)
Donations to the Organizational COVID Fund	**0.354*** (0.119)	**0.294** (0.116)
COVID: Make Personal Impact	**0.522** (0.218)	**0.353*** (0.202)
COVID: Make Public Impact	-0.057 (0.190)	0.121 (0.183)
I Have Deep Connection with Organization	**0.309** (0.149)	-0.022 (0.140)
Provide Life-long Service to Organization	-0.084 (0.078)	**-0.155** (0.073)
I Am a Part of My Organization	0.031 (0.131)	**0.396*** (0.130)
I Give My Best to the Organization than others	-0.049 (0.129)	**0.302** (0.018)
Always Support for the Success of Organization	**0.465*** (0.112)	**0.304*** (0.106)
Number of Health Problems	**0.447*** (0.250)	-0.063 (0.238)

Table 3: Regression Output (Source: Authors' preparation)

Based on the statistical findings, it is evident that pro-group motivation has a significantly positive influence on the average total effort exerted by employees in both scenarios. The positive coefficients (0.354 for the baseline and 0.294 for the treatment) indicate that for every one-unit increase in donations to the organizational COVID fund, there is a predicted increase of 0.354 (baseline) and 0.294 (treatment) in the likelihood of employees exhibiting greater total effort. Additionally, Figure 7 reinforces this observation through a comparative analysis of employees' efforts and donations to the organizational COVID fund.
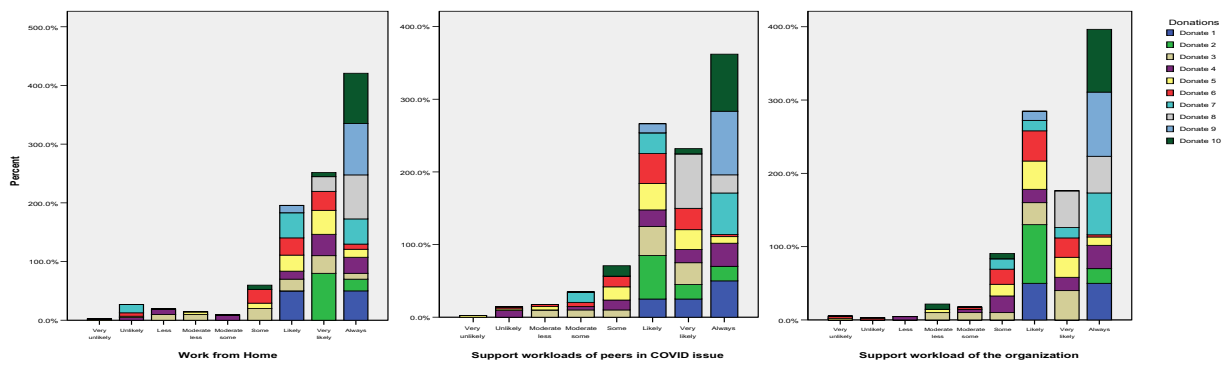
Figure 7: Comparing Employees' Effort by Pro-group Motivation (Source: Authors' preparation)

The results of the study support hypothesis 2, indicating that subjects motivated to support the group exert more effort compared to those who are not. The variables "Provide lifelong service to the organization," "I am a part of my organization," "I give my best to the organization than others," and "Always support for the success of organization" were essential measures used to assess the degree of identity fusion among the respondents. When considering the treatment effects, "I am a part of my organization," "I give my best to the organization than others," and "Always support for the success of organization" have demonstrated positive and significant impacts on the average total effort made by employees. The positive coefficients indicate that an increase in fusion concerns is associated with a predicted increase in employees' average total effort. Furthermore, figure 6 provides additional support for these findings through the comparison of employees' efforts on selected measures and fusion status.

In addition, the outcomes also support hypothesis 3, indicating that identity-fused subjects exert more effort than non-identity-fused subjects. However, the "Provide lifelong service to the organization" measure has shown a negative significant impact on the average total effort made by employees. This suggests that an employee's commitment to providing lifelong service to the organization may be associated with lower productivity compared to an employee who is less consistent in such decisions. Furthermore, comparison between the positive impacts derived from pro-group motivation and the measures of identity fusion reflects that the identity-fused subjects are pro-group motivated, supporting hypothesis 1.

Conclusion

The model highlighted in this study is a crucial tool, as the concept of identity fusion and its behavioral implications have emerged as significant concerns in today's professional landscape. According to Knippenberg (2000), Ellemers et al. (2004), and Vo et al. (2022), the relationship between self and organizational identities has a direct impact on work motivation, as well as both

task and contextual performance. Ellemers et al. (2004) have asserted that issues related to self-categorization and social identity processes have the potential to influence the motivation and behavior of individuals and groups in a workplace setting. Work motivation, as highlighted by Vo et al. (2022), plays a pivotal role in organizational development, contributing to enhanced employee productivity and effectiveness. Furthermore, the level of self-shapingness, influenced by self-categorization, is indicative of individuals' identities (Newson et al., 2016).

The impact of self-shapingness varies with the individual's experience, whether positive or negative (euphoric or dysphoric) in nature, and is amplified when identities are fused, potentially leading to extreme group behaviors. Hence, an employee's sense of self and organizational identity significantly influences their motivational efforts and task-based performance. Moreover, it can impact both leadership's motivational processes and group performance within an organization (Ellemers et al., 2004; Vo et al., 2022; Leon, 2023).

This study is based on the models and empirical findings of Akerlof & Kranton (2000), Swann et al. (2009), Newson et al. (2016), Kimbrough & Vostroknutov (2016), and Leon (2023) to explore how identity fusion impacts employees' productivity. The variations observed in the fusion measure are used to understand pro-social and pro-group behavior, measured in dictator games. The study emphasizes the importance of fusion measures, as employees with fused identities demonstrate a stronger intention to donate to both national and organizational COVID funds. This suggests that the majority of employees with fused identities exhibit more pro-social and pro-group-motivated behaviors. Additionally, empirical findings support hypothesis 1, as the majority of high donors to both national and organizational COVID funds are identity fused. Productivity measures include tasks such as working from home, supporting colleagues during COVID-19 related issues, and assisting the organization during the pandemic. The responses to these tasks illustrate how identity-fused employees are willing to perform and exert their best effort to meet targets.

Furthermore, the analysis uses regressions, with effort as a measurement of employee productivity. Non-parametric regressions are employed due to the non-normal distribution of the data for both baseline and treatment models. The fitness statistics of the models are robust enough to interpret the statistical impact of the causal variables on the variations in the average total effort. The baseline represents a scenario where all respondents are assigned to be identity fused, while the treatment allows respondents to respond with their identity status. Pro-group motivation significantly impacts the average total effort made by employees. Positive coefficients indicate that for every one-unit increase in the number of donations to the organizational COVID fund, there

is a predicted increase of 0.354 [baseline] and 0.294 [treatment] in the log odds of achieving a higher level of average total effort. These results and a comparison of employees' effort and donations support hypothesis 2, as pro-group motivated individuals exert more effort than those who are not motivated.

The causal variables "Provide lifelong service to the organization [ER]," "I am a part of my organization [PO]," "I give My best to the organization more than others [GB]," and "Always support for the success of the organization [RS]" are used to observe identity fusion. In examining the treatment effects, PO, GB, and RS exhibit positive and significant impacts on the average total effort made by employees. Positive coefficients indicate that for every one-unit increase in fusion concerns, there is a predicted increase of 0.396, 0.302, and 0.304, respectively, in the log odds of achieving a higher level of average total effort. These outcomes and graphical illustrations support hypothesis 3, as identity-fused individuals exert more effort than non-identity-fused individuals.

Recommendations

The results of the study indicate that all three hypotheses are supported. This suggests that the findings could provide valuable insights for manufacturing organizations dealing with employee-related challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study shows that identity fusion and pro-group motivation positively impact employee productivity, and these factors appear to be more influential than traditional approaches such as financial incentives and retention measures, especially during a crisis. The alignment of these results with existing literature on identity fusion, group behavior, and task-based performances further contributes to their credibility (Swann et al., 2009; Swann et al., 2010).

The generalizability of these results to other organizations may depend on their specific nature and culture. Manufacturing organizations similar to the ones included in the study, particularly those in the textile industry, might find these implications useful. It's important to note that the study employed an arbitrary incentive system in an online setting, which may differ from real-world financial incentives.

In summary, by treating such experiments as a way to test organizational dynamics, senior leadership can better understand and shape employees' future behaviors. This could help organizations develop comprehensive strategies for employee motivation, engagement, and relationship-building to navigate the challenges of the new normal in business.

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