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## **STATUS INCONGRUENCE IN SUPERVISOR-SUBORDINATE DYADS—THE EFFECTS ON SUBORDINATE JOB SATISFACTION AND CREATIVE PERFORMANCE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Extant research on status incongruence has begun to explore the resulting tensions it may engender between supervisor and subordinate, yet it excludes the role of other demographic factors beyond age which influence status perceptions. We draw on role congruity theory to examine how organizational culture influences whether supervisor-subordinate dyadic status incongruence has a negative or positive impact on subordinate job satisfaction and creative performance. We find that status incongruence reduces job satisfaction when supervisor-subordinate dyads work in a hierarchical organizational culture (i.e. low clan organizational culture), and job satisfaction increases for supervisor-subordinate dyads that work in a clan organizational culture (i.e. high clan organizational culture). Furthermore, these effects on job satisfaction ultimately impacted subordinate creative job performance, supporting a moderated-mediation model. Implications for future research on status incongruence are discussed.

*Keywords:* status incongruence, organizational culture, job satisfaction, creative job performance, role congruity theory, supervisor-subordinate dyads

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Status incongruence depicts a circumstance in which traditional status characteristics (e.g., age, work experience, organizational tenure) associated with leader roles and subordinate roles are reversed (Hirschfeld & Thomas, 2011; Jarmon, 1976; Perry, Kulik, & Zhou, 1999). Traditional hierarchical norms depict supervisors as being the older, wiser, and more educated leader (Collins, Hair, & Rocco, 2009), whereas in instances of status incongruence, the subordinate may be older and have more work experience or organizational tenure (Triana, Richard, & Yücel, 2017). With the generational shifts in the labor market, organizations have a greater likelihood of status incongruence between supervisors and subordinates (Collins et al., 2009), and it is important to investigate how status incongruence

impacts employee subjective states which are suggested to affect employee creativity (Brief & Weiss, 2002). For example, in a large company, it would not be an uncommon notion for an employee to manage someone 10-15 years older (Knight, 2015). The supervisor-subordinate age difference dynamic (considering age as a status characteristic) has been well established in the literature (Collins et al., 2009; Kunze & Menges, 2017; Perry et al., 1999), but less is known about the additive effects of multiple instances of status incongruence where the supervisor is younger, less experienced, less tenured, and less educated (see Lucas, 2017 for an example). In this scenario, employees may feel more qualified than their supervisor, and this feeling may greatly affect the employees' level of job satisfaction (Smith, 2013) and other subsequent effects.

Research suggests that status incongruence can result in tensions between subordinates and supervisors (Collins et al., 2009; Hirsch, 1990; Shellenbarger & Hymowitz, 1994). Collins and colleagues (2009) reported that elder subordinates had low expectations of a younger supervisor, and they argue that low expectancy results in low support from the subordinate. Other studies have shown that younger supervisors are reluctant to give directives to subordinates who are of the same age as their parents or grandparents (Hirsch, 1990), and that elder employees also do not like to take orders from supervisors who are their children's and grandchildren's ages (Hirsch, 1990; Shellenbarger & Hymowitz, 1994). Perry et al. (1999) explain that younger supervisors managing older subordinates may contradict age norms because older employees typically manage younger employees. Their research has documented well the tensions that status incongruence may engender between supervisor and subordinate. However, they only analyzed the impact of age difference, thereby negating the role of other factors influencing status.

In this manuscript, we aim to build on the current literature on status incongruence by investigating the effects of incongruence on multiple characteristics (i.e. age, work experience, education, and organizational tenure), versus focusing on a single status characteristic. Specifically, adopting Triana, Richard, and Yucel's (2017) characterization, status incongruence includes situations where the subordinate is not only potentially older than the supervisor, but also has possibly more education than the supervisor, has more work experience and/or has more organizational tenure than the supervisor. When there is no status incongruence, we would have status *congruence*, which refers to a situation where the supervisor is older, has more organizational tenure, work experience, and education than the subordinate. In this circumstance, the two members of the dyad are involved in a relationship which is congruent with traditional social status characteristics, and

where role congruity theory (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Eagly, Karau, & Johnson, 1992) would predict no reduction in subordinate affect (i.e., job satisfaction). As the workplace becomes more generationally diverse, it is necessary for researchers and managers alike to know what to expect from this diversity so they can better manage it.

As the status incongruence phenomenon may or may not, in isolation, impact subordinate attitudes about their job situation or their ability to perform creatively, we consider the role that organizational context plays. Specifically, we set out to explore how status incongruence affects subordinate overall job satisfaction, particularly when the organizational culture (de)emphasizes power differentials and hierarchy. Organizational culture is defined as the pattern of shared values, beliefs, and assumptions that provide behavioral norms and social cues for organizational members, serving as an organizational control mechanism (Deshpande and Webster, 1989; Perrone, Zaheer, & McEvily, 2003).

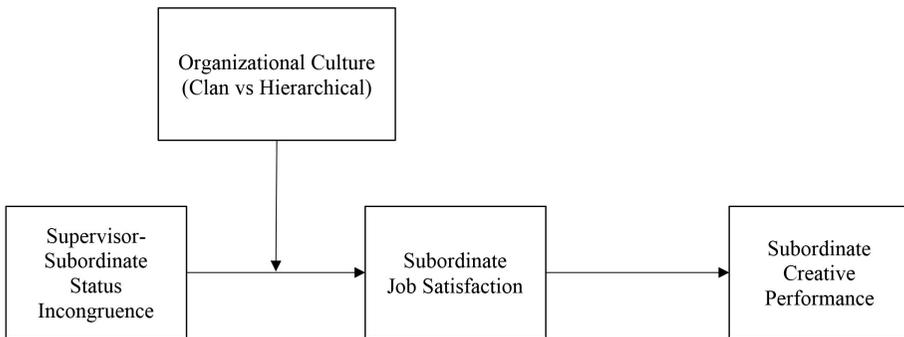
Williams and O'Reilly (1998) put forth that organizational culture acts as a powerful mechanism to manage differences, and it can encourage either solidarity or divisiveness. Research supports the notion that organizational culture makes organizational identity salient for employees and encourages diverse members to base their social categorizations on common interests with the organization rather than on status characteristics (Chatman, Polzer, Barsade, & Neale, 1998). Therefore, we examine whether status incongruence will have more negative (or positive) effects on subordinate job satisfaction when hierarchical status is (de)emphasized. We argue that job satisfaction is critical when managing across generations, as is the influence of organizational culture—the more employees feel valued in their working environment, they stand a greater likelihood of being satisfied with their jobs (DelCampo, 2011; Westerman & Yamamura, 2007) despite the existence of status incongruence.

Because increased job satisfaction facilitates job performance (Bowling, Khazon, Meyer, & Burrus, 2015; Wright, Cropanzano, & Bonett, 2007), we also examine under what organizational culture conditions that status incongruence effects on job satisfaction ultimately increase or decrease the creative aspect of subordinate job performance. Our focus on creativity is justified due to the concern that status incongruence episodes may impede creative performance when influenced by the dissatisfaction that one may have with their job situation. Furthermore, the possibility that a subordinate may express higher job satisfaction and thereby realize a creative performance advantage from being in a status incongruent situation, has not yet been acknowledged in the relational demography literature. For example, the literature on

teams would suggest that dyadic dissimilarity and even status incongruence—within the appropriate context—may also yield enhanced information sharing, creativity, and improved problem-solving capabilities (Gilson, Lim, Luciano, & Choi, 2013; Homan, van Knippenberg, van Kleef, & De Dreu, 2007; van Knippenberg, De Dreu, & Homan, 2004; van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). Therefore, we examine whether a high clan organizational culture—an environment that encourages employees to view coworkers and supervisors as an extended family of cohesiveness (Ouchi, 1980; Perrone, Zaheer, & McEvily, 2003)—may create a positive context where subordinates working in status incongruent dyads actually express more job satisfaction, and therefore improve their subsequent creative performance.

In summary, we explore relational demography within supervisor-subordinate dyads to understand subordinates’ states of affect, as well as behavioral reactions to status incongruence.

**Figure 1**  
**The Conceptual Model of The Hypothesized Effects of Supervisor-Subordinate Status Incongruence On Creative Performance Via Job Satisfaction when Moderated By Organizational Culture**



Our conceptualization offers a key organizational contextual factor, organizational culture, as a relevant contingency condition, through which job satisfaction mediates the relationship between status incongruence and subordinate creative job performance. We test the predictions of our theoretical model by conducting a field study using a sample of 178 supervisor-subordinate dyads, and we offer implications for future research and practice.

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## THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

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### Status Incongruence in Supervisor-Subordinate Dyads

According to Eagly and Karau's (2002) role congruity theory, an impending situation for prejudice arises when social perceivers hold beliefs and expectations about individuals based on the status cues of certain demographic characteristics that may contrast with hierarchical norms related to age, education, or experience. These status characteristics (e.g. age, education, and/or experience) are often considered legitimizing status signals congruent with certain leadership positions and visible roles in organizations. In situations where employees see themselves as the leader prototype more so than the individuals leading them, perceptual inconsistency has been formed based on the employees' beliefs and role expectations. The perceptual inconsistency of role expectations versus reality can lower employees' self-evaluation (Diekmann & Hirnisey, 2007; Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell, & Ristikari, 2011).

Perceived incongruity between employees' status affiliations and the expected role for themselves and their leaders can lead to attitudes that are less positive toward the individuals who occupy a high-stakes role, such as in a supervisory role or leadership position. The perceived incongruity can lead to a form of prejudice where an older, more educated and more tenured subordinate may perceive a supervisor less qualified for the leadership role than themselves (Monzani, Hernandez Bark, van Dick, & Peiró, 2015). In sum, role incongruity increases the likelihood that a supervisor with lower status characteristics (e.g. on the basis of age, education, and/or experience) comparative to a subordinate may be perceived as less competent by the subordinate, which leads to the plausibility of negative subordinate responses to the job situation.

A pertinent example of such a phenomenon is the prejudice toward leaders perceived as younger than their subordinates, which is derived from the incongruity that many people perceive between the characteristics of age and the requirements of leader roles, for example, older age should equate to leadership. Based on role congruity theory, prejudice toward such leaders consists of two types of disadvantage—biased perceptions of leadership ability and fitting the leadership prototype (Eagly & Karau, 2002). First, drawing from the descriptive aspect of the age role, is the perception of younger leaders as possessing less leadership ability than their elder counterparts. Second, deriving from the injunctive aspect of the age role is the less advantageous evaluation of behavior that fulfills the prescriptions of a leader role when this behavior is enacted by a younger leader compared to an elder employee.

The first type of disadvantage stems from social perceivers' combining of the descriptive aspects of the leader roles. This blending produces the perception that younger and less tenured employees possess less agency and more communion, and therefore are less qualified for leadership, especially for executive roles (Diekmann & Hirnisey, 2007). These two forms of disadvantages would lead to consequences such as less favorable attitudes toward younger and less tenured leaders, greater difficulty in younger and less tenured individuals attaining leadership roles, and greater difficulty in being recognized as effective in these roles (Diekmann & Hirnisey, 2007).

The above-mentioned discrepancy in status may have important effects on individual behaviors and outcomes. Status incongruence refers to a situation where traditional status characteristics associated with the leader and subordinate roles appear to be reversed (Triana et al., 2017). It is a relationship where lower-ranked individuals (e.g. a subordinate) possess more prestige-based status characteristics than do their high-ranked counterpart (e.g. a supervisor). Nevertheless, following the trends of demographic changes and generational shifts in the workplace, it is not uncommon for older workers to report to younger supervisors (Cappeli & Novelli, 2010; Kunze & Menges, 2017). The pre-established patterns of behavior were well settled and accounted for over the past two decades, with studies elucidating how elder employees are reluctant to take instructions from supervisors who are younger than they are (Hirsch, 1990; Shellenbarger & Hymowitz, 1994). In the same vein, sometimes younger supervisors are uncomfortable giving orders to subordinates who are older than they are (Hirsch, 1990). Conversely, status incongruence research which looked at status as embedded in age found that older workers expect less from younger supervisors than do younger workers (Collins et al., 2009)

Still, findings about the impact of status incongruence on individual outcomes and behavior has been divided; evidence on age status incongruence in work dyads shows that tension is a probable outcome of status incongruence, whereas other studies have found more positive outcomes. For instance, Perry et al (1999) found some evidence that age status incongruence may have serious implications in dyadic relationships. Elder subordinates working under younger supervisors are more likely to engage in work change behavior, or adaptive behavior as a result of negative work affect (Perry et al., 1999). They are also likely to exhibit positive conduct, such as citizenship behaviors, both towards other individuals and towards their organizations. One possible explanation may reside in the fact that elder employees engross in more citizenship when the organizational culture promotes inclusiveness.

In sum, the perceived congruence between an individual's status and role expectations results in attitudes that may be less positive toward their job situation

when they are supervised by someone with lower status characteristics. If the individual's self-concept is embedded in role congruence, then status incongruence within the supervisor-subordinate dyad may be personally threatening and an impediment to the individuals' creative job performance (Tierney & Farmer, 2002). We argue that the saliency of status incongruence effects is dependent upon the organizational context, specifically the organizational culture in which the incongruence resides, as well as the performane nature of the job.

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### **The Moderating Role of Clan Organizational Culture**

Given that organizational culture is a control mechanism guiding behavior for organizational members, it creates a context which either elevates or buffers the likely tensions between dissimilar or status incongruent supervisor-subordinate dyads (Deshpande & Webster, 1989; Perrone, Zaheer, & McEvily, 2003; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998), depending on the type of culture (Richard & Miller, 2013). A clan-based organizational culture encourages employees to minimize the salience of individual differences between organizational members, and align more with the shared values, beliefs, and behavioral norms of the organization (Chatman, Polzer, Barsade, & Neale, 1998).

Organizational culture typologies vary along the cooperation and interdependence dimensions of human interaction (Chatman & Barsade, 1995; McMillan-Capehart, 2005; Richard, Kochan, & McMillan-Capehart, 2002). Within the Competing Values Framework (Deshpande & Webster, 1989; Deshpande, Farley, & Webster, 2000), the dominant attributes that distinguish organizational culture types are considered and are operationalized across two dimensions: formal-informal organizational processes, and internal-external focus. For the purposes of our study, we will focus on the dimension of formal-informal organizational processes, operationalized as clan organizational culture (i.e. high clan culture) and hierarchical organizational culture (i.e. low clan culture), given that both organizational cultures are internally focused.

Clan organizational culture and hierarchical organizational cultures are antipodes. The clan organizational culture is considered a friendly place to work due to its informal governance. It emphasizes the development of human resources, employee participation in decision-making, teamwork, and cohesiveness, whereas the hierarchical organizational culture emphasizes formalization and mechanistic governance that reduce flexibility and variety, and thus may hamper the advantages of diversity/dissimilarity (Richard & Miller, 2013). Employees working in clan

organizational cultures are largely influenced by internalized values and goals rather than by formal rules to determine appropriate action and behaviors due to a heavy emphasis on socialization (Ouchi, 1980; Perrone, Zaheer, & McEvily, 2003). According to Kerr and Slocum (1987), a clan organizational culture is essentially characterized by long socialization processes, high commitment from organizational members, peer pressure to conform to expected behavioral norms, and the importance of supervisors functioning as mentors for social cues.

For status incongruence in supervisor-subordinate dyads to yield positive outcomes, there necessitates a context that emphasizes cohesiveness, participation, and teamwork (Dwyer, Richard, & Chadwick, 2003; Pless & Maak, 2004; Richard, Kochan, & McMillan-Capehart, 2002). For instance, a group atmosphere that encourages freedom of expression should facilitate openness among status incongruent supervisor-subordinate dyads (Swann, Polzer, Seyle, & Ko, 2004). This openness should lead to reduced conflict and tension, and instead create more positive outcomes, such as job satisfaction.

Per McMillan and colleagues (2012), an “organizational culture based on hierarchies relies on the use of legitimate authority to achieve performance goals” (p. 312), to which job satisfaction has an important relationship (Bowling, Khazon, Meyer, & Burrus, 2015; Wright et al. 2007). The consideration of legitimate authority is problematic in status incongruent supervisor-subordinate dyads because although the younger, less tenured, or less educated supervisor has positional power, the subordinate may be less willing to show deference, particularly in a hierarchical organizational culture (i.e. low clan organizational culture). Hierarchical organizational cultures emphasize stability, structure, greater formalization, and are less concerned with creating and maintaining supportive relationships among organizational members (McMillan et al., 2012). With more focus on employee control, monitoring, implementing rules and standard operating procedures (McMillan et al., 2012; Ouchi & Price, 1993), this heightened attention from a lower status supervisor may create greater tension and lower job satisfaction for higher status subordinates because the expectations associated with the status characteristics conflict with the positional expectations (Collins et al., 2009; Hirsch, 1990; Perry et al., 1999; Shellenbarger & Hymowitz, 1994). Thus, we argue that subordinates in status incongruent dyads will likely experience greater job satisfaction in a clan organizational culture (i.e. high clan organizational culture) than in a hierarchical organizational culture (i.e. low clan organizational culture).

*Hypothesis 1:* Dyadic status incongruence is negatively related to subordinate job satisfaction when clan organizational culture is low (i.e.,

hierarchical culture is high), and positively related to subordinate job satisfaction when clan organizational culture is high.

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### **The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction**

Previous research has consistently shown that job satisfaction increases employee job performance (Franke & Park, 2006; Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001; Morrisson, 1997; Petty, McGee, & Cavender, 1984). Job satisfaction may increase individual performance because “people who evaluate an attitude-object favorable, tend to engage in behaviors that foster or support it, and people who evaluate an attitude object unfavorable tend to engage in behaviors that hinder or oppose it” (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993: 12). For example, Keaveney and Nelson (1993) found that job satisfaction increases job performance, arguing that such individuals intrinsically satisfied with their job may have a higher motivation orientation to perform better. Furthermore, when studying the effects of job satisfaction and organizational commitment, Shore and Martin (1989) found that job satisfaction explained more incremental variance in the supervisor-rated measures of job performance. In addition, job satisfaction has been shown to be a mediator between a host of organizational factors and employee job performance (Crede, Chernyshenko, Stark, Dalal, & Bashshur, 2007; Yousef, 2000, 2002).

One salient aspect of job performance, the creative component, has recently gained much attention in the literature (Shalley, Gilson & Blum, 2009, Tierney & Farmer, 2002, Zhang & Bartol, 2010). We define creative job performance as the deliberate creation, promotion and actualization of novel ideas within one’s job function, work group, and organization, for the sake of the same job function, work group, and organization (Janssen & Van Yperen, 2004; Kanter, 1988; Scott & Bruce, 1994; West & Farr, 1989). To encourage more creative performance, organizations have moved away from seniority-based compensation and promotion plans to merit-based plans to encourage competition and creative performance, giving younger and less tenured employees an opportunity to pursue leadership roles and stretch assignments that may have previously been out of reach. Young, “fresh blood” may be less experienced, but they can also come with fresh ideas and more innovation. Their lack of experience is viewed as an advantage, as they are considered not to be tainted with the notion of doing things the way they have always been done. This perspective is likely beneficial for supervisor creative performance; however the creative outcomes for the subordinates may be overlooked, as well as the implications of additive status incongruence between subordinates and their supervisors.

As we have argued above, low job satisfaction is a possible outcome for subordinates in status incongruent dyads, depending on the organizational culture. A potential symptom of job satisfaction is the status threat employees may experience due to the status differences with their supervisor. Status threats may cause some individuals to behave in assertive, competitive ways towards their supervisors in order to defend their status (Tiedens & Fragale, 2003; Lee, Choi & Kim, 2018) which can undermine the subordinate's ability to perform creatively (Lee et al., 2018). Individuals processing the implications for experiencing multiple status differences with their supervisor takes extra mental energy which impedes one's ability to think and perform creatively and innovatively. In a recent study by Lee, Choi, and Kim (2018), the authors argue that status conflict—"disputes over the relative status positions of people in the social hierarchy of their group"—can hinder team creativity (p. 187). Although status conflict is a different construct from status incongruence, our operationalization of status incongruence implies there is a felt conflict for the individual who is likely to feel more threatened by the lack of status congruence (i.e. the subordinate), thus impacting job satisfaction. Because job satisfaction has been shown to be a key mediator in the organizational behavior domain, we examine whether it behaves as a mediator of the status incongruence to subordinate's creative job performance relationship across high and low clan organizational culture.

*Hypothesis 2:* The negative (positive) effect of status incongruence on subordinate job satisfaction when clan organizational culture is low (high) will reduce (increase) supervisor-rated creative job performance.

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## METHODS

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### Sample

Our data collection effort targeted both working professionals enrolled in a graduate program at a major university in the United States as well as their supervisors. The working professionals received a survey and subsequently invited their respective supervisors to respond to another survey; each supervisor responded to one survey as participants were from multiple organizations. This central aspect of our study design allowed us to collect data from the participants' direct supervisor to increase the external validity of our research (Rosnow & Rosenthal, 2008), as well as to reduce the likelihood of common source bias.

All survey respondents answered of their own will and the responses were

kept confidential. The surveys were collected online using Survey Monkey to ensure the highest possible response rate. To guarantee the authenticity of the data collected, the supervisors could opt to provide their contact information for the researchers to conduct random checks for true submissions. Responding students were granted extra credit for completing the employee survey, and additional extra credit if the supervisor completed the supervisor survey, which included an introductory note explaining the nature, purpose and procedure of the study. This was followed by a questionnaire which instructed the respondents how to answer the questions in the survey. In the employee survey, demographic data, as well as key measures including dyadic tenure (experience in years with the current supervisor) and job satisfaction were collected. The supervisor survey—collected one month after all subordinate surveys were turned in—inquired about the demographics of the supervisor as well as a request to rate the subordinate's creative job performance. At the end of this process, both surveys were matched by means of an identification number provided by the subordinate participant to ensure proper matching of the subordinate and supervisor surveys, and to maintain confidentiality of the data (Tepper & Taylor, 2003).

The initial response rate was 100%; however more than half (55%) did not yield a fully completed survey from their supervisor. In all, 178 dyadic pairs (matched employee and supervisor surveys) were collected, resulting in a final sample from various industries. Such industries include service (42.7%), wholesale (3.5%), manufacturing (17.8%), government and education (12.9%), retail (7.7%), healthcare (6.9%), and other (8.4%). Women represent 38.2% of the respondents, and the age range was between 18 and 59 years old. Table 1 offers summary statistics and correlations between the variables of interest.

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## **Dependent Variable**

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### ***Creative Job Performance (CJP) (supervisor-reported).***

The subordinate's creative job performance was collected from the immediate supervisor. The measure was adopted from Janssen and Van Yperen (2004) and consisted of nine items measured on a five-point Likert scale with a coefficient alpha of .93. A sample item is, "Creating new ideas for improvements."

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**Independent Variables**

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***Status incongruence (between subordinate and supervisor).***

Consistent with previous status incongruence measures in the literature (Jarmon, 1976; Lundberg, Kristenson, and Starrin, 2009; Perry et al., 1999; Triana et al., 2017), we first determined whether there was a status incongruence between the supervisor and subordinate on the basis of age, education, work experience, and organizational tenure. Employee education was measured on the employee survey in a question that asked them to rate their highest education degree received. The same question was asked in the supervisor survey to determine supervisor education. Education was coded (1 = *high school*, 2 = *associate degree*, 3 = *bachelor's degree*, 4 = *graduate degree*). Both work experience and organizational tenure were measured in number of years and collected directly from the designated employee and the employee's supervisor. Consistent with Triana, Richard, and Yucel (2017), we calculated the supervisor credentials (age, education, work experience, or organizational tenure) and then subtracted the subordinate credentials for each variable. This resulted in four calculations: one for age, one for education, one for work experience, and one for organizational tenure. If the result is negative, that means the subordinate has higher credentials than the supervisor on that variable (e.g. older age, higher educational attainment, more work experience, greater organizational tenure). Then, following Jarmon (1976), we dummy coded each of the four resulting calculations (i.e. 1 = *high status incongruence* or 0 = *low status incongruence*) to create four indicators of status incongruence. Finally, we added these four incongruence indicators together to create an overall measure of status incongruence between the supervisor and subordinate, with values ranging from 0 to 4.

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**Mediator**

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***Job satisfaction.***

We utilized three items from Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, and Klesh (1983). A sample item is "In general, you are satisfied with your job." Measured on a seven-point Likert type scale, the coefficient alpha is .84.

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## Moderator

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### **Clan organizational culture (subordinate-reported).**

To measure clan organizational culture employees responded to a four-item scale adapted from the Competing Values Framework Scale developed by Quinn and colleagues (Cameron & Quinn, 1999; Quinn, 1988; Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983; Quinn & Spreitzer, 1991) and further validated by other researchers (Howard, 1998; Quinn & Spreitzer, 1991). Items were measured on a five-point Likert scale where 1 = *strongly disagree* and 5 = *strongly agree*. Items were: 1) My company is a very personal place. It is like an extended family, 2) The head of my company is generally considered to be a mentor, sage, or a father or mother figure, 3) The glue that holds my company together is loyalty and tradition, 4) My company emphasizes human resources. High cohesion is important. Cronbach's alpha for this measure was .80.

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## Control Variable

Subordinate respondents provided information on our control variable, dyad tenure, which was number of years working under the direction of the supervisor (also collected from supervisor as validity check).

Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, and correlations) for all variables are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations**

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1. Dyad tenure	1.89	1.57	-				
2. Status incongruence	.66	.73	.25**	-			
3. Clan culture	3.34	.90	.13	-.07	-		
4. Job satisfaction	3.88	.84	.02	-.10	.50**	-	
5. Creative Job Performance	3.50	.80	.29**	.13	.10	.14	-

*Note:*  $N = 178$ ; \*\*  $p < .05$ ; Two-tailed

**RESULTS**

Before testing the hypotheses, we first evaluated the distinctiveness of the key constructs. Because there were several scales assessed from the subordinate respondents, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) with AMOS 24.0 of the two subordinate-rated variables: clan organizational culture (4 items) and job satisfaction (3 items). The results showed that the hypothesized two-factor model provided an adequate fit to the data ( $\chi^2 = 27.81, p = .01, df = 13, CFI = .971$ ). This model was significantly better than a one factor model ( $\chi^2 = 145.52, p = .000, df = 14, CFI = .744$ ) that did not have acceptable fit. We then estimated our models using ordinary least squares regression and used the Process macro in SPSS 24 (Models 1 and 7) by Hayes (2012) to test our moderation and moderated-mediation hypotheses

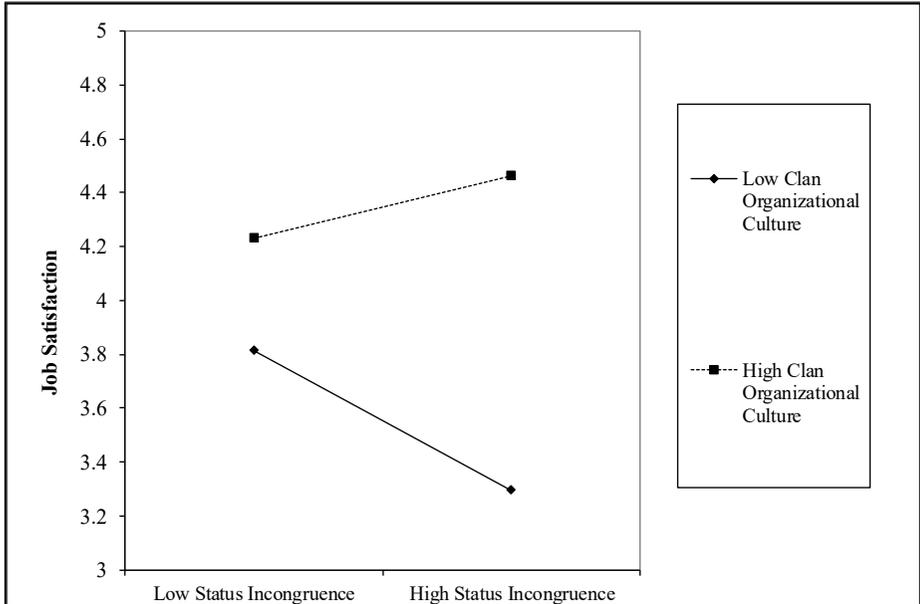
**Table 2**  
**Regression Tables for Effects on Job Satisfaction and**  
**Creative Job Performance (CJP)**

Variable	Tested	Job Satisfaction			CJP	
		Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Constant		3.86*** (.10)	3.91** (.11)	2.39*** (.23)	3.92*** (.86)	2.71*** (.28)
1. Dyad tenure		.01 (.04)	.03 (.04)	-.02 (.04)	.02 (.04)	.14*** (.04)
2. Status incongruence			-.12 (.09)	-.06 (.08)	-.10 (.08)	.08 (.08)
3. Clan Culture				.47*** (.06)	.44 (.06)	
4. Status incongruence X Clan Culture	H1				.29*** (.08)	
5. Job satisfaction	H2					.14* (.07)
<i>R-square</i>		.00	.01	.25	.30	.11

*The coefficients and standard error (in parenthesis) are reported; N = 178*  
 \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$

Hypothesis 1 suggests that the relationship between status incongruence and job satisfaction is negative when clan culture is low and positive when clan culture is high. In Model 4 of Table 2, a significant interaction effect emerges ( $\Delta R^2 = 5.04\%$ ) for job satisfaction ( $\beta = .287, p = .0004$ ), lending support for H1. We suggested status incongruence would be negatively (positively) related to job satisfaction when clan culture was low (high). Figure 2 depicts a significant and negative slope when clan culture is low ( $-3.68; p = .0003$ ) and a significant and positive slope when clan culture is high ( $2.65; p = .009$ ).

**Figure 2**  
**Three-way Interaction Between Status Incongruence and Clan Culture On Job Satisfaction**



We used the bootstrapping approach to confirm mediation effects for our moderated-mediation hypotheses (H2) (Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007). We ran our analysis using 5,000 bootstraps. Hypothesis 2 predicts the conditional indirect effect of status incongruence on creative job performance via job satisfaction will be negative (positive) in low (high) clan cultures. As predicted, Table 3 reports 95% bootstrapping confidence intervals showing the indirect effects. Status incongruence effects on our creative job performance (via a decrease in job satisfaction) are negative under low clan culture conditions (Table 3) (Effect =  $-.0486$ , Boot LLCI =  $-.1302$  and Boot ULCI =  $-.0071$ ) and positive under high clan culture conditions (Effect =  $.0217$ , Boot LLCI =  $.0018$  and Boot ULCI =  $.0629$ ) supporting H2.

**Table 3**  
**Moderated-Mediation Results. Bootstrapped Conditional Indirect Effects of Job Satisfaction on Supervisor-Rated Creative Job Performance**

		Dependent variable: Creative Job Performance			
Mediator-Job Satisfaction	Moderator-Clan Culture	Effect	Boot SE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
	Low	-.05	.03	-.13	-.01
	High	.02	.02	.00	.06

Note: *N* = 178. Bootstrap sample size = 5,000

## DISCUSSION

Our study’s aim was to investigate how multiple characteristics of status incongruence affect subordinate affect (i.e. job satisfaction), and ultimately, subordinate creative job performance across clan versus hierarchical organizational culture types. We found that in hierarchical organizations, typified by a low clan organizational culture, status incongruence leads to lower (overall) job satisfaction, but it increases job satisfaction in organizations with high clan cultures. Additionally, such status incongruence impacts subordinates’ creative job performance as a result of the interplay between status incongruence and organizational culture.

## Limitations and Future Research

Although the study and its design rely on multi-sourced data which signals great confidence in our findings, we offer a few limitations that may inform future research. First, our study may produce restricted findings because of its use of a cross-sectional design (i.e., we collected data related to organizational culture and job satisfaction at the same time), thereby limiting the extent of our inference for causality. Our design did, however, put variables under scrutiny which are trait-based (i.e, status incongruence) and not state-based, suggesting characters, behaviors and feelings that are consistent and long-lasting. These differ from psychological states, which are temporary behaviors or feelings that depend on a person’s situation and motives (Mehroof & Griffiths, 2010). Furthermore, we were able to collect creative performance from the supervisor at a 1-month period later than the subordinate, offering some longitudinal tenets. To curb potential doubts about cross-sectional design, future studies may consider a longitudinal design to show the robustness of our trait-based cross-sectional design.

An additional potential limitation of our study is a monocultural source of data as we only sampled participants from the United States. Despite the deliberate nature of this choice to show that there is variance among individuals' perception of the importance of status in role congruity, such a sample may spark skepticism about the generalizability of the perception of status by the participants in our study. Future research may want to test the influence of organizational culture types on the outcomes of status incongruence in other countries beyond the U.S. to test the generalizability of our findings.

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## **Contributions**

The extant literature concerning role congruity and status incongruence has been helpful in predicting the interpersonal dynamics that affect supervisor and subordinate relationships; however, the literature has not directly addressed the influence of organizations and organizational context in shaping supervisor-subordinate relations. We understand anecdotally and empirically that status incongruence between a supervisor and subordinate may result in some interpersonal tension that could stifle the subordinate's job satisfaction and ability to perform creatively; however, our results provide evidence that the culture of the organization can exacerbate or lessen the negative implications of those tensions. Our study complements the literature by specifying the type of organizational culture that would most likely foster greater job satisfaction and creative performance relative to the effects of supervisor-subordinate status incongruence. We show that clan organizational culture can indeed foster positive effects of status incongruence on subordinates' job satisfaction and creativity.

Furthermore, while previous studies have shown that age is one factor that creates incongruence in supervisor-subordinate relationships, we follow the work of recent studies to show how multiple characteristics of status together affect the perceptions of roles and positions within dyads. Our findings show that status incongruence should simultaneously consider additional characteristics including age (i.e. education, work experience, and organizational tenure), and thereby reconcile the literature to show that the effects of status incongruence have more theoretical and empirical precision when it is considered multidimensionally.

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## **Conclusion**

This paper draws on a multidimensional conceptualization of status incongruence to explore when and how it affects subordinate's job satisfaction and

creative performance. We provide evidence of the importance of organizational culture in shaping how both supervisor and subordinate may respond to situations when lower status individuals are conferred positional power. Our results show that status incongruence decreases job satisfaction in a hierarchical organizational while it increases job satisfaction for dyads that work in a clan organizational culture, and that these ultimately impact subordinate creative job performance. These findings invite us to rethink the way we currently see status incongruent dyads by pointing to a more key part played by organizations in shaping how such incongruence affects individuals, dyads, and organizations.

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