

**Do Engaged Leaders Enrich their Followers' Engagement? Role of
LMX and Power Distance**

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Abstract

Drawing upon social exchange theories, we developed and tested a model of followers' work engagement. The goal of this research was to understand why some leaders engage their subordinates and others do not. Questionnaire data were obtained from 214 Malaysian employees and their 77 immediate supervisors. We measured work engagement from both subordinate and supervisor perspectives. Results suggest that leaders can boost followers' work engagement by displaying their own work engagement and developing high quality exchange relationship (LMX) with followers. But the relationship between leader engagement and LMX depends on the followers' power distance orientation. Implications for practice include the development of high-quality exchange relationship between supervisors and their subordinates.

Keywords: Employee engagement, leader-member exchange, cultural orientation

Do Engaged Leaders Enrich their Followers' Engagement? Role of LMX and Power Distance

Leadership scholars and practitioners alike are recognizing the importance of work engagement. Engaged employees are considered great assets to organizations. Such employees display elevated levels of self-efficacy in guiding and investing energy in their own career (Bakker, 2009; Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008). Work engagement has been found to be related to several important outcomes such as task and contextual performance (Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011; Demerouti, Bakker, & Gevers, 2015). Given the importance of this construct, researchers began to identify the antecedents of work engagement. Bakker, Albrecht, and Leiter (2011) suggest that leaders' engagement can enrich followers' engagement. Based on this call, this study was designed at integrating the three bodies of leadership literature—work engagement, leader-member exchange (LMX), and power distance cultural orientation--and addresses a research question: Why and how do some leaders engage their subordinates and others do not?

We contribute to the existing leadership literature in five important ways. First, we are aware of no research that has integrated the three leadership paradigms mentioned above. In fact, studies have been conducted but all in isolation to examine the relationship among those constructs. Second, most researchers in the past have employed only a single perspective (subordinate or supervisor) to understand the antecedent of work engagement. We employ both perspectives—supervisor and subordinate—to measure work engagement. Having different sources of data has been strongly recommended in leadership research (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003) to minimize the variance that is attributable to common method. Third, there is a dearth of research identifying the mechanism with which leaders' engagement can lead

to subordinates' engagement. We propose that a relational variable may act as a mechanism between leaders' and followers' engagement. Of the various relational concepts, LMX has been found to be salient and has proven to be extraordinarily useful in numerous domains of human functioning. For instance, it has been found to serve as a mediator for various antecedents of leader-follower relationship and consequences (Dulebohn, Bommer, Liden, Brouer, & Ferris, 2012). Thus, we anticipate LMX as a potential mediator. Fourth, although we have argued that the relationship between supervisor engagement and subordinate engagement would be mediated by LMX, we also expect the strength of this relationship to differ across employees who are lower and higher on power distance orientation. Hence, we developed a moderated mediation model (e.g., Baron & Kenny, 1986; Edwards & Lambert, 2007; Muller, Judd, & Yzerbyt, 2005; Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007), which jointly examines LMX as the mediating mechanism and power distance as a moderator, to enhance the theoretical validity and precision of the employee engagement literature. Fifth, the studies that examined work engagement were conducted mostly in the West. Our study contributes to the leadership literature by testing the moderated mediation role of LMX and power distance in the supervisor engagement-subordinate engagement relationship in a slightly different milieu--the Malaysian context.

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

Kahn (1990) was perhaps the earliest to conceptualize work engagement. He described engaged employees as individuals who are personally invested in their work roles--physically, cognitively, and emotionally. While this concept is gaining prominence among scholars as well as practitioners, there is no agreement among them on how work engagement should be operationalized (Bakker et al., 2011). On one hand, practitioners define work engagement as organizational commitment (particularly as affective commitment) and extra-role behavior

(Bakker et al., 2011). On the other hand, scholars operationalize work engagement as constructive, work-related state of mind, which is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Bakker et al., 2011). Grounded on this definition, numerous studies have found that engaged employees are proactive, energetic, dedicated, committed to high performance standards, and are more likely to work harder (see Bakker et al., 2011). Fundamentally, they contribute towards enhanced individual and organizational performance due to four reasons as articulated by Bakker (2009):

“Engaged employees (a) frequently experience positive emotions such as happiness, pleasure, and enthusiasm; (b) tend to have better health; (c) communicate their engagement to others and they also (d) take responsibility and the initiative for creating their own work-related and personal resources” (Blomme, Kodden, & Beasley-Suffolk, 2015, p. 128).

Acknowledging the importance of work engagement, numerous studies have investigated and identified possible antecedents of employee engagement. Most of these influencing factors have been grouped into two main categories (Bakker et al., 2011; Bakker, 2011; Blomme et al., 2015)—*job resources* (e.g., social support, autonomy) and *personal resources* (e.g., psychological capital). Studies (see Bakker et al., 2011) have consistently provided support for the notion that job and personal resources facilitate work engagement. While this fact has been proven over time, there are still many areas about work engagement, which requires further investigation.

One such area is the role of leadership in facilitating engagement. There is a significant gap on how leaders can influence followers’ level of engagement (Bakker et al., 2011; Carasco-Saul, Kim, & Kim, 2015; Gutermann, Lehmann-Willenbrock, Boer, Born, & Voelpel, 2017).

There are several studies, focusing on the role played by leadership style, primarily-- transformational and transactional leadership--in work engagement (e.g., see Table 1 in Carasco-Saul et al., 2015). However, according to Christian et al. (2011), leadership is only weakly associated with engagement when other factors were considered. Thus, it remains unclear as to why do some leaders engage their subordinates and others do not? It is pertinent to understand the underlying mechanism through which leaders might exert their influence on employee work engagement. Thus the first major goal of this research was to address this question by investigating the link between leaders' own engagement and their followers' engagement through LMX. We are aware of only one such study thus far which was conducted by Gutermann et al. (2017) among white collar workers in a German service company. As their research was limited to a specific cultural context, our study intends to address this gap by testing similar proposition in the Malaysian context.

The Mediating Role of LMX

LMX refers to the mutual exchange quality between a leader and each of his or her followers based on mutual trust, respect, and obligations (Graen & Scandura, 1987; Graen & Uhl-Bein, 1995). Numerous researchers (e.g., Bhal & Ansari, 2000; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Liang, Ling, & Hsieh, 2007) have highlighted the importance of establishing an equally supportive supervisor-subordinate relationship in order to achieve organizational outcomes.

In view of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), leadership styles that indicate acceptance, consideration, and respect toward subordinates would in response generate the desire among subordinates to repay leader's benevolence and experience enriched LMX (Liang et al., 2007). In essence, styles that include relations-oriented behaviors such as supporting,

recognition, consultation, and delegation, hold greater potential for nourishing the quality of leader-member relations (Yukl, O'Donnell, & Taber, 2009).

Gutermann et al. (2017) reasoned that engaged leaders probably would devote a great deal of their time and effort in interrelating with their subordinates. In fact, interacting and exchanging information with subordinates in a constructive and interactive environment is deemed as part of an engaged leader's obligation. Thus, we posit that subordinates will reciprocate the extension of support and effort from an engaged leader through a mutually beneficial relationship. In line with Gutermann et al. (2017), we too anticipate LMX to act as a potential mediator. Based on a comprehensive meta-analysis, Dulebohn et al. (2012) reiterated that LMX serves as a mediator for various antecedents of leader-follower relationship and consequences such as organizational citizenship behavior and job satisfaction.

Essentially, past studies indicate that LMX serves as a mediator that could explain the effect of leaders' behavior on followers. Building on such findings, this study postulates that LMX could explain the fundamental process of the leader-follower engagement relationship. Leaders are in a position to influence followers (Yukl, 2013). As argued earlier, leaders' engagement is expected to crossover and impact subordinates' engagement. This engagement transference from leader to subordinate can be better explained by mechanisms such as LMX (Gutermann et al., 2017). Engaged leaders are expected to invest more effort in interacting with their subordinates—which translates to high quality LMX. Consequently, when subordinates perceive their leaders to be engaged and willing to go the extra mile to develop high quality LMX based on trust, followers feel the need to reciprocate (Gutermann et al., 2017) by being engaged (Blomme et al., 2015). Thus we advance the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: LMX mediates the relationships between supervisor work engagement (reported by supervisors) and subordinate work engagement (reported by subordinates), such that the effect of supervisor engagement is significantly smaller or non-significant after the effect of LMX is controlled for.

The Moderating Role of Power Distance

“When theories regarding culture are tested within one country, researchers must determine the extent to which within-country variance exists on cultural dimensions and whether this variance is adequate for hypothesis testing” (Clugston, Howell, & Dorfman, 2000, p. 7). Daniels and Greguras (2014) surmised that it is inapt to discount within-country variance when studying cultural orientations. In line with this standpoint, it has been recommended that individualized measures of culture be used when culture is an independent or moderator variable predicting any individually measured dependent variables (Bochner & Hesketh, 1994).

Accordingly, we chose one of the most prominent cultural dimensions at the individual level--power distance--for this study, because this is one of the dimensions which have been found to be typical of the Malaysian context (Ansari, Ahmad, & Aafaqi, 2004; Abdullah, 1994; Hofstede, 1994). Furthermore, Daniels and Greguras (2014) found that most studies that they reviewed conceptualized power distance orientation at the individual level of analysis, which means it could help better explain the variance in the leaders’ engagement and LMX relationship.

Given the high power distance culture, leaders hold the ultimate power and authority that strengthen their own leadership and control (Hofstede, 1994). In such context where hierarchy, and reverence for superior is reckoned a norm, the uneven power distribution between supervisor and subordinate is accepted. In essence, followers with high power distance orientation will have

higher liking for leaders who can be relied upon for guidance and support (Hofstede, 1994). This is also aligned with social learning theory (Bandura, 1971), which implies that individuals with high power distance orientation have a greater tendency to perceive their leaders as role models and thus, emulate their behaviors. Fundamentally, we posit that there is a greater tendency for subordinates to look up to their engaged leaders and translate that awe and respect to high quality LMX. In essence, we posit that when followers have greater power distance orientation, the positive effect of leader's engagement on LMX would be enhanced. Hence, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 2: Power distance moderates the indirect effect of leader work engagement on subordinate work engagement (via leader-member exchange). Specifically, the indirect effect will be stronger when power distance orientation of the employees is high than when it is low.

Method

Research Site, Participants, and Procedure

In order to generalize the survey findings in significantly different settings, we included in our sample full-time employees and their respective current immediate supervisors representing several diverse service and manufacturing organizations. In the process of distributing the questionnaires, managers (supervisors) were asked to prepare a code list with the corresponding name(s) of employee(s), and the subordinates' questionnaires were numbered based on the code list before the questionnaires were distributed to the subordinates. The survey was coded so that the supervisor and subordinate responses were matched for statistical analysis. To protect the confidentiality of the respondents, completed questionnaires were returned directly to the researchers in sealed envelopes. The sampled employees had to meet the selection criterion of at least six months of working experience with their immediate supervisor. Of the

600 questionnaires distributed, we received usable responses from 214 subordinates and their 77 immediate supervisors (a response rate of 35.67%). Of the 214 pairs of usable responses, only 120 were received on time (i.e., within the specified time three months) and the remaining 94 were received late after a few reminders. This might raise an issue if survey responses were subjected to response bias. Thus, we conducted a non-response bias test—for supervisor and subordinate responses separately--in order to ensure the validity of the research findings by comparing the early and the late respondents on several demographic factors, such as age, gender, ethnicity, organizational tenure, dyadic tenure, and levels of education. The analysis indicated no significant difference ($p > .05$) between the two groups of respondents on any of the demographic variables—thereby suggesting no threat to response bias.

The demographic profile of the subordinates was as follows: Subordinates were mostly in the age range of 19 to 55 years ($M = 33.0$; $SD = 7.8$). There were 112 female participants (52.3%). In terms of ethnicity, 102 participants were Malay (47.7%), 50 Indian (23.4%), 42 Chinese (19.6%), and 13 others (6.1%). About 60% of them were degree holders. The average tenure of employees with the current organization was 5.9 years ($SD = 6.3$) and the average tenure with the current immediate supervisor (i.e., dyadic tenure) was 3.1 years ($SD = 2.9$). Majority of them represented lower (45.8%) and middle (39.7%) levels of management.

On the other hand, supervisors were mostly in the age range of 26 to 64 years ($M = 38.6$; $SD = 8.1$). Over half of them were male (56.5%). Their racial composition was as follows: Malay = 43.0%; Indian = 28.0%; Chinese = 21.0%; others = 7.0%. Over 85% of them were degree holders (bachelor's and above). Their average tenure with the current organization was 8.0 years ($SD = 6.0$). They were mostly at middle (69.0) and upper (20.0) levels of management.

In summary, supervisors were significantly older, better educated, had longer tenure, and held higher position than their subordinates ($p < .01$). However, supervisors and subordinates were not significantly ($p > .05$) different in terms of gender and ethnicity.

Measures

Data were obtained by means of questionnaire surveys from two sources. The subordinate survey included, in addition to demographics, work engagement, LMX, and power distance orientation scales, whereas the supervisor survey consisted of demographic and work engagement scale items. Collecting two sources of data was a deliberate attempt to minimize any common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012). Except for personal-demographics, all other scale items were rated on a 7-point scale. The item scores in each scale were summed up and then averaged to arrive at an overall score for the scale. Higher scores represented higher levels of each of the constructs.

Work engagement. We measured work engagement with a 9-item UWES-9 (Utrecht Work Engagement Scale, Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006). Though the scale is composed of three subscales, we used an overall measure of engagement. Example items include, “At my work, I feel bursting with energy” (Vigor), “I am enthusiastic about my job” (Dedication), and “I get carried away when I’m working” (Absorption). The scale was completed by both subordinates and their respective supervisors.

Leader-member exchange (LMX). We employed a 12-item scale (LMX-MDM, Liden & Maslyn, 1998) to assess the quality of exchange between participating managers and their respective immediate supervisors. The scale was originally developed to assess four exchange dimensions (contribution, loyalty, affect, and professional respect), with three items for each dimension. Subordinates were asked to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement with

each statement. Sample items are: “I am willing to apply extra efforts beyond those normally required, to meet my supervisor’s work goals (Contribution); “I am impressed with my supervisor’s knowledge of his/her job” (Professional Respect); “I like my supervisor very much as a person” (Affect); “My supervisor would defend me to others in the organization if I make an honest mistake” (Loyalty). Given that the four dimensions (often called “currencies”) have been found to fall under a second-order factor (Erdogan, Kraimer, & Liden, 2004; Liden & Maslyn, 1998), we used the scale as an overall measure of LMX in this research.

Power distance. We used 6 items to assess power distance cultural orientation of the subordinates (Dorfman & Howell, 1988). The scale was developed as an ongoing effort to extend Hofstede’s (1980, 1993) work to the individual level of analysis, so that it can be used at both the micro (individual) and macro (national) levels. Evidence regarding reliability, validity, and usefulness of the scale was found for research studies conducted in Taiwan and Mexico (Dorfman & Howell, 1988). Subordinates rated their degree of agreement with each item. An example of power distance scale item is, “Managers should seldom ask for the opinions of employees.”

Control variables. Subordinates provided information about their age, gender and ethnicity, level of education, organizational level, organizational tenure, and tenure with the current supervisor. Supervisors also provided demographic data similar to those reported by the subordinates. Certain demographic variables such as subordinate gender, supervisor gender, and the duration of the dyadic work relationship were statistically controlled for in all analyses because of their potential effects on the quality of the relationship between supervisors and subordinates (Ansari, Hung, & Aafaqi, 2007; Ansari, Tan, & Aafaqi, 2014; Erdogan & Liden,

2002; Graen & Scandura, 1987; Liden & Maslyn, 1998; Seers, 1989; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Doing so ruled out any alternative explanations for the findings.

Results

Psychometric Properties and Evidence against Common Method Bias

Prior to testing the major hypothesis, we performed several analyses to examine the psychometric properties of the measures and to gather empirical evidence against common method variance (CMV). We conducted a series of confirmatory analysis (CFA) using covariance matrix and maximum likelihood estimation to assess the discriminant validity of the substantive constructs measured in this study. We used four indices to assess the fit of the measurement models: comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), goodness of fit index (GFI) (Bentler, 1990), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA, Browne & Cudeck, 1993). Given a large number of items for the four study variables, which can potentially cause parameter instability, correlated residuals and cross-loadings, and increased standard errors (Bagozzi & Edwards, 1998), we adopted a parceling procedure (Little, Cunningham, Shahar, & Widaman, 2002). Specifically, for the four constructs--the three subordinate self-reported constructs (i.e., work engagement, power distance, and LMX) and a supervisor-rated construct (work engagement)--we adopted random assignment procedure and created four parcels of randomly selected items for each construct (i.e., 16 parcels total). The hypothesized four-factor model shows satisfactory fit ($\chi^2 = 214.74$, $df = 98$, $p < .01$, $GFI = .90$, $CFI = .92$, $TLI = .90$, $RMSEA = .08$) and has significantly superior fit to the alternative two- and single-factor models (see Table 1). Further, in the four-factor model, all parcels had significant loadings on their respective factors. Given these CFA results, we continued to examine the four factors as distinct constructs.

Since employees (subordinates) self-rated three factor items at the same time, the possibility of CMV cannot be ruled out. In order to provide some empirical evidence against this bias, we conducted a Harman's 1-factor test and examined the unrotated factor solution involving all 12 parcel items rated by subordinates (4 items each for subordinate engagement, power distance, and LMX factors) in an exploratory factor analysis. The analysis constrained to 3 factors, explaining a total of 63% of the variance in the matrix. It was evident that no single factor accounted for the majority of the variance in the data. In other words, a single factor did not emerge from an unrotated principal components analysis, and the first factor accounted for only 30% of the variance in the matrix, suggesting that CMV was not a serious issue in this data set (Podsakoff et al., 2003, 2012). In addition, strong evidence of construct validity (reported above) also substantiates that measures do not suffer from common method bias.

Means, standard deviations, intercorrelations, and coefficients alpha are presented in Table 2. As can be seen, all constructs had acceptable coefficients alpha exceeding .80 (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). It can also be seen in Table 2 that the constructs were as correlated as one would expect on theoretical grounds. In conclusion, results of CFA, Harman's 1-factor test, reliability analysis, and measurement model analysis indicate that the measures have sound psychometric properties in terms of reliability and construct validity and that there is no serious threat of common method bias in this research.

Tests of Hypotheses

We examined our major hypotheses using the PROCESS macro 3.0 (Model 7; Hayes, 2018) in SPSS, with supervisor gender, subordinate gender, and their dyadic tenure controlled for in the analysis. Results of the moderated mediation model are summarized in Figure 1 and Tables 3 and 4. Results show that supervisor work engagement has a significant direct effect on

subordinate work engagement ($\beta = .19$, $SE = .09$, $p < .01$) and LMX ($\beta = .22$, $SE = .08$, $p < .01$). Similarly, LMX has a significant direct effect on subordinate work engagement ($\beta = .41$, $SE = .08$, $p < .01$). The mediation results suggest that (see Table 4) supervisor engagement predicts LMX, which in turn predicts subordinate engagement—thus supporting Hypothesis 1.

We examined Hypothesis 2 by including interaction between supervisor engagement and power distance orientation on LMX. Significant interactions were plotted following the procedure suggested by Aiken and West (1991). As can be seen in Table 3, the interaction effect was statistically significant ($\beta = .18$, $SE = .06$, $p < .05$). Clearly, supervisor engagement leads to subordinate engagement for those with high power distance than those with low power distance orientation (see Figure 2).

To test the hypothesized moderated mediation effect (Hypothesis 2), we followed the steps recommended by Muller et al., (2005) and examined three particular conditions accordingly: (1) a significant effect of supervisor work engagement on subordinate work engagement; (2) a significant effect of supervisor engagement on LMX and a significant interaction between supervisor engagement and power distance orientation predicting LMX; and (3) a significant effect of LMX on subordinate engagement and a significant interaction between LMX and power distance predicting subordinate engagement—see Tables 3 and 4 and Figure 1.

To further validate findings of moderated mediation relationships, we examined a key condition, which requires the magnitude of the conditional indirect effect of leader work engagement via LMX to be different for employees across high and low levels of power distance. We used the statistical significance test by Preacher et al., (2007), which applied Aroian's (1947) exact standard error for indirect effects, to compute a t statistic for the conditional indirect effect. Following this recommendation, we operationalized high and low

levels of power distance as ± 1 SD above and below the mean score of the cultural orientation. Table 4 presents the estimates, standard errors, t statistics, and significance value of the conditional indirect effects for subordinate work engagement across low and high levels of power distance orientation. Results (Table 4) show that, the conditional indirect effects of supervisor work engagement were stronger and significant in the high power distance condition but were weaker and not significant in the low power distance condition. Thus, moderated mediation hypothesis (Hypothesis 2) received full support.

Discussion

The present research contributes to the leadership literature by integrating three bodies of literature: work engagement, LMX, and power distance cultural orientation. At a glance, it seems that, leader's own level of work engagement plays a crucial role in developing their relationship with their subordinates and consequently elevating their subordinates' level of engagement. This finding is in line with the findings reported in the study by Gutermann et al. (2017). Leaders' engagement seems to be contagious and spreads across subordinates through the enrichment of leader-subordinate relationship. However, this finding cannot be applied in all context in a blanket manner.

The inclusion of power distance as a moderator indicates that this finding is not generalizable in all context. Results of the moderated mediation model indicate that the mediating role of LMX in leader-follower engagement can differ depending on the power distance orientation of the employees. The complex interplay between power distance and leader engagement helps explain the underlying reason why the contagious effect of leaders' engagement on subordinates' engagement was only evident among employees with high power distance orientation. As hypothesized, subordinates with high power distance orientation, tend to

view their leaders as role models to be emulated (Bandura, 1971). In such situations, subordinates admire their engaged leaders who usually would go the extra mile to interact and build positive relationship with them. Such constructive relationship building effort by the engaged leader will be converted into high quality LMX, and subsequently enrich subordinates' engagement. This important finding has important theoretical and practical implications which will be discussed further below.

Implications for Theory and Practice

Our study has some palpable theoretical ramifications. First, our study has contributed to the literature on employee engagement by identifying the role of engaged leaders. Past studies have consistently identified job resources and personal resources as antecedents of employee work engagement (e.g., see Bakker et al., 2011). While we do not deny the pertinent role of these resources, it is equally important to understand the underlying process through which leaders can enrich their subordinates' level of engagement.

Second, the pertinence of LMX has also been emphasized in this study. Knowing that LMX quality mediates the influence of leadership style on work outcomes, our study has shed some light on how LMX explains the transference of leaders' engagement to subordinates' engagement.

Finally, our findings have advanced the contention that leadership influence on desired work outcomes is highly dependent on the cultural orientation of the individuals (i.e., context). In line with the noteworthy differences amid Western and non-Western setting, leaders need to adapt their style and attitude accordingly to realize the anticipated advantages. Generally, the findings of our study have provided empirical substantiation—especially from the Malaysian

perspective--to show that the cross-over of leader engagement to subordinate engagement through LMX is only evident when power distance is high.

These theoretical contributions translate into practical implications for organizations today. With organizations going global, it is important to comprehend how cultural variances could influence the impact of leader behavior. Leaders need to understand that their level of engagement is indeed contagious, especially among employees with high power distance orientation. Therefore, work engagement must be fostered from the top. When leaders themselves are engaged, it is hoped that they would be able to capitalize their level of engagement in their quest to enrich their subordinates' engagement in context characterized by high power distance.

Potential Limitations and Opportunities for Future Research

Despite theoretical and practical contributions stated earlier, our study is not without limitations. First, we incorporated only one cultural dimension (i.e., power distance) in this study. Future research should also consider other cultural dimensions such as collectivism and paternalism as possible moderators of the leaders' engagement-LMX- employee engagement relationship. Second, our data were based on the Malaysian context. Hence, future research should aim to reproduce the findings of this study in another cultural context. Third, we considered LMX score only from the perspective of the subordinates. It would be interesting to test the influence of LMX agreement between leaders and subordinates to better understand the underlying process of the above-mentioned relationship. Finally, we employed LMX as the mediator for the leaders' engagement-subordinates' engagement relationship. Undeniably the transference process between these variables could be explained by other factors as well such as

team dynamics, perceived support and so forth. It would be beneficial to consider such potential mediators in future.

Conclusion

The study extends existing leadership research by demonstrating that leaders' on-going experience of work engagement is important in order to enriching the followers' work engagement. However, leaders' engagement is most strongly related to high-quality relationships when subordinates have high rather than low power distance orientation. Leaders experiencing high work engagement may develop similar work engagement among their subordinates by developing high-quality relationships with them. Hopefully, our paper's theorizing and findings will provoke leadership scholars to further explore the contagion role and process of leader engagement in subordinate work engagement.

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Table 1

Results for Confirmatory Factor Analyses

<i>Models</i>	χ^2	<i>df</i>	$\Delta\chi^2$ (Δdf)	<i>GFI</i>	<i>CFI</i>	<i>TLI</i>	<i>RMSEA</i>
Four-factor measurement model	214.74	98	Baseline	.90	.92	.90	.08
Two-factor model	500.09	103	285.35 (5)	.74	.67	.61	.14
Single-factor model	992.30	104	777.56 (6)	.60	.39	.30	.20

Note. $N = 214$. All alternative models were compared with the hypothesized four-factor model. All $\Delta\chi^2$'s are significant at $p < .01$; GFI = Goodness of Fit Index; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index (Tucker & Lewis, 1973); RMSEA = Root-Mean-Square Error of Approximation (Steiger, 1990); The four factor measurement model consists of leader work engagement, subordinate work engagement, power distance, and LMX; The three factor model consists of combined subordinate-rated factors (subordinate self-rated engagement, power distance, and LMX) and leader self-rated engagement; Single-factor consists of all four factors.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics, Coefficients Alpha, and Intercorrelations of Study Variables

<i>Factor</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>01</i>	<i>02</i>	<i>03</i>	<i>04</i>	<i>05</i>	<i>06</i>	<i>07</i>
01. Supervisor gender ^a	1.42	0.49	SIM						
02. Subordinate gender ^a	1.55	0.50	.45**	SIM					
03. Dyadic tenure ^b	3.10	2.96	-.20*	.04	SIM				
04. Leader engagement	4.26	0.83	-.08	-.11	.01	(.92)			
05. Power distance	3.68	1.40	-.07	-.10	.18*	.03	(.82)		
06. LMX	4.95	0.87	-.16*	-.13	.08	.23**	.00	(.89)	
07. Subordinate engagement	3.99	.097	-.21**	-.15*	.16*	.27**	.06	.44**	(.92)

Note. $N = 214$. Diagonal entries in parentheses indicate coefficients alpha; Decimal points are omitted from correlation matrix and coefficients alpha; LMX = Leader-Member Exchange; M = Mean; SD = Standard deviation; Control variables had no effect on substantive conclusions but are included in the correlation table; ^adummy-coded variable (0 = female; 1 = male); ^bratio scale; SIM = Single-item measure.

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$.

Table 3

Results of the Moderated Mediation Analysis

	β	SE	t	R	R ²	MSE	F(df)
<i>LMX as criterion measure</i>							
Model summary				.36	.13	.76	3.83** (6,153)
Supervisor engagement (A)	.22*	.08	2.68**				
Power distance (B)	-.01	.05	0.27				
A X B	.18**	.06	3.07**				
<i>Subordinate engagement as criterion measure</i>							
Model summary				.49	.24	.84	9.48** (5,154)
Supervisor engagement	.19	.09	4.47**				
LMX	.41	.08	4.95**				

$N = 214$; In view of the non-significant relationships, control variables (supervisor gender, subordinate gender, and supervisor-subordinate dyadic tenure) are not included in this table.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 4

*Moderated Mediated Results for Subordinate Work Engagement across Levels of Power**Distance*

Moderator	Level	Conditional indirect effect	Boot SE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Power distance	Low	-.01	.05	-.11	.10
	High	.20	.06**	.08	.32
<i>Index of moderated mediation</i>					
Power distance		Index = .07	.03**	.02	.13

** $p < .01$; number of bootstrap samples = 5000.

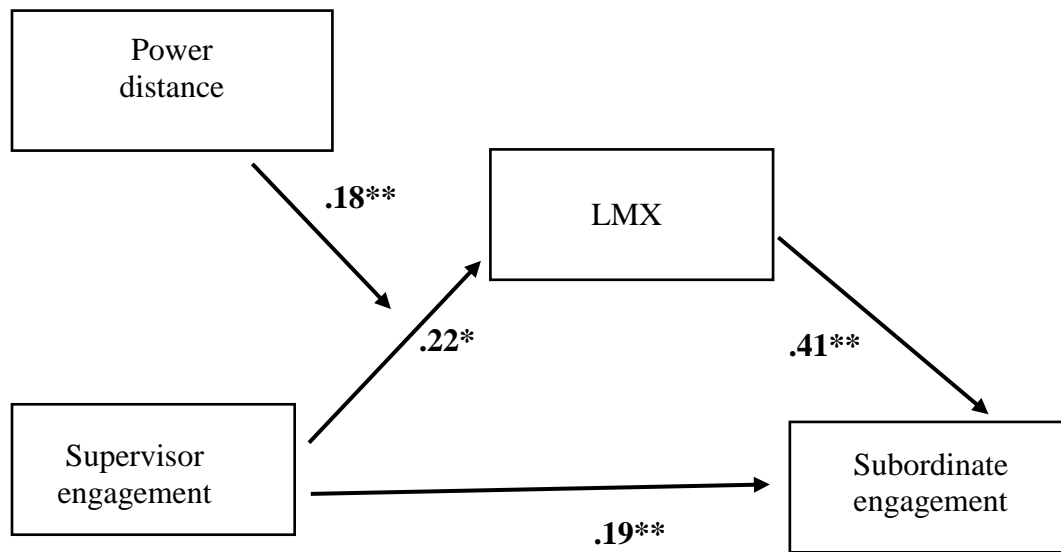


Figure 1. The indirect effect of supervisor engagement on subordinate engagement through LMX, moderated by power distance orientation.

** $p < .01$.

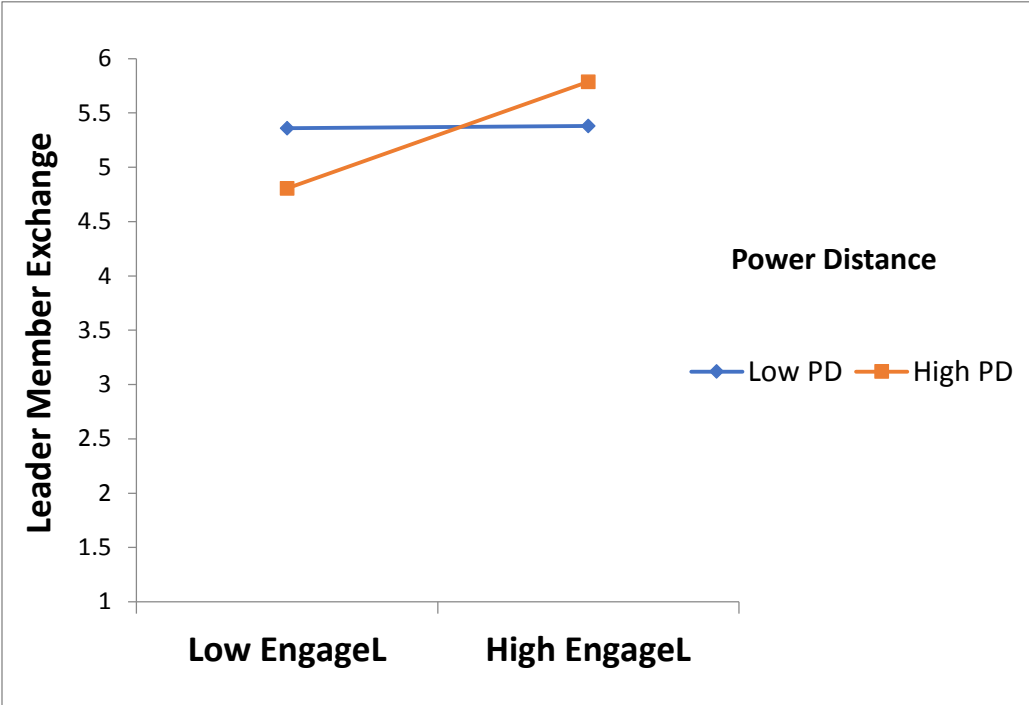


Figure 2. Supervisor engagement X power distance interaction on LMX.