

FORTHCOMING ARTICLE

THE ROLE OF GENDER MATCH, LMX TENURE, AND SUPPORT IN LEADER-MEMBER EXCHANGE

Kanika T. Bhal^{a*}, Mahfooz A. Ansari^b and Rehana Aafaqi^c

^a Department of Management Studies,
Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, India

^b Faculty of Management,
University of Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada

^c Faculty of Management
University of Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada

ABSTRACT

The study explores the impact of gender-match, LMX tenure, and supervisory support in predicting the quality of leader-member exchange. Additionally, it aims at establishing whether there are significant variations in the quality of exchange within a group. Drawing a sample of 201 Malaysian employees from different supervisory levels, we tested several causal hypotheses pertaining to antecedents and impact of leader-member exchange (LMX) by means of structural equation modeling. The analysis indicated individual-level analysis for LMX. Whereas gender match influenced LMX-Affect, perceived supervisory support positively affected both currencies of LMX and organizational support (POS). The impact of gender match on POS was mediated by LMX-Affect. Contrary to our expectations, LMX tenure did not influence LMX-Affect, and LMX-perceived contribution did not influence organizational support. Implications of the findings are discussed and directions for future research are suggested.

Keywords: LMX; Gender match; Supervisor support; Perceived organizational support.

I. INTRODUCTION

Research on leader-member exchange (LMX) theory of leadership has advanced significantly, in various directions, over the last 30 years after the seminal study by Dansereau, *et al.*, (1975). A substantial amount of research has focused on the outcomes of LMX; however, there are some areas that need a little more attention. First, LMX conceptualization began by addressing the issue of analysis of levels at which it (LMX) occurs, but there has been little research (Dansereau, Yammarino, Markham, Alutto, Newman, Dumas, *et al.*, 1995) addressing this issue. Second, there is very little research identifying the antecedents of LMX (see such works as those of Gerstner and Day, 1997; Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995; Schyns, *et al.*, 2005).

We first analyze whether the quality of exchange between a leader and different members varies within the workgroup. Next, we assess the impact of gender match, length of association with the leader (LMX tenure), and perceived supervisor support on the quality of exchange between a leader and a member. Finally, we assess whether the quality of leader-member exchange leads to a perception of support from the organization as a whole (Perceived Organizational Support). It will not only advance understanding of Leader-Member Exchange theory, but it will also have practical implications for leader development.

* Corresponding author: Kanika T. Bhal, Department of Management Studies, Vishwakarma Bhawan, Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, Shaheed Jeet Singh Marg, New Delhi 110 016, India. E-Mail: kanika@dms.iitd.ernet.in

FORTHCOMING ARTICLE

The study addresses the following research issues. To begin with, in most of the previous studies, LMX has been assessed as a one-dimensional construct consisting mostly of on-the-job leader-member interactions. In this study, LMX is assessed through a two-dimensional scale consisting of “contributions” on the job and “affective” interactions off-the-job. Second, following the *varient* approach (Dansereau, *et al.*, 1984) it tests whether there are significant within- or between-group variations in subordinates’ perceptions of the two dimensions of LMX. Third, it assesses the impact of relational demographic variables like gender match and LMX tenure (i.e., member’s length of association with the leader) and supervisor support on LMX. Fourth, it assesses the impact of LMX on perceived organizational support. Fifth, most of the studies, barring a few on the Chinese and Japanese samples (Hui, *et al.*, 1999; Wakabayashi and Graen, 1984), have been conducted in the United States. This study adds to the literature by testing the proposed model in the Malaysian context, thus providing some empirical cross-cultural validity to LMX-subordinate-related work outcomes relationships. It should, however, be noted that we are not advocating that the proposed relationships hold true for the Malaysian context only and are not likely to be replicated in the other contexts.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the following sections, we first discuss the two dimensions of LMX and the issue of levels of analysis. We then discuss the impact of gender match, LMX tenure, and supervisor support on the two dimensions of LMX. In the last section, we discuss the role of LMX as a predictor of perceived organizational support. Six hypotheses, thus generated, are built into a model, which is tested against some alternate models—see Figure 1.

LMX: Issues of Level and Dimensionality

The effectiveness of leadership lies in its impact on the subordinates. In the LMX or dyadic conceptualization of leadership, the unique relationship of a leader with each of the subordinates is counted. The dyadic study of leadership focuses on leader-member dyads and the quality of interaction in those dyads (Dansereau, *et al.*, 1975) wherein the nature of exchanges and the quality of interaction of a leader might vary across different subordinates in the work-group.

Most of the earlier conceptualizations treated LMX as a one-dimensional construct in predicting subordinate-related outcomes. In such conceptualizations, the exchange or the quality of interaction in a leader-member dyad was limited to the job and tasks at hand, with little or no focus on assessing social interactions. The development of varying quality of interaction in a leader-member dyad has been understood in terms of role development (Graen, 1976; Jacobs, 1971; Katz and Kahn, 1978) and social exchanges (Blau, 1964; Graen and Scandura, 1987). The leader assesses the competencies and motivation of the subordinates through role making episodes and offers different inducements to high quality subordinates for collaborating on unforeseen (unstructured) tasks. How a subordinate defines the role then determines the quality of interaction in a leader-member dyad. According to role theory (Jacobs, 1971; Katz and Kahn, 1978), roles are multidimensional and are likely to have different combinations of task focus and social interaction (Bales, 1958). Further the nature of interaction in different quality dyads is maintained through social exchanges. These exchanges too are conceptualized as multidimensional involving material and non-material rewards like advice, workflow, and friendship.

Given that both roles and exchanges are multidimensional, LMX too needs to be studied as a multidimensional construct (Dienesch and Liden, 1986; Liden and Maslyn, 1998). Though some researchers (e.g., Ang, *et al.*, 2005; Bhal and Ansari, 1996; Paglis and Green, 2002) have tried to include both the leader and the member perspectives while assessing the quality of exchange in a leader-member dyad, little effort has been made to identify the different dimensions of this exchange. Dienesch and Liden (1986) suggested that LMX may be based on three “currencies” of exchange: task behaviors (perceived contribution), loyalty to each other (loyalty), and simply liking for each other (affect). Thus, perceived contribution deals with on-the-job dimension of interaction, loyalty with social support, and affect with affective feelings of liking which go beyond the work situation. This conceptualization was subsequently used by researchers (e.g., Bhal and Ansari, 1996; Liden and Maslyn, 1998) to develop psychometrically sound scales of LMX. The Bhal and Ansari study resulted in a two-dimensional scale consisting of two orthogonal dimensions: LMX-Contribution and LMX-Affect. The two dimensions, which relate to on-the-job work-related interaction and off-the-job informal interactions, are in line with the earlier conceptualizations of leader behavior that have viewed leader behavior as consisting of consideration and initiating structure (Halpin and Winer, 1957), employee oriented and production oriented (Fleishman and Harris,

FORTHCOMING ARTICLE

1962), or concern for people and concern for production (Blake and Mouton, 1964). More recently, Maslyn and Uhl-Bien (2001) further proposed that affect, loyalty, and professional respect dimensions are more like social currencies that focus on social exchange between leader and member, whereas contribution dimension is more like a work-related currency. They included socially related currencies on the ground that exchange between leader and members is not only based on the work-related elements (Bhal and Ansari, 1996; Wayne, *et al.*, 1997). Thus, a high “contribution-dominated” exchange (work-related currency) is likely to involve intensive interaction on task related activities, whereas an “affect-dominated” exchange (social currency) is likely to involve off-the-job, affective and personal interactions. Thus, conceptualizing LMX as a two-dimensional construct – consisting of contribution and affect dimensions—is quite consistent with the theories on which LMX is based.

The VDL/LMX theory is grounded essentially in the level at which leader behavior needs to be studied. In contrast to the then existing theories (such as Ohio State Leadership Studies), this theory postulated and tested the leader’s behavior and relationship with different subordinates in a work-group. Overall, the analysis indicated that there was a significant within-group variation under a leader for assuming a work-group to be homogeneous – an *a priori* theoretical assumption made by earlier leadership theories (Graen, 1976; Graen and Schiemann, 1978; Graen, *et al.*, 1982). Reexamining data from the Ohio State University Leadership studies, Schriesheim, *et al.* (1995) stated that the researchers need to explicitly mention the assumptions of the levels at which leadership is likely to occur and demonstrate how the data align with the assumptions of the level. Quality of exchange as measured from the subordinate perspectives, in the VDL/LMX conceptualization, made the assumption that there were significant differences in the perceived relationship of different subordinates within a work-group (Dansereau, Yammarino, and Markham, 1995). Most of the research on LMX has been on identifying the impact of LMX quality on subordinate outcomes. Though the focus of LMX research has shifted to the relationships in a dyad and not to the leader or the member (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995), the underlying assumption here is that these dyadic relationships are embedded in a work-group and it is the differing quality of relationship within a work-group that leads to unique subordinate outcomes. It makes sense to test and show that the unique quality of relationship leads to subordinate outcomes, but the issue assumes greater significance when it is demonstrated that one leader has varying relationships with different subordinates in one work-group. Though the issue of level of analysis in LMX/VDL theory has conceptually addressed the issue of dyad level, individual level, and group level (Dansereau and Yammarino, 1998; Mumford, *et al.*, 2000; Scandura, 1999), there has been little research (e.g., Bhal and Ansari, 1996; Bhal and Ansari, 2000; Dansereau, *et al.*, 1995) that has empirically tested these assertions. In line with this, we hypothesize:

H1: Both perceived contribution and affect dimensions of LMX, as measured from the subordinate perspective, will show significant within-group variation and non-significant between group variance.

Gender Similarity as a Predictor of LMX

There has been some research--more conceptual than empirical—that explains the development of LMX (e.g., Bauer and Green, 1996; Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995; Judge and Ferris, 1993; Tsui and O’Reilly, 1989). But there is relatively little research on the antecedents of LMX (Gerstner and Day, 1997).

In understanding interpersonal and dyadic relationships, similarity of attitudes and demographics of the partners provide useful preposition to be explored. Research in social psychology (e.g., Berscheid and Walster, 1969; Byrne, 1971; Harrison, 1976) provides evidence for a strong link between similarity and affective relationships. Moreover, examining similarity between individuals in the workplace has been considered critical for understanding behavior at work (Schneider, 1987) and there have been some studies that have assessed the impact of superior-subordinate similarity on process outcomes of the subordinates (Greene, 1972; Wexley, *et al.*, 1980). In the context of LMX, some studies have explored the impact of gender and demographic similarity on the quality of exchange. Though there are some studies that report either no relationship of gender match with LMX (e.g., Bauer and Green, 1996; Liden, *et al.*, 1993) or the positive impact of gender mismatch on high quality exchange (Adebayo and Udegbe, 2004), there is evidence that is to the contrary. According to Gerstner and Day (1997), simple demographic factors may not predict leader-member exchange but relational demography—the extent to which the individuals are similar – may. In support of this, gender is shown to predict Out-Group status of the subordinates (Duchon, *et al.*, 1986) and gender dissimilarity is shown to lead to poor quality of exchange (Green, *et al.*, 1996). Research in cognitive psychology reveals that similarity is an important construct (Medin, *et al.*, 1993) that leads to positive affect (e.g., Busch and Wilson, 1976; Schurr and Ozanne, 1985). Treating LMX as a two-dimensional construct provides scope for assessing the differential impact of this similarity on these two

FORTHCOMING ARTICLE

dimensions. As the past research reports a positive relationship between similarity and affective response, our second hypothesis is as follows:

H2: Gender similarity in a leader-member dyad will lead to higher quality of LMX-Affect.

LMX Tenure as a Predictor of LMX

In research on the development of LMX, time is considered an important factor, as the relationship is expected to grow over a period of time through the process of role definition (Graen, 1976; Graen and Scandura, 1987). As noted by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995), LMX is a social exchange process in which LMX relationships develop based in part on anticipation of deepening reciprocal trust and expectations of interacting obligations over time. Some empirical research on LMX has acknowledged the importance of LMX tenure (i.e., duration of the dyad working together) and has used it as a control variable in assessing the relationship of LMX with other variables (Ang, *et al.*, 2005; Gomez and Rosen, 2001; Wayne, *et al.*, 1997). Viewing the length of association in the context of two-dimensional construct of LMX provides unique insights. So far as perceived contribution currency of LMX is concerned, the leader and the member might get through repeated episodes over a period of time a more accurate idea about the quality and quantity of each other's contribution (which could either be high or low). However, previous research on length of association and affective response reveals that duration might result in affect-related relationships, as feelings of liking are likely to grow over a period of time. Research (Quiñones, *et al.*, 1995; Tesluk and Jacobs, 1998) linking organizational tenure and employee responses has shown that the duration of stay more significantly predicts outcomes like commitment, which is affective in nature, than performance. Extending the same logic to LMX or dyad tenure, it would mean that LMX tenure does not necessarily result in on-the-job performance but is likely to influence the feelings and affect. In line with this assertion, our next hypothesis is as follows:

H3: Length of association with the leader (LMX tenure) will be positively related to affect dimension of LMX.

Supervisor Support as a Predictor of LMX

Development of LMX is based on the process of role definition by subordinates in a work-group (Graen, 1976; Graen and Scandura, 1987). LMX is a dynamic process theory, and it is viewed in terms of successive trust building. The interactions that the leader and members have with each other at the initial stage are likely to persist and have an impact on the subsequent quality of LMX. Since the roles are negotiable, subordinates require support from the leader in the process of role development, which is likely to influence their relationship with the supervisors. Just as employees form global perceptions concerning their evaluation by the organization (perceived organizational support), they also develop general views concerning the degree to which supervisors value their contributions and care about their well-being (perceived supervisor support; Kottke and Sharafinski, 1988). Based on the norms of reciprocity principle (Gouldner, 1960), perceived supervisor support would strengthen affective reactions toward the leader and the perceived leader support would generate a perception of high contribution by the leader. Employees would then repay the leader through greater affect and increased efforts at work. In line with this, our next hypothesis is as follows:

H4: Perceived leader support will lead to higher affect and higher contribution dimensions of LMX.

LMX and Perceived Organizational Support

Past research has shown that the subordinates' quality of relationship with the leader gets transferred to affective, cognitive, and behavioral reactions to organizations like satisfaction (Vecchio and Gobel, 1984), commitment (Duchon, *et al.*, 1986; Kee, *et al.*, 2004), and organizational citizenship behavior (Foo and Ansari, 2004; Hackett and Lapierre, 2004; Hui, *et al.*, 1999; Settoon, *et al.*, 1996; Wayne, *et al.*, 1997). In this light, it may be said that affective relationship with the leader gets perceived as organizational support. Further, Eisenberger, *et al.* (1986) theorized that discretionary rewards given to the organizational members based on their contributions are likely to predict POS. Given that leaders administer these rewards and past research has shown that POS is related to supervisor support, on-the-job related interactions with the supervisors contribute to POS (Eisenberger, *et al.*, 2002). Hence, our next hypothesis is as follows:

H5: Affect and contribution dimensions of LMX will lead to perceived organizational support.

The hypothesized model based on these hypotheses is contained in Figure 1.

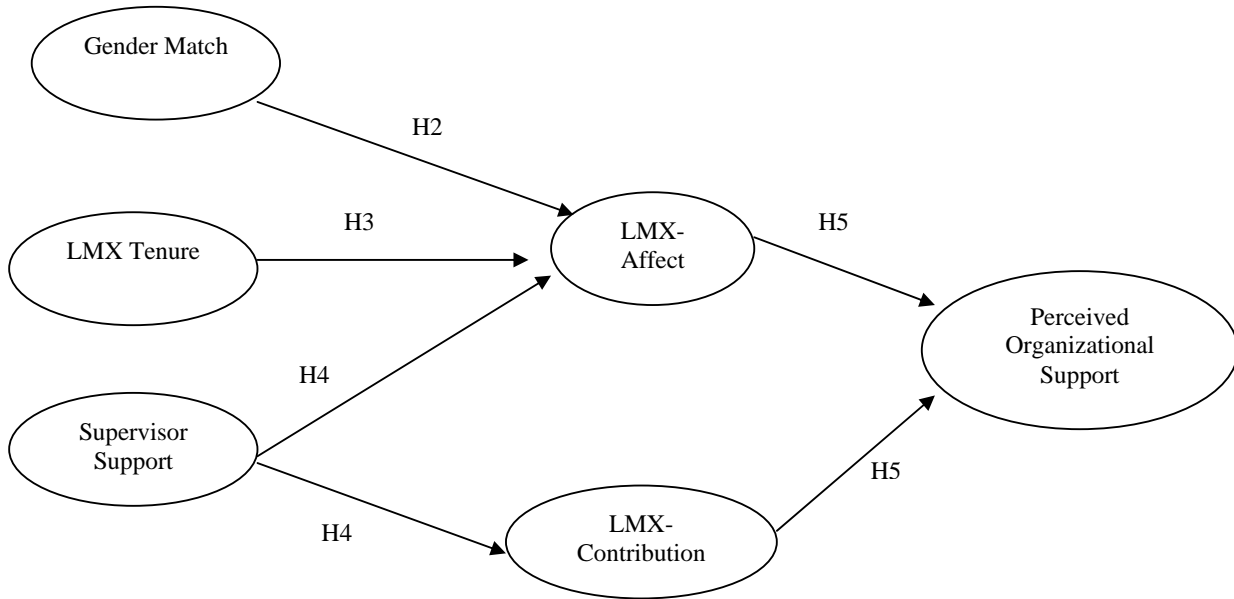


Figure 1: The hypothesized model.

III. METHOD

Research Site and Participants

Given that organizations are many and of divergent nature, no attempt was made to draw the sample randomly. Rather, keeping in view a few dimensions of this heterogeneous universe, we selected 24 contrasting organizations conveniently located in the State of Penang, Malaysia. Having such a heterogeneous group of organizations was a deliberate attempt by the authors in order to generalize the survey findings in significantly different settings. Out of a total of 24 organizations included in the survey, 16 (66.6%) were manufacturing and 8 (33.4%) were service organizations. Of the 24 organizations, 9 (38%) were electronic/electrical, 3 (13%) construction, 2 (8%) automotive part and plastic, 2 (8%) banking/financial institutions, and 8 (33%) from other organizations. An industry wise understanding of the issue could have provided more insight but since the sample is from very diverse organizations (in different sectors), and the size in each industry is small, it is not feasible to conduct a significant statistical analysis.

The survey was targeted at the different job categories of employees at supervisory levels employed in the above organizations. Two hundred one supervisors and their 83 immediate supervisors voluntarily participated in the study. Initially, the questionnaire was distributed to 350 respondents. Of these, 231 questionnaires were returned, yielding a response rate of 66%. Thirty of the returned questionnaires were incomplete and could not be used. The final response rate for usable questionnaires ($N = 201$) was 57.4%. Respondents ranged in age from 19 to 51 years ($M = 31.77$; $SD = 7.32$). Their average tenure with their immediate supervisor was 2.69 years ($SD = 2.13$). About 65% of the respondents were female and 35% were male. Over half of them (114; 56.7%) were working under the same gender leader (53 were female leader-subordinate dyads; 61 were male leader-subordinate dyads) and 87 (43.3%) were working with leaders of different gender (76 females working under male leaders; 11 males working under female leaders). In terms of ethnic background, over half of them (116, 57.7%) were Chinese, followed by Malay (67, 33%), and Indian (12, 6%) respondents. Nineteen respondents belonged to the middle level, 106 to lower level, 65 from clerical level, and 11 were from other support services. However, the profile of the leaders to whom they were reporting was different. Of the 83 (immediate supervisors) leaders to whom these

FORTHCOMING ARTICLE

subordinates were reporting, 13 were from the top, 54 from the middle, and 16 were from the lower management levels.

For establishing within- and between-group variations, the number of subordinates reporting to a leader has to be two or more. Thus, the complete and usable sample consisted of 168 (60 males and 108 females) respondents who reported to 50 leaders, using this criterion. The work-groups varied in size. There were 22 groups of 2, 10 groups each of 3 and 4 members, 2 groups of 5, 3 groups of 6, and 1 each of 7, 9, and 10 members. The mean age of this set of respondents was 31.79 years ($SD = 7.23$), and their tenure with the supervisor was 2.56 years ($SD = 1.99$).

Measures

Leader-member exchange (LMX). The quality of exchange between supervisor and subordinate was assessed with a 10-item quality of interaction scale (Bhal and Ansari, 1996, 2000). This was a two-dimensional scale of LMX, based on the conceptualization by Dienesch and Liden (1986). The two dimensions were perceived contribution and affect. The scale consisted of 10 items, with 5 items, each of perceived contribution (referred to as contribution subsequently) and affect. The respondents were asked to rate on a 5-point scale (1 = *not at all true*; 5 = *very true*) as to how true the statements were to their relationship with the immediate supervisor.

Perceived organizational support. A shortened version of perceived organizational support scale (SPOS) (Eisenberger, *et al.*, 1990) was adopted to assess the perceived organization support. It was a 9-item scale that measures one of the dimensions of support (i.e., organization support). We asked the participants to rate on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*) their degree of agreement with each statement.

Supervisor support. The same 9-item scale (SPOS) was used by replacing the word “company management” with “immediate superior” to measure supervisory support. We asked the participants to use the previous 7-point agreement-disagreement scale.

Gender match. The respondents were asked to report their own gender and that of their immediate supervisor. When both members of the dyad were of the same gender (male-male or female-female), they were considered matched dyads. On the other hand, dyads of opposite genders (male-female or female-male) were treated as mismatched. Thus those subordinates who were working with the leader of their own gender were dummy coded as 1, whereas those working with the leader of opposite gender were coded as 0.

Personal demographics. In addition, participants responded to several single-statement items on such demographic data as age, and tenure with the immediate supervisor.

IV. RESULTS

The analysis was conducted using AMOS 5.0 software (Arbuckle and Wothke, 1999). The model in Figure 1 was evaluated using the procedures recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). In Stage 1 of the process, the fit of a confirmatory factor analytic (CFA) model to the observed data was evaluated to determine if the items loaded on their respective scales, before testing the model in stage 2. Four measures were used to assess the fit of structural models: the goodness of fit index (GFI), the adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) (Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1984), comparative fit index (CFI) (Bentler, 1990), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) (Browne and Cudeck, 1993).

At the first stage, a single-factor model was compared to the hypothesized four-factor (LMX-Contribution, LMX-Affect, Supervisor Support, and Perceived Organizational Support) model (LMX-Contribution and LMX-Affect were treated as covarying as they are two dimensions of the same scale). For CFA at stage 1, as mentioned above, first a single-factor model was estimated. This model provided poorer fit to the data ($\chi^2 = 1919.525$, $df = 350$, $p < .001$; GFI = .500; AGFI = .420; CFI = .634; RMSEA = .150). Next, the hypothesized model was tested. Given the number of variables, the results of the CFA provided a reasonable model fit ($\chi^2 = 1308.292$, $df = 349$, $p < .001$; GFI = .670; AGFI = .616; CFI = .777; RMSEA = .117). Thus the four-factor model provided better fit indices ($\Delta\chi^2 = 611.233$ $\Delta df = 1$; $p < .001$). All items were significant predictors of their respective latent variables.

FORTHCOMING ARTICLE

After confirming the factor structures, we formed composite variables for each construct from their respective items and used those composites as single indicators of their respective factors. The reliability of the scales was assessed through Cronbach's coefficient alpha. The reliability coefficients, descriptive statistics, and intercorrelations of the exogenous and endogenous variables are contained in Table 1. Table 1 indicates that reliabilities of all the variables are acceptable for research purposes that ranged between .83 and .90 (Hair, *et al.*, 1998). Most of the correlations were in the expected direction.

Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations, Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha and Intercorrelations among Study Variables

Factor	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1.LMX Tenure	2.69	2.13	--				
2. LMX-PC	4.95	1.19	.10	(.90)			
3.LMX-AF	3.76	1.40	.18**	.55***	(.87)		
4. Supervisor Support	4.88	0.89	.12	.77***	.60***	(.83)	
5. Organizational Support	4.24	1.02	.12	.57***	.51***	.70 ***	(.84)
6. Gender Match	0.57	0.50	.15*	.02	.20**	.07	.20**

Notes:

N = 201; Cronbach's alpha is given in parentheses along the diagonal; * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; LMX-PC = Perceived contribution dimension of LMX, LMX-AF = Affect dimension of LMX. While assessing gender match, those subordinates working with leaders of their own gender were coded as 1 whereas those working with leaders of opposite gender were coded as 0.

Before testing the hypothesized model in stage 2, the significance of within- and between-group variations for contribution and affect dimensions of LMX was tested. To test our hypothesis 1 and establish the level at which LMX-contribution and LMX-Affect occur, we conducted a within-and-between-analysis (WABA) to assess sources of variance (Dansereau, *et al.*, 1984; Schriesheim, *et al.*, 2000; Yammarino and Markham, 1992). This test compares the within-groups eta with the between-groups eta and calculates an *E* ratio. For LMX-Contribution, squared between-groups eta correlation was .39 and squared within-groups eta correlation was .60; *E* ratio for perceived contribution was .79. For LMX-Affect, squared between-groups eta correlation was .46 and squared within-groups eta correlation was .52; *E* ratio for affect was .94. The analysis indicates neither a significant within-group nor a significant between-group variance for both dimensions of LMX. Thus our first hypothesis (H1) does not receive support from the data. The analysis, however, indicates that the leaders' relationships with their subordinates (either measured as perceived contribution or affect) cannot be averaged for a work-group either. The results support an individual level analysis.

Table 2: Results on Model Comparison

	χ^2	<i>df</i>	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf	<i>GFI</i>	<i>AGFI</i>	<i>CFI</i>	<i>RMSEA</i>
Hypothesized Model	66.151	9	–		.90	.76	.87	.18
Model 1 ^a	65.596	7	.555	2	.90	.70	.86	.20
Model 2 ^b	24.243	8	41.908	1	.96	.90	.96	.10
Model 3 ^c	59.339	8	6.812	2	.91	.76	.88	.18
Model 4 ^d	8.197	3	57.961	6	.97	.93	.96	.09
Model 5 ^e	16.158	6	49.993	3	.97	.92	.96	.09

Notes:

^aIn comparison to the hypothesized model, model 1 adds paths from LMX tenure to LMX-PC and from gender match to LMX-PC; ^bIn comparison to the hypothesized model, model 2 adds a path from supervisor support to organizational support; ^cIn comparison to the hypothesized model, model 3 adds a direct path from gender match to organizational support. ^dIn comparison to the hypothesized model, model 4 drops the various paths to LMX—PC and LMX—AF and adds direct paths from Gender Match, LMX Tenure and supervisor support to perceived organizational support. ^eIn comparison to the base model, model 5 drops the paths from LMX—PC and LMX-AF to organizational support.

In assessing the hypothesized model (see Figure 1) we relied primarily on the $\Delta\chi^2$ relative to the change in degrees of freedom. Although the χ^2 test is the standard statistic, it is usually not recommended with large data sets because it is practically impossible to fail to reject the null hypothesis (Little, 1997). To evaluate the model, we compared the fit of five alternate models to our hypothesized model, the results of which are presented in Table 2.

As shown in Table 2, Models 4 and 5 provided the best χ^2 and fit indices as compared to the hypothesized model. Figures 2 and 3 present the standardized path estimates for these two models.

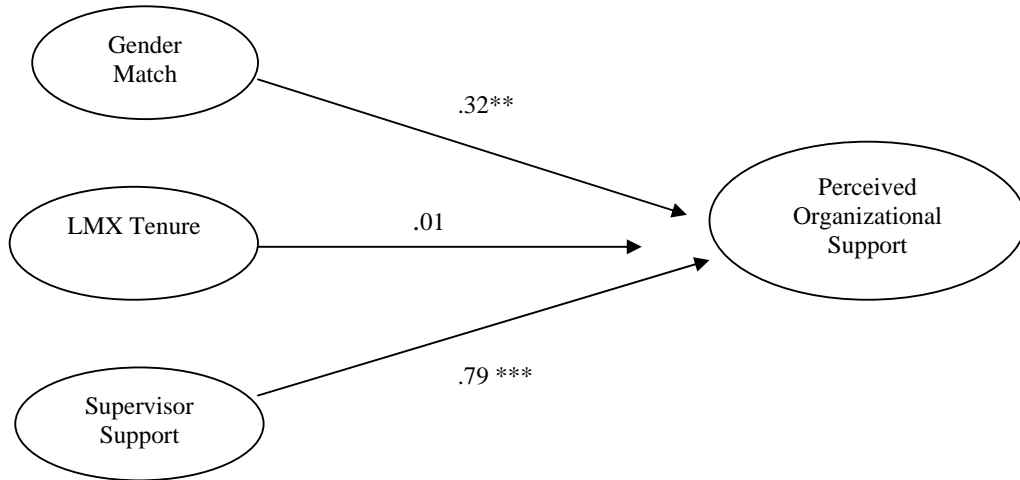


Figure 2: Structural path estimates of the best fitting model – model 4.

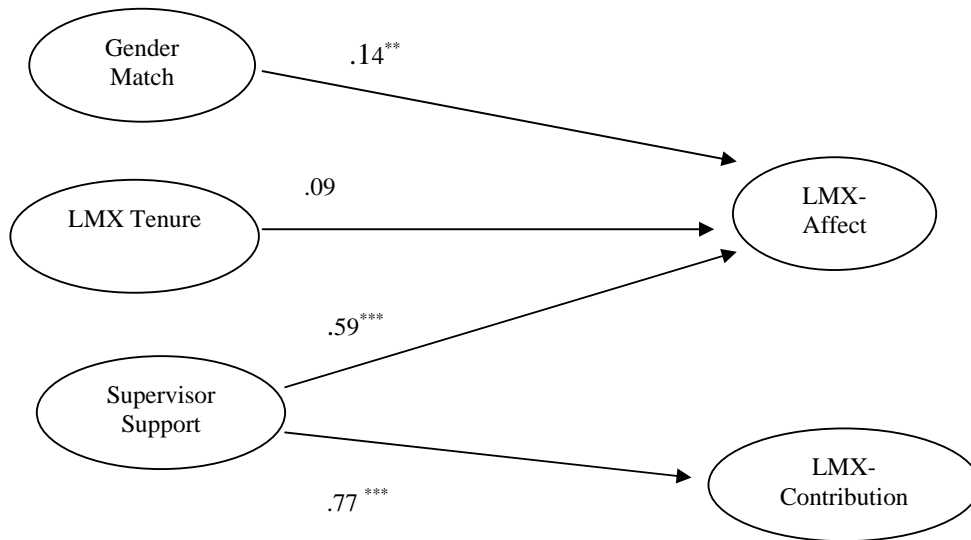


Figure 3: Structural path estimates of the best fitting models – model 5.

Providing support for hypothesis 2, gender match in the leader-member dyad was positively related to LMX-Affect. Hypothesis 3 however, did not find support as LMX-tenure was not significantly related to LMX-Affect in the model. Hypothesis 4 received support, as supervisor support was related to both affect and perceived contribution dimensions of LMX. Hypothesis 5 obtained partial support as only LMX-Affect was positively related to organizational support and perceived contribution was not.

FORTHCOMING ARTICLE

V. DISCUSSION

This study extends and supports LMX theory in some important ways. First, it establishes the level at which contribution and affect dimensions of LMX operate. Our hypothesis, which posits a significant within-group variation and a non-significant between-group variation, does not find full support from the data. Instead, our analysis reveals both within-group variations and between-group variations non-significant. The understanding of LMX has moved farther from traditional in-group/out-group conceptualization to a focus on dyadic and/or individualized leadership (Dansereau, *et al.*, 1995; Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). Our results provide evidence for a more person-focused (individualized) leadership. In an exchange theory framework, when a subordinate perceives high contribution and affect from the superior, the subordinate reciprocates it with personal responsibility, as well as contribution and affect. Further, the superior's relationship is based on the evaluation of individual needs, capabilities, and motivations of the subordinate. Since the relationship between the leader and the subordinate is individualized, they are independent of other subordinates working in the same work-group under the leader (Dansereau, *et al.*, 1995). Hence the results are individualized and not rooted in the context of a work-group. Further since it is a relational aspect of leadership where both the leader and the subordinate play an important role, it cannot be averaged for a work-group either. Our results support this notion as reflected in non-significant between-group variations.

Second, our findings support the assertion that gender similarity leads to higher affect in a leader-member dyad. Individuals tend to have higher affect (DeNisi and Williams, 1988) with others who are similar to their own selves. There could be several mechanisms that create this effect. Men and women are shown to use different sets of information to develop trust in others (Johnson and Swap, 1982); similarity probably allows two individuals with the same gender to anticipate each other and this behavioral predictability (Meglino, *et al.*, 1991) might increase the ease and quality of their interactions. Similar people use a common communication system (Schein, 1985) and interpret the events in similar ways. The study indicates that these mechanisms might operate in gender similarity and they are important for LMX. There are some researchers who believe that these mechanisms are more likely to operate in the initial stages of interaction (Dienesch and Liden, 1986); however, these mechanisms increase the likelihood of initiating and maintaining a relationship, which becomes more stable over time (Blau, 1964; Lewis and Weigert, 1985). Similarity thus provides opportunity for initiating an interaction and because of the ease of communication and similarity in perceptions it leads to better quality of exchange in a leader-member dyad (Tsui and O'Reilly, 1989).

Third, our results indicate that though LMX tenure independently correlates with LMX-Affect, it becomes non-significant in the model. It is possible that the duration of interaction with the leader by itself may not be significant; it may be operating through some other variables like support. Just as the length of interaction is not significant the quality of relationship in this duration is probably more important.

Finally, supervisor support turns out to be a strong causal factor of both the dimensions of LMX and organizational support. Support and guidance from the supervisor is important for the subordinates to define their roles, which subsequently results in the quality of exchange in a leader-member dyad.

Taken as a whole, our analysis indicates that it is the affect dimension of LMX that is significantly associated with organizational support. This is probably because the exchanges between the leader and member are interpersonal against the backdrop of formal organizations (Graen and Cashman, 1975). However, the results may be unique to the Malaysian context in which the study is conducted. Though Malaysian society is fairly heterogeneous, Malay, Chinese, and Malaysian Indians do not differ significantly on work-related values (Abdullah and Lim, 2001; Lim, 2001) and all three groups are high on Hofstede's (1980) value dimension of collectivism (Lim, 1998; Rashid, *et al.*, 1997) and have strong preference for interpersonal relationships (Ansari, *et al.*, 2004). A high focus on collectivism and interpersonal relationships might result in the increased importance of affect dimension in leader-member exchange and its relationship with organizational support and other subordinate outcomes. This is not to say that contribution dimension of LMX is unimportant.

The study is not without potential limitations. First, all the data for this study were collected from a single source, raising concerns of common method variance. However, we conducted a CFA comparing the one-factor model with the hypothesized four-factor model, and the four-factor model provided much-improved fit indices. Emergence of neat factors indicating their respective scales, and all the items loading on their respective factors, provide evidence against common method bias. Second, since the data were cross-sectional, direction of causality

FORTHCOMING ARTICLE

is assumed rather than tested. Thus, inclusion of longitudinal studies and other ratings of behavior and attitudes could provide support for current findings. Longitudinal studies are also likely to provide insight into how dyadic relationships grow over a period of time. Third, all the data were collected through self-reports, which may be limited. However, recent research suggests that self-reported data are not as limited as was previously believed and people often accurately perceive their social environment (Alper, *et al.*, 1998). Further, self-reports are also likely to be influenced by social desirability. Although this bias cannot be ruled out, some researches have shown that social desirability may not be a source of bias in measuring organizational perceptions (Moorman and Podsakoff, 1992; Spector, 1987). We have included only subordinate perceptions in the study. However, taking the perceptions of supervisors--especially on LMX--would enrich the understanding of level at which LMX operates and assess whether there is mutuality of perception within a dyad.

Data limitations aside, the study has some obvious theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the study has been successful at enriching the leadership literature by integrating various constructs into the LMX framework. It has discovered, while replicating previous research, some new set of antecedents of LMX. Relational demographic issues like gender match and LMX tenure have been incorporated in the LMX model. The two dimensional model of LMX finds further support from a new cultural background. Practically, it clearly points out the need for leadership training in enhancing the quality of leader-member relationship. The issue of gender match also is more likely to be salient in eastern cultures like Malaysia and need to be incorporated in the human resource management systems of these organizations. The quality of relationship is strongly recommended in Malaysian organizations—given the fact that such relationships are crucial in a relationship-oriented society like Malaysia (Ansari, *et al.*, 2004). There is indication in the past research that LMX has implications for all cultures but more so in the collectivist country (Graen, 2006).

REFERENCES

- Abdullah, A., & Lim, L. (2001). Cultural dimensions of Anglos, Australians and Malaysians. *Malaysian Management Review*, 36, 9-17.
- Adebayo, D.O., & Udegbe, I.B. (2004). Gender in the boss-subordinate relationship: A Nigerian study. *Journal of Organizational behavior*, 25, 515-525.
- Alper, S., Tjosvold, D., & Law, K.S. (1998). Interdependence and controversy in group decision making: Antecedents to effective self-managing teams. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 74, 33-52.
- Anderson, J.C., & Gerbing, D.W. (1988). Structural equation modeling in practice: A review and recommended two-step approach. *Psychological Bulletin*, 103, 411-423.
- Ang, C.H., Ansari, M.A., & Jantan, M. (2005). *Upward influence and work outcomes: The mediating role of LMX and organizational support*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management, Honolulu, Hawaii.
- Ansari, M.A., Ahmad, Z.A., & Aafaqi, R. (2004). Organizational leadership in the Malaysian context. In D. Tjosvold & K. Leung (Eds.), *Leading in high growth Asia: Managing relationship for teamwork and change* (pp. 109-138). Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co.
- Arbuckle, J.L., & Wothke, W. (1999). *Amos 4.0 User's Guide*. Chicago, IL: SmallWaters Co.
- Bales, R.F. (1958). Task roles and social roles in problem solving groups. In E.E. Maccoby, T.M. Newcomb & E.L. Hartley (Eds.), *Readings in social psychology* (pp. 437-447). New York: Holt & Rinehart.
- Bauer, T.N., & Green, S.G. (1996). Development of leader-member exchange: A longitudinal test. *Academy of Management Journal*, 39, 1538-1567.
- Bentler, P.M. (1990). Comparative fit indexes in structural models. *Psychological Bulletin*, 107, 238-246.

FORTHCOMING ARTICLE

- Berscheid, E., & Walster, E. (1969). *Interpersonal Attraction*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Bhal, K.T., & Ansari, M.A. (1996). Measuring quality of interaction between leaders and members. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 26, 945-972.
- Bhal, K.T., & Ansari, M.A. (2000). *Managing Dyadic Interactions in Organizational Leadership*. New Delhi: Sage.
- Blake, R.R., & Mouton, J.S. (1964). *The Managerial Grid*. Houston, TX: Gulf.
- Blau, P.M. (1964). *Exchange and Power in Social Life*. New York: Wiley.
- Browne, M.W., & Cudeck, R. (1993). Alternative ways of assessing model fit. In K.A. Bollen & J.A. Long (Eds.), *Testing structural equation models* (pp. 136-162). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Busch, P., & Wilson, D.T. (1976). An experimental analysis of a salesman's expert and referent bases of social power in a buyer-seller dyad. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 13, 3-11.
- Byrne, D. (1971). *The Attraction Paradigm*. New York: Academic Press.
- Dansereau, F., & Yammarino, F.J. (1998). *Leadership: The Multiple Level Approaches (Part A & B)*. Stamford, CT: JAI Press.
- Dansereau, F., Alutto, J.A., & Yammarino, F.J. (1984). *Theory Testing in Organizational Behavior: The Variant Approach*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Dansereau, F., Graen, G., & Haga, W.J. (1975). A vertical dyad linkage approach to leadership within formal organizations: A longitudinal investigation of the role making process. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 13, 46-78.
- Dansereau, F., Yammarino, F.J., & Markham, S.E. (1995). Leadership: The multiple level approaches. *Leadership Quarterly*, 62, 97-109.
- Dansereau, F., Yammarino, F.J., Markham, S.E., Alutto, J.A., Newman, J., Dumas, M., Nachman, S.A., Naughton, T.J., Kim, K., Al-Kelabi, S.A., Lee, S., & Keller, T. (1995). Individualized leadership: A new multiple-level approach. *Leadership Quarterly*, 6, 413-450.
- DeNisi, A.S., & Williams, K.J. (1988). Cognitive approaches to performance appraisal. In G.R. Ferris & K.M. Rowland (Eds.), *Research in personnel and human resources management* (Vol. 6, pp. 109-155). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Dienesch, R.D., & Liden, R.C. (1986). Leader-member exchange model of leadership: A critique and further development. *Academy of Management Review*, 11, 618-634.
- Duchon, D., Green, S.G., & Taber, T.D. (1986). Vertical dyad linkage: A longitudinal assessment of antecedents, measures and consequences. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 71, 56-60.
- Eisenberger, R., Fasolo, P., & Davis-LaMastro, V. (1990). Perceived organizational support and employee diligence, commitment, and innovation. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 75, 51-59.
- Eisenberger, R., Huntington, R., Hutchison, S., & Sowa, D. (1986). Perceived organizational support. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 71, 500-507.
- Eisenberger, R., Stinglhamer, F., Vandenberghe, C., Sucharski, I.L., & Rhoades, L. (2002). Perceived supervisor support: Contributions to perceived organizational support and employee retention. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87, 565-573.

FORTHCOMING ARTICLE

- Fleishman, E.A., & Harris, E.F. (1962). Patterns of leadership behavior related to employee grievances and turnover. *Personal Psychology, 15*, 43-56.
- Foo, L.H., & Ansari, M.A. (2004). *Affect and organizational citizenship behavior: The impact of leader-member exchange*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Industrial & Organizational Psychology, Los Angeles, California.
- Gerstner, C.R., & Day, D.V. (1997). Meta-analytic review of leader-member exchange theory: Correlates and construct issues. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 82*, 827-844.
- Gomez, C.A., & Rosen, B. (2001). The leader-member exchange as a link between managerial trust and employee empowerment. *Group and Organization Management, 26*, 53-69.
- Gouldner, A.W. (1960). The norm of reciprocity: A preliminary statement. *American Sociological Review, 25*, 161-177.
- Graen, G., & Cashman, J.F. (1975). A role making model in formal organizations: A developmental approach. In J.G. Hunt & L.L. Larson (Eds.), *Leadership frontiers* (pp. 32-58). Kent, OH: Kent State Press.
- Graen, G. (1976). Role making processes within complex organizations. In M.D. Dunnette (Ed.), *Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology* (pp. 1201-1245). Chicago, IL: Rand McNally.
- Graen, G. (2006). In the eye of the beholder: Cross-cultural lesson in leadership from project GLOBE. *Academy of Management Perspectives, 20*, 1-8.
- Graen, G.B., Liden, R.C., & Hoel, W. (1982). Role of leadership in the employee withdrawal process. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 67*, 868-872.
- Graen, G.B., & Scandura, T.A. (1987). Toward a psychology of dyadic organizing. *Research in Organizational Behavior, 9*, 175-208.
- Graen, G.B., & Schiemann, W. (1978). Leader-member agreement: A vertical dyad linkage approach. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 63*, 206-212.
- Graen, G.B., & Uhl-Bien, M. (1995). Relationship-based approach to leadership: Development of leader-member exchange (LMX) theory of leadership over 25 years: Applying a multi-level multi-domain perspective. *Leadership Quarterly, 6*, 219-247.
- Green, S.G., Anderson, S.E., & Shivers, S.L. (1996). Demographic and organizational influences on leader-member exchange and related work attitudes. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 66*, 203-214.
- Greene, C.N. (1972). Relationships among role accuracy, compliance, performance evaluation, and satisfaction within managerial dyads. *Academy of Management Journal, 15*, 205-215.
- Hackett, R.D., & Lapierre, L.M. (2004). *A meta-analytic explanation of the relationship between LMX and OCB*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Academy of Management, New Orleans, Louisiana.
- Hair, J.F., Anderson, R.E., Tatham, R.L., & Black, W.C. (1998). *Multivariate Data Analysis*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Halpin, A.W., & Winer, B.J. (1957). A factorial study of the leader behavior descriptions. In R.M. Stogdill & A.E. Coons (Eds.), *Leader behavior: Its description and measurement*. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University, Bureau of Business Research.
- Harrison, A.A. (1976). *Individuals and Groups: Understanding Social Behavior*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

FORTHCOMING ARTICLE

- Hofstede, G. (1980). *Cultures' Consequences*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Hui, C., Law, K.S., & Chin, Z.X. (1999). A structural equation model of the effects of negative affectivity, leader-member exchange, and perceived job mobility on in-role and extra-role performance: A Chinese case. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 77, 3-21.
- Jacobs, T.O. (1971). *Leadership and Exchange in Formal Organizations*. Alexandria, VA: HumRRO.
- Johnson, C., & Swap, W.C. (1982). Measurement of specific interpersonal trust: Construction and validation of a scale to assess trust in a specific other. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 43, 1306-1317.
- Jöreskog, K.G., & Sörbom, D. (1984). *LISREL-VI User's Guide*. Mooresville, IN: Scientific Software.
- Judge, T.A., & Ferris, G.R. (1993). Social context of performance evaluation decisions. *Academy of Management Journal*, 36, 80-105.
- Katz, D., & Kahn, R.L. (1978). *The Social Psychology of Organizations*. New York: Wiley.
- Kee, D.M.H., Ansari, M.A., & Aafaqi, R. (2004). Fairness of human resource management practices: Leader-member exchange, and organizational commitment. *Asian Academy of Management Journal*, 9, 99-120.
- Kottke, J.L., & Sharafinski, C.E. (1988). Measuring perceived supervisory and organizational support. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 48, 1075-1079.
- Lewis, J. D., & Weigert, A. (1985). Trust as social reality. *Social Forces*, 63, 967-985.
- Liden, R.C., Wayne, S.J., & Stilwell, D. (1993). A longitudinal study on the early development of leader-member exchanges. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 78, 662-674.
- Liden, R.C. & Maslyn, J.M. (1998). Multidimensionality of leader-member exchange: An empirical assessment through scale development. *Journal of Management*, 24, 43-73.
- Lim, L. (1998). Cultural attributes of Malays and Malaysian Chinese: Implications for research and practice. *Malaysian Management Review*, 33, 81-88.
- Lim, L. (2001). Work-related values of Malays and Chinese Malaysians. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 1, 229-246.
- Little, T. (1997). Mean and covariance structures (MACS) analyses of cross-cultural data: Practical and theoretical issues. *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, 32, 53-76.
- Maslyn, J., & Uhl-Bien, M. (2001). Leader-member exchange and its dimensions: Effects of self-effort and other's effort on relationship quality. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86, 697-708.
- Medin, D.L., Goldstone, R.L., & Gentner, D. (1993). Respects for similarity. *Psychological Review*, 100, 254-278.
- Meglino, B.M., Ravlin, E.C., & Adkins, C.L. (1991). Value congruence and satisfaction with a leader: An examination of the role of interaction. *Human Relations*, 44, 481-495.
- Moorman, R.H., & Podsakoff, P.M. (1992). A meta-analytic review and empirical test of the potential confounding effects of social desirability response sets in organizational behavior research. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 65, 131-149.
- Mumford, M.D., Dansereau, F., & Yammarino, F.J. (2000). Followers' motivation and levels of analysis: The case of individualized leadership. *Leadership Quarterly*, 11, 313-340.

FORTHCOMING ARTICLE

- Paglis, L.L., & Green, S.G. (2002). Both sides now: Supervisor and subordinate perspectives on relationship quality. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 32*, 250-276.
- Quiñones, M.A., Ford, J.K., & Teachout, M.S. (1995). The relationship between work experience and job performance: A conceptual and meta-analytic review. *Personnel Psychology, 48*, 887-910.
- Rashid, M.Z.A., Anantharaman, R.N., & Raveendran, J. (1997). Corporate cultures and work values in dominant ethnic organizations in Malaysia. *Journal of Transnational Management Development, 2*, 51-65.
- Scandura, T.A. (1999). Rethinking leader-member exchange: An organizational justice perspective. *Leadership Quarterly, 10*, 25-41.
- Schein, E.H. (1985). *Organizational Culture and Leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Schneider, B. (1987). The people make the place. *Personnel Psychology, 40*, 437-453.
- Schriesheim, C.A., Castro, S.L., & Yammarino, F.J. (2000). Investigating contingencies: An examination of the impact of span of supervision and upward controllability on leader-member exchange using traditional and multivariate within- and between-entities analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 85*, 659-677.
- Schriesheim, C.A., Cogliser, C.C., & Neider, L.L. (1995). Is it "trustworthy"? A multiple-levels-of-analysis reexamination of an Ohio State leadership study, with implications for future research. *Leadership Quarterly, 6*, 111-145.
- Schurr, P.H., & Ozanne, J.L. (1985). Influences on exchange processes: Buyers' preconceptions of a seller's trustworthiness and bargaining toughness. *Journal of Consumer Research, 11*, 937-953.
- Schyns, B., Paul, T., Mohr, G., & Blank, H. (2005). Comparing antecedents and consequences of leader-member exchange in a German working context to findings in the US. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 14*, 1-22.
- Settoon, R.P., Bennett, N., & Liden, R.C. (1996). Social exchange in organizations: Perceived organizational support, leader-member exchange and employee reciprocity. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 81*, 219-227.
- Spector, P.E. (1987). Method variance as an artifact in self reported affect and perceptions at work: Myth or significant problem. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 72*, 438-443.
- Tesluk, P.E., & Jacobs, R.R. (1998). Toward an integrated model of work experience. *Personnel Psychology, 51*, 321-355.
- Tsui, A.S., & O'Reilly, C.A. (1989). Beyond simple demographic effects: The importance of relational demography in superior-subordinate dyads. *Academy of Management Journal, 32*, 402-423.
- Vecchio, R.P., & Gobdel, B.C. (1984). The vertical dyad linkage model of leadership: Problems and prospects. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 34*, 5-20.
- Wakabayashi, M., & Graen, G.B. (1984). The Japanese career progress study: A 7-year follow-up. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 69*, 603-614.
- Wayne, S.J., Shore, L.M., & Liden, R.C. (1997). Perceived organizational support and leader-member exchange. *Academy of Management Journal, 40*, 82-111.
- Wexley, K.N., Alexander, R.A., Greenawalt, J.P., & Couch, M.A. (1980). Attitudinal congruence and similarity as related to interpersonal evaluations in manager-subordinate dyads. *Academy of Management Journal, 23*, 320-330.

FORTHCOMING ARTICLE

Yammarino, F.J., & Markham, S.E. (1992). On the application of within and between analysis: Are absence and affect really group-based phenomena? *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 77, 168-176.