

ABSTRACT

Advancing Leader-Member Exchange utilising the 4Cs relationship model

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Keywords: Reciprocity, Psychological constructs, Dyadic partners, Interdependence, LMX, 4Cs Model

The leader-staff member relationship in a workplace setting is fundamental to optimising organisational performance, reducing turnover intentions and increasing both parties' satisfaction, motivation and psychological well-being (Martin et al., 2010). The conceptualisation of the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory and associated self-reporting tools represent the most prevalent approach to understanding leader-member relationships; yet has attracted much scrutiny regarding theory content (Gottfredson et al., 2020). Although researchers have suggested a multitude of constructs, many believe the leader-member relationship consists of Mutual Liking, Trust, Respect and Obligation. This study draws upon the perspective of ten participants from an organisational workplace to explore the structure and content that underpin LMX Theory in the twenty-first century, in order to better understand interpersonal relationships between leaders and members and offer an alternative approach to redefining the theoretical content of the concept. This qualitative study utilised semi-structured interviews adopting deductive and inductive content analysis to augment pre-existing theory and extend current knowledge. Analysis revealed that the 4Cs relationship model consisting of the emotions of Closeness, the thoughts of Commitment, Complementarity behaviours and Co-orientation more appropriately captures the social exchanges' reciprocal nature between a leader and a member. The 4Cs relationship model is a highly validated and reliable relationship model designed for the coach-athlete relationship in a sports context. Mutual Liking and Obligation may no longer be appropriate to considering leader-member relationships, and 24 dimensions, including Trust, Respect, Integrity, Honesty, Openness, and Leading/ Following by Example, can be considered essential elements of the relationship. The findings suggest that the LMX structure is limited and may not be suitable in the modern workplace. The findings demonstrate that the nature of the dyadic relationship between a leader and a member can be more effectively observed using a modified 4Cs model to capture a greater breadth and depth of social exchanges.

References

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