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A Dyadic Approach to Examining the Emotional Intelligence–Work Outcome Relationship: The Mediating Role of LMX

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ABSTRACT

Adopting a dyadic approach, we examine the processes through which leader–member exchange (LMX) mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and work outcomes. Fitting the data from a survey of 204 unique pairs of leaders and followers to an actor–partner independence model (APIM), we found that follower EI positively affects LMX as perceived by both dyad members, whereas leader EI is positively related to only leader ratings of LMX. Using polynomial regression, we also found that EI similarity between the leader and follower has a positive relationship with both leader and follower ratings of LMX. Follower LMX partially mediates the relationship between follower EI and attitudinal outcomes (i.e., organizational commitment and job satisfaction) and organizational citizenship behavior. Leader LMX fully mediates the effect of both leader and follower EI on evaluations of job performance. Implications and limitations are discussed.

KEYWORDS



emotional intelligence;
leader–member exchange;
job satisfaction;
organizational commitment;
organizational citizenship
behavior

Introduction

Leader–member exchange (LMX) theory is a dyadic and relational approach toward leadership that evolved from an earlier model called the vertical-dyad linkage (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975). A principle tenet of LMX theory is that differential relationships with each subordinate are developed by leaders and the quality of this relationship affects work outcomes (Gerstner & Day, 1997; Liden, Sparrowe, & Wayne, 1997). In contrast to leader-based approaches (e.g., leader’s traits, behaviors, and situational contingencies), LMX theory is relationship based and emphasizes that mutual trust, respect, and obligation are at the basis of leadership making (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). LMX has developed into a burgeoning area of scientific inquiry and continues to be an area of focus in organizational behavior and leadership research. As a result, a large body of empirical research and reviews has been collected (Epitropaki & Martin, 2005; Yukl, 2006), and LMX has been found to be related to important work outcomes, such as job satisfaction, work-related well-being, organizational commitment, and job performance (Dulebohn, Bommer, Liden, Brouer, & Ferris, 2012). The majority of LMX research has focused on its consequences (Erdogan & Liden, 2002); however, more recently scholars are beginning to examine its antecedents.

The antecedents to LMX that have been examined thus far can be separated into three broad categories: follower characteristics (e.g., confidence, affectivity, personality), leader characteristics (e.g., leader behavior, expectations of followers, personality), and interpersonal relationship variables (e.g., perceived similarity, trust, affect or liking; Dulebohn et al., 2012). Though leadership is an emotion-laden process (Antonakis, Ashkanasy, & Dasborough, 2009) and emotions play an active role in the formation and continued development of the leader–follower relationship, emotional intelligence (EI) has only recently received attention in the LMX literature (e.g., Clarke & Mahadi, 2017; Huang, Chan, Lam, & Nan, 2010; Ordun & Acar, 2014; Sears & Holmval, 2010).

Salovey and Mayer (1989) defined EI as “the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions” (p. 189). It has been suggested that some baseline level of EI is necessary for developing high-quality relationships (Kram & Cherniss, 2001) and that EI competencies such as self-awareness and relationship management can play an instrumental role in fostering and maintaining high-quality relationships (Smith, 2006). In the context of a

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leader–follower relationship, awareness and management of one's own and others' emotions enhance the interpersonal interactions upon which the evaluation of LMX quality is formed (Smith, 2006). Recent research examining how EI affects LMX and works through LMX to influence work outcomes shows promise (Chen, Lam, & Zhong, 2012; Clarke & Mahadi, 2017; Jordan & Troth, 2011), but more work is needed to investigate the impact on both parties in leader–follower relationships.

The purpose of this study is to extend LMX theory by testing a model that includes measures of both leader and follower EI, leader and follower perceptions of LMX, and various work outcomes, including job satisfaction, commitment, job performance, and organizational citizenship behavior. Grounding the present research in social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), we adopt a dyadic approach to investigate how EI directly affects followers' and leaders' perceptions of relationship quality and the role that LMX has as a mediator between EI and work outcomes. Blau (1964) contends that social exchange involves a series of interdependent interactions from which obligations are engendered. As the development of high-quality relationships involves an affective component vis-à-vis continuous emotional support and identification (Tse, Huang, & Lam, 2013), we posit that leaders with higher levels of EI will be more responsive to the emotional demands of followers, thus creating favorable perceptions of LMX and subsequently eliciting increased reciprocal obligations (e.g., positive attitudes toward the organization, positive work-related behaviors). Similarly, by empathizing and exhibiting concern for their leaders, followers with greater levels of EI will positively impact their leaders' perceptions of LMX and therefore receive more favorable reviews. Providing visibility to the mechanism by which the level of EI in the leader and follower influences behavioral and attitudinal work outcomes through LMX quality will enhance our understanding of the affective component of leadership.

Theory and hypotheses

EI and LMX quality

Rather than generalizing leadership style across multiple followers, LMX theory focuses on the different levels of exchange quality that exist between the leader and their followers. Subordinates in high-quality LMX relationships (i.e., in-group) are favored by the leader, are given greater autonomy and responsibility, garner better support, and tend to perform above and beyond their contractual requirements (Martin, Thomas, Charles,

Epitropaki, & McNamara, 2005). Subordinates in low-quality LMX relationships (i.e., out-group) tend to be disfavored by the leaders, enjoy less support and fewer resources, and are less psychologically involved in their work (Martin et al., 2005). Low-quality LMX relationships are characterized by economic exchange (Blau, 1964), while high-quality relationships are more social in nature, engendering feelings of mutual obligation and reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960).

LMX depends upon three primary factors: (a) the characteristics (e.g., personality, skills and ability) of the individuals in the relationship (Phillips & Bedeian, 1994), (b) the expectations of these individuals, which are based on experience and implicit “schemas” (Lord & Maher, 1991), and (c) the assessments and reactions to the exchange as it is occurring (Blau, 1964; Homans, 1961; Uhl-Bien, Graen, & Scandura, 2000). With respect to the characteristics of the individuals involved in the exchange, there has been a considerable amount of research focused on leadership styles (e.g., contingent reward, transformational) and personality traits (e.g., agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, locus of control, and affectivity; Dulebohn et al., 2012). Indeed, Dulebohn and colleagues' meta-analysis of the literature highlighted a number of personality traits that are predictive of LMX. Emotional intelligence is another individual characteristic, distinct from personality traits, that is an important predictor of workplace outcomes such as job performance (Law, Wong, & Song, 2004) and LMX (Clarke & Mahadi, 2017). For example, Smith (2006) proposed EI as a potential predictor of high-quality LMX relationships, although Smith did not provide a theoretical basis for why this relationship exists. The ability to understand and manage the moods and emotions of the self and those of others helps leaders to be more effective in their interpersonal exchanges (George, 2000). Successful interactions, particularly those that require instilling motivation or eliciting cooperation (as in a leader–follower relationship), demand an ability to regulate one's own emotions (Cunningham, 1988). Therefore, the ability to use these emotions for self-encouragement has internal motivational benefits, as well as positive relational effects with others. For example, when one displays the appropriate emotions for the circumstances at hand, this provides stability and continuity for the follower (Smith, 2006). However, the mechanism that underpins the relationship between EI and LMX is unclear.

One theoretical basis for expecting a positive relationship between EI and self-reported evaluations of LMX is Swann's (1987) self-verification theory. Self-

verification theory suggests that individuals tend to prefer stable self-conceptions. Further, they tend to readily receive information that confirms their self-concept and resist information that disconfirms their self-concept (Swann, 1987). People reflectively have a particular perception of themselves and prefer to maintain continuity of this self-conception over time. Feedback that might disrupt or jeopardize this self-conception is filtered and disregarded (Swann, 1987). To keep one's self-concept intact, and in an effort to acquire self-confirmatory feedback, individuals high in EI will likely avail themselves more emotionally to their social relationships, both personally and professionally, affecting evaluations of LMX quality. LMX quality, which includes the ability to provide emotional support and connection, thus serves as an indication of one's EI. As a result, individuals who are high in EI will evaluate LMX quality more favorably due to the need to self-verify. Individuals low in EI will evaluate LMX quality more poorly in an effort to maintain consistency with a self-concept that includes limitations in the ability to empathize and provide emotional connections. Consistent with the predictions of self-verification theory, there has been some preliminary evidence to support the relationship between an individual's EI and his or her ratings of LMX (Karim, 2008). Therefore, we propose that both follower and leader EI influence the self-perceptions of LMX quality as follows:

Hypothesis 1a. Follower EI is positively related to follower perceptions of LMX quality.

Hypothesis 1b. Leader EI is positively related to leader perceptions of LMX quality.

Applying the tenets of self-verification theory, we suggest that the EI of the leader or follower will influence the other member's evaluations of LMX quality. In addition to taking in and processing information in such a way as to confirm their own self-conception, individuals have a need for other people to see them as "they see themselves" (Swann, 1987). To obtain this verification from others, individuals execute strategies vis-à-vis interaction and communication (e.g., displaying the appropriate cues) to bring others' appraisals into conformance with their own self-view (Swann, 1987). An individual possessing high EI would signal EI competence to others in a way that would elicit feedback confirming this self-conception. For example, a leader high in EI may be more inclined to listen to concerns, empathize, and demonstrate gestures of affection (Liden & Maslyn, 1998; Liden et al., 1997) than a low-EI leader in an effort toward self-

verification. Similarly, a follower high in EI may be more responsive to the needs, feelings, and concerns of the leader than a follower low in EI for the same reasons. Thus, we include two additional hypotheses focusing on the effects of EI on the others' perceptions of LMX:

Hypothesis 1c. Follower EI is positively related to leader perceptions of LMX quality.

Hypothesis 1d. Leader EI is positively related to followers' perceptions of LMX quality.

LMX as a mediator between EI and outcomes

LMX theory suggests that investment by both the leader and follower in their relationship positively influences their perceptions of one another, and this has mutual benefits in terms of work outcomes (Cogliser, Schriesheim, Scandura, & Gardner, 2009). In an attempt to more fully understand the underlying processes that lead to positive work outcomes, we investigate the antecedents to and consequences of LMX together, treating LMX as a mediator that links EI to affective commitment, job satisfaction, job performance, and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Based on social exchange theory (SET) (Blau, 1964), the act of social exchange creates "favors that create diffuse future obligations, not precisely specified ones, and the nature of the return cannot be bargained about but must be left to the discretion of the one who makes it" (p. 93). These "unspecified obligations" derived from social exchange are unlike specified obligations, which are a function of economic exchange and generally agreed upon in advance (Blau, 1964). In the context of EI and LMX, a leader or follower may be motivated to reciprocate due to the increased emotional support, compassion, and understanding that are received from the other. From the followers' perspective, these unspecified obligations may take the form of holding positive work-related attitudes (i.e., job satisfaction, affective commitment) and engaging in positive work behaviors (i.e., OCB). From the leaders' perspective, these unspecified obligations may result in greater support and more favorable evaluations for the follower.

Cross-dyad relationships

Though the preceding sections make a strong case for a prediction of the within-person relationship from EI → LMX → Outcomes, we also predict there will be cross-dyad effects of these constructs. In other words, in examining the mediating effect of LMX between EI and affective commitment, job satisfaction, OCB, and

job performance, we include EI and LMX measures from both the leader and follower so that we can evaluate all the possible paths (i.e., follower EI → follower LMX → outcome, leader EI → follower LMX → outcome, follower EI → leader LMX → outcome, leader EI → leader LMX → outcome) through which EI may indirectly influence these work outcomes. While previous studies have shown promising support of LMX as a mediator between EI and positive workplace outcomes (e.g., Chen et al., 2012; Clarke & Mahadi, 2017; Jordan & Troth, 2011), few studies have fully examined all possible paths of impact between leader and follower. Hence, we attempt to build from the richness of LMX theory to investigate these cross-dyadic relationships to better understand the boundaries of EI and LMX theory in predicting positive workplace outcomes for leaders and followers.

Recent work on interpersonal emotion management (IEM)—strategies focused on managing others' emotional responses—has found that EI is positively associated with the IEM strategies of situation modification, attentional deployment, and cognitive change, and negatively associated with the IEM strategy of modifying the emotional response, which involves an attempt to encourage suppression of the emotional response (Little, Klumper, Nelson, & Gooty, 2012). Furthermore, research finds that leaders positively influence LMX by using problem-focused IEM strategies (situation modification and cognitive change) to address situational and perceived causes of negative emotions in followers (Little, Gooty, & Williams, 2016). Combined, this research suggests that leaders high in EI are more likely to engage in appropriate IEM strategies to positively influence followers' perceptions of LMX, and this can in turn positively influence work outcomes such as OCBs and job satisfaction (Little et al., 2016). Additionally, we suggest this work extends to that of the follower, as followers higher in EI are going to be more likely to invest more into their relationship with the leader and behave appropriately to positively influence LMX, and in turn work outcomes.

Since previous studies have found a direct relationship between EI and various work outcomes (Nikolaou & Tsaousis, 2002; Sy, Tram, & O'Hara, 2006; Wong & Law, 2002), we include direct effects in our model and hypothesize that EI leads to positive work outcomes through favorable evaluations of LMX by both follower and leader LMX. Thus, we propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2a. Follower EI will lead to positive work outcomes (affective commitment, job satisfaction, OCB,

and job performance) through favorable evaluation of LMX by the follower.

Hypothesis 2b. Leader EI will lead to positive work outcomes (affective commitment, job satisfaction, OCB, and job performance) through favorable evaluation of LMX by the follower.

Hypothesis 2c. Follower EI will lead to positive work outcomes (affective commitment, job satisfaction, OCB, and job performance) through favorable evaluation of LMX by the leader.

Hypothesis 2d. Leader EI will lead to positive work outcomes (affective commitment, job satisfaction, OCB, and job performance) through favorable evaluation of LMX by the leader.

EI similarity and LMX

Examining the EI of the leader and follower would be incomplete without also examining how the characteristic similarity in EI between each dyad member affects perceptions of LMX quality. For example, when a subordinate has characteristics (e.g., values, attitudes, personality) that are compatible with the leader, the leader may evaluate the relationship more favorably (Yukl, 2006). Similarly, a subordinate may perceive a relationship with a leader who shares common values and attributes more positively. According to similarity-attraction theory (Byrne, 1971), greater similarity between two individuals will yield increased interpersonal affect, attraction, and harmony due to its self-validating properties. As a result, individuals will seek more frequent interactions with similar parties and view these interactions as being more positive (Byrne, 1971).

Extending similarity-attraction theory to the context of EI and LMX, we theorize that EI similarity between a leader and follower may affect evaluations of LMX quality. Similarity in the EI levels of both the leader and follower will result in comparable expectations of empathy, emotional support, and psychological involvement in the relationship. Each party having similar EI capacities would expect no more or no less from the other with respect to emotional awareness and regulation. Discrepancies in the EI level between leader and follower, however, can result in misunderstandings, frustration, and miscommunication, as one party may have higher expectations than the other with respect to emotional responsiveness and reciprocity. In one of the few EI–LMX studies, Sears and Holmval (2010) surveyed 37

dyads (11 supervisors and 37 subordinates) to examine the effect of EI similarity and found EI similarity was positively correlated with follower perceptions of LMX; however, leader perceptions were not measured in this study. We propose that EI similarity will be positively related to follower perceptions of LMX (hypothesis 3a) and further hypothesize that due to the influence of similarity-attraction effects on the leader, EI similarity will favorably impact leader perceptions of LMX (hypothesis 3b):

Hypothesis 3a. EI similarity is positively related to follower perceptions of LMX quality.

Hypothesis 3b. EI similarity is positively related to leader perceptions of LMX quality.

Method

Sample and procedure

The sample for this study consisted of military officers serving in the South Korean Army. A survey was administered to 250 company commanders, who served in military units throughout South Korea, and a platoon leader who directly reported to each company commander. Company commanders had an average of three subordinate platoon leaders, from which the researcher randomly selected one to participate in the study. Questionnaires were primarily administered in person, or via postal mail in cases where officers were in remote locations. To ensure confidentiality, all surveys were completed anonymously and enclosed in sealed envelopes. After discarding incomplete survey responses and responses that were only received from one member of each dyad, 204 leader-follower dyads remained for our analyses. All dyads used in our study were unique in that no leader had multiple matched followers. In our sample of 204 dyads, only one leader and follower (.05%) were female. With respect to age, 59% of the followers were between the ages of 20 to 25 years (all were under 30) and 66% of the leaders were in the 26 to 30 age bracket, 34% were 31 to 35, and one reported being 36 to 40. Followers were generally with the Army less than 6 years (96%), whereas 34% of leaders reported 1 to 5 years, 63% reported 6 to 10 years, and 3% indicated being with the Army more than 10 years. For our leader-follower dyads, 30% reported the duration of their relationship was less than 7 months, 52% stated 7–12 months, and 18% indicated more than 12 months. Since our sample was comprised of soldiers in the South Korean army, it was primarily composed of young men. In the

Limitations and Future Research section we discuss unique aspects of the South Korean culture that may influence our study's findings.

Measures

Since the sample was Korean military officers, the survey items for all measures were independently translated into Korean by two bilingual researchers. Any items for which there were discrepant translations were resolved by a third party. With the exception of EI, which utilized a 7-point scale, all measures consisted of a 5-point Likert-type scale. Because our study is dyadic in nature, we developed two different questionnaires—one for the leaders and one for the followers. Emotional intelligence and perceptions of LMX were included on both the leader and follower questionnaires. Affective commitment, job satisfaction, and OCB were on the follower questionnaire. The job performance of the follower was measured from the leader's perspective on the leader questionnaire.

Emotional intelligence

We used the 16-item Wong and Law (2002) scale to measure EI of both the leader and follower. The self-report scale measures four dimensions of EI, including self-emotion appraisal (SEA), others' emotion appraisal (OEA), use of emotion (UOE), and regulation of emotion (ROE). Sample items include "I have a good understanding of my own emotions" (SEA), "I always know my friends' emotions from their behavior" (OEA), "I always set goals for myself and then try my best to achieve them (UOE), and "I am quite capable of controlling my own emotions" (ROE). All items were anchored to a Likert-type scale from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (7). Reliabilities for leader and follower EI were .88 and .89, respectively.

LMX

We used the LMX-7 scale (Scandura & Graen, 1984), modified by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995), to measure both follower and leader perceptions of LMX. For the follower questionnaires, we asked followers to consider the relationship with their assigned leader. For the leader questionnaires, we asked leaders to consider only the relationship with the specific follower responding to our study. Using the recommendation of Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995), we modified the wording of the items in the leader questionnaires to measure the leaders' perceptions of LMX. Sample items for follower LMX include "How well does your leader understand your job problems and needs?" and "How would you

characterize your working relationship with your leader?” Reliabilities for leader and follower LMX were .89 and .91, respectively.

Affective commitment

The tripartite conceptualization of organizational commitment includes three forms: affective, normative, and continuance. Meyer and Allen (1997) define affective commitment as an employee’s emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organization; normative commitment as pressure on an employee to remain with an organization to do the process of socialization; and continuance commitment as commitment resulting from the perceived costs related to leaving the organization. Since the sample in our study is Korean military officers, and these officers are expected to serve for a certain period of time (they cannot leave even if they so desire), we focus on affective commitment. To measure the affective commitment of the follower, we included six items from the Meyer and Allen (1997) organizational commitment scale on the follower survey. Sample items include “I really feel as if this organization’s problems are my own” and “This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.” All items were anchored to a Likert-type scale from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). We reworded three items in the scale that were originally reverse coded to make interpretation of these items clearer. Reliability for the scale was .84.

Job satisfaction

Ten items from the Brayfield and Rothe (1951) index of job satisfaction were included on the follower survey to measure job satisfaction. The six unselected items from the index were less appropriate for a military context. Some sample items include “Most days I am enthusiastic about my work” and “My job is usually interesting enough to keep me from getting bored.” All items were anchored to a Likert-type scale from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). Reliability for the scale was .86.

Job performance

To measure job performance of the follower from the leader’s perspective, we used five items adopted from the basic task performance dimension of the Tsui, Pearce, Porter, and Tripoli (1997) scale. Task performance consists of activities that are likely to appear in formal job descriptions and that contribute to the organization’s technical core (Motowidlo, 2000). In reviewing the scale, we identified the five most relevant items applicable to the general tasks of platoon leaders. Items related to quantity or creativity are not easily applied to the general tasks of platoon leaders and were omitted,

and two of the three items related to quality were eliminated to reduce survey length. The items retained include “The quality of work is much higher than average” and “Employee upholds highest professional standards.” Reliability for the scale was .94.

Organizational citizenship behavior

Organizational citizenship behaviors, as distinct from task performance (Conway, 2000) and consistent with contextual performance (Motowidlo, 2000), are defined “as contributions to the maintenance and enhancement of the social and psychological context that supports task performance” (Organ, 1997, p. 91). A shortened version of the Williams and Anderson (1991) two-factor scale was included on the follower survey to measure OCB. Four items were used to measure organizational citizenship behaviors directed toward individuals (OCBI) and three items for those directed toward the organization (OCBO). A sample item for OCBI was “Takes time to listen to co-workers’ problems and worries” and for OCBO “Attendance at work is above the norm.” All items were anchored to a Likert-type scale from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). Reliability for the scale was .83 (OCBI) and .74 (OCBO).

Results

Measurement model

Prior to examining our hypotheses, we conducted a series of confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) using AMOS 22 to verify our hypothesized four-factor structure of both leader and follower EI as well as the distinctiveness of all nine study variables: namely, leader EI, follower EI, leader LMX, follower LMX, affective commitment, job satisfaction, OCBI, OCBO, and job performance. The measurement models were estimated using maximum likelihood. Some poorly loading items or items that had multiple loadings in the EI, LMX, and outcomes scales (possibly due to subtleties in translation) were eliminated. In the CFAs for both leader and follower EI, we compared a one-factor model and a second-order four-factor model. In the one-factor model, all 13 items of EI were loaded on a single latent construct; in the second-order four-factor model, the same 13 items were loaded on the four first-order latent constructs of four respective EI dimensions, and these dimensions were then loaded on the second-order single latent construct of EI. As shown in Table 1, the hypothesized second-order four-factor model (i.e., self-emotion appraisal, others’ emotion appraisal, use of emotion, and regulation of emotion) for leader EI ($\chi^2[61] = 87.87$; comparative fit index

Table 1. Results of confirmatory factor analysis for the measures of study variables.

Measurement models	χ^2	df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
<i>Leader EI</i>					
Four-factor second-order model	87.87	61	.98	.98	.05
One-factor model	637.12	65	.58	.50	.21
<i>Follower EI</i>					
Four-factor second-order model	138.11	61	.95	.93	.08
One-factor model	620.97	65	.61	.53	.21
<i>Overall measurement model</i>					
Hypothesized nine-factor model	2074.57	1550	.93	.92	.04
Eight-factor model A ^a	2360.23	1558	.89	.88	.05
Eight-factor model B ^b	2576.73	1554	.86	.85	.06
One-factor model	4720.06	1582	.56	.54	.10

^aLeader and follower EI as one factor.^bLeader and follower LMX as one factor.

[CFI] = .98; Tucker–Lewis index [TLI] = .98; root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .05) fit the data significantly better than the one-factor model of leader EI. The hypothesized second-order four-factor model for follower EI ($\chi^2[61] = 138.11$; CFI = .95; TLI = .93; RMSEA = .08) also fit the data significantly better than the one-factor model of follower EI.

In addition to testing the measurement model of EI, we compared the fit of the hypothesized nine-factor measurement model, in which the items leader EI, follower EI, leader LMX, follower LMX, affective commitment, job satisfaction, OCBI, OCBO, and job performance were expected to load on their respective constructs, with other competing measurement models. The chi-squared and fit indices in Table 1 show that the hypothesized nine-factor measurement model ($\chi^2[1550] = 2074.57$; CFI = .93; TLI = .92; RMSEA = .04) provided a better fit for the data than an eight-factor model in which leader and follower EI were combined into one factor (Model A), an eight-factor model in which leader and follower LMX were combined into one factor (Model B), and an overall one-factor model. No error terms were allowed to covary, other than those as required by the actor–partner independence model (APIM) for the LMX variable (see the Actor–Partner Independence Model Analyses section). The CFA results provide evidence supporting the distinctiveness of the study variables. Table 2 shows the

means, standard deviations of, and correlations between the study variables.

Within and between analysis

To confirm whether the relationships among EI and LMX exist at a dyadic or at an individual level, we utilized the within and between analysis (WABA) procedures outlined in Gooty and Yammarino (2011). As shown in Table 3, EI and LMX did not meet the criteria for a strong between- or within-dyads variation. As expected, the two tests (*E* ratio and *F* ratio) for EI were nonsignificant, indicating EI should be held independent of one another in the model. The *E* ratio for LMX was nonsignificant, whereas the *F* ratio was significant, suggesting equivocality—at the dyad level LMX exhibits variation both between and within dyads (which we also accounted for in the model as noted under the Actor–Partner Independence Model Analyses section). WABA II for dyads, shown in Table 3, indicates that only the *Z* test for between correlations versus within correlation is significant. Thus, the overall inference for the relationship between EI and LMX based on our WABA analysis is equivocal for individual differences.

Actor–partner independence model analyses

Hypothesis 1 and 2 state that EI directly affects LMX and LMX mediates the relationship between EI and work outcomes. We tested these hypotheses by specifying an actor–partner interdependence-mediated model or APIMeM (Ledermann, Macho, & Kenny, 2011) in AMOS 22. Due to the dependence between the actor and partner in an actor–partner interdependence model (APIM) analysis, the residual error variance for each paired latent variable (leader and follower LMX in our model) and the error terms for each paired indicator (not shown) are allowed to covary (Kenny, Kashy, & Cook, 2006). The fit indices for the full mediation

Table 2. Means, standard deviations, and correlations.

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Follower EI	5.73	.66	(.89)								
2. Leader EI	5.73	.63	-.05	(.88)							
3. Follower LMX	3.90	.71	.32**	.09	(.91)						
4. Leader LMX	3.90	.61	.15*	.47***	.24***	(.89)					
5. Affective commitment	4.09	.71	.40***	-.04	.47***	.15*	(.86)				
6. Job satisfaction	3.70	.69	.44***	.04	.37***	.23***	.46***	(.84)			
7. OCBI	3.95	.57	.49***	-.05	.42***	.25***	.49***	.44***	(.83)		
8. OCBO	3.99	.55	.44***	-.09	.36***	.15*	.45***	.43***	.66***	(.74)	
9. Job performance	3.76	.77	.14*	.36***	.18**	.77***	.17*	.11	.18*	.09	(.93)

Note. *N* = 204. Reliabilities are shown in parentheses.

p* < .05; *p* < .01; ****p* < .001.

Table 3. Within and between analysis results for EI and LMX.

Variable	WABA I					WABA II				Overall WABA		
	Eta		<i>E</i> ratio	Tests		Correlations		Tests		Components		Inference
	<i>B</i>	<i>W</i>				<i>B</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>Z</i>	Between	Within	
	<i>E</i>	<i>F</i>										
EI	.69	.72	.95	1.10	EI							
LMX	.79	.61	1.28	1.64**	LMX	.47	.30	.18	1.97*	.25	.13	E/ID

Note. E/ID = equivocal/individual differences. $N = 408$ at individual level, $N = 204$ at dyad level.

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

model indicated the overall model was a good fit for the data ($\chi^2[1570] = 2228.45$; CFI = .90; TLI = .90; RMSEA = .05). To determine whether LMX fully or partially mediates the effects of EI, we compared three alternative partial mediation models to the full mediation model. The results of the model comparison are presented in Table 4. Model 1 adds a direct path from leader EI to job performance (this was the only work outcome with a significant total effect from leader EI); Model 2 adds all the direct paths from follower EI to each of the work outcomes; and Model 3 adds the direct path from leader EI to job performance and all direct paths from follower EI to work outcomes. Visual inspection of the fit indices in that table shows that Model 2 and Model 3 provide a better fit relative to the fully mediated model. Since Model 3 is the least constrained and the others are nested within it, we confirmed with a χ^2 difference test that Model 3 is a

significantly better fit over both the fully mediated model ($\Delta\chi^2[6] = 134.94$, $p < .001$) and Model 1 ($\Delta\chi^2[5] = 133.8$, $p < .001$). Model 2 and Model 3 were equivalent based on the χ^2 difference test; however, Model 2 is the more parsimonious, and the results of this model are shown in Figure 1.

Test of hypotheses

Utilizing the path coefficients from the best fitting mediation model, shown in Figure 1, both actor effects, leader EI to leader LMX ($\beta = .59$, $p < .001$) and follower EI to follower LMX ($\beta = .38$, $p < .001$), and one of the partner effects, follower EI to leader LMX ($\beta = .28$, $p < .001$), were significant in support of hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 1c. No direct relationship was found between leader EI and follower LMX; thus, hypothesis 1d was not supported.

Hypothesis 2 proposes that EI leads to positive work outcomes through favorable evaluations of LMX by the follower (2a, 2b) or the leader (2c, 2d). To test for this mediation effect, we used two procedures: (a) Sobel's test and (b) bias-corrected bootstrapping (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Sobel's test has an assumption of multivariate normality, which is often violated. We therefore generated 95% "bias-corrected" confidence intervals using bootstrapping analysis to confirm the results of Sobel's test (Bollen & Stine, 1992; Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Results from

Table 4. Results of model comparisons.

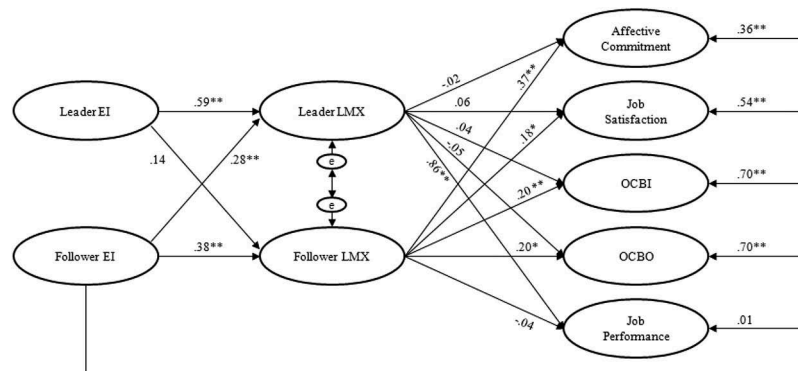
Models	χ^2	<i>df</i>	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
Fully mediated model ^a	2288.45	1570	—	—	.90	.90	.05
Model 1 ^b	2286.40	1569	2.05	1.00	.90	.90	.05
Model 2 ^c	2154.66	1565	133.80	5.00	.92	.91	.04
Model 3 ^d	2152.22	1564	136.23	6.00	.92	.91	.04

^aFully mediated model.

^bIn comparison to the fully mediated model, Model 1 adds path from LEI to JP.

^cModel 2 adds paths from FEI to AC, JS, OCBI, OCBO, and JP.

^dModel 3 adds path from LEI to JP, and adds paths from FEI to AC, JS, OCBI, OCBO, and JP simultaneously.

**Figure 1.** Actor-partner interdependence mediated model.

Sobel's test indicated that the indirect paths from follower EI (FEI) through follower LMX to affective commitment (AC), job satisfaction (JS), OCBI, and OCBO were statistically different from zero (FEI → AC: $t = 2.89$, $p < .01$; FEI → JS: $t = 2.06$, $p < .05$; FEI → OCBI: $t = 2.30$, $p < .05$; FEI → OCBO: $t = 2.13$, $p < .05$). Follower LMX did not mediate the relationship between follower EI and job performance (JP). The 95% confidence intervals generated via bootstrapping analysis, shown in Table 5, were consistent with Sobel's test for affective commitment (confidence interval CI = .038, .271), job satisfaction (CI = .005, .188), and OCBI (CI = .002, .155). Follower LMX, however, did not mediate the relationship between follower EI and OCBO (CI = -.052, .197). In partial support of hypothesis 2a, these results suggest that follower LMX partially mediated the effects of follower EI on affective commitment, job satisfaction and OCBI.

Hypothesis 2b was not supported, since leader EI (LEI) to follower LMX was not significant. Hypotheses 2c and 2d, with leader LMX as a mediator, were supported for job performance only. The indirect paths to job performance from follower EI through leader LMX ($t = 3.39$, $p < .01$) and leader EI through leader LMX ($t = 5.36$, $p < .01$) were statistically different from zero. The bias-corrected confidence intervals confirm these results (FEI → leader LMX → JP: CI = .085, .437; LEI → leader LMX → JP: CI = .407, .763). These results show that leader LMX fully mediated the effects of both follower EI and leader EI on job performance, in partial support of hypotheses 2c and 2d.

Common method variance

Previous research has examined the possibility of common method bias and its resulting distortions in cross-sectional survey research (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Since our variables were measured with surveys completed by both leaders and followers,

Table 5. Mediation of the effect of follower EI on affective commitment, job satisfaction, OCBI, OCBO, and job performance through follower LMX.

Dependent variables	Bootstrapping			
	Percentile 95% CI		BC 95% CI	
	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper
Affective commitment	0.028	0.261	0.038	0.271
Job satisfaction	-0.013	0.177	0.005	0.188
OCBI	0.001	0.146	0.002	0.155
OCBO	-0.074	0.170	-0.052	0.197
Job performance	-0.097	0.379	-0.065	0.437

Note. BC, bias corrected; 2,000 bootstrap samples.

we address this serious concern by adapting Williams, Hartman, and Cavazotte's (2010) recommended marker variables approach (Lindell & Whitney, 2001) and test for the effects of source bias in our best fitting structural model. To account for the multiple sources in our study, we added two latent marker variables—one for the leader and one for the follower—and allowed each latent marker variable to be linked to its same source indicators. As recommended, we held the marker variable, openness to experience (selected post hoc), orthogonal to the substantive factors and conducted sequential testing of a constrained non-congeneric effects model (Method-C), an intermediate model that was congeneric across latent variables in the model (Method-I), and an unrestricted model in which all method factor loadings were allowed to be unequal (Method-U). Chi-squared difference tests of each model are shown in Table 6. Model comparisons indicated that the best fitting model was the unrestricted model in which marker variable effects were unequal (with source bias accounting for approximately 9% and 11% of the variance in follower and leader respectively). However, as indicated with the final Method-U and Method-R comparison, the marker variable effects did not significantly bias correlations, nor, based upon inspection, were the estimated values of structural paths in the model significantly changed. While common source bias was present in our data, it was not a significant factor and did not alter the results of our analysis.

Polynomial regression

Hypothesis 3 states that EI similarity will be related to follower perceptions of LMX. In order to examine the relationship that similarity in leader EI and follower EI have on LMX perceptions, we conducted a polynomial regression with response surface analysis (Edwards & Parry, 1993) following the procedure elaborated in

Table 6. Common method variance model comparison tests.

Models	χ^2	df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
Baseline ^a	2720.04	1930	.90	.89	.05
Method-C ^b	2635.09	1928	.91	.90	.04
Method-I ^c	2602.09	1915	.91	.91	.04
Method-U ^d	2524.05	1872	.92	.91	.04
Method-R ^e	2525.33	1873	.92	.91	.04
Chi-squared model comparison tests					
	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf	p		
Baseline vs. Method-C	84.95	2	.000		
Method-C vs. Method-I	33.00	13	.002		
Method-I vs. Method-U	78.04	43	.001		
Method-U vs. Method-R	1.28	1	.258		

^aNo common method variable effects model.

^bConstrained non-congeneric effects model.

^cCongeneric across latent variables model.

^dUnrestricted model (all method factor loadings allowed to be unequal).

^eModel with factor correlations fixed to baseline model.

Shanock, Baran, Gentry, Pattison, and Heggstad (2010). Since all dyads were unique (no two dyads had the same leader or follower in the pair), the data did not violate assumptions of independence. As an initial test of the discrepancies inherent in our data between leader EI and follower EI, we used the Fleenor, McCauley, and Brutus (1996) procedure. This test determines the percentages of “in agreement” values and the percentages of discrepant values in either direction (Shanock et al., 2010). The in-agreement and discrepancy frequencies are reported in Table 7.

Since discrepant values are evident in our sample, we proceeded with the polynomial regression. Following the procedure outlined by Atwater, Waldman, Ostroff, Robie, and Johnson (2005), we centered our predictors (leader EI and follower EI) around their respective mean and made three new variables: (a) the square of the centered EI variable; (b) the cross-product of the centered EI and LMX variable; and (c) the square of the centered LMX variable. We then ran the polynomial regression by regressing LMX on the centered EI variables, the product of the centered EI and LMX variable, the centered LMX squared, and the centered EI squared

terms. The results of the polynomial regression are presented in Table 8. The significant a_1 for both follower LMX and leader LMX indicates that a positive linear relationship exists between EI similarity and each dyad members’ perception of LMX—the greater the similarity, the higher both followers and leaders evaluate LMX. The addition of the significant negative a_3 for leader LMX, indicates that leader LMX is higher when EI similarity is discrepant such that leader EI is higher than follower EI.

Figure 2a depicts the response surface analysis results for follower LMX, allowing for a three-dimensional examination of the relationship. In the far corner of the graph where leader EI and follower EI are high, follower LMX is high ($z = 7.32$), and in the front of the graph where both leader and follower EI are low, follower LMX is lower, but still relatively high ($z = 4.02$). This compared with the follower’s LMX scores when leader EI is high and follower EI is low ($z = -.56$) and vice versa ($z = 1.37$) shows that follower perception of LMX falls when EI scores between leader and follower are discrepant. A similar pattern can be discerned from the results for leader LMX shown in Figure 2b, whereby leaders score LMX high ($z = 8.68$) when both leader and follower EI is high and score LMX lower when EI for both dyad members is low ($z = 3.42$). Thus, hypotheses 3a and 3b are both fully supported. With leader LMX, there is an additional effect where leaders evaluate LMX more favorably ($z = 6.08$) when leader EI is high and follower EI is low.

Table 7. Frequencies of follower EI levels over, under, and in agreement with leader EI levels.

Agreement groups	Percentage	Mean follower EI	Mean leader EI
Follower EI more than leader EI	25.4	5.48	3.40
In agreement	46.7	4.69	4.40
Follower EI less than leader EI	27.9	3.00	4.92

Table 8. Polynomial regression results of EI similarity as a predictor of LMX.

	Follower LMX		Leader LMX	
Constant	3.95***	(.06)	3.91***	(.05)
Follower EI	.33***	(.08)	.11	(.07)
Leader EI	.09	(.09)	.55***	(.07)
Follower EI squared	.02	(.07)	-.04	(.05)
Follower EI × Leader EI	.17	(.12)	.05	(.09)
Leader EI squared	-.08	(.09)	.12	(.07)
R^2	.12***		.12***	
Surface tests				
a_1	.41***		.66***	
a_2	.11		.13	
a_3	.24		-.44***	
a_4	-.22		.03	

Note. $N = 204$.

$a_1 = (b_1 + b_2)$, where b_1 is beta coefficient for Follower EI and b_2 is beta coefficient for Leader EI;

$a_2 = (b_3 + b_4 + b_5)$, where b_3 is beta coefficient for Follower EI squared, b_4 is beta coefficient for the cross-product of Follower EI and Leader EI, and b_5 is beta coefficient for Leader EI squared;

$a_3 = (b_1 - b_2)$;

$a_4 = (b_3 - b_4 - b_5)$.

Discussion

General findings

Building on social exchange theory and self-verification theory, this study investigated the relationship between leader and follower EI, leader and follower perceptions of LMX, and relevant work outcomes. We found the direct relationship between leader EI to leader LMX and follower EI to follower LMX was significant; thus, the actor’s EI level influences his or her own perceptions of LMX quality. The crossover effect between follower EI and leader LMX suggests that the leader considers the EI of the follower in assessing LMX quality. However, the effect of leader EI on follower perceptions of LMX was not significant. Because of this finding, we examined the nonlinear relationship between EI and LMX where leader and follower EI interact to influence the perception of LMX. Consistent with similarity-attraction theory (Byrne, 1971), we found that EI similarity is a significant factor in forming LMX perceptions, such that when both

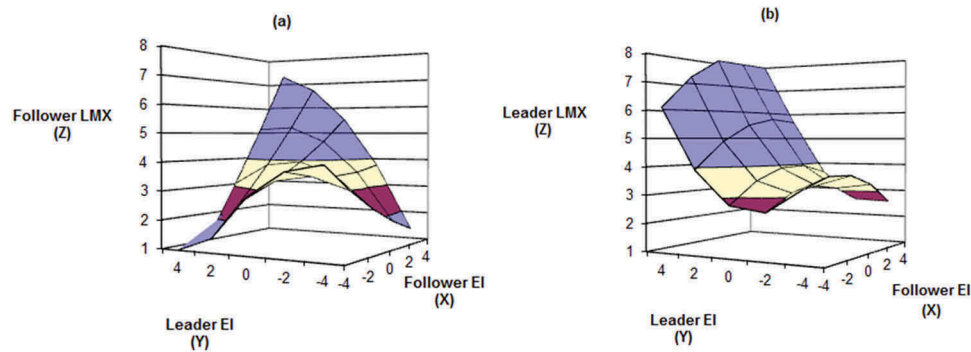


Figure 2. Response surface analysis results.

leader and follower score similarly on EI, the shared perceptions of LMX are more favorable. As shown in Figure 2, when EI of the leader and EI of the follower are both high, LMX is scored the highest by both dyad members ($z = 7.32$ for follower LMX, $z = 8.68$ for leader LMX). When EI is low for both members, LMX perception are moderate ($z = 4.02$ for follower LMX, $z = 3.42$ for leader LMX).

In cases where EI scores differ, with either the leader or follower scoring significantly higher than the other on EI, LMX evaluations are unfavorable. This suggests that followers prefer leaders who have EI levels similar to themselves. From both the leader's and follower's perspective, the worst-case scenario is when my EI is low and my partner's EI is high ($z = -.56$ for follower LMX, $z = 2.56$ for leader LMX). When my EI is high and my partner's EI is low, then results vary for leader and follower evaluations of LMX. Followers whose EI was higher than their leaders evaluate LMX unfavorably ($z = 1.37$), but leaders with the higher EI evaluate LMX higher ($z = 6.08$) in this scenario than when both leader and follower possess low EI. One plausible explanation for this is that from the followers' perspective they are highly dependent upon their leader's EI and they prefer a leader with at least a comparable level of EI to their own. However, as a leader with multiple followers, if my EI is high and my follower's is low, I can rely upon other followers with high EI when the need arises. Another possibility is that as a leader I am the dominant party in the relationship and may naturally expect that my EI level will be higher than that of my followers. In other words, I may not particularly demand that my followers display high EI. Another possible explanation is that a low-EI leader may not desire high EI in a follower, since such a situation might necessitate skills that the leader does not possess or is uncomfortable exercising. Additionally, a high-EI follower may require the leader to spend more time in developing and maintaining the relationship:

something a low-EI leader might not value and prefer not investing in.

A primary reason for studying the EI-LMX relationship is to understand the effect that it has on various work outcomes. In testing hypothesis 2, we found that follower LMX partially mediates the effect of follower EI on affective commitment, job satisfaction, and OCBI. Leader LMX fully mediates the effects of both leader EI and follower EI on job performance only. One explanation for these results is that a higher quality relationship between a leader and a follower drives higher performance. An alternative reason that may be offered for why leader LMX mediates the relationship between EI and job performance is that leaders may be less critical in evaluating the performance of followers with whom they have a high-exchange relationship (Duarte, Goodson, & Klich, 1994; Heneman, Greenberger, & Anonyuo, 1989; Yukl, 2006). In our study, follower job performance is evaluated by the leader; thus, performance evaluations of high-LMX employees may have been lenient due to a desire by the leader to maintain the continuity of the relationship.

Our findings show that most of the effects of EI are primarily mediated through follower LMX. Followers who are high in EI and have a favorable LMX relationship with their leader may have greater affective commitment because they feel reciprocity and responsibility toward their leader, who, to a certain extent, embodies the organization. High-EI followers may experience positive feelings as a result of the high-LMX relationship with their leader, and use these emotions to improve their general attitude and specific evaluations of job satisfaction. Due to the feelings of reciprocity resulting from the benefaction of high-LMX relationships, high-EI followers may engage in more interpersonal OCBs as a means of paying this courtesy forward to fellow coworkers.

Since the applications for EI are interpersonal in nature, followers who perceived high LMX quality

may increase OCBs directed at individuals more rather than OCBs directed at organizations. This might explain why in our bootstrapping analysis LMX mediated the relationship with only OCBI and not OCBO. Follower LMX did not mediate the relationship between follower EI and job performance. One explanation may be that the characteristics of the job may be of significant importance. For example, in order to perform a job well, a salesperson may require EI and also a high-LMX relationship with increased emotional support from a supervisor, whereas a budget analyst may perform reasonably well without either of these.

Theoretical and practical implications

While the EI literature has shown support that followers with high EI have better job attitudes and performance outcomes, the process through which this occurs has been unclear. Based upon social exchange theory, we show that followers with high EI may develop stronger relationships with their leaders, and the resulting high LMX quality facilitates their positive attitudes and work outcomes. Another theoretical implication is that the impact of EI on LMX and subsequent work outcomes is not limited to just one's own EI, but—via similarity-attraction theory (Byrne, 1971)—is influenced by the partners' EI such that when EI levels are similar, LMX is evaluated more favorably.

Our theoretical framework expanded the EI, LMX, and work outcome association in three specific ways. First, we used a sample of leader–follower dyads and empirically demonstrated not only the direct effects of both leader and follower EI on LMX, but also the effects of EI similarity between the leader and follower on LMX. Second, we examined LMX not only from the followers' perspective, but also from the leaders' perspective. LMX is rarely studied (i.e., conceptualized, measured, and analyzed) at the dyadic level of analysis (Gooty & Yammarino, 2013). In order to examine the complete dyadic relationship between leader and follower EI and leader and follower LMX, we utilized the actor–partner independence model. Third, as Sears and Holmvall (2010) suggested, we tested the influence of EI on work outcomes through LMX development processes. Specifically, we examined the processes through which both leader and follower perceptions of LMX mediate the relationship between EI and affective commitment, job satisfaction, OCB, and job performance. It should be noted that the Sears and Holmvall (2010) study consisted of 37 dyads (11 supervisors; 37 subordinates), while the sample for

the present research consisted of 204 unique dyads (no two dyads included the same leader).

A practical implication of the present study is that improving the levels of EI of both the leader and follower or at least taking it into consideration may contribute to organizational effectiveness. Organizations can apply this implication in their human resource practices, such as (a) recruiting employees high in EI, (b) placing employees with appropriate EI levels based on situational considerations, and (c) providing training and development opportunities to further refine their EI skills.

However, consideration needs to be given to the leader–follower dyad simultaneously. In situations where one member's EI is high and the other's is low, organizational effectiveness can be undermined due to the negative implications such a combination has for LMX. Improving perceptions of LMX by recruiting high-EI leaders and training them in EI is a necessary but not sufficient condition for positively impacting follower attitudes and performance. These recruiting and training efforts must also be considered for followers as well. In cases where recruiting or training are prohibitive or impractical, pairing leaders and followers with similar EI levels may help minimize the adverse impact to job attitudes and performance and relieve stress that could be otherwise caused by socio-emotional incompatibilities.

Limitations and future research

A limitation of the present research is that although we did measure LMX from both the followers' and leaders' perspective as suggested in prior LMX research (e.g., Sears & Holmvall, 2010; Sin, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2009), EI and OCB were measured by self-report. Self-report measures are susceptible to common method variance and social desirability biases (e.g., Bagozzi & Yi, 1990; Williams & Brown, 1994). The self-report EI measure used in this study showed convergent and discriminant validity with previous research that compared multiple ratings of EI using multitrait–multimethod (MTMM) analyses (Law et al., 2004). In past research OCB has been most commonly measured by self-report and less frequently by the ratings of others. Self-evaluation of OCB is susceptible to social desirability, whereas evaluations of OCB by supervisors, for example, are limited by fewer reliable observations concerning the nature and frequency by which employees help peers and exhibit constructive social behaviors (Organ, Podsakoff, & MacKenzie, 2006). Of the outcome variables, we assessed follower job performance from the leaders' perspective rather than by self-report. This in part accounts for the higher correlations between leader LMX and job performance and the

lower correlations between the OCB variables and job performance that can be observed in Table 1. One recommendation for future research is to measure observable outcome variables (e.g., job performance, OCB) from the perspective of both the leader and the follower. Additionally, using objective measures of performance may minimize the susceptibility to social desirability.

Our findings may also be influenced by cultural factors unique to South Korea, which can be categorized as a high-context culture. Based upon Hall's (1976) conceptualization, a high-context culture is defined as one in which people are highly involved with one another, social hierarchies are salient, emotions are self-regulated, and communication is open and often contains simple messages with deep meaning. Low-context cultures are highly individualized, with less emphasis on social hierarchy, lower levels of involvement, and more explicit and nonpersonal forms of communication (Hall, 1976). The dynamics through which EI influences LMX perceptions and subsequent work outcomes may vary depending upon variations in context within cultures. Due to the interpersonal expectations in high-context cultures, there may be an increased desire for partners to possess high EI. Future research should see whether these findings generalize to low-context cultures or determine whether cultural context may moderate the relationship between EI and LMX quality. In our study, job performance was measured from the leaders' perspective. In high-context cultures relative to low-context cultures, high LMX may have a greater impact on a leaders' evaluation of follower performance due to the importance placed on having meaningful interpersonal relationships (a strong relationship between LMX and follower performance was found in our results).

Since our study was conducted in a military context and the sample of officers consisted primarily of male participants from a relatively narrow age range, we cannot be certain our findings are generalizable to non-military organizations with organizational members who also differ in age and gender. However, many organizational characteristics of our sample are not unique to the military. Adherence to hierarchy, professionalism, a strong mission, and demanding and stressful jobs characterize many organizations (Dvir, Eden, Avolio, & Shamir, 2002). There may be more similarities than differences between military and nonmilitary settings in how leaders and subordinates evaluate the quality of their relationships. Future research should however attempt to replicate our findings in a nonmilitary organization.

Our study is also cross-sectional and unable to evaluate the long-term effects of EI dissimilarity between the leader and the follower. One possibility is that over an extended period of time, dyadic partners may attempt to pattern themselves after the other in an attempt to minimize differences. In this case, the negative effects of EI dissimilarity would be mitigated over time. Another possibility is that increased stress and strain from ongoing interaction with a partner whose level of EI differs substantially from one's own will cause LMX quality to further decline, increasingly harming the relationship. In a post hoc moderated regression analysis, we found a significant negative interaction effect between EI similarity and relationship duration on follower LMX suggesting that the negative effects from EI dissimilarity on LMX can worsen over time. Future research using repeated measures should further examine the longitudinal effects of EI dissimilarity on LMX.

Conclusion

Currently, the study of LMX largely involves expanding its nomological network of related constructs and further developing our understanding of the underlying processes through which LMX mediates or moderates the relationship between various antecedents and work outcomes. In the present research, we use social exchange as a theoretical framework and take a dyadic approach to examine how EI affects LMX from both the perspectives of the leader and follower. We find that follower EI plays a greater role by influencing both follower and leader LMX, while leader EI is relegated to affecting leader LMX. In addition to examining the direct effects of this relationship, we examine the effects of EI similarity between the leader and follower on perceptions of LMX quality and found that similar EI levels resulted in a more favorable perception of the relationship. Finally, our research shows that follower LMX partially mediates the relationship between follower EI and important work attitudes and behavior, and leader LMX fully mediates the effect of both leader and follower EI on evaluations of job performance. We hope that our framework and approach in this study can serve as a guide for subsequent EI and LMX research and in the practical application of EI to leadership in organizations.

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