

# How perceptions of others' work and impression management motives affect leader–member exchange development: A six-wave latent change score model

Ziguang Chen, Yuanyuan Huo, Wing Lam,  
Roger Chun-To Luk, Israr Qureshi



UNIVERSITY OF SURREY



SURREY  
BUSINESS  
SCHOOL

UNIVERSITY OF SURREY

As a new employee settles in, establishing a good relationship with his or her supervisor is always a priority. Such a relationship focuses on meeting each other's expectations. However, does the rosy glow of early interpersonal interactions gradually change into a more mature relationship? There has been significant discussion of this issue in the academic literature on the development of leader-member exchange (LMX). Despite the fundamental importance of social exchange theories and norms of reciprocity in LMX development, the question of how leaders and subordinates achieve LMX of varying quality at different times remains unresolved. Although a few empirical studies have focused on LMX development processes (Liden, Wayne, & Stilwell, 1993), we still know very little about the type of follower behaviour that is associated with this from the point at which the new team is formed.

LMX development is a dynamic process involving change and evolution. To understand how dynamic processes play out in relation to one another, it is important to collect longitudinal within-person data to test LMX development over time. Guided by Shamir's (2005, p. 498) view that 'the social relationship we call leadership is always co-produced by leaders and others [followers]', we undertake a six-wave questionnaire survey of newly established leader-subordinate dyads over a full year.

Our primary theoretical contribution is to extend the integration of LMX and attribution theory by providing insight on how leaders' and subordinates' perceptions of each other's work and IM motives contribute to the dynamic development of LMX from the establishment of a new dyad to a year of maturity. Our empirical findings thus complement and extend previous research by demonstrating that the effort made by both parties is positively related to LMX.

Inherent in the concept of LMX is the centrality of 'two-to-tango' exchanges in a leader-member relationship. This research has primarily echoed Antonakis' (2017) call for the replication of leadership studies in general and Maslyn and Uhl-Bien's (2001) call for the use of longitudinal design to address the process of how perceived dyadic effort motives are involved in LMX development. We have answered this call by plotting the trend of changes in the quality of LMX, from initial formation to a year later, using a six-wave longitudinal design and LCS models to test our predictions. Our findings thereby offer theoretical, methodological, and practical implications for understanding and developing high-quality LMX in organizations over time from the formation of new teams.



UNIVERSITY OF SURREY



UNIVERSITY OF SURREY