

ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT AND INGRATIATORY BEHAVIOUR AS PREDICTORS OF LEADER-MEMBER EXCHANGE AMONG SOFTWARE PROFESSIONALS

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Abstract *This study reports about the influence of organisational commitment and ingratiation behaviour on leader-member exchange. Data were collected randomly from 150 software professionals in Chennai city. Among others, the key findings indicate that select dimensions of organisational commitment (namely, normative commitment and continuance commitment) and one dimension of ingratiation behaviour (namely, other enhancement) served to significantly predict leader-member exchange.*

Keywords: *Leader-Member Exchange, Organisational Commitment, Ingratiation Behaviour, Software Professionals, Chennai City.*

INTRODUCTION

Leader-member exchange is referred to as the quality of exchange between a supervisor and an employee (Dienesch and Liden, 1986; Graen and Scandura, 1987). These exchanges are posited to fall along a continuum. For example, leaders may form high quality social exchanges that are based on trust, open communication, information sharing, and liking of followers, whereas with others, they may form lower quality exchanges that do not extend beyond the employment contract (Erdogan, Liden, and Kraimer, 2006; Liden, Sparrowe and Wayne, 1997). Northouse (1991) remarked that when leaders and followers have good exchanges, they feel better, accomplish more, and the organisation prospers. High quality exchanges bring positive organisational outcomes such as innovation, empowerment, positive job climate, and organisational citizenship behaviour. When the relationship between leaders and subordinates are all high-quality, it is to the advantage of the individual (leader / follower) and the organisation.

Leader-Member Exchange Theory

The leader-member exchange theory posits that leaders and members (followers) in an organisation develop dyadic

relationships over time through a series of observations, try-outs, interactions and conversations (Graen, 1976). In most leadership situations not every follower is treated the same by the leader, resulting in two groups of followers – an “in-group” and an “out-group”. When a leader is close to his or her subordinates, they will consider each other “in-group”; the other subordinates to the leader will become “out-group”.

“In-group” subordinates not only perform their jobs in accordance with the employment contracts but are also available to perform unstructured tasks or extra work or additional responsibilities. Supervisors exchange personal and positional resources (inside information, influence in decision-making, task assignment, job latitude, support, and attention) in return for subordinates’ performance on unstructured tasks (Graen and Cashman, 1975). They also tend to receive better performance evaluations and more promotion opportunities, and mutual trust, respect and care for which they show more loyalty and respect for the leadership, resulting in higher leadership effectiveness (Graen, Liden and Hoel, 1982). In contrast, “out-group” subordinates perform in accordance with the prescribed employment contract and are extended with limited reciprocal trust and support, and few rewards from their supervisors (Deluga, 1998).

STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Research on leader-member exchange has been done in various organisational settings and researchers have studied leader-member exchange in the light of constructs like job satisfaction, (Graen, Novak and Sommerkamp, 1982; Stringer, 2006), performance, (Graen, Novak and Sommerkamp, 1982; Dunegan, Duchon, and Uhl-Bien, 1993), turnover, (Graen, Liden, and Hoel, 1982; Vecchio, 1998), stress, (Harris and Kacmar, 2005), organisational citizenship behavior, (Scandura, Graen, and Novak, 1986; Wayne and Greene, 1993) and so on. Similarly, many researchers (for instance, Soldner and Crimando, 2010; Torka, Schyns and Looise, 2010; Tagar and Sharih, 2008) have attempted to relate leader-member exchange and organisational commitment. No study has sought to answer questions like “Do employees who have a psychological attachment to organisation contribute differently to leader-member exchange? Do employees with high organisational commitment consciously strive to have favourable leader-member exchanges?”

On the other hand, studies relating leader-member exchange to ingratiation behaviour (for instance, Ansari, Bhal and Aafaqi, 2008) are less prevalent compared to those relating leader-member exchange to organisational commitment. Colella and Varma (2001) investigated how subordinate disability and ingratiation were related to leader-member exchange quality. Rai (2009) studied subordinate ingratiation and leader-member exchange from a subordinate gender perspective. However, this study seeks to answer the question whether employees with vested interests, those who engage in ingratiation behaviour, contribute differently to leader-member exchange?

Thus, while the criticality and importance of leader-member exchange have been established by various researches, there is a need for greater understanding of the relationship between work-related attitudes (such as employee commitment), ingratiation behaviour of an employee in an organisation and leader-member exchange. This study is an attempt in this direction and seeks to trace the interplay of organisational commitment, ingratiation behaviour and leader-member exchange among software professionals in Chennai city, India.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this section, only those studies relating to either of the independent variables and leader-member exchange are presented. Though there are various studies exclusively in the field of organisational commitment, ingratiation behaviour and leader-member exchange, it needs to be mentioned no study has covered all these three variables at one go. Also,

while some studies have traced the effect of leader-member exchange on organisational commitment, no study has sought to trace the interplay of organisational commitment and leader-member exchange. However, a summary of the research on leader-member exchange and organisational commitment has been presented for understanding.

Lee (2005) investigated leadership behaviours, leader-member exchanges and their applicability in determining employees' organisational commitment based on data collected from 201 Research and Development professionals in Singapore. The findings from hierarchical regression analysis revealed that transformational leadership had positive association with the dimensions of leader-member exchange and organisational commitment. Leader-member exchange quality was also found to mediate the relationship between leadership and organisational commitment.

Soldner and Crimando (2010) studied the relationship between subordinates' perceptions of the quality of the leader-member exchange, organisational commitment and willingness to engage in organisational citizenship behaviour. By surveying staff of a rehabilitation organisation, they examined (a) the differences in leader-member exchange according to the dyadic gender of the supervisor compared to the employee and dyadic duration of the relationship and (b) the moderation effects of both dyadic duration on the relationship between leader-member exchange, organisational citizenship behaviour and organisational commitment, and of dyadic gender on the relationship between leader-member exchange, and both organisational citizenship behavior and organisational commitment. The correlation between leader-member exchange and organisational commitment was found to be significant and there was evidence of the moderating effects of dyadic duration and dyadic gender on the relationship between leader-member exchange and organisational commitment.

Torka, Schyns and Looise (2010) assessed the mediation effect of participation quality on the relationship between leader-member exchange and affective and normative organisational commitment. The research was conducted at three faculties of a Dutch university and involved faculty staff (N = 206). It was found that two indicators of participation quality mediated the leader-member exchange and affective organisational commitment relationship. A statistically significant relationship was found between leader-member exchange and affective commitment ($r = 0.34$; p value < 0.01) and the relationship between leader-member exchange and normative commitment was found to be 0.09. Regression analysis revealed a significant relationship between leader-member exchange and affective commitment ($\beta = 0.342$; $p < 0.001$). The relationship between leader-member exchange and affective commitment was mediated by satisfaction with participation (Sobel test statistic = 1.998; $p < 0.05$, two-

tailed) and by distributive justice concerning participation (Sobel test statistic = 2.430; $p < 0.01$, two-tailed), but not by procedural justice (Sobel test statistic = 1.760; n.s.). Satisfaction with participation, perceived distributive justice concerning participation and procedural justice did not mediate the relationship between leader-member exchange and normative organisational commitment.

Tagar and Sharif (2008) tested whether leader-member exchange quality related to followers' reported level of affective commitment, mediated by the role of experienced meaningfulness of work, experienced responsibility for work, and knowledge of results. Data were randomly collected from 381 members of the Institute of Public Administration of Canada. A statistically significant relationship was found between leader-member exchange and affective commitment ($r = .40$; $p < 0.001$). They found that job characteristics mediated the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and affective commitment. Also, there was support for a direct link between leader-member exchange and affective commitment.

Rai (2009) examined whether subordinate ingratiation and subordinate gender interacted to influence leader-member exchange such that ingratiation had a stronger positive impact on leader-member exchange relationships for female subordinates than male subordinates. Data were collected from 164 employees (117 men and 47 women) at a large organisation in eastern India. As hypothesised, subordinate ingratiation and subordinate gender interacted to influence leader-member exchange quality, such that ingratiation had a stronger positive impact on leader-member exchange relationships for female subordinates than those for male subordinates.

Bhal and Atri (1991) explored the role of subordinate competence and ingratiation in determining the quality of leader-member exchange. The data were collected from 454 Indian Army officers. Results revealed no relationship between ingratiation and quality of leader-member exchange.

Colella and Varma (2001) investigated how subordinate disability and ingratiation were related to leader-member exchange quality and found that the interaction of disability and ingratiation affected leader-member exchange. Ingratiation had a stronger relationship to supervisors' leader-member exchange ratings when a subordinate had a disability.

Ansari, Bhal and Aafaqi (2008) examined the moderating effect of leader-member exchange on the influence goals-ingratiatory behavior relationship (N=448 Malaysian business students). Regardless of the goals of influence attempt (personal or organisational), leader-member exchange made a significant difference in the use of other

enhancement tactic. The in-group subordinates were likely to use this tactic more often to influence their immediate supervisors than those who played the role of out-group subordinates. On the other hand, out-group subordinates were found to dramatically increase the frequency of self enhancement tactic from organisational to personal goal condition. In- and out-group subordinates differed in the use of other enhancement ingratiation tactic in the organisational goal condition, but not in the personal goal condition.

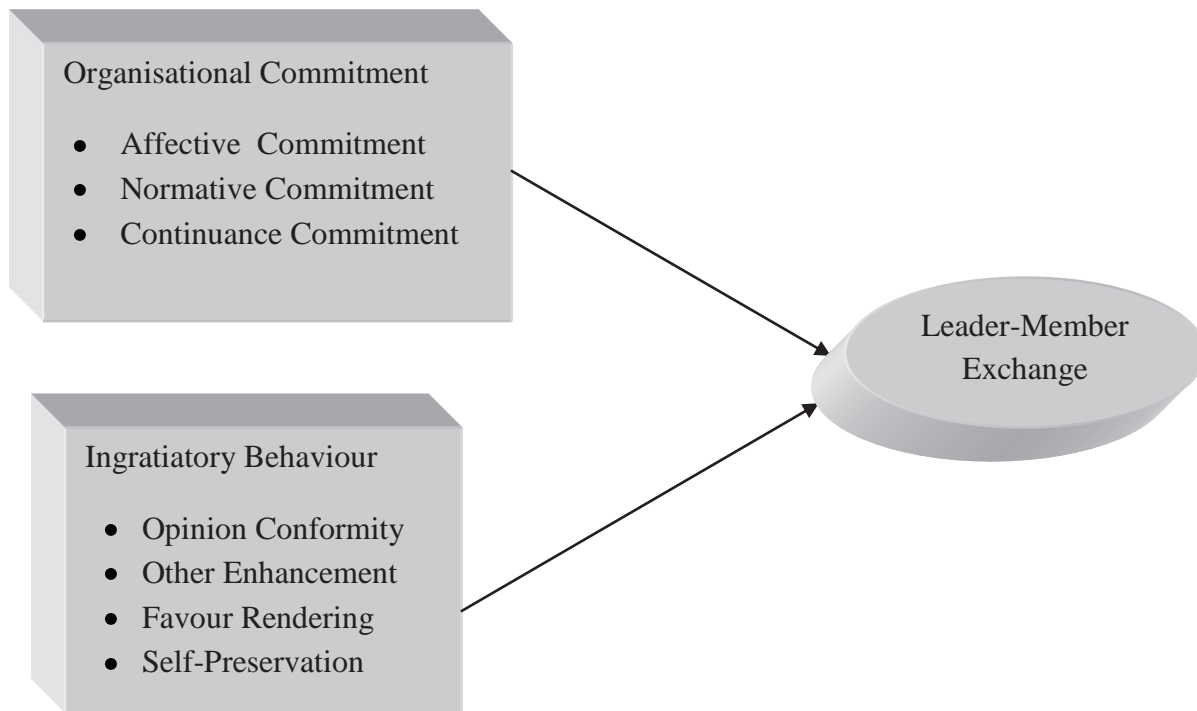
Deluga and Perry (1994) studied the contribution of subordinate performance and ingratiation to the quality of leader-member exchanges based on data collected from 152 dyads of subordinates and their immediate supervisors. Results of hierarchical regression analysis indicated that subordinate-ingratiatory activity augmented performance in the prediction of higher quality exchanges. Furthermore, other enhancement and opinion conformity domains of ingratiatory behaviour were positively linked with higher quality exchanges.

To sum up, the review of literature indicates that no study has reported the impact of organisational commitment on leader-member exchange. However, studies have reported the influence of subordinates' ingratiation and leader-member exchange. Further, no study has been conducted among software professionals. This study is an attempt to address these research gaps.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Leadership plays a major role in any organisation. It is very important to study the relationship and the interactions that occur between leaders and members. The quality of the relationship between the leader and each group member has important job consequences. For instance, research indicates that in-group members exhibit higher productivity and job satisfaction, improved motivation, more organisational citizenship behaviours (Ilies, Nahrgang, and Morgeson, 2007; Chen, Lam, and Zhong, 2007). Thus it is important to study about an issue that is instrumental for organisational effectiveness and other organisational outcomes. Also, organisational behaviour like organisational commitment and ingratiatory behaviour are inherent aspects of organisational life and it is pertinent to study leader-member exchange in the light of the same. Further, the review of literature indicates that there is limited research in the field of leader-member exchange in the Indian context. This research study set in the Indian context and has been carried out among software professionals.

The results of the present study would throw light on whether employees who have a positive psychological attachment to an organisation would strive to have an

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

enriching leader-member exchange and whether employees indulging in ingratiatory behaviour would exhibit positive leader-member exchange.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were put forth as part of this research.

1. What is the extent of ingratiatory behaviour, organisational commitment and leader-member exchange among the software professionals?
2. What are the differences in leader-member exchange among the software professionals that may be attributed to personal and job-related factors?
3. Is there any relationship between ingratiatory behaviour and its dimensions, organisational commitment and its dimensions and leader-member exchange?
4. Can ingratiatory behaviour, organisational commitment and its dimensions serve to predict leader-member exchange?

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The study conducted among software professionals working in tier-I information technology companies in Chennai has the following research objectives:

1. To trace the extent of ingratiatory behaviour, organisational commitment and leader member exchange among the software professionals.
2. To study whether differences in leader-member exchange exist based on the personal and job-related attributes of the software professionals.
3. To find the relationship between ingratiatory behaviour, organisational commitment and its dimensions and leader-member exchange of the software professionals.
4. To examine the predictability of leader-member exchange by the independent variables namely ingratiatory behaviour and organisational commitment and its dimensions of the software professionals.
5. To put forth suggestions to enhance leader-member exchange based on the findings of the study.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

The main focus of the study is to understand the extent of leader-member exchange among software professionals working in tier-I information technology companies in Chennai. The theoretical framework developed is shown in Figure 1. Organisational commitment, its dimensions (namely affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment) and ingratiatory behaviour, its dimensions (namely, opinion conformity, other

Table 1: Descriptive and Reliability Statistics of the Variables of the Study

S. No.	Variables	Minimum score obtained	Maximum score obtained	Mean	Standard Deviation	Cronbach alpha value
	Dependent Variable					
1	Leader-Member Exchange	8	35	27.79	6.05	0.88
	Independent Variables					
I	Organisational Commitment	46	120	85.53	14.03	0.78
	Dimensions of organisational commitment					
1	Affective commitment	10	40	25.13	6.79	0.76
2	Normative commitment	10	40	27.12	6.11	0.67
3	Continuance commitment	13	42	33.28	7.15	0.89
II	Ingratiatory behaviour	63	108	91.09	11.95	0.81
	Dimensions of ingratiation behaviour					
1	Opinion conformity	15	33	26.89	3.64	0.63
2	Other enhancement	12	35	26.11	4.70	0.70
3	Favour rendering	8	30	22.85	4.75	0.81
4	Self-preservation	6	20	15.24	3.85	0.83

enhancement, favour rendering and self-preservation) are taken as independent variables and the dependent variable chosen for this study is leader-member exchange.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF THE VARIABLES OF THE STUDY

- **Leader-member exchange:** Leader-member exchange is referred to as the quality of exchange between a supervisor and an employee (Dienesch and Liden, 1986; Graen and Scandura, 1987).
- **Organisational commitment:** Organisational commitment is referred to as employees' psychological attachment to the organisation (Mowday, Steers and Porter, 1979).
- **Affective commitment:** Affective commitment refers to employee's identification, or strong emotional attachment and involvement in the organisation. It is the "employee's positive emotional attachment to the organisation" (Meyer and Allen, 1991).
- **Continuance commitment:** Continuance commitment refers to an awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organisation (Meyer and Allen, 1991).
- **Normative commitment:** Normative commitment reflects an obligation to continue with the organisation (Meyer and Allen, 1991).
- **Ingratiatory behaviour:** Ingratiatory behaviour refers to when subordinates see their superiors as targets

of interest to them, and thus use upward influence strategies to fulfil objectives of personal interest (Kipnis, Schmidt and Wilkinson, 1980). Thus, it is the behaviour of an individual attempted to increase one's worth in the eyes of the leader.

- **Opinion conformity:** Opinion conformity refers to a subordinate's ingratiation by agreeing with the superior's opinions regarding work and non-work related issues (Varma, Toh and Pichler, 2006).
- **Other enhancement:** Other enhancement is the subordinate's attempt to praise his/her superior's achievements or qualities by making explicit verbal assertions about his virtues with the likelihood that the superior will be elated (Varma, Toh and Pichler, 2006).
- **Favour Rendering:** Favour Rendering is the ingratiation by doing favours over work-related obligations in order to gain the superior's affection (Varma, Toh, and Pichler, 2006).
- **Self-preservation:** Self-preservation is effected when the subordinate behaves to improve his or her image in the mind of the superior by identifying himself as the kind of employee with the characteristics desired by the superior and thereby making himself as a preferred person (Varma, Toh, and Pichler, 2006).
- **Software professional:** A software professional is a professional engineer who is formed and skilled in the application and creation of software.

NULL HYPOTHESES

To facilitate statistical testing, the following null hypotheses have been formulated.

NH 1: There is no significant difference in the mean values of leader-member exchange of the respondents based on personal factors.

NH 2: There is no significant difference in the mean values of leader-member exchange of the respondents based on job-related factors.

NH 3: There is no relationship between ingratiation behaviour, organisational commitment and leader-member exchange.

NH 4: Ingratiation behaviour and organisational commitment and its dimensions will not serve to predict leader-member exchange.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive research design was adopted in this study. Data for this study were collected from primary sources – the respondents were the software professionals working in tier-I information technology companies in Chennai city. Data were collected from software employees of five tier-I information technology companies in Chennai city. The universe for the study consists of all the software professionals who form part of the companies covered in this study and whose names appear on the pay rolls of these companies. The sample was drawn randomly and the sample size was 150. Software professionals with at least two years of work experience in the present company were considered for the study. Data were collected using a questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of four parts namely, (i) Personal Data Sheet, (ii) Leader-Member Exchange Questionnaire (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995), (iii) Organisation Commitment Questionnaire (Meyer and Allen, 1991) and (iv) Measuring Ingratiation Behaviour in Organisational Setting Scale (Kumar and Beyerlein, 1991).

The Leader-Member Exchange Questionnaire (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995) is a 7 item tool on a five point scale. The items measure the member / employee's views on their relationship with their supervisor or leader. High scores indicate high quality of leader-member exchange. The Organisation Commitment Questionnaire (Meyer and Allen, 1991) is an 18 item tool on a seven point Likert type scale where '1' refers to "strongly disagree" and '7' refers to "strongly agree". High scores indicate high organisational commitment. The three dimensions of organisation commitment are affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment. The Measuring Ingratiation Behaviour in Organisational Setting

scale (Kumar and Beyerlein, 1991) is a 24 item tool on a five point scale where '1' refers to "Never do it" and '5' refers to "Almost always do it". High scores indicate that the employees have more ingratiation behaviour. The four dimensions of ingratiation behaviour are opinion conformity behaviour, other enhancement behaviour, favour rendering behaviour and self-preservation behaviour.

Table 1 gives the descriptive statistics and reliability indices (Cronbach alpha values) of the variables of the study.

From Table 1 it is evident that the mean value of the variables range from 15.24 to 91.09. The mean value of the dependent variable 'leader-member exchange' is 27.79 and the standard deviation is 6.05. The mean score of organisational commitment is 85.53 and the standard deviation is 14.03. The highest mean score of the dimensions of organisational commitment is that of 'continuance commitment' which is 33.28 and the standard deviation is 7.15. Two dimensions of ingratiation behaviour namely 'opinion conformity' and 'other enhancement' have almost equal mean value. The lowest mean score among the dimensions of ingratiation behaviour is that of 'self-preservation' (mean value = 15.24).

Pre-testing of the tool was done on 30 respondents during April 2012. The data collection was carried out during the months of May and June 2012. The data were analysed using SPSS package Version 20. Appropriate descriptive and inferential statistics have been applied. Statistical tests applied include t-test, one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), correlation and regression.

The limitations of the study emanate from the sample size and the nature of the ingratiation behaviour construct. Since ingratiation behaviour is concerned with behavioural and emotional aspects of employees, the element of self-report bias may be more.

STUDY RESULTS

Respondents' Profile

As regards the personal profile, a little more than three-fourth of the respondents (75.3%) belonged to the age group of 24 to 28 years. The mean age is 26.98 years and the standard deviation is 2.38. The maximum age of the respondents was 33 years. Majority (80.0%) of the respondents were men. A little more than two-third of the respondents (68.0%) had Under Graduation / Post Graduation professional degrees (ex: B.E., B.Tech, MCA, M.Tech etc).

With respect to the job profile, a little more than one-fourth of the respondents (28.7%) were designated as 'software developers'. Other designations included 'technical specialists' (22.7%), 'software engineers' (15.3%), 'software analysts' (18.7%) and 'software testers' (14.7%). A little

Table 2: Independent sample t-test results for Leader-Member Exchange based on Personal attributes of the respondents

S. No	Variable	Group	N (150)	Mean	Standard deviation	T value	Degree of freedom	p value
1	Age	24-28 (in years)	113	28.48	5.46	2.46	148	0.02*
		29-33 (in years)	37	25.70	7.30			
2	Gender	Male	120	27.32	6.41	-1.95	148	0.05*
		Female	30	29.70	3.89			
3	Educational status	UG,PG professional	102	27.71	6.18	-0.25	148	0.79 (NS)
		UG,PG others	48	27.98	5.85			

* Significant at 0.05 level; NS=>Not significant

more than three-fourth of the respondents (76.7%) had their total years of work experience as 2 to 5 years. The rest had 6 to 9 years of work experience. The mean total years of experience was 4.04 and the standard deviation was 1.92. As regards work experience in the current organisation, majority of the respondents (86.7%) had between 2 and 4 years of experience and the rest (13.3%) had up to 7 years of work experience in the same organisation. The mean year of experience in the present organisation was 3.16 and the standard deviation was 1.08.

Differences in Mean Score of Leader-Member Exchange Based on Personal Profile of the Respondents

Independent sample t-test was applied to test the difference in leader-member exchange on the basis of personal factors namely age, gender and educational status. To facilitate hypothesis testing, NH 1 namely "There is no significant difference in the mean values of leader-member exchange of the respondents based on personal factors" has been broken down as under:

NH 1:1 - There is no significant difference in the mean of leader-member exchange between respondents of different age groups.

NH 1:2 - There is no significant difference in the mean of leader-member exchange between male and female respondents.

NH 1:3 - There is no significant difference in the mean of leader-member exchange between respondents of varying educational status.

From Table 2, it is understood that the mean score of leader-member exchange among the respondents from the age group of 24-28 years is 28.48 and that among those in

the age group of 29-33 years is 25.70. Thus respondents from the younger age group (i.e., 24-28 years) have higher scores of leader-member exchange. The t-value of 2.46 is statistically significant (p value < 0.05). Hence, it is concluded that the difference in means of leader-member exchange of the respondents from the two age groups is statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis (NH 1:1) is rejected.

The mean score of leader-member exchange among the male respondents is 27.32 and that among the female respondents is 29.70. Thus female respondents have higher scores of leader-member exchange. The t-value of -1.95 is statistically significant (p value is significant at 0.05 level). Hence, it is concluded that the difference in means of leader-member exchange of the male and female respondents is statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis (NH 1:2) is rejected.

Item 3 of Table 2 indicates that the mean score of leader-member exchange among the respondents with professional education is 27.71 and that among the other group is 27.98. Thus it is inferred that both the groups have almost equitable scores of leader-member exchange. The t-value of -0.25 is not statistically significant (p value is greater than 0.05). Hence, it is concluded that the difference in means of leader-member exchange of the respondents from the two educational backgrounds is not statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis (NH 1:3) is accepted.

Differences in Mean Score of Leader-Member Exchange Based on Job Profile of the Respondents

To test the difference in leader-member exchange on the basis of variables related to job profile of the respondents namely, total years of experience and years of experience

Table 3: Independent Sample t-test results for Leader-Member Exchange based on Job-related Factors

S. No	Variable	Group	N (150)	Mean	Standard deviation	T value	Degree of freedom	p value
1	Total years of experience	2-5 (in years)	115	27.66	6.37	-0.48	148	0.62 (NS)
		6-9 (in years)	35	28.33	4.94			
2	Years of experience in the present organisation	2-4 (in years)	130	28.35	5.79	2.92	148	0.00*
		5-7 (in years)	20	24.20	6.67			

* Significant at 0.05 level NSà Not Significant

in the present organisation, independent sample t-test was applied (Refer Table 3). To test the difference in leader-member exchange on the basis of designation, one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was applied (Refer Table 4).

To facilitate hypothesis testing, NH 2 namely “There is no significant difference in the mean values of leader-member exchange of the respondents based on job-related factors” has been broken down as under.

NH 2:1 - There is no significant difference in the mean of leader-member exchange between respondents based on total years of experience.

NH 2:2 - There is no significant difference in the mean of leader-member exchange between respondents based on years of experience in the present organisation.

NH 2:3 - There is no significant difference in the mean of leader-member exchange between respondents of different designations.

From Table 3, it is understood that the mean score of leader-member exchange among the respondents from the group of respondents having total years of experience ranging between 2 and 5 years is 27.66 and that among the group of respondents having total years of experience from 6 to 9 years is 28.33. Thus respondents having 6 to 9 years of experience have higher scores of leader-member exchange. The t-value of -0.48 is statistically not significant (p value > 0.05). Hence, it is concluded that the difference in means of leader-member exchange of the respondents from the group of respondents having total years of experience is not significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis (NH 2:1) is accepted.

Further, the mean score of leader-member exchange among the respondents from the group of respondents having 2

to 4 years of experience in the organisation is 28.35 and that among the group of respondents having 5 to 7 years of experience in the organisation is 24.20. Thus respondents having 2 to 4 years of experience have higher scores of leader-member exchange. The t-value of 2.92 is statistically significant (p value < 0.05). Hence, it is concluded that the difference in means of leader-member exchange of the respondents based on years of experience in the present organisation is statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis (NH 2:2) is rejected.

From Table 4a, it is found that the mean score of leader-member exchange is the least for those respondents designated as “Software Analyst” (mean value is 26.18) and is the highest for those designated as “Software Tester” (mean value is 28.73). The ‘F’ value is 0.70 and the ‘p’ value is 0.59 which denotes that it is not significant. Hence the null hypothesis (NH 2:3) is accepted. Therefore, it is concluded that the difference in the leader-member exchange among the respondents from different designations is not statistically significant.

Relationship Between Organisational Commitment, Ingratious Behaviour and Leader-Member Exchange

To test the significance of the relationship between the key variables of the study, namely, organisational commitment and its dimensions, ingratiatory behaviour and its dimensions and leader-member exchange, NH 3 has been broken down as under.

NH 3:1: There is no significant relationship between organisational commitment and leader-member exchange.

Table 4a: One-Way Analysis of Variance results for Leader-Member Exchange based on Designation

Variable	Designation	N	Mean	Standard deviation	F value	p value
Designation	Software Engineer	23	27.61	6.15	0.70	0.59 (NS)
	Software Developer	43	28.14	6.17		
	Software Tester	22	28.73	6.35		
	Software Analyst	28	26.18	6.88		
	Technical Specialist	34	28.21	4.94		
Total		150	27.79	6.06		

* Significant at 0.05 level NSà Not Significant

Table 4b: Summary of ANOVA Results

Variable	Source of variation	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Mean square	F value	p value
Designation	Between groups	103.92	4	25.98	0.70	0.59 (NS)
	Within groups	5362.67	145	36.98		
	Total	5466.59	149			

Table 5: Inter-correlation matrix of the variables of the study

Variables	Values	LMX	OC	OC_d1	OC_d2	OC_d3	IB	IB_d1	IB_d2	IB_d3	IB_d4
LMX	r	1									
	p										
OC	r	.73**	1								
	p	.00									
OC_d1	r	.09	.62**	1							
	p	.28	.00								
OC_d2	r	.41**	.75**	.21*	1						
	p	.00	.00	.01							
OC_d3	r	1.00**	.73**	.09	.42**	1					
	p	.00	.00	.28	.00						
IB	r	.08	.05	.05	-.04	.08	1				
	p	.34	.55	.54	.66	.34					
IB_d1	r	.14	.14	.08	.06	.14	.54**	1			
	p	.09	.09	.31	.47	.09	.00				
IB_d2	r	.42**	.69**	.15	.92**	.42**	-.09	.05	1		
	p	.00	.00	.06	.00	.00	.24	.52			
IB_d3	r	.04	-.03	-.02	-.08	.04	.78**	.18*	-.15	1	
	p	.64	.73	.77	.31	.64	.00	.03	.08		
IB_d4	r	-.06	-.02	.06	-.03	-.06	.76**	.15	-.09	.66**	1
	p	.45	.83	.48	.69	.45	.00	.07	.23	.000	

** Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

NH 3:2: There is no significant relationship between affective commitment and leader-member exchange.

NH 3:3: There is no significant relationship between normative commitment and leader-member exchange.

NH 3:4: There is no significant relationship between continuance commitment and leader-member exchange.

NH 3:5: There is no significant relationship between ingratiation behaviour and leader-member exchange.

NH 3:6: There is no significant relationship between opinion conformity behaviour and leader-member exchange.

NH 3:7: There is no significant relationship between other enhancement behaviour and leader-member exchange.

NH 3:8: There is no significant relationship between favour rendering behaviour and leader-member exchange.

NH 3:9: There is no significant relationship between self-preservation behaviour and leader-member exchange.

Legend:

r- Pearson correlation value p- Significance value

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| i. LMX: Leader-Member Exchange | (vi) IB: Ingratiation Behaviour |
| ii. OC: Organisational Commitment | (vii) IB_d1: Opinion Conformity Behaviour |
| iii. OC_d1: Affective Commitment | (viii) IB_d2: Other Enhancement Behaviour |
| iv. OC_d2: Normative Commitment | (ix) IB_d3: Favour Rendering Behaviour |
| v. OC_d3: Continuance Commitment | (x) IB_d4: Self-Preservation Behaviour |

From Table 5, it is inferred that there is a moderate degree of positive correlation ($r = 0.73$) between organisational commitment and leader-member exchange and this is statistically significant (p value = 0.00). Hence, it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between organisational commitment and leader-member exchange. Therefore, the null hypothesis NH 3:1 is rejected.

The negligible degree of correlation ($r = 0.09$) between affective commitment and leader-member exchange is not statistically significant (p value = 0.28). Hence, it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between affective commitment and leader-member exchange. Therefore, the null hypothesis NH 3:2 is accepted. The moderate degree of positive correlation ($r = 0.41$) between normative commitment and leader-member exchange is statistically significant (p value = 0.00). Hence, it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between normative commitment and leader-member exchange. Therefore, the null hypothesis NH 3:3 is rejected. The perfect positive correlation ($r =$

1.00) between continuance commitment and leader-member exchange is statistically significant (p value = 0.00). Hence, it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between continuance commitment and leader-member exchange. Therefore, the null hypothesis NH 3:4 is rejected.

With regard to ingratiation behaviour, Table 5 indicates that there is negligible degree of correlation ($r = 0.08$) between ingratiation behaviour and leader-member exchange and that this is not statistically significant (p value = 0.34). Hence, it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between ingratiation behaviour and leader-member exchange. Therefore, the null hypothesis NH 3:5 is accepted.

The low correlation ($r = 0.14$) between opinion conformity behaviour and leader-member exchange is not statistically significant (p value = 0.09). Hence, it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between opinion conformity behaviour and leader-member exchange. Therefore, the null hypothesis NH 3:6 is accepted. The moderate degree of positive correlation ($r = 0.42$) between other enhancement behaviour and leader-member exchange is statistically significant (p value = 0.00). Hence, it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between other enhancement behaviour and leader-member exchange. Therefore, the null hypothesis NH 3:7 is rejected. With regard to favour rendering behaviour, there is almost nil correlation ($r = 0.04$) between favour rendering behaviour and leader-member exchange and this is not statistically significant (p value = 0.64). Hence, it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between favour rendering behaviour and leader-member exchange. Therefore, the null hypothesis NH 3:8 is accepted. The very low degree of negative correlation ($r = -0.06$) between self-preservation behaviour and leader-member exchange is not statistically significant (p value = 0.45). Hence, it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between self-preservation behaviour and leader-member exchange. Therefore, the null hypothesis NH 3:9 is accepted.

Prediction of Leader-Member Exchange Based on Organisational Commitment, Ingratiation Behaviour

To predict leader-member exchange based on the independent variables that is, the dimensions of organisational commitment namely affective commitment, normative commitment, continuance commitment and the dimensions of ingratiation behaviour namely, opinion conformity, other enhancement, favour rendering, self-preservation, the following null hypothesis was framed:-

NH 4.1: Affective commitment, normative commitment, continuance commitment, opinion conformity, other

Table 6a: Model Summary of Multiple Regression

Model	Variables Entered	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Results
1	Other Enhancement	.07	.06	5.88	F value = 10.35 p value = 0.00
2	Other Enhancement, Normative Commitment	.09	.08	5.82	F value = 7.27 p value = 0.00
3	Other Enhancement, Normative Commitment, Continuance Commitment	.12	.10	5.74	F value = 6.57 p value = 0.00

enhancement, favour rendering and self-preservation will not serve to predict leader- member exchange.

All the mentioned variables were subjected to step-wise regression but only three variables namely 'other enhancement', 'normative commitment' and 'continuance commitment' entered into the regression equation. The other variables namely 'affective commitment', 'opinion conformity' and 'favour rendering', and 'self-preservation' failed to meet the selection criteria as indicated by the non-significant t-value ($p > 0.05$). Thus of the seven variables entered, only three variables reached the criteria for entry into the final regression equation. The model summary is presented in Table 6a.

The ANOVA test to find out the goodness of fit of the model revealed that the combination of variables namely, other enhancement, normative commitment, continuance commitment significantly predicted leader-member exchange. For this model, the F value is 6.57 and the significance value is 0.00 which showed that the regression model had a good fit.

Table 6b lists the coefficient for each variable and its relative impact. It is clear that continuance commitment makes the strongest unique contribution in explaining leader-member exchange. Further as the t-test results are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) the null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that the three variables 'other enhancement', 'normative commitment', 'continuance commitment' serve to significantly predict the variance in leader-member exchange. Through this regression analysis it is evident that

other enhancement, normative commitment and continuance commitment are statistically significant predictors of leader-member exchange.

DISCUSSION

This study has helped to throw light on the interplay between organisational commitment, ingratiation behaviour and leader-member exchange based on data derived from software professionals in Chennai city. The tests of differences reveal that leader-member exchange is statistically significant across age groups, gender categories and employees with less years of experience in the organisation. The regression analysis shows that other enhancement behaviour (a dimension of ingratiation behaviour), normative commitment and continuance commitment are statistically significant predictors of leader-member exchange. Thus the study has brought to light that certain dimensions of organisational commitment and ingratiation behaviour have a role to play in leader-member exchange. For instance, continuance commitment has emerged as a significant predictor of leader-member exchange implying that employees who intend to continue in the organisation would strive to maintain positive leader-member exchange. In the like manner, other enhancement dimension of ingratiation behaviour is a significant predictor of leader-member exchange. This implies that employees who involve in communication of leader enhancing statements tend to have positive leader-member exchanges. Further, women employees have reported better leader-member exchange. A similar finding has been reported by

Table 6b: Coefficients

Model 3	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T value	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Other Enhancement	-.36	.10	-.28	-3.59	.00
Normative Commitment	-.23	.09	-.24	-2.76	.00
Continuance Commitment	.16	.07	.19	2.19	.03

Rai (2009). This gender advantage experienced by women may be attributed to personality factors and also leader's outlook on managing women. Findings such as these are interesting and note worthy.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings of the present study, the following suggestions are put forth.

- In the interest of effective leader-member exchanges, the leader has to be wary of possible other enhancement tactics adopted by followers. Other enhancement tactics are adopted to consciously “flatter” the boss in order to get personal gain. Such tendencies may result in positive leader-member exchange for the follower concerned and the leader but such phenomena would be a great demoralising factor for other followers who do not indulge in such behaviour. Hence, as a good leader, one should be wary of such negative behaviour and should not entertain the same in order to remain an inclusive and democratic leader. Inputs on understanding self and others, transaction analysis and so on would be handy in this regard.
- Normative commitment and continuance commitment have been identified as a significant predictor of leader-member exchange. This is a cue to human resource managers to strive to make the organisation as a great place to work—a workplace that the employees aspire to be in. The employees should not feel part of the organisation because of compulsion but by desire. This aspect of commitment could be enhanced through effective talent management and employee engagement initiatives.
- In organisations, adequate redressal mechanisms need to be made available so that employees do not feel obliged to indulge in ingratiation behaviour to experience positive leader-member exchanges and also so that unprofessional workplace behaviours may be duly reported.
- Aspiring researchers could carry out qualitative or mixed-methods studies to explore further this area of research.

CONCLUSION

The study of leadership continues to be a popular and important research endeavour. Leader-member exchange focuses on the extent and quality of interaction between a leader and the follower. Development and maintenance of a mature dyadic relationship between the leader and follower will benefit not only the supervisors and the subordinates, but also the organisation as a whole. This study has brought to light some interesting findings.

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