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# Leadership perspective between leaders and subordinates in a marketing communication agent company

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## Abstract

The phenomenon that occurs nowadays is the distance between leaders and subordinates due to their different statuses. This gap can be anticipated by using the perspective of the Leadership Member Exchange (LMX) in leaders and subordinates. This study aimed to determine social exchanges between leaders and subordinates with LMX perspectives in a marketing communication agent company using phenomenological approach with LMX perspective. It was found four findings on how to build communication, hold outings or vacations, and benefit from outside activities of work. There was high quality LMX perspective between leaders and subordinates at a marketing communication agent company.

**Keywords:** Leaders and subordinates, Exchange leadership member, Social exchange.

## Perspectiva de liderazgo entre líderes y subordinados en una empresa de agente de comunicación de marketing

### Resumen

El fenómeno que ocurre hoy en día es la distancia entre líderes y subordinados debido a sus diferentes estados. Esta brecha se puede anticipar utilizando la perspectiva del Intercambio de Miembros de Liderazgo (LMX) en líderes y subordinados. Este estudio tuvo como objetivo determinar los intercambios sociales entre líderes y subordinados con perspectivas LMX en una empresa de agente de comunicación de marketing utilizando un enfoque fenomenológico con

perspectiva LMX. Se encontraron cuatro hallazgos sobre cómo construir comunicación, realizar salidas o vacaciones y beneficiarse de actividades de trabajo externas. Había una perspectiva LMX de alta calidad entre líderes y subordinados en una empresa de agente de comunicación de marketing.

**Palabras clave:** Líderes y subordinados, Miembro de liderazgo de intercambio, Intercambio social.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

One form of social exchanges is the Leadership Member Exchange (LMX). LMX is a social exchange that occurs in the scope of work (LIDEN ET AL., 1997). The social exchanges between leaders and subordinates results in increased quality in fulfilling obligations, gratitude, and trust. As a result, the number of social exchanges between leaders and subordinates is higher, the quality of relationship between leaders and subordinates tends to be stronger in the work environment. The exchange of various materials and goods materially or non-materially can be classified into social interactions in the context of the work environment (LIDEN ET AL., 1997). Individuals in the work environment giving advice, information, effort and social support that was identified as social exchanges between leaders and potential subordinates (HU AND LIDEN, 2015: JARAMILLO, 2018).

LMX describes the role in the process of the relationship between a leader and subordinates and this exchange relationship that had been developed from time to time. Because the LMX theory which

used to be called the vertical dyad linkage theory, focuses on how the reciprocal influence between leaders and subordinates. LMX leadership will have the uniqueness of leaders and subordinates having a goal of vision and mission so that the reciprocal relations between leaders and subordinates have strong personal closeness (GRAEN AND SCHIEMANN, 2013). The closeness between leaders and subordinates of the LMX theory argues that leaders form differences to exchange relationships with subordinates, subordinate relations to leaders are based on mutual trust, respect, and obligation (high-quality LMX relationships) to people who are only based on the requirements of a formal employment contract between leaders and subordinates (low quality LMX relationships) (GRAEN AND UHL-BIEN, 1995).

All actions carried out by individuals and carried out as often as possible will form a sense of getting rewarded. The higher the value of the results of a good deed by another individual, the greater the possibility of getting the same. The basic principle of social exchange is that rewards must be proportional to investment, so individuals when expecting a reward received must be worth the sacrifice (HOMANS, 1961). The social exchange referred to in that is limited to actions that depend on the reaction to get appreciation from others and will stop when the expected reaction cannot be obtained (BLAU, 2017).

The strong relationship between leaders and subordinates makes subordinates develop well in work, but the high quality of relations

between leaders and subordinates will create jealousy from other subordinates. As an example, when there are subordinates from different divisions see the high quality of relationships from other divisions, these subordinates will compare their relationship to with their leaders (HOGG ET AL., 2003).

One consequence of this approach is that LMX theory assumes that evaluating leaders and subordinates relationship is the same as the relationship given when there is social interaction. The relationship between leaders and subordinates is similar to the existence of social exchanges in an environment outside of work, the context in this assumption is how leaders or subordinates evaluate themselves about what their leaders or subordinates have given (LIDEN AND MASLYN, 1998).

This study analyzed how social exchange theory between leaders and subordinates using a member exchange leadership perspective. This research focused on social exchanges conducted between leaders and subordinates in the leadership member exchange perspective and also the factors related to the relationship between leaders and subordinates. This research was expected to be applied to companies regarding the benefits of applying the four dimensions of LMX theory, so that good performance increased organizational commitment and job satisfaction between leaders and subordinates are created.

Social Exchange Theory is the exchange of activities both tangible and intangible. The purpose of tangible exchanges is the gift giving while intangible exchange is the giving of attention (HOMANS, 1961). Social Exchange Theory can also be explained in the form of awards in the form of goods or services, tangible or intangible that can meet individual needs and goals (SZABO ET AL., 2001). Social Exchange Theory (SET) can also be understood from the perspective of LMX because social exchange theory will have an impact on member exchange leadership, namely the existence of exchange relations that occur in the work environment between leaders and subordinates (LIDEN AND MASLYN, 1998).

LMX was used as a reference to see quality relationships between leaders and subordinates and the exchange of relationships between leaders and subordinates (YUKL, 2015). Leaders who influence subordinates with LMX will make subordinates loyal to leaders, have a more significant impact on the work of subordinates, and will be committed to the organization (KREITNER AND KINICKI, 2005). With high commitment and job satisfaction, the subordinates will struggle with all of their abilities to achieve the work targets, so they will achieve high work productivity (AVOLIO AND LUTHANS, 2008). The theory of LME involves four main dimensions, namely affection, contribution, loyalty and professionalism of respect (LIDEN AND MASLYN, 1998).

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

This research was conducted at PT. Daya Maha Berkarya. The research object of this research was related to social exchanges between leaders and subordinates of perspectives in PT. Daya Maha Berkarya. Respondents in this study were represented by leaders and subordinates so that the subordinates could work together with PT. Daya Maha Berkarya. This research used qualitative methods to dig deeper into the ways leaders lead their teams. The informants of this study were 10 people with interviews that conducted approximately one month, and the average interview process for each informant took 10-25 minutes.

The type of data used in this study were primary and secondary data. Primary data in this study were obtained by conducting in-depth interviews with leaders and subordinates at PT. Daya Maha Berkarya. Secondary data in this study were supporting data and obtained from various parties, such as the literature of research journals, books, internet and mass media.

The qualitatively obtained data were analyzed by interactive models with three steps of analysis, namely data condensation, presentation and verification (Miles and Huberman, 1984). In this study, the data credibility test was carried out using technique of extension of observation and triangulation of time in which the

researchers dug data and tested the findings to the informants by searching the data back to the informants at different times.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study discussed how leaders who have subordinates become leaders with the concept of social exchange in the perspective of member exchange leadership. The leaders provided a comfort when working under the direction of the supervisor. The profiles of each informant are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Informants' Profile

Informant	Gender	Age	Position
SPV01	Male	36	Supervisor Milo REG Surabaya
SPV02	Female	37	Supervisor Batita dan Lactogrow REG Surabaya
SPV03	Male	32	Supervisor Dancow dan NBC REG Surabaya
SPV04	Male	38	Supervisor Nescafe REG Surabaya
BWH01	Female	25	SPG Milo REG Surabaya
BWH02	Male	23	SPB Milo REG Surabaya
BWH03	Male	23	SPB Dancow Fortigro REG Surabaya
BWH04	Female	25	SPG Dancow Fortigro REG Surabaya
BWH05	Male	25	SPB Batita REG Surabaya
BWH06	Female	23	SPG Nescafe REG Surabaya

From the table above, it can be seen that every individual who becomes informant in this study once worked for a company or organization before deciding to change jobs. The number of leaders was 4 persons with details of 3 male leaders and 1 female supervisor

and 6 subordinates with details of 3 women and 3 men, out of the total informants. The minimum age for the informant was 20 years and the maximum age was 38 years. In this study the informants described how the leadership member exchange process in the PT. Daya Maha Berkarya.

### *3.1. Application of affection*

Affection that will be carried out by the informants is a good relationship and how to communicate well between leaders and subordinates, as well as a form of concern between leaders and subordinates that arises. Strong relationships between leaders and subordinates will provide comfort and emergence of reciprocity between leaders and subordinates. With a leader's position in the organizational hierarchy, leaders will have more power, assets, and resources. Therefore leaders will have the key to determine the relationship that had a good quality for exchanges with subordinates.

#### *a. The way to communicate*

The way of communication between leaders and subordinates is the main highlight between the quality of the relationship between leaders and subordinates. The kinship system that has been

implemented by each leader to the team can build the better quality of the relationship and communication between leaders and subordinates.

There are times when we are serious, uhh. . . We talk seriously but if we are relaxed again or there is no work that is important I say to them through joking but the message that I convey must still be conveyed to them and I also call them directly by name or 'guys' and I consider them as family here (SPV01)

From the description of the informants, it can be seen that in terms of communication, it is explained that employees do not always communicate seriously with their subordinates. Leaders also sometimes provide communication by joking to greet messages to subordinates. Informant SPV01 prioritized kinship systems and never called subordinates as subordinates, but with their names, brand names or teams. In LMX theory, leaders want to have a variety of relationships with subordinates to have high quality between leaders and subordinates.

b. Outing

Outing is a vacation carried out by leaders and subordinates. The leaders will spend personal money to accommodate the holiday with the subordinates so that the subordinates do not spend money on the costs of staying and transportation costs.

There are activities outside the city like outings. It is like an award for them a year for what they have been doing. Sometimes, I used to go once a year, for example, when we had tour Jogja for one week. I never burdened them to spend even a penny because my own ehh I saw that they were good at working, so I didn't burden them to pay (SPV03).

The outing is like an outdoor vacation, so we don't pay. All are borne to supervisor, but yes, we really hasitated to take it eee if we want to snack or hang out ourselves, we use our own money in Malang. The spy even paid for the villa until the gasoline. It made us hesitate (BWH01)

. Outing activity is a form of appreciation to the subordinates that has worked with special ratings from leaders. Informants from the subordinate's point of view also explained that outing is a vacation together with leaders. Subordinates were also free of charge for this holiday activity because all costs were borne by the leader.

Subordinates often felt uncomfortable with their leaders because they had given free holidays. Based on the interview, it can be seen that the leader will voluntarily issue a personal budget to hold vacation activities with subordinates, starting from lodging and transportation funded by leaders as a form of appreciation for the performance of subordinates.

### c. Benefits of outing

The leaders invited subordinates to vacation and refresh from work. They totally paid all the necessities for the vacation. The benefit

of vacation was to get to know each other among subordinates, subordinates to leaders and leaders to subordinates.

"Well, with such activities, we automatically know each other, yes, so we are closer, then we know their character" (SPV04)

From SPV04, it was informed that the benefits of inviting subordinates to outside activities of work and vacation, and not charging to pay for lodging and transport costs were an award from leaders because subordinates had carried out work with high totality. "So it's better to know that the characters of each of the other team's. It makes us understand the team's subordinates' characters, so we also better understand the boss's character" (BWH01)

Informants from the subordinate's point of view explained that activities and holidays were useful to get to know more from the character of each individual well from fellow subordinates in a team. From the description above, it can be seen that the existence of outside activities of work was the initiative of leaders and subordinates aimed for refreshing from work and getting to know each other from each other's subordinate characters.

### *3.2. Team member contributions*

Contributions from subordinates will affect the relationship to fellow subordinates who have a positive influence. The existence of

different roles and responsibilities given by leaders to their members can influence the contributions of these subordinates.

a. Contributions to the team

SPV03 had contributed by making visits to each team to see the conditions in the field and assessing each subordinate work according to the rules. "I visit them in the field one by one. I want to see whether they are working or not. If not, then I say so." (SPV03). "Our contribution is what we can. We can be role models for new workers. They will certainly be partnered with senior workers so that they are taught, so our contribution is to teach new workers" (BWH01)

From the point of view of the subordinates, the contribution of the informant was according to the SOP and provided direction and gave a good example to the subordinates who have just started working. From the description above, it can be seen that the contribution aimed to achieve the shared vision and mission between leaders and subordinates. The two-way contributions both from leaders and subordinates are the key to achieving the vision and mission.

b. Totality at work

Totality at work was done by subordinates to companies can take the form of doing additional work without expecting

compensation. "His loyalty is like we have an impromptu visit from Jakarta, so I ask that suddenly and they are ready to do that, you know, ready to come and they leave things that they need and give priority to me" (SPV03). SPV03 described that subordinates would prioritize work interests even though they were sudden.

"Yes, I got extra hard work, we are loyal and total to the team. For example, if we do the report for 3 to 6 months, we have to do overtime, and if it is objected, it is because we are loyal, totality." (BWH01). BWH01 got additional work and implemented it as parts of the form of loyalty and totality to leaders and companies. Subordinates would not object to getting additional work. From this description it can be described that from the supervisor's point of view, subordinates would not refuse if they got additional assignments and would solve them well

### c. Incentive

The company did not have a budget to provide rewards from the results of the totality of subordinate work. As a leader who had a team, they were willingly willing to lose money to provide rewards for the achievements of subordinates that had been achieved. "Our company does not have overtime bonuses so I as an SPV will give rewards from my personal pocket so I give food allowance for subordinates who have helped me" (SPV01)

Rewards from the company do not exist, but the rewards from SPV itself are like giving more money per employee, sometimes if work late at night, spv will buy us food and we also get overtime money from SPV with his personal money to pay for overtime. (BWH04)

Informants from the supervisor's point of view realized that from the start they did not have a budget from the company. Leaders were willing to spend personal funds to give awards to the work of subordinates. From a subordinate point of view, BWH04 illustrated that all subordinates who worked at the company know that companies did not have the budget to provide additional funds for subordinates so that subordinates work with totality. From the results of the interview it is known that leaders and subordinates must understand each other.

### *3.3. Team loyalty*

Loyalty will provide opportunities for leaders and subordinates to dissipate their loyalty to the company. Loyalty can also describe between loyal and unfaithful from subordinates to leaders.

#### *a. Building mental loyalty*

As a leader, building mental loyalty for the team and subordinates is forming an atmosphere for subordinates who have a

sense of belonging. "I tried to make the team feel comfortable when working, working in the office here, working together with me, and continuing to create an atmosphere so that the team also feels that they have this office" (SPV01)

From information from informant SPV01, as leaders, they must maintain a conducive working atmosphere and subordinates must feel part of the group of companies. A leader must build a comfortable work environment that starts from a kinship nature.

In my opinion, the contribution that must be given to the team is that we worked well, if, for example, there is something happens, we talk about it as much as possible, ehh the team is good. Maintaining good value is difficult as much as possible so that our team is still good. (BWH01)

From the point of view of BWH01, it is illustrated that a good team must be maintained because maintaining it will be more difficult than reaching. This good atmosphere had been felt by the informant to maintain or become better. From the results of the interview, it is known that building loyalty mentality from a supervisor's point of view will be different, but from that difference one goal is that subordinates must have loyalty to their leaders and subordinates must also have awareness of themselves to build mental loyalty. BWH01 stated that maintaining the team atmosphere was a form of building the mental loyalty of subordinates to leaders and the company.

b. Building trust

Building trust between leaders and fellow subordinates was used for the convenience of one team so leaders can direct additional tasks and subordinates can rely on leaders as support. Leaders and subordinates are bound together in a productive manner that is more than a predetermined work relationship.

"In kinship system, communication is important. There must be reciprocity, too, eh, I also want the team to have an open attitude towards me." (SPV01)

He knows that he wants to help us with the process, want to help the subordinate process so he helps. The spv help us how do we get better, he leads us, and he briefs us so we don't want to go directly. So like that, so far I believe my spv, I'm sure that if he wants the team to be better with direction and with the contribution of his contribution, so he also help indirectly. (BWH01)

Building trust begins with the system used in communicating between leaders and subordinates. The system run by leaders according to SPV01 was based on a mutually open kinship system between leaders and subordinates. It was the way leaders want to follow the flow of the process together with subordinates, and subordinates also wanted to see contributions from leaders to bring this team to be better. From the point of view of subordinates how to build

trust with contributions from leaders to intervene was by helping and supporting subordinates in their daily work.

c. Commitment.

The loyal form of subordinates was tangible evidence of subordinate loyalty to leaders and as an example of subordinate loyalty to leaders, such as forming a commitment to subordinates. "They have been joining me for a long time so I see loyalty to me. For example, if they are asked by another team, they will hesitate and still prioritize to go to my team." (SPV02).

From the results of the interview, it was known that the informant from the supervisor's point of view stated that the subordinates of SPV02 had committed themselves to the team. Subordinates would focus and prioritize the team and the current SPV. "If in terms of loyalty to the company, to be honest the issue of fees or salaries is not much here, but the boss or spv here and even all the components in this office are very comfortable to work with." (BWH01)

From the results of interviews from the perspective of the subordinates, it illustrated that the subordinates commit to remain with their leaders even though they show that the salary received was small. Comfortable feeling from subordinates is what make them commit to

leaders. From the results of the interview above, it can be seen that subordinates had high commitment to their leaders because employers have implemented kinship factors that have become a leaders approach to subordinates.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The implementation of LMX in marketing communication agent companies was divided into 4 dimensions, namely. Affection, contribution, loyalty and professional respect. In each dimension there was a relationship between leaders and subordinates to the company with a high quality LMX perspective.

In this study there are suggestions that can be used in further research. Further research can conduct analysis of Leadership Member Exchange in different places or locations and include a relatively larger number of informants to get a deeper picture of LMX. Further research can also use a quantitative approach so that results can be generalized. It is necessary to distinguish between old employees and new employees, so that they can assess the results of member exchange leadership assessments from old and new employees to leaders.

This research is useful for two subjects, companies and academics. For companies, they can find out information about social

exchanges between leaders and subordinates with a member exchange leadership perspective and it is expected that the company can implement and benefit from applying 4 (four) dimensions of LMX theory. The LMX perspective with high quality can be used as a solution so that the company's vision and mission can be achieved well and efficiently. For academics, this research is expected to provide understanding and become a reference for further research on how social exchanges between leaders and subordinates in LMX perspective work.

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