



# Research on the Influence of New Generation Employee Leader-member Exchange on Relationship Performance — The Mediating Role of Work Engagement

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**Abstract:** Based on the leader-member exchange theory (LMX), this paper explores the relationship between the leader-member exchange of the new generation of employees and employee relationship performance, and introduces employee work involvement to study its mediating effect. This study conducted a questionnaire survey on 208 new generation employees, and found that the exchange of leadership members of high-quality new generation employees is conducive to the formation of high-quality relationship performance; In the positive effect of leader-member relationship performance of new generation employees, job engagement plays an intermediary role. This study provides some enlightenment and reference for enterprises to manage the new generation of employees and follow the trend of The Times to achieve strategic goals.

**Key words:** leadership member exchange theory; the new generation of employees; relational performance; job engagement

## 1. Introduction

With the development of social economy and times, the new generation of employees is gradually entering the workplace. Usually, the new generation of employees are far from their superiors in all aspects, and are prone to conflicts and conflicts. These conflicts and contradictions will affect the closeness of leaders to different subordinate members and form different quality leader-member relationship. Leader-member exchange relationship with different quality will affect employees' work attitude, positive motivation and status, and form work involvement with different quality, which will produce positive or negative results on work performance. Therefore, studying the leader-member exchange and relationship performance of the new generation of employees is conducive to promoting the new generation of employees to improve their work behavior, promote their personal performance and personal value, and promote the realization of corporate strategic goals. This paper aims to study the leader-member exchange relationship and relationship performance of the new generation of employees by studying and summarizing the existing literature and conducting questionnaire survey and analysis, so as to provide the practical basis for enterprises to manage the new generation of employees more effectively and promote enterprises to achieve strategic performance and strategic goals efficiently.

## 2. Research hypothesis

### 2.1 the relationship between the new generation of employees' leadership member exchange and relationship performance

After the new generation of employees enter the workplace, the high-quality leader-member exchange relationship will enable the new generation of employees to establish an emotional bridge between the leader and the new generation of employees, and fully achieve the improvement of their relationship performance. On the contrary, the low-quality leader-member exchange relationship makes the new generation of employees and leaders always communicate around organizational rules and regulations, which leads to low-quality relationship performance.

Therefore, we propose:

H1: There is a positive correlation between leader-member exchange and relationship performance of new generation employees.

### 2.2 the mediating role of work input

First, when the exchange quality of leaders is high, employees tend to give leaders more loyalty and rewards; When the exchange quality of leaders is low, the relationship between employees and leaders is maintained by organizational rules and regulations, and the corresponding employees' emotional feedback and input are also reduced.

From this we propose:

H2a: The new generation of employee leadership member exchange has a positive correlation with job engagement.

Secondly, under the premise of high-quality work input, the new generation of employees are willing to devote more time and energy to their work tasks, thus achieving good work performance. On the contrary, under the premise of low quality work input, the new generation of employees only do their jobs well.

From this we propose:

H2b: Job engagement is positively correlated with relationship performance.

H2: Job engagement plays an intermediary role in the positive effect of leader-member exchange on relationship performance of new generation employees.

### 3. Research process

#### 3.1 Data collection and samples

In this study, a questionnaire survey was used to collect data for the new generation of employees (aged 18 to 30), and the online questionnaire platform - Juanxing was used to collect questionnaires, and 210 sample data were obtained in total. After excluding invalid questionnaires that did not meet the requirements and answered regularly, a total of 208 valid samples were obtained.

#### 3.2 Measuring tools

All the scales in this paper come from relevant literatures at home and abroad and have been proved to have good reliability and validity.

The leader-member exchange scale adopts the LMX-MDM scale of Wang Hui and Niu Xiongying (2004) to measure the quality of leader member exchange. Relationship performance was measured using the scale proposed by Xia Fubin and Lu Ping in a Study on the Structural Dimensions of Employee Relationship Performance in Chinese Enterprises. The work involvement scale was developed by Schaufeli et al. All the above scales were scored by Lister 5 points.

### 4. Research result

#### 4.1 Descriptive test

According to the descriptive test results, there is a significant positive correlation between leader member exchange and relationship performance ( $p=0.708$ ,  $r<0.01$ ). Hypothesis H1 is verified. There was a significant positive correlation between leader member exchange and job engagement ( $p=0.804$ ,  $r<0.01$ ), assuming H2a was verified. There was a significant positive correlation between job engagement and relationship performance ( $p=0.710$ ,  $r<0.01$ ), assuming H2b was verified.

#### 4.2 Regression analysis test

According to the relevant results of regression analysis (see Table 1), it can be seen from model 1 that the independent variable is the leader member exchange relationship, and the dependent variable is the relationship performance. After controlling the influence of gender and age, it can be concluded that the leader member exchange has a significant impact on the relationship performance ( $B=0.661$ ,  $p<0.05$ ).

According to model 2, the independent variable is the leader member exchange relationship, and the dependent variable is the job involvement. After controlling the influence of gender and age, it can be concluded that the leader member exchange relationship has a significant influence on the job involvement relationship ( $B=0.850$ ,  $p<0.05$ ).

According to model 3, the independent variable is job involvement and the dependent variable is relationship performance. After controlling the effects of gender and age, it can be concluded that job involvement has a significant impact on relationship performance ( $B=0.633$ ,  $p<0.05$ ).

#### 4.3 the mediation effect test

In this study, SPSS was used for hierarchical regression to verify the mediating effect. As can be seen from Table 3, after controlling the gender and age variables, in the change process from model 1 to model 3, the work input of the intermediary variable is added, and the R square increases from 0.504 to 0.570, the  $\Delta R$  square is 0.064, and the explanatory variation increases. In model 1, leader member exchange was significant at the level of 0.01 ( $B=0.661$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). In model 2, leader member exchange was also significant at the level of 0.01 ( $B=0.850$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). In model 4, job involvement also showed a significant level of 0.01 ( $B=0.376$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). So intermediation effect exists. Let's say H2 is true.

**Table 1. Regression analysis results of new generation employees, job engagement and relationship performance (N=208)**

Argument	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	Relational performance			Job involvement			Relational performance			Relational performance		
	B	$\beta$	p	B	$\beta$	p	B	$\beta$	p	B	$\beta$	p
Sex	.068	.056	.278	-.085	-.060	.158	.105	.087	.019	.100	.083	.089
Profession	.000	.002	.965	-.030	-.137	.001	.016	.088	.019	.012	.064	.202
1	.661	.716	.000	.0850	.774	.000				.341	.370	.000
2		.					.633	.753	.000	.376	.448	.000
R		.710			.821			.723			.755	
R2		.504			.673			.522			.570	
Adjust R2		.497			.668			.515			.561	
$\Delta$ R2											.064	
f-number		69.213			140.144			74.332			67.247	
Sig		.000			.000			.000			.000	

Note: 1 represents the exchange of leading members and 2 represents the work input

## 5. Research conclusion and enlightenment

The results show that the leader-member exchange of the new generation employees has a significant positive correlation with their relationship performance, and the quality of the new generation employees' job engagement has a positive moderating effect. At the same time, there is a significant positive correlation between leadership member exchange and job engagement, and job engagement also has a significant positive correlation with their relationship performance.

This study has some implications for management practice: (1) The quality of the exchange relationship between employees and leaders will affect their relationship performance. Therefore, leaders need to pay attention to the emotional interaction between employees, give cordial greetings and care to employees at appropriate times, and create a high-quality atmosphere for the exchange of leaders and members. (2) Job engagement can improve the relationship performance of the new generation of employees. When managing the new generation of employees, enterprises should pay full attention to their work involvement, enhance their work enthusiasm, improve the working environment to improve their work focus and other measures to achieve the improvement of relationship performance and make the organization stand out in the fierce competition.

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