

EMERGENT LEADERSHIP IN THE WORKPLACE

by

Austin T. Minor

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Project Approved:

Michael Cole, Ph.D.  
Department of Management  
(Supervising Professor)

William Becker, Ph.D.  
Department of Management

Dianna McFarland, Ph.D.  
Department of Psychology

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## INTRODUCTION

Within the workplace there are countless interactions that take place among employees at all levels of the organization. To help us better understand these interactions, Social Exchange Theory (SET) is one of the foremost tools we can use. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century social philosophers sought to understand the basis for what social exchange was grounded on. Adam Smith, in 1850, wrote:

Whoever offers to another a bargain of any kind, proposes to do this: Give me that which I want, and you shall have this which you want, is the meaning of every such offer; and it is in this manner that we obtain from one another the far greater part of those good offices which we stand in need of. (p. 7)

Stated more plainly, SET is an exchange process through which individuals, both consciously and unconsciously, aim to maximize benefits and minimize costs.

In the SET framework, theorists argue that these interactions create obligatory relationships that are centered on self-interest (Emerson, 1976; Huston & Burgess, 1979). Regarding self-interest, Blau (1964) says social exchange takes place when “an individual is attracted to another if he expects associating with him to be in some way rewarding for himself, and his interest in the expected social rewards draws him to the other” (p. 20). As each party looks to his own self-interest, these social interactions have the potential to form interdependent relationships that ultimately produce high-quality relationships (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Interdependence occurs when both parties are mutually dependent on one another to achieve positive results. This is far different from either dependence or independence. Dependence is where one individual takes advantage

and relies completely on the other. Independence is where an individual desires no interaction to create communicative or collaborative working relationships. Rather, in interdependency, exchange outcomes are the result of both parties in the exchange relationship putting forth an effort. The same cannot be said for independence and dependence, where only one party is involved in the effort. In regards to exchange relationships, only interdependency possesses the nature of true exchange (Blau, 1964; Homans, 1961; Molm, 1994).

A social exchange might be best understood by contrasting it to an economic exchange. In an economic exchange, the interaction is such that each party is giving something up for the benefit of the other party. One party provides a good in exchange for a sum of money because they value the money more than they do the good or service. Social exchanges are similar in that value is created and each party benefits from the other. For instance, a low-level employee might work with his manager to learn how to use new software that the company has introduced. The employee gets quality training and the manager might gain rapport within the department. An interaction takes place and value is created as the exchange occurs. However, there are some key factors that differentiate a social exchange from a purely economic exchange. Unlike an economic exchange, Cole, Schaninger, and Harris (2002) point out that “social exchange elicits positive affect, trust, and kinship” (p. 146). Blau (1964) adds, “Only social exchange tends to engender feelings of personal obligation, gratitude, and trust; purely economic exchange does not” (p. 94).

SET hinges on one party initiating the first interaction. If the other party responds favorably, there is then the potential for further interaction in future encounters. The result can be somewhat of a spiral effect, where each interaction builds on previous ones and the steps in the process become less clear, yet more natural and concrete (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). This process is founded on mutual trust. Blau (1968) puts it this way:

Social exchange requires trust.... Typically, however, social exchange relationships evolve in a slow process, starting with minor transactions in which little trust is required because little risk is involved and in which both partners can prove their trustworthiness, enabling them to expand their relation and engage in major transactions. Thus the process of social exchange leads to the trust required for it in a self-generating fashion.

As these relationships grow, there are various outcomes that are favorable for both parties, as well as the organization. First, connections are formed that Cropanzano, Byrne, Bobocel, and Rupp (2001) call *social exchange relationships*. A strong social exchange relationship consists of employees “taking care” of other employees. As each party looks out for the other, social exchange strengthens. Cropanzano and Mitchell assert that with stronger social exchange comes “effective work behavior and positive employee attitudes” (p. 882). Another positive outcome of social exchange relationships is increased commitment between the two parties. Because each party is inclined to reciprocate the benefits it receives, the relationship also fosters goodwill and helping behaviors toward the parties involved in the social

exchange (Malatesta, 1995; Malatesta & Byrne, 1997; Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, & Taylor, 2000).

Scholarly research has employed SET to study three focal relationships that occur in the workplace. The first key relationship is that between an individual employee and the organization, known as perceived organizational support (POS). Settoon, Bennett, and Liden (1996) found that POS was linked to an employee's commitment to and involvement within the organization. The quality of support the employee receives from the organization determines the quality of reciprocation by employees (Cole, Schaninger, & Harris, 2002). Over time as employees have more experience with the organization, they begin to form beliefs about how the organization views and feels about them (Cole et al., 2002). When employees believe the organization perceives them positively, employees show reduced absenteeism and put forth more effort. In addition, when employees feel support from the organization they may become more committed and exhibit positive citizenship behaviors (Brief and Motowidlo, 1986; Organ, 1988).

The second relationship is that between an individual employee and coworkers, known as team member exchange (TMX). While POS involves perception of the organization, TMX is defined as an "individual member's perception of his or her exchange relationship with the peer group as a whole" (Seers, 1989, p. 119). More broadly, TMX looks at an employee's propensity to participate in extra-role behaviors to help teammates and the team achieve their goals (Cole et al., 2002). TMX has been shown to increase organizational commitment, job satisfaction, job performance, and satisfaction with peers (Hellman, Witt, and Hilton, 1993).

The final relationship is that between an employee and his or her supervisor, known as leader-member exchange theory (LMX), which refers to “the quality of exchange between leaders and each of their followers” (Zhou & Schriesheim, 2009). Most individuals have spent much, if not all, of their time during their work life carrying out tasks under the authority of another individual. Employees report to, receive direction from, and are often evaluated by this individual. Commonly known as one’s boss or supervisor, an individual’s relationship with this person is an integral part of the workplace, and it is a relationship that has received much attention from researchers. It is around this relationship that my research is focused, and consequently the rest of my discussion will be focused on the leader-follower dynamic.

#### HISTORY OF LEADER-MEMBER EXCHANGE

The Leader-Member Exchange model has gone through a four-stage series of developments over a span of about 30 years. In the first stage of study, researchers found that leaders formed differentiated relationships with followers. Stage two research sought to clarify these differentiated workplace relationships and began to form a framework for LMX (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). In stage three, studies were done on an individual level, studying how leaders can work with each individual subordinate on a more personal level to form greater interdependency in their work relationship (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Finally, stage four took a broader approach to LMX research, and instead of studying individual interactions, looked at how leader-subordinate relationships fit into the organization at large (Schriesheim, Castro, & Cogliser, 1999).

In the midst of this four-stage development of LMX, there has been widespread disagreement about what the LMX construct actually represents. Graen (1976) described LMX to be built on “competence, interpersonal skill, and trust” (p. 76), while Cashman, Dansereau, Graen, and Haga (1976) collectively described LMX based on “attention and sensitivity” (p. 76). Schiemann (1977) also included attention and sensitivity, along with trust and support. Moving into the 1980s, LMX continued to be defined as “the quality of exchange between leader and subordinate” (Schriesheim, Castro, & Cogliser, 1999, p. 76). Other subdimensions of LMX studied by Graen and his colleagues were motivation, understanding, confidence, innovativeness, and delegation. Ten years into LMX research, there was still no clear definition as to what the construct represented (Schriesheim, Castro, & Cogliser, 1999). However, Scandura, Graen, and Novak (1986) finally put forth a more detailed definition of the LMX construct:

Leader-member exchange is (a) a system of components and their relationships (b) involving both members of a dyad (c) involving interdependent patterns of behavior and (d) sharing mutual outcome instrumentalities and (e) producing conceptions of environments, cause maps, and value” (Scandura, Graen, & Novak, 1986, p. 580).

#### LEADER-MEMBER EXCHANGE THEORY

While SET can be used to examine many types of relationships, one of the most important and most studied work relationships is that between an appointed leader and follower. An appointed leader implies any leader in an appointed position of legitimate authority. Appointed leaders can derive their power from

several different bases. For example, status within a company would grant one *legitimate power*, which is concrete and highly visible. Other appointed leaders might have the rights to exercise *reward power*, whereby they can give rewards to employees for their efforts. Conversely, others can possess *coercive power*, exercising their right to punish employees for their poor performance or unsatisfactory behavior (French Jr. & Raven, 1962). It is around these power bases that appointed leaders exercise leadership among their followers.

Part of the reason for the wealth of research conducted around the leader-follower relationship is because of its importance within the workforce. Research has shown that there are countless outcomes that result from interactions between leaders and followers. A poor relationship with one's supervisor leads to inefficiencies. However, if leaders and followers have a high-quality relationship, there is greater organizational alignment, as well as several other positive outcomes that researchers have found in previous studies. Prior research by Gerstner and Day (1997) even found a significant negative relationship between high-quality relationships and turnover intentions. Thus, if the leader-follower relationship is out of sync, problems will loom, potentially incurring significant turnover costs to the organization.

LMX research details the effects the leader-follower relationship has on follower behavior and the organization (Cole et al., 2002). Researchers have often found high-quality exchange between leader and subordinate to be linked to both higher follower job satisfaction and greater follower performance (Gerstner & Day, 1997; Liden, Sparrowe, & Wayne, 1997). A number of other outcomes have been

found to result from a high degree of LMX, including mentoring from the leader and more rapid follower career advancement (Scandura & Schiesheim, 1994), as well as greater commitment to the organization (Duchon, Green, & Taber, 1986). LMX has also been paired with subordinate performance (Dansereau, Alutto, Markham, & Dumas, 1982), in addition to subordinate satisfaction (Graen, Novak, & Sommerkamp, 1982) and decreased propensity to quit (Vecchio, 1982).

### EMERGENT LEADERSHIP

Despite overwhelming evidence and support surrounding the relationship between an appointed leader and subordinates, there are times when subordinates, for one reason or another, seek out the help and advice of an individual other than their direct supervisor. This informal leader is what one might call an *emergent* leader. Northouse (2010) differentiates emergent leaders from assigned leaders by recognizing that emergent leaders gain power “because of the way other group members respond to them” (p. 5). The leader emerges from within the group based on factors that set the individual apart from others. Much like an appointed leader, an individual that emerges might be seen as having a keen awareness of group dynamics and thus be well liked by members. Others may be seen as having expert power on matters of group discussion. Regardless of how one gains status or power, emergent leadership is about group perception – much different from an appointed leader that gains power from position. Fisher (1974) noted some of the other behaviors that might lead to leader emergence: being verbally involved, being informed, seeking others’ opinions, initiating new ideas, and being firm but not rigid (Northouse, 2010).

While researchers have studied the beneficial effects of LMX between appointed leaders and their followers, little research has adopted LMX theory when exploring the emergent leader-follower relationship. This raises many questions. First of all, do followers have an emergent leader or 'go-to other'? And if so, does that group exhibit any differences from those followers that do not report as having an emergent leader? If employees do have emergent leaders that they go to for help, could it be that researchers are studying the wrong leader? If followers do in fact seek out another leader, be it an emergent leader or 'go-to other', then it would be clear that another variable is at play. We cannot look at appointed leaders to the exclusion of the emergent leader, if in fact the emergent leader is playing a role in the work life of the follower. In addition, how does LMX between emergent leader and follower impact outcomes? Is this relationship more or less important than findings for LMX based on the appointed leader and follower?

Beyond the limited research on LMX and emergent leadership, I am aware of no research that has compared and contrasted the effects of LMX between appointed leaders-followers and emergent leaders-followers. Hence, the purpose of my thesis is to use LMX to examine how follower outcomes (i.e. creative performance, task performance, and citizenship behavior) are impacted by low-high quality relationships between appointed leader-follower and emergent leader-follower.

## HYPOTHESES

Based on prior research, LMX between appointed leader and follower has consistently been shown to have a positive relationship with creativity (Oldham & Cummings, 1996; Zhou & Oldham, 2001), in-role or task performance (Settoon, Bennett, & Liden, 1996; Dansereau, Alutto, Markham, & Dumas, 1982), and extra-role performance or OCB (Settoon et al., 1996). It is these three outcomes that were measured in my survey. Creativity is a complex outcome that demands intensive effort from employees. It can have multiple influencers, and while individual characteristics ultimately determine creative potential, context and work environment have a significant effect on creative performance. Moreover, the interaction between the individual and the work environment play a large role in determining creative performance (Amabile, 1988; Woodman, Sawyer, & Griffin, 1993). Creativity is critical to the work context, as creative employees have developed innovative processes, products, and services (Amabile, 1996; Mumford & Gustafson, 1988).

The second and third outcomes in the survey are similar yet distinct. In-role performance, also known as task performance, refers to how effective employees are at performing their specific job responsibilities (Turnley, Bolino, Lester, & Bloodgood, 2003). These job responsibilities refer to the formal tasks given to an employee by his or her appointed leader. The third outcome is extra-role behavior, commonly known as citizenship behavior, and at times also called altruism. Williams and Anderson (1991) define these as “behaviors that immediately benefit specific individuals and indirectly through this means contribute to the organization

(e.g., helps others who have been absent, takes a personal interest in other employees)” (p. 602). In other words, these are behaviors that employees exhibit, separate from their in-role tasks, that in effect give back to others in the organization.

### **Hypothesis 1**

The consistency of prior researchers finding LMX to have a positive relationship between these three outcomes has a very logical nature to it, especially in the context of an appointed leader and their follower. Because a follower is evaluated on overall job performance, it would follow that a high quality relationship between leader and follower would be strongly correlated with those three positive outcomes. Following the social exchange framework, the more integrated the leader-follower relationship becomes, the more natural and interdependent it becomes. The result is that both parties feel a sense of obligation to the other, which contributes to the follower putting forth more effort and energy to on-the-job performance, which I believe increases the likelihood of the three outcomes tested in my survey. Consequently, my first hypothesis follows the findings of past research.

*Hypothesis 1* – There will be a positive relationship between LMX-appointed leader and each of the three follower outcomes of creativity, in-role or task performance, as well as extra-role performance or OCB.

### **Hypothesis 2**

While researchers have shown the relationship between appointed leaders and their followers to have a positive relationship to the three outcomes, the

relationship between emergent leaders and their followers has not drawn as much attention from researchers. Where research on emergent leadership has been done it has largely been conducted around working within groups and teams. From a teamwork standpoint, Stogdill (1974) argues that emergent leaders may be equally as important as appointed leaders in regard to task completion. In fact, emergent leaders are tied to task coordination so much so that theorists have argued that the extent of a leader's task coordination behaviors determine how strongly the individual is perceived by others to be a leader (Neubert & Taggar, 2004). Emergent leaders are also highly "tuned in" to their co-workers' emotions (Wolff, Pescosolido, & Druskat, 2002). In addition, emergent leaders' personality plays a large role in their rise to power, as they are highly extraverted (Judge, Bono, Ilies, & Gerhardt, 2002). Because of their emotional intelligence and extraversion, emergent leaders exhibit support for, as well as a strong interest in, other group members. These supportive behaviors have been shown to inspire creativity (Shalley, Gilson, & Blum, 2009), and via SET and the notion of reciprocity (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) could result in more extra-role behaviors on the part of the employee. Considering these prior research findings regarding emergent leaders, I propose that the emergent leader's relationship to each of the three follower outcomes will be positive.

*Hypothesis 2* – There will be a positive relationship between LMX-emergent leader and each of the three follower outcomes of creativity, in-role or task performance, as well as extra-role performance or OCB.

### **Hypothesis 3.1**

My third hypothesis is on the comparison of the magnitude of the relationships found in Hypotheses 1 and 2. As noted previously, creativity is greatly impacted not only by the characteristics of the individual, but also largely by the environment that the individual works in (Amabile et al., 1993). More specifically, support from the supervisor has been shown to have a positive effect on employees' creativity (Oldham & Cummings, 1996; Zhou & Oldham, 2001). Supportive supervisors take an interest not only in the employee, but also in the work they do. Within the domain of leader emergence, emergent leaders have been shown to exhibit empathy by reading the emotions of other employees and responding to those emotions with positive action (Kellett, Humphrey, & Sleeth, 2006; Zaccaro, Gilbert, Thor, & Mumford, 1991). I propose that emergent leaders, by understanding other employees and their emotions, and by taking an interest in them and the work they do, will have a positive and higher relationship with followers than will appointed leaders.

*Hypothesis 3.1* – LMX-emergent leader will have a positive relationship with creativity, and LMX-emergent leader will have a stronger effect on followers' creativity as compared to LMX-appointed leader and the same outcome.

### **Hypothesis 3.2**

The idea of leaders emerging because of high emotional intelligence that results in empathy (Kellett et al., 2006) is highly critical to employee task performance. Leaders with a high level of emotional intelligence are better able to understand co-workers' emotions, whether they are mad or upset, excited or happy

(Humphrey, Pollack, & Hawver, 2008). Consequently, these leaders may be able to structure tasks in a way that is more suited to individual employee needs (Byron, 2007; Niedenthal and Brauer, 2012). In fact, some researchers have found a positive relationship between high emotional intelligence and task coordination behaviors by emergent leaders (Kellett et al., 2006; Riggio, Riggio, Salinas, and Cole, 2003; Wolff et al., 2002). Moreover, because extraversion is “the most consistent correlate of leadership” among the Big Five traits (Judge et al., 2002, p. 773), emergent leaders may be even more inclined to lend guidance on employee task behaviors. Walter and colleagues assert that “highly extraverted individuals with strong emotion recognition capability may not only be more cognizant of viable courses of action toward team task achievement but they are also more likely to embark upon such courses, proactively and persuasively structuring and organizing members’ task-related activities” (Walter, Cole, van der Vegt, Rubin, & Bommer, 2012, p. 979). Because of their ability to decipher employee emotions and respond accordingly with tasks that fit the individual, emergent leaders can potentially have a very strong relationship to employees’ task performance. However, taking into account the relationship employees have with their appointed leader, the appointed leader-follower relationship may have a greater effect on task performance than the emergent leader-follower relationship. Because of the direct reporting relationship between employees and their appointed leader via tasks and assignments, I believe appointed leaders will prove to have a stronger effect on task performance than will emergent leaders.

*Hypothesis 3.2* – LMX-emergent leader will have a positive relationship with in-role performance, however LMX-emergent leader will not have as strong an effect on followers' in-role performance as compared to LMX-appointed leader and the same outcome.

### **Hypothesis 3.3**

As leaders emerge because of emotional intelligence and their awareness of certain tasks that might be suited to individuals, there is somewhat of a spiral effect that takes place. The more emergent leaders consider the needs of the group, the more they emerge as a leader within the group. Anderson and Berdahl (2002) put it this way: "...hierarchical positions in groups are often allocated to group members according to their contributions: The more group members provide for the group's goals, the higher the position they are allocated is" (p. 1373). As noted previously, within SET exists the idea that as the relationship between two parties strengthens, a sense of obligation is created within the relationship (Emerson, 1976; Huston & Burgess, 1979). There is a reciprocal nature that arises to the relationship. As group members see the emergent leader putting forth effort for the benefit of group members (i.e. extra-role behaviors), it may be that, based on SET, group members will in turn feel a sense of obligation to put forth the same effort and exhibit extra-role behaviors to others in the group or organization as a whole. Furthermore, because the tendency to respond to group member needs is inherent within the emergent leader and one of the foremost ways in which he or she rises to power, I propose that the emergent leader will have a greater effect on extra-role behaviors than will the appointed leader.

*Hypothesis 3.3* – LMX-emergent leader will have a positive relationship with extra-role performance (OCB), and LMX-emergent leader will have a stronger effect (i.e. higher correlation) on followers' extra-role performance as compared to LMX-appointed leader and the same outcome.

## METHOD

### **Data Collection Procedures**

I conducted a survey using the snowball method by asking participants to take my survey and then pass it on to others in their network (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). Networks initially contacted were family and friends; my fraternity alumni group; and an employee of an accounting firm, which was a contact of supervising professor, Dr. Cole. I began by drafting an e-mail explaining who I am and the purposes for my research, as well as a brief summary of what my research entails. In the email I explained that all survey data was anonymous and would not be used for any purpose other than my research. Once I completed the email draft, as well as the survey, I opened up the survey and waited for results to come in. The survey was opened on November 26, 2012, and closed on February 28, 2013.

### **Sample**

In total, 195 respondents provided complete data. Of the respondents, 45% were male and 55% were female. Respondents ranged in age from 18-77, and averaged 30 years of age. The average length of time respondents had spent working with their current employer was 5 years. Respondents reported to work in various fields, including finance, human resources, education, accounting, operations, sales, marketing, and consulting, among others. These included

employees from upper management, such as VPs, to low-level employees and everywhere in between.

### **Measures**

Data collected was used to measure the strength of LMX for appointed leaders and their followers, as well as for emergent leaders and their followers. In addition, three outcomes were measured: creativity, in-role performance, and extra-role performance.

#### ***Appointed Leader-LMX***

Using the Leader Member Exchange-Multi-Dimensional Measure (LMX-MDM), four dimensions of LMX were examined: Affect, Contribution, Loyalty and Professional Respect. Based on individual responses, survey items reflected self-reported strength of the relationship between each employee and their appointed leader. Sample items include “I like my supervisor very much as a person” and “I respect my supervisor's knowledge of and competence on the job” (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

#### ***Emergent Leader-LMX***

Data regarding emergent leaders was collected by asking participants if they had a ‘go-to other’ person that they sought out in the workplace for advice and help. If respondents indicated that they do in fact have a ‘go-to other’, a new set of questions would appear that requested the same information that was asked about appointed leaders. The only difference was that LMX items were modified to reflect emergent leaders.

### ***Creative Performance***

Creativity was assessed using Shalley, Gilson, and Blum's (2009) research items on creative performance. Participants gave a self-report on their level of creativity from the perspective of their appointed leader, as well as their emergent leader or 'go-to other' (if applicable). Sample items include "The work I produce is novel" and "The work I generate is original" (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

### ***In-role Performance***

In-role performance, or task performance, was assessed using Williams and Anderson's (1991) items. Participants were asked to give a self-report from the perspective of their appointed leader, as well as their emergent leader or 'go-to other' (if applicable). Examples of sample items include "I adequately complete my assigned duties" and "I neglect aspects of my work" (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

### ***Extra-role performance***

Extra-role performance, or OCB, was also assessed using Williams and Anderson's (1991) items. Participants again were asked to give a self-report from the perspective of their appointed leader, as well as their emergent leader or 'go-to other' (if applicable). Sample items include "I help others who have been absent" and "I take a personal interest in others" (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

## RESULTS

In looking at the results for my set-up question, “Do employees have a ‘go-to other’ or emergent leader?” the results were interesting. Out of the 195 respondents, 155 (about 80%) answered “yes”, indicating that they do in fact have an important other that they seek out for advice and help.

After looking at the percentage of those who said they have a ‘go-to other’, I looked at the mean values on the three outcomes for those respondents who said they *do* have a ‘go-to other’ compared to those who said they *do not*. The group with a ‘go-to other’ consisted of 155 individuals, and the group with an appointed leader only consisted of 40 individuals. The mean scores were as follows:

Mean Scores <sup>A</sup>	No (do not have ‘go-to other’)	Yes (do have ‘go-to other’)
Creativity	3.65	<b>3.86**</b>
In-role	4.41	4.49
Extra-role (OCB)	3.87	<b>4.28**</b>
**p < .01 <sup>A</sup> (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree)		

Interestingly, those individuals that do have a ‘go-to other’ or emergent leader, on average, rated themselves as being both more creative and as exhibiting more extra-role behaviors (OCBs). Both of these differences proved to be statistically significant (p < .01).

After correlations were run for LMX-appointed leader and outcomes and LMX-emergent leader and outcomes, the results were insightful in at least few different ways. First, the survey results held true with prior research in regard to LMX-appointed leader. Just as prior research as shown time and again, there proved to be a positive correlation between LMX-appointed leader and each of the three outcomes, which included creativity, in-role or task performance, and extra-role performance or OCB.

Outcomes	LMX-Appointed <sup>A</sup>	LMX-Emergent <sup>B</sup>
Creativity	.229**	.093
In-role	.221**	.142
Extra-role (OCB)	.289**	<b>.375**</b>

\*\*p < .01

<sup>A</sup> LMX-Appointed refers to the strength of the relationship between the respondents' quality of relationship with their appointed leader and each of the three measured outcomes.

<sup>B</sup> LMX-Emergent refers to the strength of the relationship between the respondents' quality of relationship with their emergent leader or 'go-to other' and each of the three measured outcomes.

These results were encouraging because they showed that on the whole, my thesis results for LMX-appointed leader and outcomes are similar to that of the larger scholarly literature.

However, more interesting was that all correlations for LMX-emergent leader also were shown to be positive. This validates and proves relevant the research question of "Do employees have an emergent leader or 'go-to other'?" In addition, it provides evidence that emergent leaders have a relationship with the measured

outcomes in the same way that the appointed leader does. Therefore, just as an appointed leaders are a very necessary topic of study, so too are emergent leaders. The results for creativity and in-role performance in regard to emergent leaders had no statistical significance. However, extra-role performance was in fact shown to have a stronger relationship with LMX-emergent than did LMX-appointed with the same outcome. In effect, the emergent leader surfaces as having a highly significant relationship to and effect on the workplace dynamics in leader-follower relationships and their outcomes.

### DISCUSSION

This information is significant for research because it shows that the large majority of employees actually have someone they go to for help outside of their appointed or assigned leader. It raises questions about the extent of the effects this “emergent leader” has on individuals, as well as the workplace as a whole. It is interesting that more research has not been done in this area. If indeed, as my results show, many if not most employees are going to an emergent leader, then there is a great void that needs to be filled in the area of workplace leadership around the emergent leader-follower relationship. Most research conducted on emergent leaders has been done around work teams, so it would be valuable for researchers to look more closely at the individual relationships surrounding emergent leaders.

While there are many other variables at play, these results could indicate that an emergent leader plays a vital role in the creativity of followers, as well as the extra-role behaviors (OCBs) that followers exhibit. The in-role performance might

not differ that greatly due to the fact that employees report to their appointed leader in regard to their job duties. However, it is possible that the emergent leader inspires followers in such a way as to make them more creative and more willing to give back to the organization via extra-role behaviors. While these findings do not allow us to say that the emergent leader is the direct cause of extra-role behavior on part of the follower, it is appropriate to look at some of the possible implications for these results.

The findings have implications for managers as well as organizations. First of all, the results once again confirm the usefulness of SET for understanding social interactions and relationships. With the emergent leader as a part of the follower's work life, the follower has one more social exchange relationship that can be leveraged to result in more positive outcomes, or at least an increased frequency those that already exist. In addition, organizations often rely on employees' extra-role behavior to thrive. Office buildings are frequently designed to support social interaction among employees. Restrooms, cafeterias, vending machines, etc. are all placed in a central location in order to foster more collaboration and interaction among employees. If this interaction is shown to possibly contribute to more extra-role behavior on part of employees, then organizations are better off in the long run.

While there are managerial implications based on the survey results, there are also potential implications for employee turnover. Research has shown that a high degree of extra-role behavior in organizations results in decreased employee turnover. When companies spend less time, energy, and resources on filling vacancies, they save money on recruiting, hiring and training. In fact, in some cases

it can cost a company up to two-and-a-half times the former workers' annual salary in order to replace them. If the worker that left made \$100k per year, it could cost the company up to \$250k just to replace that single employee. In effect, increased extra-role behavior by employees contributes directly to the organization's bottom line. And not only does the organization save money, but it gets to keep the employees that are worth keeping – those that are giving back to the organization through extra-role behavior.

In conclusion, my thesis explored LMX by examining how follower outcomes (i.e. creative performance, task performance, and citizenship behavior) are impacted by low-high quality relationships between appointed leader-follower and emergent leader-follower. Results were found that suggest further research needs to be done around the emergent leader-follower relationship. Employees with an emergent leader reported to be significantly more creative and more willing to give back to the organization through extra-role behaviors than employees with only an appointed leader. In addition, LMX-emergent leader proved to have a stronger relationship with extra-role performance than did LMX-appointed with the same outcome. Thus, the emergent leader was shown to have a highly significant relationship to and effect on the workplace dynamics in leader-follower relationships and their outcomes.

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## ABSTRACT

This study uses Leader-Member Exchange theory to examine how three follower outcomes – creative performance, task performance, and citizenship behavior – are impacted by low-high quality relationships between appointed leader-follower and emergent leader-follower. Employees that have an emergent leader or ‘go-to other’ reported to be significantly more creative and more willing to give back to the organization (via extra-role behavior) than employees that only reported having an appointed leader. Furthermore, there was a stronger relationship (i.e. higher correlation) with LMX-emergent leader in regard to followers’ extra-role performance as compared to LMX-appointed leader and the same outcome. Results have potentially significant implications for employees, managers, and the organization as a whole.