

## A NEW CONSEQUENCE OF LEADER-MEMBER-EXCHANGE: IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT TACTICS

### LİDER-ÜYE ETKİLEŞİMİNİN YENİ BİR SONUCU: İZLENİM YÖNETİMİ TAKTİKLERİ

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#### Abstract

When members of the in-group and out-group formed by the leader are aware of this categorization, employees' motivation, attitudes towards job or organization, and performance can be affected by being a member in-group or out-group (leader-member exchange, LMX). One of the consequences of this categorization awareness is impression management tactics displayed by an employee. Impression management is a goal-directed process in which individuals try to influence the perceptions of other people about a person, object or event. The purpose of the study is to investigate the effect of awareness of being a member in-group or out-group for the employee on impression management tactic. A cross-sectional survey is utilized in this research. 427 employees are selected from 13 different organizations. The reliability of the scales is diagnosed via an internal reliability coefficient. The validity of the scales is diagnosed via construct validity (factor analysis). The proposed relationships are tested using structural equation modeling (SEM). According to research findings, ingratiation by self-promotion, one dimension of impression management, is affected by leader-member-exchange. Contribution dimension of LMX influences utilizing of impression management tactic negatively, as expected. Contrary to expectations, LMX in terms of affect and professional respect influences arising of impression management tactic positively.

**Keywords:** Leader-Member-Exchange; Impression Management tactics, Attitude, Organization

#### Öz

Grup üyeleri, lider tarafından oluşturulan iç grup – dış grup kategorileştirmesinin farkında olduklarında, çalışanların motivasyonu, işlerine ya da örgüte yönelik tutumları ve performansları iç grup ya da dış grup üyesi

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olma durumlarından etkilenmektedir (lider-üye etkileşimi). Bu kategorileştirmenin farkındalığının bir sonucu da çalışan tarafından ortaya konan izlenim yönetimi davranışıdır. İzlenim yönetimi, bireylerin bir kişi, nesne ya da olay ile ilgili diğer kişilerin algılarını etkilemeye yönelik çabalarını içeren amaca yönelik bir süreçtir. Bu araştırmanın amacı, çalışan için iç grup ya da dış grup üyesi olması ile ilgili farkındalığının izlenim yönetimi davranışı göstermesindeki etkisini incelemektir. Araştırma, yatay kesit türünde gerçekleştirilmiştir. 13 farklı örgütten 427 çalışan örnekleme seçilmiştir. Ölçeklerin güvenilirliği, içsel tutarlılık güvenilirliği, geçerliliği ise yapısal geçerlilik (faktör analizi) ile teşhis edilmiştir. Önerilen ilişkiler yapısal eşitlik modeli ile test edilmiştir. Araştırma bulgularına göre, bir izlenim yönetimi davranışı olan “kendini sevdirerek niteliklerini tanıtmaya” lider-üye etkileşiminden etkilenmektedir. Lider-üye etkileşiminin “katkı” boyutu beklendiği şekilde izlenim yönetimi davranışının ortaya çıkışını negatif yönde etkilemektedir. Beklentilerin aksine, lider üye etkileşiminin “duygu ve profesyonel duruş” boyutu izlenim yönetimi davranışının ortaya çıkışını olumlu yönde etkilemektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Lider-Üye Etkileşimi, İzlenim Yönetimi taktikleri, Tutum, Örgüt

## 1. Introduction

Individuals in each environment that they live as the feature of social creatures interact with their surroundings. The people who exposure to continuous interaction usually want to know other individuals' impressions about themselves. The desired impression can be “being favor” or “being afraid of himself/herself”, “described as hardworking” (Doğan, & Kılıç, 2009, p.62). Therefore, they want to influence their families, friends, and also managers in an organization and to accomplish their goals. When people create the image for influencing other individuals' evaluations and behaviors, they utilize different tactics. Individuals carry out these attempts for gaining more social reward and less social punishment from surrounding important people besides to defense and develop themselves (Jones, 1990; Çetin & Basım, 2010, p.257). For instance, establishing interaction with the supervisor for the aim of gaining positive performance feedback and organizational rewards differentiate in the usage of impression tactics (Oğuzhan & Sığırı, 2014, p.359). People using these tactics can usually display behaviors like arriving for work early and leaving the office late, so positively describing their success (Weng & Chang, 2015, p.7). Impression behaviors are commonly seen in job interviews, performance evaluations, and negotiations process (Doğan & Kılıç, 2009, p.57). According to prior field study findings, the employees with a qualified relationship with their supervisors gain lots of benefits such as future opportunities in the organization for the promotion and career development more than the employees with low relations (Weng & Chang, 2015, p.5).

Because emotions influence human behavior in positive and negative stimuli, efficient leaders manage their own emotions besides to influence followers' emotional states (Humphrey, Pollack & Hawver, 2008, p.15; McColl-Kennedy & Anderson, 2002, p.549; Glanda & Jared, 2012, p.6). Therefore, employee emotions can be influenced by a leader's attitude. Leader attitude towards subordinates is related to employees' behavior about job and organization in lots of previous field studies. Turnover intention, performance, and motivation are some of the organizational variables related to

leader attitude. Being a member of an in-group or out-group formed by a leader affects employee's behavior in an organization (Pwinger & Ebert, 2001).

Specifically, the employee who is aware of this categorization can behave by utilizing impression management tactics. Impression management is a consciously or unconsciously goal-directed behavior pattern. Individuals try to influence the perceptions of other people concerning a person, object, or event in this process. Employees carry out this operation by regulating and controlling knowledge in social interaction (Pwinger & Ebert, 2001).

Project-type works and lean structure have increased in today's competitive environment. The increasing importance of task interdependency in working groups causes managers to undertake a leader role beyond the chain of command more than past. Therefore, group members' evaluation by the leader has become more critical in this context. Besides, informal social networks gain much more significance to attain desired resources for employees (Martin et al., 2010). The individuals' desire for obtaining power in the working group is more closely to regulate their behavior with supervisors. This kind of close relation with supervisors is much more crucial in today's institutions. Therefore, understanding relationship between LMX and impression management has gained importance from past to present.

In a competitive environment, coworkers' behavior can result in non-cooperative job execution and can become harmful for the work environment in some situations (Wulani & Lindawati, 2018). Employee's perception of peers in a group can be influenced by working conditions, one of which is the quality of the relationship between leader and member. For instance, the members of low-quality exchange group perceive the success of employees having high-quality relations with the leader as much more. This situation can lead to conflicts among the employees. If a manager wants to understand the cause of a conflict among his or her subordinates, it can be a useful approach to learn to what extent his or her subordinates use impression management tactics. Especially, building performance culture based on competitiveness is desired approach to attain organizational aims. This stimulating factor for creating high-quality relationships with a supervisor can cause the employees to utilize impression management tactics more than in the past.

Increasing competition in organizations and performance anxiety among employees in order to achieve organizational goals make employees more reliant on impression management tactics to gain leader confidence in today's increasingly competitive environment. Employees' expectations from their managers and organizations have increased more than the past, so they need to apply more to impression management strategies (Wulani & Lindawati, 2018, Chen et al., 2021). An employee who uses impression management strategies in high level will not be sincere in developing attitudes towards the organization manager and the work he/ she does. This feature is made for the individual to cover up his or her actual failure in performance appraisal. There is very little research to examine the relationship between LMX and impression management tactics in the literature (Wulani & Lindawati, 2018). Therefore, new research is required to understand the relationship between LMX and

impression management that may hinder the employee's actual evaluation. New field studies are needed about which tactics can be used the most. Although LMX has drawn considerable attention in recent years, there is little evidence about what impression management tactics are affected by LMX relationship for the employees. Utilizing impression management tactics is an individual preference. In particular, it is necessary to examine which strategies are preferred to gain the positive results for LMX relationship with in different samples in today's increasingly competitive environment. Most of the studies examining the relation between LMX and impression management are cross-sectional in the literature (Chen, et al., 2021). There is an inadequacy of studies trying to reveal the relationship between impression management tactics and leader-member exchange (Agina, Mohammad & Omer, 2017). The repetition of the studies to reveal the relationship of LMX having inconstant dynamics in its own nature with impression management is required for the different samples at current times due to the scarcity of the longitudinal studies.

It can be proposed that the employees having closed relationship with the leader don't utilize impression management tactics because they have a positive effect on the leader's view of themselves. They think that these tactics are harmful to trust, whereas the employees with low qualified relations use these tactics for influencing the leader's perception (Oğuzhan & Sıgır, 2014, p.361; Erdem, 2008, p.17). Besides, there are studies that reveal the effect of the impression management tactics on LMX relation in the literature as the opposite of the effect for the relationship that will be proposed (Weng & Chang, 2015; Wulani & Lindawati, 2018). In this context, it gains importance to clarify the effects of LMX on impression management. Obviously, more research is needed to find out why and how individuals prefer to utilize impression management techniques when they are members of an out-group in the LMX exchange to respond to this gap in the literature. Understanding these two variables can help much to enhance a more stable work environment (Agina, Mohammad & Omer, 2017). It can be original research to investigate which tactics employees apply in a Turkish sample. The aim of the study is to investigate the effect of awareness of involvement of in-group or out-group on utilizing impression management tactics for the employees.

## **2. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses**

### **2.1. Leader-Member Exchange (LMX)**

The notion that leaders tend to establish different relationships with different followers was first launched in 1975 (Dansereau, Graen & Haga, 1975). Originally named as the "Vertical Dyad Linkage" (VDL) model of leadership, leader-member exchange (LMX) theory asserts that supervisor-subordinate relationships occur in continuous interval. Some employees have more high-quality exchange relationships with their supervisors than other employees (Dansereau, Graen & Haga, 1975; Liden, Sparrowe & Wayne, 1997; Schriesheim, Casto & Cogliser, 1999; Sparrowe & Liden, 2005). Employees with high-quality exchange relationships were described as in-group members, while those with

low-quality exchange relationships were labeled as out-group members (Dansereau, Graen & Haga, 1975; Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Scandura, 1999; Bolino & Turnley, 2009).

According to the LMX model, three stages are experienced through leader-member exchange development. The first step is role-taking. In this phase, the leader tries to discover skills and abilities, motivation levels to execute a job, competencies, and weaknesses of group members. The leader diagnoses this initial appointment by sending the role to the employee, who receives the role and work directions. Through member's reactions, the leader appraisals the employee's situation and decides whether to initiate another sent role to the foci person. The second stage for the LMX exchange relationship is role making. After completing role-taking phase, the relationship between leader and member progress, so the nature of relation commences being defined. The last stage is routinization. In this last phase, clear mutual understandings and expectations improve among parts, and the relationship stabilizes (Graen & Scandura, 1987; Nahrgang, Morgeson & Ilies, 2009).

Supervisors allocate better work assignments to employees in high-quality exchange relationships (and generally exceed the borders of a task). Employees and supervisors trust and are loyal to each other, and they have common feelings of liking and respect (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Liden & Maslyn, 1998; Liden, Sparrowe & Wayne, 1997). On the contrary, in low-quality LMX relationships, the relationship between followers and leaders tends to be described by the only employment contract, not beyond the borders on behalf of employees (Bolino & Turnley, 2009).

Most research about the Leader-Member Exchange theory has been related to its consequences or outcomes. Specifically, the findings of a meta-analysis carried out by Gerstner and Day (1997) show that high-quality LMX relationships have significant effects on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and role clarity in high-level. According to research results, subordinates in high-quality leader-member exchange relationships confront less role conflict, have lower turnover intentions, higher objective job performance, and receive better performance ratings from their supervisors (Bolino & Turnley, 2009).

## **2.2. Impression Management Tactics as Consequence of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX)**

Impression management research considers the ways in which individuals behave to form and manipulate images, mental patterns, and perceptions regarding themselves in the minds of other individuals (Bozeman & Kacmar, 1997).

Impression management model comprises two phases: impression motivation and impression construct. The behavioral and cognitive antecedents of impression management are formed through these two phases. Impression management is a goal-oriented function to display one's desired image. The motivation for impression management and impression structure causes individuals to determine antecedents in the light of the value of desired goal and perception about the difference between actual and desired image. Impression construct shapes the decision about choosing the type of effect

and about determining tactics/strategies for these images. Cognitive determinants of impression management are an individual's self-concept, perception regarding context-based desirability/ undesirability of diversified images, the perceptions of role limitation, the perceived value of one's aims, and perception of current image based on social context (Maher et al., 2018).

One remarkable point for explaining impression management is self-presentation. It is grounded rationality for impression management. Self-presentation means how individuals try to present themselves to control or frame how other people perceive them. It requires declaring oneself and reacting in ways that constitute the desired impression. Self-presentation is a part of an expansive set of acts defined as impression management. Impression management attributes to the restrained presentation of information concerning all kinds of things, containing information related to other individuals or facts. Self-presentation indicates particularly information about the self. Self-presentation is transferring information concerning oneself to other individuals. There are two kinds and motivations of self-presentation: harmonize one's own self-image and harmonize audience expectations (Baumeister, 1987; Leary, 1996). Self-presentation is revealing. People build an appearance of themselves to assert personal identity and present themselves in an aspect which is compatible to this image. If they perceive like it is confined, they frequently display reactance or turn into challenging. These individuals attempt to declare their independence against those who would pursue to decrease self-presentation expressiveness (Leary, 1996)

Several impression management tactics can be used by employees in the workplace to influence the perceptions, sensitivity, and decisions made by organizational superiors (King, 2004). These tactics can be categorized into either self-focused or other-focused (Weng & Chang, 2015, p.4; Kacmar, Delery & Ferris, 1992, p.1257; Rioux & Penner, 2001, p.1309). Self-promoting sayings, entitlements, enhancements, overcoming an obstacle, eulogizing their own accomplishments, arriving for work early, leaving the office late are examples of self-focused tactics that show one's desirable features for the job. Other enhancements and opinion conformities and sycophantic attitudes are examples of other-focused impression management tactics (Weng & Chang, 2015, p.4; Kacmar, Delery & Ferris, 1992, p.1257; Stevens & Kristof, 1995; Schlenker, 1980). This circumstance strengthens the prospect for personal promotion.

Other classifications for impression management tactics are protective and acquisitive tactics, assertive and defensive tactics, protective and defensive tactics, attributive and repudiative tactics, and assertive-offensive-defensive-protective tactics. in the literature.

For the protective versus acquisitive tactics, the individuals using acquisitive tactics look for the social approval to improve described favored treatment in obscure future situations (Arkin, 1981; Agina, Mohammad & Ömer, 2017). Tactics of acquisitive presentation indicate impressing other individuals approvingly whenever and wherever possible characteristically. Conversely, protective tactics intend to avoid social improbation carefully that would result in specific and rather urgent loss or punishment (Arkin & Sheppard, 1990; Agina, Mohammad & Ömer, 2017). Assertive presentation

is described as actions intended for building a particular appearance (Tedeschi & Norman, 1985). This type of impression management tactic includes acquisitive self-presentation (Arkin & Shepard, 1990; Agina, Mohammad & Ömer, 2017). Additionally, Roth, Harris & Snyder (1988) introduce two apparent tactics for developing the desired impression: 1 – the attributive tactic that requires communicating the possession of favorable features (for instance, smart and honorable) and 2 – the repudiative tactic which is the rejection of possession of adverse features (for instance, jealous and dishonorable). Besides, Schutz (1998) categorized impression management tactics, not just depending on the two-side direction (as the dichotomies), but also depending on how vigorously the individual involve with the tactics. His taxonomy classifies self-presentational attitudes as kind of an assertive, offensive, defensive or protective style. Assertive self-presentation includes attempting to look nice by presenting a convenient appearance. This type of tactic contains effective but not an aggressive effort by the employees to give the impression that they have particular features even though not certainly the best in the organization. Tactics for this kind of impression management may contain verbal assertions for continuity of membership in the group, one of which is using wearable pieces such as an emblem belonging to the group. Assertive presentation easily displays an employee in a preferred light, whereas offensive as the second classification does the same, however through the superiority or disreputability of others (Agina, Mohammad & Ömer, 2017). The employees attempt to look nice by making other individuals look evil, thus this type of tactic is known as aggressive (Schutz, 1998; Agina, Mohammad & Ömer, 2017). Protective presentation is intended not to build a favorable impression, but to avoid bad appearances. Actions are not performed to exhibit preferred identities but to deceive those which are unacceptable. It is a more passive strategy than the defensive presentation because the employees avoid, rather than amend, undesired figures. This tactic involves some circumstances that could be mortifying or shaming, so quitting more risky tactics that can influence impressions, positively (Leary & Kowalski, 1995; Agina, Mohammad & Ömer, 2017).

Mentioned taxonomies are interpenetrated and dichotomies. Jones and Pitman (1982) developed a theoretical framework with the aim of combination for motivational, cognitive, and evaluative features without dichotomous taxonomy. The model proposed by the researchers consists of five tactics depending on both self-focused content and other-focused content. The tactics of the impression management model: 1 – Ingratiation (i.e., the behavior of complimenting others), 2-self-promotion (i.e., the talking highly about oneself), 3-exemplification (i.e., the behavior of serving as a role model), 4-intimidation (i.e., the behavior of acting in a threatening manner), and 5-supplication (i.e., the behavior of acting helpless). While shedding a positive light upon the person enacting tactic of ingratiation, self-promotion, and exemplification can be possible, intimidation and supplication often have adverse effects concerning the target person's perceptions about individuals utilizing the tactic (Kacmar, Harris & Nagy, 2007). The tactics in the model combining the self-focused content and other-focused content are assertive. Assertive self-presentational tactics are utilized to create or develop an identity in the mind of observers, namely supervisors (Christopher et al., 2007). These types of tactics used by the employees proactively regulate impressions about themselves. Assertive tactics

are self-enhancement strategies (Bolino et al., 2008). Therefore, the employees prefer the assertive type of impression management tactics more for managing the relationship with the supervisor or the leader. Bolino and Turnly (1999) developed a scale designed to measure the degree to which individuals engage in five types of impression management. The researchers provided evidence for the reliability of their scale and its five factors. Afterwards, Kacmar, Harris and Nagy (2007) evaluated the factor structure of the scale, the reliability of the subscales beside to convergent and discriminant validity. Their findings provided additional support for the psychometric properties of the scale (Bolino et al., 2008). This taxonomy is the most widely used model that proposes the five assertive tactics in the impression management literature. For this reason, this impression management model proposing five assertive tactics that can be recognized easily by the leader for the employees is preferred to use for this research.

Leader-Member Exchange theory proposes that employees develop strong relationships with their superiors because of gaining additional competencies/responsibilities through skill, trustworthiness, and willingness considered by leaders (Liden, Sparrowe & Wayne, 1997, p.59; Liden & Graen, 1980, p.457). As Liden, Wayne & Stilwell (1993) indicate, Leader-Member Exchange frequently describes a follower's performance as "the dominant variable in LMX development".

The relationship between LMX and impression management tactics is theoretically based on two theories. One of them is The Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1988). This theory proposes an argument grounded cause and effect relationship via conceptual framework regarding determinants and psychological process in the way that how LMX influence employees' behavior and performance. This theory highlights learning in a social context comprised of person and environment. People learn information around them with interactions in a reciprocal relationship. The emphasis of social cognitive theory is social influence emerging from external and internal social reinforcement in a dynamic environment. The social cognitive theory draws attention to the way in which individuals gain knowledge, develop behavior and maintain this type of behavior in the light of the social environment. Past experiences for regulating behavior developed before are significant factors according to this theory. Reciprocal determinism, behavioral capability, observational learning, reinforcements, expectations are the main elements for initiating behavior and maintaining or giving up this kind of behavior afterward. The employees who experience low-level leader-member exchange will utilize impression management tactics to achieve goal-directed behavior considering social reinforcements in the environment in which they work. The positive side of LMX entails positive reciprocal exchange between managers and employees. The perception of reciprocal exchange is related to how subordinates understand the dynamic nature of LMX (Yang, 1998). The reciprocity argument emphasizes that when supervisors trust subordinates and are supportive of them and also recognize their performance achievements, reciprocity is accepted (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Thomas et al. (2013) argued the social cognitive theory as the fundamental theoretical background of LMX. Reciprocal relation to establish leader-follower relationships (in terms of structure, content, and processes) is beneficial to the employee who desires to maintain advantageous exchange. Depending on



social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986), self-regulation of motivation and proof of work are governed by advantageous follower-leader relationship for an employee as one of the self-regulatory mechanisms. Perceived beneficial relationship grounded reciprocal determinism directs employees' attitudes in their capabilities to strengthens motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to regulate efforts in their working life. Drawing from social cognitive theory, it is proposed that high-quality LMX relationships refer to enactive priority or direct experience, vicarious experience, persuasion, and affective arousal that are sources mentioned for social cognitive theory. In light of social cognitive theory, leaders constitute the circumstances for subordinates in high-quality exchanges to gain mastery over their job by dedicating challenging and valuable job assignments (Bauer & Green, 1996; Graen & Scandura, 1987; Jawahar, Schreurs & Mohammed, 2018). Leaders are likely to provide supportive performance feedback to employees who prefer high-quality relationships. By forming efficient performance feedback as a cognitive resource, leaders cause employees to experience vicarious tries in high-quality relationships (Jawahar, Schreurs & Mohammed, 2018).

The second theory for explaining the relationship between LMX and impression management tactics is Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964). Social Exchange Theory is based on a social psychology concept that concerns social changes as the process of interactive exchanges among different people. This theory focuses on interactions among individuals as a result-oriented social behavior. The main argument of the theory is cost and rewards for individuals in a social context. The theory postulates that comparison of cost with reward guide an individual to develop behavior and make a decision. Rewards are positive consequences of social exchange, whereas cost can be considered as negative outcomes. Therefore, being a side of high-quality LMX relation for an employee provides the person with a reward such as increment, trust, and support from the supervisor in a working group. The employees can apply impression management tactics for the sake of gaining rewards. The decision for applying impression management tactics depends on favorable outcomes such as long-term benefits and social approval emerging from having high-quality LMX exchange.

Ties emerging from relations between individuals and other employees in a group or organization affect reciprocal interaction. The employees' aim is to achieve more excellent utility from reciprocal links in the future. Because LMX postulates interpersonal exchange relations between supervisors and subordinates, it is possible to utilize impression management tactics for an employee experiencing low-quality exchange relations with supervisors considering this dynamic social context in the light of theory (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

When employees who experience low-quality leader-member exchange relationships perceive that the subordinates in relatively high-quality relationships succeed their higher status through impression management tactics instead of higher performance, they are likely to assume such a result as unjust (Bolino & Turnley, 2009, p.1191). Therefore, employees in the out-group enact impression management tactics. It can be expressed that there is a relationship between impression management and LMX.

Employees' responses to perceived unfair situations can be grounded Martin's (1981) Reactions Model in the context of LMX relationships. This model proposes that employees can react to being in a low-quality exchange relationship via two states. First, involving in self-improvement (e.g., working harder, exhibiting organizational citizenship behavior at a high level) and chasing constructive patterns (e.g., voicing their concerns to their managers loudly). Secondly, displaying stress symptoms and adverse attitudes (e.g., increased stress in high-level, job satisfaction in low-level) and involving in destructive activities (e.g., counterproductive work behavior). Employees experiencing relatively low-quality LMX relationships are expected to react to their status and engage in some tactics (Bolino & Turnley, 2009, p.278). One response can be using impression management tactics.

Previous research indicates that employees experiencing high-quality exchange relationships have a tendency to ascend the career ladders more quickly (Scandura & Schriesheim, 1994, p.1595; Wakabayashi et al., 1988, p.222). In this way, remarkable advantages occur for subordinates with relatively higher quality LMX relationships (Bolino & Turnley, 2009, p.278). On the contrary, employees experiencing relatively lower-quality exchange relationships are expected to undertake ordinary assignments to work on, receive less managerial support, feel more unpleasantly for their jobs, and exposure to fewer career advancement opportunities (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995, p.223; Gerstner & Day, 1997, p.833; Maslyn & Uhl-Bien, 2005, p.77). Besides, Maslyn and Uhl-Bien's (2005) research displays that subordinates experiencing relatively lower-quality leader-member exchange relationships frequently would like to establish better relationships with their managers. Parallel to this, Vecchio (1995) reported that individuals in relatively low-quality exchange relationships were jealous of their co-workers with relatively high-quality exchange relationships with their managers (Bolino & Turnley, 2009, p.279). Therefore, it is possible to utilize impression management tactics for employee out-group. Bolino and Turnley (2009) proposed that the employees having low LMX relations feel aggrieved due to deprivation of high-quality relations with supervisors and discrimination stemming from the supervisor. These employees react in both manners that are in a positive and negative mood. One of them is self-improvement and being constructive perceived by the manager through impression management tactics.

As for field studies aiming to examine the relation between LMX and impression management, the existence of little research can be expressed.

Firstly, Wayne and Green (1993) were conducted a field study to investigate the relationship between LMX and impression management tactics. The researchers reported that only one form of impression management, other-focused, was significantly related to LMX. Therefore, it needs to thoroughly examine how several types of tactics influence LMX via field research.

Like other research, Weng and Chang (2015) diagnosed the mediation role of impression management tactics on the relation between personality traits and LMX. Leader-Member Exchange Theory grounds reciprocity behaviors and the exchange process. Supervisors re-arrange the relationship with subordinates in the light of subordinates' impression management tactics. In this context,

the effect of using impression management tactics on developing LMX relationships can be investigated in a rational way. The direction of the relation is investigated from impression management to LMX (Weng & Chang, 2015, p.5). The direction of the examined effect is contrary to the argument for this research. It is expected that the subordinate utilizes impression management tactics depending on the LMX exchange relation in the light of the theoretical knowledge mentioned before. Therefore, more research is needed to diagnose the direction of the relation.

Hooper and Martin (2008) developed a measure of perceived variability in overall LMX quality (Hooper & Martin, 2008, p.23). They suggested that individuals rely chiefly on the fairness norms of equity and equality to evaluate situations in their environments. The researchers cite as evidence that equity norms in groups promote competition and disharmony among members while equality norms incite cooperation and relational harmony. They argued that LMX differentiation holds negative implications for members' wellbeing. The findings of their study supported this assertion. Perceived LMX variability was found to be positively related to relational team conflict (Henderson et al., 2009). The group member feeling LMX variability can apply for all impression management tactics (self-focused or other-focused tactics) for gaining high-level.

According to the power-dependency theory, employees are interested in impression management tactics to gain significant resources from their managers. This kind of resource can be a good relation with the supervisor or change to attain both favorable and remarkable duties and job roles. Impression management tactics can be utilized to gain career positions in organizations (Diekmann et al., 2015; Wulani & Lindawati, 2018). According to Weng and Chang (2015), rather than out-group members, in-group members are happy about their benefit of career development opportunities in their institutions. Those valuable resources could be reached when subordinates have good relationship quality, namely the high quality of LMX with managers. Subordinates can apply several types of impression management tactics to their managers for abstaining from punishment or insulting management (Wulani & Lindawati, 2018). Utilizing high-quality LMX with superiors, subordinates are exposed to favorable treatment from managers.

In the light of theoretical knowledge explained and previous research findings, the employees can take advantage of five assertive impression management tactics mentioned before. Considering the impression management model that proposes the five assertive tactics, employees can utilize these tactics as a consequence of being a member of out-group in LMX relationship, separately.

The employees who are aware of the advantages of being seen as clever, capable, and hardworking have a good position and high-level status in organizations. This kind of person develops an image that he or she deserves career and salary increment (Rosenfeld, Giacalone & Riordan, 1995). Therefore, an out-group member can utilize self-promotion tactic for gaining an advantage.

**H1:** Employees who are members of the out-group utilize self-promotion as one of the impression management tactics.

The tactic of ingratiation is another way of trying to be an in-group member. People prefer sincere and warm individuals to antipathical ones. Therefore, people want to be liked by others (Rossenfeld, Giacalone & Riordan, 1995; Leary, 1996). The more asymmetric the power relation between two people, the more important being enjoyed by others for that employee. Jones (1990) stated that when employees succeed in being appreciated by others, they think superiors' control power diminishes and their behaviors under the superior's control are seen as positive. According to Rossenfeld, Giacalone & Riordan (1995), ingratiation limits the supervisors' control field and decreases punishment options and control alternatives. In this way, the employee is treated with a much better attitude. Agreement with superior, utilizing compliments, doing favor are some kinds of ingratiation tactics. So, an out-group member can use this type of tactic.

**H2:** Employees who are members of the out-group utilize ingratiation as one of the impression management tactics.

Another tactic to be used for as a consequence of low-level LMX relationship is exemplification. The people who utilize exemplification tactic display their behavior by knowing to have moral and ethical value and reflect exemplary attitude and behavior such as arriving early to work, going out from work late, taking work home, not taking permission, volunteering for challenging responsibilities, desiring for helping others, executing more performance than necessary in institutions. Employees without having a selfish attitude cause the managers to feel guilty even if they do not reward what employees deserve (Feldman & Klich, 1991). Therefore, an out-group member can utilize an exemplification tactic for changing his or her membership status from out-group to in-group.

**H3:** Employees who are members of the out-group utilize exemplification as one of the impression management tactics

The employees who utilize intimidation tactics as impression management tactics want to impact other individuals in their desired way. People could want to be perceived as rude, threatening, frightening, not-well individuals because this situation is favors their advantage. The individuals can attain social power to pretend possible threaten and dangerous challenges and protect themselves through this threatening view (Leary, 1996; Rossenfeld, Giacalone & Riordan, 1995). This tactic is usually seen in involuntary relations. Assertive behaviors displayed by the people who use intimidation tactics cause these individuals to have a strong profile and to deserve career increment. These employees are seen as hardworking, capable, and strong others. Bolino and Turnley (2009) showed that managers perceive the performance of employees using intimidation tactics as a higher level (Tatar, 2006). Therefore, an out-group member can utilize intimidation tactic to gain advantage.

**H4:** Employees who are members of the out-group utilize intimidation as one of the impression management tactics

The person utilizing the tactics of supplication focuses on his or her own weaknesses and disadvantages and demands to help protection and support from others by stimulating feelings of suffering for them. In this way, a person can get rid of critical responsibilities and take precious for possible failure (Leary, 1996). Employees try to reflect their profile to superiors as weak and indigent so as to prevent themselves from critics by others. Criticizing weak and indigent people conflict with social norms. The person who utilizes this tactic causes to diminish critics directed to him or her. This employee thinks that he or she does not face being a member of the out-group.

**H5:** Employees who are members of the out-group utilize supplication as one of the impression management tactics

To sum up, employees who want to become an in-group member can take advantage of five assertive impression management tactics, which are self-promotion, ingratiation, exemplification, intimidation, and supplication.

The increasing importance of informal social networks and horizontal exchange in the work environment can influence the expected results of LMX (Martin et al., 2010). Research findings about employees' social networks show that structural configurations of individual relationships except for their immediate supervisors have an effect on promotions (Burt, 1992), reputation (Kilduff & Krackhardt, 1994), turnover (Krackhardt & Porter, 1986), influence (Brass, 1984; Brass & Burkhardt, 1992; Friedkin, 1993; Madsen & Friedkin, 1993) and career increment (Sparrowe & Popielarz, 1995). Besides, work and non-workplace relationships share some similar features to shape interpersonal relations for employees. These considerations can decrease the effect of LMX on impression management tactics for employees. Therefore, it needs to examine the link between LMX and impression management in different samples and organizational settings.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Sampling**

427 employees are randomly selected from 13 different organizations. Sampling is from both the service sector and the production sector. They are electronic devices and robot technologies, hospital, ship construction, LPG, metal fabrication, energy, transportation, printing, fuel oil, and banking.

#### **3.2. Instruments**

The cross-sectional survey is utilized in this research. Data collection process is carried out between November-December, 2019.

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX): The scale developed by Liden and Maslyn (1998) is utilized for measuring leader-member exchange. It has 12 questions to be answered on a Likert scale. Four dimensions of LMX are designed: Affect, Loyalty, Contribution, and Professional Respect (Genç, 2010, p.47). Higher scores mean higher exchange quality. The Turkish version was adapted by Genç (2010). The researcher reported the internal reliability of this scale as 0,947. A 6-degree likert scale is used to collect data for this research.

Impression Management Tactics: The scale developed by Bolino and Turnley (1999) is utilized for measuring impression management tactics. This scale grounded the taxonomy formed by Jones and Pittman (1982). This impression management model consists of five assertive types of tactics which are self-promotion, ingratiation, exemplification, intimidation, and supplication (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Bolino et al., 2008). This model proposing five assertive tactics that can be recognized easily by the leader for the employees in low level of LMX relationship is preferred to use. There are 22 items in the original scale, but 16 items are utilized. When decreasing the number of scale items, it is preferred that some items in all five dimensions are eliminated. That is to say, 16 items are selected to address all of the five sub-dimensions. Internal reliability for this scale was 0.87. The Turkish version was adapted by Tatar (2006). The researcher reported internal reliability of this scale as 0.90 for all scale. 0.81, 0.80, 0.82, 0.73, and 0.59 was calculated for sub-scales. 6-degree Likert scale is used to collect data for this research.

Common method bias can be considered because data for both variables is obtained from the same resource (participant). The method developed by Podsakoff, et al. (2003) can be applied to minimize the effects of this damaging effect. Utilizing the scales having high-level reliability value and commitment to participants for confidential data are steps for diagnosing common method bias. Besides, Harman's single factor test can be used for evaluating the value of common method variance (Grafton, Lillis & Widesener, 2010, p.689; Burney, Henle & Widesener, 2009, p.305). According to the test, all variables are subject to factor analysis with the principal components. If there is high-level common method variance, a single factor or an overall factor signing the value of total variance emerges (Demirtaş & Biçkes, 2014).

The demographic questions are not asked the participants due to the aim of diminishing their anxiety about revealing personal identity in the research.

### **3.3. Data Analysis and Results**

#### **3.3.1. Reliability and validity of scales**

LMX scale adapted from Genç (2010) is subject to exploratory factor analysis because the researcher who carried out his study in private banks and software development firms used a 7-degree Likert scale and revealed a different factor structure contrary to expected ones. The impression management scale adapted from Tatar (2006) is also subject to exploratory factor analysis because the

researcher used a 5-degree Likert scale and revealed a 6 factor-structure different from the original scale.

Construct validity is diagnosed with exploratory factor analysis because of the different measurement degrees and factor structures for the scales in the previous studies. Factor structure and internal reliability coefficients for the scale of LMX and the scale of impression management tactics are shown in Table 1 and Table 2, respectively.

**Table 1.** Exploratory Factor Analysis for LMX

Factor	Items	Factor Loads	Eigenvalue	Explained variance (%)	Name of factor
1	1.I like my supervisor very much as a person	0.825	5.587	38.909	affect and professional respect
	2. My supervisor is the kind of person one would like to have as a friend	0.836			
	3.My supervisor is a lot of fun to work with.	0.874			
	4.My supervisor defends my work actions to a superior, even without complete knowledge of the issue in question.	0.564			
	10. I am impressed with my supervisor's knowledge of his or her job.	0.661			
	11.I respect my supervisor's knowledge of and competence on the job.	0.655			
	12.I admire my supervisor's professional skills.	0.634			
2	7.I do work for my supervisor that goes beyond what is specified in my job description	0.800	1.298	29.951	contribution
	8.I am willing to apply extra efforts, beyond those normally required, to further the interests of my work group	0.857			
	9.I do not mind working my hardest for my supervisor.	0.868			
Total				68.854	Reliability: 0.909

**Table 2.** Exploratory Factor Analysis for Impression Management Tactics

Factor	Items	Factor Loads	Eigenvalue	Explained variance (%)	Name of factor
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1	2. Compliment your colleagues so they will see you as likable.	0.797			Ingratiation via self-promotion
	3. Stay at work late so people will know you are hard working	0.809			
	4. Make people aware of your talents or qualifications	0.681			
	7. Let others know that you are valuable to the organization.	0.749	5.806	27.786	
	8. Praise your colleagues for their accomplishments so they will consider you a nice person	0.777			
	9. Arrive at work early to look dedicated	0.637			
13. Do personal favors for your colleagues to show them that you are friendly		0.603			
2	6. Try to appear busy, even at times when things are slower	0.533			exemplification and supplication
	11. Act like you know less than you do so people will help you out.	0.695			
	14. Come to the office at night or on weekends to show that you are dedicated	0.781	1.862	19.646	
	15. Act like you need assistance so people will help you out	0.738			
	16. Pretend to know less than you do so you can avoid an unpleasant assignment.	0.738			
3	1. Talk proudly about your experience or education.	0.573			
	10. Deal forcefully with colleagues when they hamper your ability to get your job done	0.852	1.095	11.013	
	12. Make people aware of your accomplishments	0.564			
Total				58.426	Reliability: 0.877

Varimax Rotated, Principle Component Analysis is utilized in the analysis. The items having an eigenvalue higher than 1 and the items loaded with the value of 0,5 or higher on the one factor are considered. The items loaded on more than one factor with the difference score of 0,1 or lower value are removed from the analysis.

In the LMX scale, the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> items are removed from the dimensions. In the impression management scale, 5<sup>th</sup> item is removed from the factor. Since the 3<sup>rd</sup> factor has an unacceptable reliability value (0,555 < 0.70), it is not named and operated for analysis.

Although there is a separation of scale items among dimensions in factor analysis, dimensions emerge as a result of combining scale elements with the same characteristics in a cluster through cluster analysis which gives fairly similar results with factor analysis. The cluster analysis cause these items to be collected in a cluster (Gable & Wolf, 2001; Özdamar, 2002; Ertürk, 2006; Hair, et al., 2006; Doğan & Başokçu, 2010). When naming the dimensions, factors, where the elements are predominantly aggregated, are taken into account. Naming the factors is carried out based on the meaning of the elements (Şencan, 2005). A common name is determined to cover all variables for labeling the



factors (Avşar, 2007). The elements belonging to different dimensions were grouped under the same factor as a result of the factor analysis in accordance with the approach of unification of the scale elements under the same factor in the cluster analysis. For this reason, a common label was created by combining the names of the dimensions represented by the elements belonging to different dimensions when naming the factors. The dimensions are named considering the content of items loaded and adhering to original sub-scale names. Okursay and Turan (2014) named the dimensions obtained as a result of the factor analysis with this approach in their studies. Similarly, Hündür (2019) used the scale developed by Liden and Maslyn (1998) for measuring leader-member exchange. The researcher reported merging of four dimensions into two factors according to the factor analysis results and named the factors as 1 – affect and professional respect 2-loyalty and contribution by reflecting original names of tactic dimensions. Besides, Basım, Tatar & Şahin (2006) and Türköz (2010) used the scale developed by Bolino and Turnley (1999) for measuring impression management tactics for their study. The researchers named one factor that is emerged through the merging of the items belonging to two different dimensions as ingratiation by self-promotion. They considered the names of original dimensions emerged via the factor analysis results for naming the factor.

If the variables are considered in terms of common method variance, both variables decomposed to more than one factor. The variance explained at one factor is 38,9 % out of 68,85 and 27.786 % out of 58,426 for LMX and impression management, respectively. The value of relative percent depending on the explained variance is 56 % for LMX and 47,5 % for impression management. According to findings, the common method bias is at an acceptable level.

### 3.3.2. Effects of LMX on Impression Management Tactics

Mean (M), standard deviation (S.D) of variables, internal consistencies of sub-dimensions, and linear relationships between variables (correlation variables) are shown in Table 3. Internal consistencies are shown on the diagonal. The mean values of impression management variables are relatively low.

**Table 3.** Means, standard deviations, internal consistencies and bivariate correlations among variables

	M.	S.D.	1	2	3	4
(1) Imp.manag (ingratiation via self-promotion)	2,67	1,22	(0,886)			
(2) Imp.manag (exemplification and supplication)	2,06	0,94	0,513**	(0,73)		
(3) LMX (affect and professional respect)	4,38	1,08	0,045	- 0,066	(0,897)	
(4) LMX (contribution)	3,95	1,40	-0,198**	0,000	0,598**	(0,868)

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

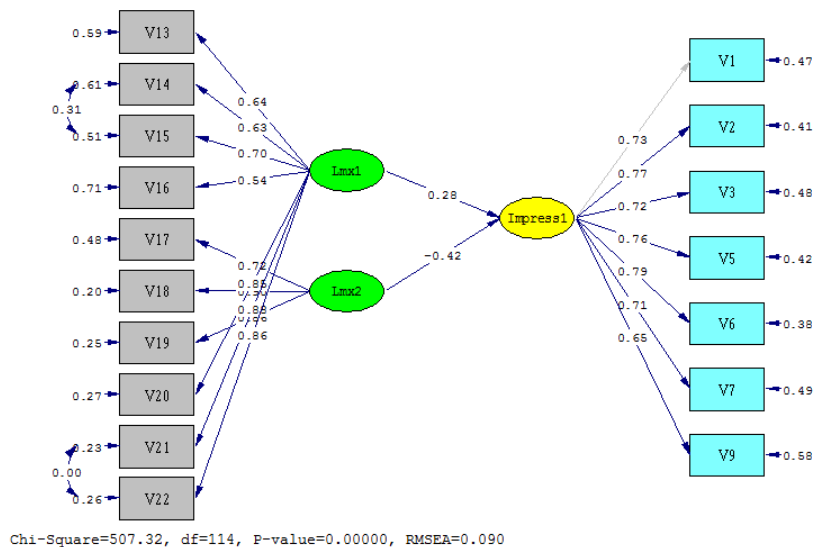
The skewness and kurtosis values of variables are measured. The skewness values are in the range from 0,984 to - 0,519. The kurtosis values are in the range from 0,679 to - 0,290. Skewness (<1.0) and kurtosis (<1.0) values indicate that variables have normal distribution value (Şencan, 2005).

According to correlation values, there is a middle-level correlation value between impression management tactics (0,513). There is also a middle-level correlation value between LMX dimensions (0,598). There is a negative low-level significant correlation between the contribution dimension of LMX and ingratiation via the self-promotion dimension of impression management tactic as expected.

LMX is the independent variable and impression management tactics are the dependent variable. The proposed relationship is tested with structural equation modeling (SEM) through Lisrel program. Lisrel software grounded SEM has an algorithm enabling the users to transform the data for the normal distribution through changing the characteristics of data from discrete to continuous before testing model.

An algorithm is an interface process aiming the transforming data for normal distribution before SEM at the Lisrel program (Yılmaz & Varol, 2015). Therefore, it can be said that the Lisrel software is a more useful tool than the SPSS for testing the research model. It is a rational approach that the whole model for the research is tested via SEM at Lisrel and SPSS program is utilized for exploratory factor analysis due to differentiates in structural validity results of the scales mentioned before. Some studies utilize both SPSS for exploratory factor analysis and SEM for testing model (Erkılıç, Gazeoğlu & Aytekin, 2018; Karadeniz & Kocamaz, 2018; Yıldırım, 2015; Morçin & Çarıkçı, 2016; Tükyılmaz, 2012). These studies have utilized both exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis to test the validity of the scales beyond the aim that the researchers develop the scales for their studies. Besides, the researchers have diagnosed the relationship in the model via SEM at the Lisrel/AMOS or linear regression at the SPSS program. That is to say, both software tools are utilized together for SEM and exploratory factor analysis except for developing scale studies.

Dimension “exemplification and supplication” of impression management does not have a significant relationship with LMX dimensions (t value <1.96). This dimension of impression management is removed from path analysis. Standardized path coefficients for impression management model is shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Standardized path coefficients for impression management tactics model

The modifications proposed by SEM between items V14-V15 and V21-V22 are carried out. The reason for this is that participants evaluate these items in close meaning.

The goodness of fit index for the model is shown in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Goodness of fit index for the model

	X <sup>2</sup> /d.f.	RMSEA	GFI	SRMR	NNFI	CFI
acceptable	< 5	< 0.08	>0,90	<0,08	>0,90	>0,90
calculated	4.45	0.090	0.88	0.054	0.94	0.95

Considering all fit index scores, it can be expressed that the model's fit is at an approximately good level.

Depending on significant t values of relationships, ingratiation by self-promotion (impression management) is influenced by LMX dimensions. The contribution dimension of LMX influences impression management tactics negatively, as expected ( $t=-4,95$ ). Contrary to expectations, the affect and professional respect dimension of LMX influences impression management tactics, positively ( $t=3,45$ ). LMX dimensions do not explain the variance in the impression management tactics for dimension exemplification and supplication.

Impression management (ingratiation by self-promotion) =  $0.28 \cdot \text{LMX}$  (affect and professional respect)  $- 0.42 \cdot \text{LMX}$  (contribution)

The effect of LMX's contribution on the tactic of ingratiation by self-promotion is relatively higher than that of LMX's affect and professional respect.

According to these findings, hypotheses H1 and H2 are partially accepted because dimensions of affect and personal respect (LMX) have a reverse-direction relationship with impression management. Hypotheses H3, H4, and H5 are rejected due to insignificant effects.

#### **4. Conclusion and Discussion**

According to the analysis results, the contribution dimension of LMX is the most significant effect for impression management for this research. Contribution means the perceived amount, direction, and quality of work-oriented activity that each member puts forth towards attaining an agreed mutual goal (Dienesch & Liden, 1986, p.623; Hwa, Jastani & Ansari, 2009, p.166). Outgroup members whose supervisor does not contribute to complete their task utilize impression management tactics. The findings of the research support this notion.

The most explicit tactic used by employees in organizational settings is ingratiation (Tatar, 2006). According to research findings, only 2 types of impression management tactics, namely ingratiation and self-promotion, have a significant relationship with LMX dimensions. The employees who have low-quality LMX relationships in the contribution dimension utilize ingratiation by self-promotion tactic of impression management. Similar to this research, some empirical studies have investigated the effect of three impression management tactics that are ingratiation, self-promotion, and exemplification on working outcomes (Cheng, Chiu & Tzeng, 2013). Self-promotion involves highlighting one's abilities or accomplishments to be viewed as competent (Kacmar, Harris & Nagy, 2007). Liden and Maslyn (1998) found that supervisor ratings of performance were significantly related to the loyalty and contribution dimensions of the LMX. Since the out-group employees have low-performance appraisal anxiety, they enact impression management tactics.

An explanation for relations with unexpected direction is expressed via in-group members' tactic preference. According to findings, in-group members who have high-level LMX relation in dimensions of affect and personal respect use impression management tactics. The dimension of affect indicates that mutual affection which leader-member dyads have for each other is based on interpersonal attractions rather than work or professional values (Dienesch & Liden, 1986, p.623; Hwa, Jastani & Ansari, 2009, p.166). Professional respect is the perception of leader-member dyads concerning each other's knowledge, competence, and skills (Liden & Maslyn, 1998, p.59). Liden and Maslyn (1998) found that supervisor ratings of performance were not associated with the dimensions of affect and professional respect. Satisfaction with supervision was more strongly related to the dimensions of affect and professional respect than the dimension of loyalty or contribution. If employees are satisfied with their managers without feeling performance appraisal anxiety, they still utilize impression management tactics.

Exemplification and supplication, dimensions of impression management tactics, do not have a significant relationship with LMX. Supplication can be related to some individual values and personality traits. The participants in this research may not value supplication because this type of behavior is a matter of pride for them. The fact that a supplication tactic is utilized continuously causes the superior to perceive that employee as lazy and layabout. It is questioned that this employee continues working in the organization. The person in low-power level and status utilizes a supplication tactic (Leary, 1996; Rosenfeld, Giacalone & Riordon, 1995). According to Gardner (1992), this tactic is preferred as the last alternative. Even if the target person supports the employee, he or she develops a negative attitude towards the worker. Even though managers help these subordinates in public, they have a negative tendency in his/her own right about the subordinates. Repeating this type of behavior results in exploiting superior by the employee. So, it can be said that this tactic for participants in the study cannot be preferred chiefly. Exemplification is not a distinctive type of work behavior in today's work environment. Going above and beyond the job requirements is a necessity for almost all workers (Kacmar, Harris & Nagy, 2007) Only one unacceptable behavior damages a person's image for the tactic of exemplification even though an inappropriate behavior does not spoil the general image in other impression management tactics (Jones, 1990; Leary, 1996). So, it is quite difficult to reveal the holistic effect of the exemplification tactic for employees.

In this study, the effect of intimidation tactic does not occur. The tactic of intimidation can be used by a superior, not by a subordinate in the culture having a high level of power distance such as Turkey. The supportive finding reported by Bolino and Turnley (2009) is that there is no significant relationship between intimidation tactics and ingratiation.

According to findings, three hypotheses for proposed relations are rejected. The fact that only two hypotheses are partially accepted draws the researchers' attention to the theoretical background of LMX. One of the critics of LMX is the lack of explaining how to create a high-level exchange relation between superior and subordinate in detail. How supervisors establish high-quality exchange with employees and increase the level of quality is not adequate in terms of theoretical framework and discussion of findings in an application (Khatri, 2011, Martin et al., 2010). Besides, cross-cultural effects are not clearly presented for LMX (Khatri, 2011). This research applied in Turkish sampling does not considerably confirm the relation between LMX and impression management. LMX theory focuses on the exchange in the relationship between superior and subordinate in reciprocity advantage with a formal managerial situation. However, informal social networks and horizontal exchanges that are much more common in an organization now than past can provide some advantages to employees beyond LMX, even more than LMX' ones (Martin, et al., 2010). For this reason, subordinates might not desire to develop high – quality with their managers and do not need to utilize impression management tactics. Benefits obtained via structural configurations shaped through informal social networks for employees preclude can forestall the advantage of LMX depending on the increasing importance of differences among workforce in nowadays' institutions,

especially in multinational companies. Project-type works and new job models such as home-office working bring about that face-to-face connection or close relation with the supervisor is not necessary for gains.

The research findings indicate that dimensions of LMX and dimensions of impression management tactics should be investigated separately and individually for diagnosing proposed relations. Liden, Sparrowe & Wayne (1997) revealed that some research indicates ingratiation behavior and impression management are essential antecedents of LMX (Scandura, 1999, p.27; Bolino & Turnley, 2009, p.280). The findings show the reverse direction of the relationship between variables in this research. Therefore, considering the direction of relationships between independent variable and dependent variable can be a necessity for designing a research model for future studies. Besides, investigating the effect of moderating variables such as personality traits, organizational structure (hierarchical level and functional units), and organizational climate on the relation between LMX and impression management is recommended to diagnose. Relational demography variables such as similarity of organizational tenure, job tenure, age, gender, educational level between subordinate and superior can also be added to the research model.

Considering the lack of LMX theory, it needs to explain the theoretical framework of the relation between LMX and impression management via grounded theory. The Grounded Theory approach is mainly based on the qualitative study and entails experts to conduct field study for producing original and unknown information (Zhao, Peng & Han, 2012). The researchers who adopt the Grounded Theory approach describe the relationship that will be examined by considering participants in qualitative study without any previously established theory. In this way, the researchers obtain a strategy to develop a new theory (Glaser, 1998; Coto, 2017). This theory is sociology-based (Byrne, 2001). Strategy for analyzing data differentiates among researchers. The researcher links the relation under investigation with philosophy, technique, and research methodology. The Grounded Theory is a systematic inductive approach from data. The theory is developed via the data collected in the real organizational field for a specific situation, relation, or issues and it provides contextual explanations with researchers. It is crucial in this process that the researchers do not consider arbitrary uncertainties. Choosing one between two versions of Grounded theory, which are research problem and the aim of the study, draws attention to research questions, the importance of literature, procedure for analyzing data, theoretical sampling (Keith & Hase, 2008). Therefore, the studies aiming to diagnose the relationship between LMX and impression management can be designed in the light of the grounded theory approach in the future.

Examining the effect of LMX on impression management tactics is a significant contribution to literature in that the effects of LMX on commitment, job satisfaction, and supervisor satisfaction are mainly researched in previous studies (Bolino & Turnley, 2009). Even if most of the proposed hypotheses are not accepted, it is an original study specifically in the Turkish sample because unrelated variables rise to the surface. 427 employees-sampling selected from 13 different organizations is another vital feature of this research.

For managerial implications, leaders who practice LMX differentiation should understand that their behaviors will be judged against norms of fairness that exist at the workgroup and organizational levels. They should pay particular attention to how all of their group members evaluate their differential behaviors and attempt to align these behaviors with accepted norms of fair behavior. Specialized training for leaders in order to gain an aspect of how employees evaluate and respond to ethical and appropriate leader behavior may be beneficial in different contexts (Henderson et al., 2009). Besides, because subordinates having a low-quality exchange with their supervisors might not prefer utilizing impression management for the sake of their advantages, managers should take care of informal social networks in which employees engage. Informal organization in institutions can damage formal structure and regulations in some ways (Çiçek, 2018).

The research has some limitations, one of which is using only the Turkish sample. Proposed relations and rejected hypotheses are tested only in the Turkish context. Even though this study is original research in Turkish sampling, the generalization of results is limited. Besides, the research is carried out through a cross-sectional design. The social desirable effect for participants can be mentioned as another limitation of the study. The social desirability scale is not preferred to use due to increasing number of items in scales.

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