



The relationship between supervisor support and turnover intention: The moderator effect of leader-member exchange

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to examine the moderator effect of leader-member exchange in the relationship between perceived supervisor support and turnover intention. The research data was obtained from the employees (managers, engineers and technicians) of three public defense industry organizations operating in the Ankara region. 411 employees participated in this research. Correlation and regression analysis were applied by SPSS 26 program. The results of the analysis revealed that there is a negative relationship between perceived supervisor support and turnover intention, and leader-member exchange has a moderator effect in this relationship. On the other hand, there is a positive relationship between perceived supervisor support and leader-member exchange and a negative relationship between leader-member exchange and turnover intention.

Algılanan yönetici desteği ve işten ayrılma niyeti ilişkisinde lider üye etkileşiminin düzenleyici rolü

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ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı algılanan yönetici desteği ile işten ayrılma niyeti arasındaki ilişkide lider-üye etkileşiminin düzenleyicilik etkisini incelemektir. Araştırma verileri anket yöntemiyle Ankara'da savunma sanayiinde faaliyet gösteren üç kamu işletmesinin mühendis, yönetici ve teknikerlerinden elde edilmiştir. 411 çalışanın katılımıyla veri

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Anahtar Kelimeler:

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toplama süreci tamamlanmıştır. Toplanan veriler SPSS 26 paket programı aracılığıyla korelasyon ve regresyon analizlerine tabi tutulmuştur. Analiz sonuçları algılanan yönetici desteği ile işten ayrılma niyeti arasında negatif yönlü anlamlı bir ilişki olduğunu ve lider-üye etkileşiminin bu ilişkide düzenleyici bir değişken olarak rol oynadığını ortaya koymuştur. Diğer taraftan algılanan yönetici desteği ile lider-üye etkileşimi arasında pozitif yönlü ve lider-üye etkileşimi ile işten ayrılma niyeti arasında ise negatif yönlü anlamlı bir ilişki olduğu elde edilen diğer sonuçlardır.

1. Introduction

A highly qualified and competent defense labor force is central to the security and economic welfare of nations. Today defense companies have been confronting an insufficiency of well-trained staff that addresses the gap in sustainability, productivity and competitiveness. Therefore, retaining talented employees has become a strategic topic for the contemporary defense industry that requires advanced capabilities and education. In recent years, many companies have attempted to become preferred employers, which are defined as an organization that leverages their competition in attracting and retaining people with professional skills (Joo and McLean, 2006). Pfeffer (2005) suggests that the retention of qualified workers is now becoming highly important in today's world where human resources skills are increasingly the fundamental factor in yielding a competitive edge. In this context, there is a need for enhanced awareness of the underlying causes of turnover decisions (TI) and the way controlling the turnover will continue to be the main concern for further studies.

Theorists reached a consensus that employees can differentiate relationships with an immediate supervisor from managers of organizations and the organization itself (Becker, 1992; Dirks and Ferrin, 2002; Reichers, 1985, 1986). According to Reichers (1985) employees are able to bind separately to each distinguished relationship. Hoffman and Morgeson (1999) suggest that employees are also inclined to address their behaviors in a way to reciprocate towards the target that produces benefits to them. It could be also suggested that employees have higher priority for their supervisors as compared to the organization. Organizational Equilibrium Theory developed by March and Simon (1958) denotes employees' decisions to stay in an organization as a function of equilibrium between the benefits of inducements expected to be offered by the organization, and those expected from the employees. There is an increasing number of research proposing the substantial role of relational inducements such as supervisory and organizational support in employees' work-related decisions, albeit the recent studies have emphasized behavioral and material inducements including pay and benefits (Allen, Shore and Griffeth, 2003).

TI levels of employees have also been a vital issue from an organizational aspect. Lambert, Hogan and Barton (2001) suggest that many researchers and organizational leaders from varying fields have paid growing attention to the issue of employee TI. The turnover issue has become a central focus as a critical factor in terms of firms' financial performances (Lambert et al., 2001) and has been under the influence of different variables related to organizations. In this context, Mobley et al. (1979) suggest four basic precursors of employee turnover intention incorporating demographic characteristics that have an impact on individuals' decisions, TI and workplace factors. According to Jung et al. (2010), employee TI rate indicates organizational effectiveness and is a critical issue for sustainability. Building effective and constructive strategies enable organizations to develop methods to decrease employee TI and maintain sustainability. Thus, scholars have been investigating the precursors of TI (Jung et al., 2010).

Social relationships at the workplace, particularly exchange relationships between supervisors and subordinates, are one of the important facets that affect TI of employees. In this context, supervisors play a major role that shapes the behaviors of employees, which is termed as leader-member exchange (LMX) (Wayne et al., 2002). According to Harris et al. (2014), the theory of LMX proposes that leaders build relationships with their employees and have control over their behavioral responses simultaneously with reciprocal relationships. Employees more likely believe that they receive support

from their supervisor relating to their career development when the supervisor creates opportunities for their participation in career development activities. Moreover, a supervisor, who provides feedback communicates the learning objectives, gives support to employees to advance their abilities in diverse skill areas, can be believed as a supportive supervisor (Tharenou, 2001). In the literature, perceived supervisor support (PSS) is defined as the extent to which employees' feelings that their supervisor esteems their contributions in the workplace and concerns about their well-being (Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski and Rhoades, 2002). Dawley et al. (2010) suggest that employees' perception of organizational support is a significant predictor of their attitudes. PSS can be viewed as a fundamental component of a supportive work environment that facilitates the attendance of employees to the activities leading to their improvement (Dubin, 1990; Far and Middlebrooks, 1990; Kozlowski and Far, 1998).

Today organizations strive to facilitate optimized solutions with the goal of minimizing TI of the employees (Campbell, Dussault, Buchan., Pozo-Martin, Guerra Arias, Leone, Siyam and Cometto, 2014). In this context, the predominating role of strategic human resource management in minimizing employee turnover intentions is flourished by the contributions of supervisors. Colwill, Cultice and Kruse (2008) suggest that the support afforded by supervisors helps to reduce employees' turnover intentions. Consistent with the basis of social exchange theory, the literature provides research posit that behavioral outcomes of employees are positively impacted by supervisor support (Sargen, Hooker and Cooper, 2011). One of the basic goals of this research is to expand understanding of turnover intention by analyzing the influences of PSS and LMX as a moderator variable. PSS refers to the extent to which employees' awareness of supervisors' support and encouragement afforded for concerns and task performances of employees (Bodenheimer and Sinsky, 2014).

This study is designed to generate advanced insight on the vital impact of social connections in employees' decisions to quit or stay within the organization by exploring two forms of social relationships that are perceived supervisor support (PSS) and the other is leader-member exchange (LMX). These concepts are based on Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Blau, 1964) and the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960). This study also gives emphasis on the role of the leaders and organizations in fostering employees' reciprocal behaviors (Coyle-Shapiro and Conway, 2004). Hence, this study provides a significant contribution to the current literature about these three constructs.

2. Theoretical framework and hypotheses

The theoretical framework of this research is developed on the concepts of PSS, TI, LMX and the relationships among these variables. From a theoretical perspective and based on the comprehensive literature review, this research is primarily designed to observe the moderating effect of LMX in the association between PSS and TI of employees.

2.1. Perceived supervisor support (PSS)

Research shows that PSS is a critical factor in organizational effectiveness in most industries (Lu, Cooper and Lin, 2013; Tourigny, Baba and Lituchy, 2005). However, researchers have shown little interest regarding how supervisor support impacts employees' behavioral outcomes, particularly in the healthcare industry. According to Burke, Borucki and Hurley (1992), supervisor support is described as employees' perception regarding the degree to which their supervisors provide support and encouragement in return for their job performances and concerns about their well-being. Recent studies have found that when employees perceive the supportive environment created by their supervisors, they most likely to support their supervisors and reach organizational objectives and goals (Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski and Rhoades, 2002). Karatepe and Uludag (2008) suggest that supervisor support has also been found to diminish conflicting issues associated with family and workplace and thereby fosters career satisfaction. The role of supervisor support is essential for organizational effectiveness in diverse industries (Thomas, Bliese and Jex, 2005). According to Burke, Borucki and Hurley (1992), supervisor support is defined as the degree of employees' recognition regarding the supervisor's supportive behavior and their encouragement on the performance and concerns of employees.

The supportive behaviors of supervisors induce employees' supportive behaviors that lead to the optimization of corporate objectives of firms (Eisenberger et al., 2002). The significant association between training programs and supervisor behavior related to TI has also been explored (Qaisar, Shahid, Bano, Fawad and Afzal, 2019). The role of PSS in reducing employee TI is crucial (Arıcı, 2018; Kalidass and Bahron, 2015), therefore, PSS would necessarily be considered in terms of TI of employees (Choi, Cheong and Feinberg, 2012). Richard, Boncoeur, Chen and Ford (2018) suggest that supervisors' abusive behavior negatively affects TI. On the other hand, the literature embraces research (Dupré and Day, 2007) that suggest the indirect influences of the supportive management process on employee TI. Thomas and Ganster (1995) point out that the supervisors' person-oriented and task-oriented behaviors are influential on employees' TI.

2.2. Turnover intention (TI)

TI refers to employees' voluntary leaving their current jobs in the short term by considering alternative career options (Elangovan, 2001; Tett and Meyer, 1993). When considering the emphasis of researchers on the global attitudes related to job or organization as precursors of TI (Mobley, 1977; Price and Mueller, 1981), there is an insufficiency of research that has mainly investigated the influence of employee relationships with supervisors (Mitchell, Holtom and Lee 2001) on employee TI. On the other hand, the literature encompasses studies (Griffeth et al., 2000; Maertz, Stevens, and Campion, 2003; Payne and Huffman, 2005) strongly highlighting that immediate supervisors play a primary role in the TI of employees.

In human resource management studies, employee TI has been regarded as an important problem that adversely affects organizations. It is viewed as a powerful predictor in estimating the financial performances of enterprises (Lambert et al., 2001). Employees' turnover decisions negatively impact organizations and lead to high costs for firms (Stanz and Greyling, 2010). Therefore, firms view qualified employees as key assets and the leave of these employees will result in ineffective organizational management, business operations and delivery of service (Sulu, Ceylan and Kaynak, 2010). Previous research explored the potential forerunners of employee TI such as demographic characteristics, job satisfaction and workplace environment (Mobley et al., 1979).

TI has been regarded as a final act of employees to make an actual decision to quit (Mobley, 1982; Mowday, Steers and Porter, 1978) and relates to employees' intent to quit jobs as a planned behavior (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1977). TI is also referred to as a conscious purpose to quit the organization (Tett and Meyer, 1993).

2.3. Leader-member exchange (LMX)

The theory of LMX, which was originally coined by Dansereau, Graen and Haga in 1975, refers to the quality of exchange relationship between leaders and their employees/subordinates as well as the reciprocal effect and interdependence (Graen, 1976; Uhl-Bien, 2006). Likewise, Dansereau et al. (1975) suggest that the theory of LMX focuses on the quality of the two-way relationship between leaders and subordinates. According to Bauer and Green (1996), LMX is defined as a dyadic relationship between leaders and employees. LMX relies on social exchange theory (SET) which implies individuals' expectation of receiving equivalent benefits in return for providing benefits to others (Blau, 1964).

According to Bernerth, Armenakis, Feild, Giles and Walker (2015) LMX has been explained by SET as an exchange of physical and nonphysical resources in the context of social reciprocity between leaders and subordinates and defines varying patterns of relationships between them. According to Zhang, Li and Harris (2015), leaders establish bilateral valuable exchange associations with their employees by using certain types of exchanges and relationships. Leaders are more likely to give benefits such as rewards, recognition, information and latitude for discretion to those with whom they built a high-quality relationship. These subordinates are called *in-group members* whereas the subordinates that have low-quality relationships with their leaders are named *out-group members* (Graen, 1976; Graen and Scandura, 1987; Sherman, Kennedy, Woodard and McComb, 2012). Janssen and Van Yperen (2004) posit that low-quality LMX interactions are narrowed down to contract-based links that are reliant upon hierarchy and interaction based on prescribed organizational roles; however,

a high-quality LMX relationship is an aggregate of mutual trust and effect, loyalty, respect (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). Dienesch and Liden (1986) argue that subordinates' response to high-quality LMX relationships is putting efforts for the fulfillment of their tasks successfully. Jing-Zhou and Wen-Xia (2011) posit that previous research has investigated LMX as a one-dimensional construct only ranging from low-quality to high-quality association.

2.4. Perceived supervisor support (PSS) and turnover intention (TI)

The support, which is provided by supervisors, impacts employees' TI by influencing their beliefs and behaviors referring to the organization (Maertz, Griffeth, Campbell and Allen, 2007). In literature, there is a consensus on the view that employees build distinguished relationships with their supervisors and organizations as a part of them (Becker, 1992; Dirks and Ferrin, 2002; Reichers, 1985). According to employees often tend to exhibit their responsibilities towards the supervisor (Hoffman and Morgeson, 1999). In other words, Hoffman and Morgeson (1999) posit that employees are inclined to reciprocate their actions to the target that benefits them. The findings of the research implemented by Maertz and Griffeth (2004) suggest that employees' commitment to their supervisors has differentiated impacts on TI cognitions apart from a commitment to the organization.

The quality of the relationship between supervisors and employees directly impacts employee TI decisions. Hence, it is necessary to regard this relationship as a determinant of the TI of employees. Newman, Thanacoody and Hui (2012) suggest that organizations are able to minimize employee TI through the enhancement of PSS. Gentry, Putrevu and Schultz (2006) stated that PSS plays a pivotal role in employee retention in organizations. According to Guzzo, Noonan and Elron (1994) and Wayne, Shore and Liden (1997), when employees feel that they received insufficient support, the employees are more likely to display attitudes such as the intention to disappear from the organization. It is supported by the view that within an organization facilitating supportive environment, employees' negative emotions and thoughts are reduced while their loyalty is increased (Güzel, Perçin and Tükeltürk, 2011).

PSS is significant in facilitating more strategic turnover management. In this context, Tuzun and Kalemci (2011) emphasized PSS for being worthwhile in developing strategic ways to be deployed in turnover management. Supervisors' acts of providing positive feedback towards employees are viewed as excellent in minimizing employees' TI (Tuzun and Kalemci, 2011). PSS impacts employee TI by influencing employees' feelings and behaviors related to the organization itself. In the literature, plenty of empirical evidence (Becker, 1992; Clugston, Howell and Dorfman, 2000; Maertz et al., 2003; Maertz, Mosley and Alford, 2002; Mitchell et al., 2001; Settoon, Bennett and Liden, 1996; Tekleab et al., 2005; Wayne et al., 1997; Wayne, Shore, Bommer and Tetrick, 2002) suggest that the support given by supervisor should have independent and extensive impacts on turnover cognitions and attitudinal outcomes. Thus, Hypothesis H₁ is proposed as follows:

H₁: Perceived supervisor support has a significant effect on turnover intention.

2.5. Perceived supervisor support (PSS) and leader-member exchange (LMX)

In the discipline of organizational behavior, two fundamental theories, LMX (Graen and Scandura, 1987) and PSS (Eisenberger et al., 2002), are regarded as important approaches for motivating employees and have roots in Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Blau, 1964). The theory of LMX expresses the interpersonal relationship and reciprocation between supervisors and their employees and is defined as unwritten and spontaneous relations in organizations (Wayne et al., 2002). According to Eisenberger et al. (1986), POS refers to the extent to which employees perceive that they receive support from their organization for their contributions. The concept of POS is also viewed as the degree to how the organization values employees' contributions and concerns about employees' well-being (Eisenberger et al., 2014).

LMX is developed based on the process of role definition by employees in a workgroup (Graen, 1976; Graen and Scandura, 1987). The interaction between supervisor and subordinates is more likely influential on the successive quality of LMX and is critical in terms of subsequent relations reliant upon trust. There are common views established among employees regarding the extent to which

supervisors respect their contributions and concern about their well-being (Kottke and Sharafinski, 1988). By considering the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), PSS would facilitate the development of strong reaction and attachment towards the leader and the perceived leader support would create a feeling of enhanced contribution given by the leader. Thus employees would provide feedback to their leaders with increased efforts in the workplace. Wayne et al. (2002) suggest that researchers and scholars adopt diverse approaches to express the association between LMX and POS and there are empirical pieces of evidence with controversial results. In their research conducted among the employees of large enterprises in the USA, Wayne et al. (1997) reported the two-way association between LMX and POS in which these variables impacting each other. However, Wayne et al. (2002), reported a one-way relationship (in which POS impacts on LMX) in their research conducted among university personnel and workers of metal facilities in the USA. On the other hand, Eisenberger et al. (2014) found that a leaders' understanding of POS forms a high-quality LMX relationship (Eisenberger et al., 2014). Thus, Hypothesis H2 is proposed as follows:

H2: Perceived supervisor support has a significant effect on leader-member exchange.

2.6. Leader-member exchange (LMX) and turnover intension (TI)

According to Eisenberger et al. (2014) employees are engaged in organizational objectives since they are in expectation of potential achievement through tangible or intangible rewards stemming from enhanced work efforts. In this context, LMX is regarded as one of the work motivation factors that are influential on employees' attitudes. Wang et al. (2018) emphasized the LMX the positive and negative influences on work outcomes. Dulebohn et al. (2012) posit the strong influence of LMX on TI of employees.

According to Mobley (1977), TI refers to the extent of an employee's possibility of leaving the organization. Mobley (1977) points out the importance of employee TI in terms of its impacts on society due to its link with work-related behaviors and outcomes. Scholars suggest that employees' TI is impacted by organizational, psychological, financial and socio-economic factors (Gable et al., 2007). A high-quality LMX increases task completion and reduces employee TI (Adil and Awais, 2016). Rosen et al. (2011) propose the negative influence of LMX on TI. In addition, employees' commitment to their leaders, in reciprocal relationships increases the retention of talented employees and mitigates their TIs (Ballinger et al., 2010). The characteristics of subordinates and interpersonal relationships are defined as the predictors of LMX; however, leadership variables are attributed to the variance in the quality of the LMX relationship (Dulebohn et al., 2012).

TI may potentially have resulted from job-related and organizational factors individual's cognition (Eby et al., 2010; Haines et al., 2010). Chen et al. (2016) argued that the relationship between supervisor and subordinate partially mediates the supervisor-subordinate congruence or incongruence in the aspect of employees' TIs. There are several studies have examined LMX and its impact on TI (Chen et al., 2016). Previous studies empirically evidenced the negative association between LMX and TI (Abu Elanain, 2014; Kim et al., 2017). Thus, Hypothesis H3 is proposed as follows:

H3: Leader-member exchange has a significant effect on turnover intention.

2.7. The moderating role of LMX

Employees' TI has long been a troubling issue for many organizations and refraining organizations from sustaining their long-term competitiveness as well as having a financial burden concerning the recruitment of new members (Memon et al., 2014). Hence, it is eminent for organizations to develop strategies to address the problem, which should include lessening the TI of employees. There is plenty of empirical research that evidenced the negative association between LMX and TI (Harris et al., 2009, 2011). Ballinger et al. (2010) suggest that "in-group members" in high-quality LMX relationships are able to receive both tangible and intangible benefits such as salary increase and career development.

According to the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960) inferred from SET (Blau, 1964), the "in-group members" provide behavioral and affective reaction such as higher levels of work commitment,

loyalty and reduced turnover intention in exchange for rewards they receive from high-quality LMX may, in turn, generate benefits to the organizations (Tse et al., 2013). Contrary to high-quality LMX, employees with low-quality LMX who are called “out-group members” are unable to get intangible or material rewards same as “in-group members” and may develop negative feelings for their leaders. Harris et al. (2005) argue that these negative feelings towards the leaders may disseminate via “out-group members” to entire the organization as and ultimately results with TI of employees.

Based on the term reciprocity, individuals are inclined to exchange valued outcomes (Blau, 1964). According to Graen (1976), the concept of LMX is used to explain the quality of the social exchange between leaders and their employees. LMX has been detected to be positively correlated with employees’ work performance (Bauer and Green, 1996; Rosen et al., 2011). Employees are expected to exchange in a negative manner to maintain the equilibrium in case of the absence of employee perception on valued outcomes. For example, employees who experience low-quality LMX relationships are not voluntarily displayed behaviors beyond the prescribed role in the employment contract (Moss et al., 2009). Thus, Hypothesis H4 is proposed as follows:

H4: Leader-member exchange has a moderator effect on the relationship between perceived supervisor support and turnover intention.

3. Methodology

This study is fundamentally based on the assumption that PSS has a negative effect on TI and the level of employee satisfaction on LMX has a moderating effect on the influence process of PSS on TI. In other words, a higher level of LMX is characterized as a power to increase the magnitude of the influence of PSS on TI. Based on the above argument, the primary goal of this study to demonstrate the linkage between PSS, LMX and TI, as well as to identify whether LMX has a moderating effect between PSS and TI. This study, therefore, attempts to establish a framework determining at which conditions and levels the relationship between PSS and TI will occur in terms of LMX. In this context, the hypotheses are given as follows:

H1: Perceived supervisor support has a significant effect on turnover intention.

H2: Perceived supervisor support has a significant effect on leader-member exchange.

H3: Leader-member exchange has a significant effect on turnover intention.

H4: Leader-member exchange has a moderating effect on the relationship between perceived supervisor support and turnover intention.

Ethics committee permission to collect data for this study was obtained from Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University Ethics Committee with approval no 16492 dated March 26th, 2021. Although the adverse impacts and restrictions caused by the pandemic, data as a foundation of research, was collected from 411 employees (engineer, supervisors and technicians) of 3 public enterprises operating in the defense industry between February and March 2021 by using face-to-face and online survey method. The first section of the questionnaire consists of demographic questions for acquiring data relating to age, gender, education level, position and years of service of the respondents. The second section of the questionnaire comprised of statements that measure employees’ behaviors regarding PSS, TI and LMX.

Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS) Scale, which is composed of 8 items and is developed by Eisenberger et al. (1986), was used to measure employees’ perception of supervisor support. This scale includes the word “supervisor” to replace the original word “organization”. The sample statements of the PSS scale can be exemplified as “my supervisor cares about my opinion” and “my supervisor really cares about my well-being”. Employees’ perceptions of LMX were measured by using the 12-item Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Scale developed by Liden and Maslyn (1998). The LMX scale includes sample statements such as “I like my supervisor very much as a person”. Employees’ turnover intentions were measured through a one-dimensional Turnover Intention (TI) Scale that contains four items and is developed by Angle and Perry (1981). The scale includes sample statements such as “I want to remain in my organization until retirement” and “I want to leave my

organization as soon as possible”. As seen, the statement in the first item is given as inverse coded and analyses were carried out accordingly by considering this aspect. The survey questionnaire form is composed of 24 statements in total (excluding demographic questions).

All of the statements contained in the second section of the questionnaire forms distributed to the participants were prepared based on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging that has answer options from 1=strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree. SPSS26 statistics software package was used for the analysis of the acquired data. The model generated for this study is shown in Figure 1. In the proposed model, the dependent variable is denoted TI while PSS is an independent variable. However, LMX is called as dependent, independent and moderator variable in the following research model.

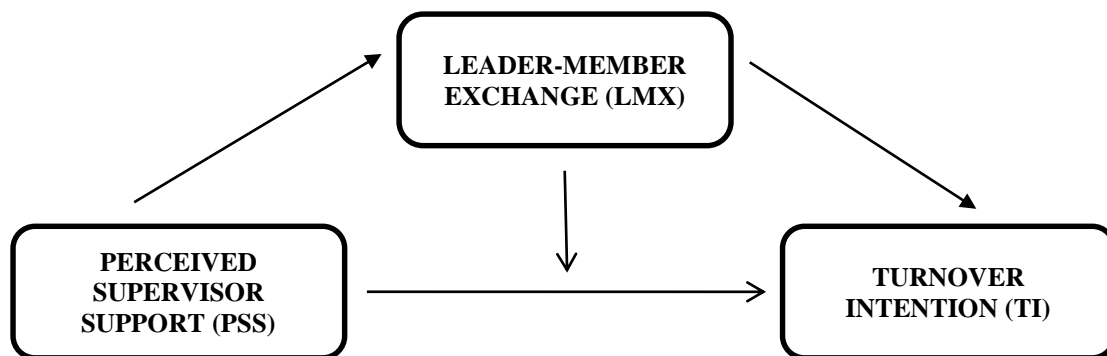


Figure 1. Research model

3.1. Research findings

The respondents of this survey are comprised of 74 % male and 26 % female. This result shows that men make up the majority of workers in enterprises operating in the defense industry. 44 % of the participants comprised of employees aged between 29 and 36 years. A large share of the respondents (49 %) is between the ages of 29 and 36 while respondents between the ages of 18 and 25 compose the smallest share (22 %). Among the respondents, 66 % are married, 34 % are single. According to the educational attainment of the respondents; 58% have a bachelor’s degree, followed by the employees with a master’s degree (24 %). Engineers represent the largest proportion of respondents (58 %) in the surveyed enterprises, followed by the technicians (29 %).

3.2. Correlation and reliability analysis

Besides the relationships between the variables PSS, LMX and TI, Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients of the scales used for measuring each variable are shown in Table 1. There is a weak relationship between variables when correlation analysis yielded “r” value less than 0.30; the relationship between variables is regarded moderate when “r” value falls within the range between 0.30 and 0.50 and correlation analysis indicates a strong relationship when r value exceeds 0.50 (Cohen, 2013). Table 1 suggests negative and strong associations between PSS and TI and between LMX and TI, whereas there is a positive and strong association between PSS and LMX.

Table 1

Relationships between variables

Variables	1	2	3
Perceived Supervisor Support	(0.94)		
Leader-member Exchange	.579*	(0.87)	
Turnover Intention	-.611*	-.499*	(0.79)

*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

**Values shown in parentheses represent Cronbach Alpha coefficients.

3.3. Regression analysis

Simple linear regression analysis was conducted for the evaluation of the hypotheses H1, H2 and H3 that were generated based on the relevant literature. In this context, the effect of PSS on TI has been explored. In addition, the effect of PSS on LMX and the effect of LMX on TI were analyzed.

The results of simple linear regression analysis are found to be statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). According to H1, the analysis results suggest that the value R^2 is 0.397 relating to the regression equation for a simple linear relationship between the variables. Based on this value, the percentage of the variance in turnover intention, which is 40, can be explained by PSS.

Hypothesis H1 is therefore accepted.

In addition, the relationship between PSS and LMX is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) and the value R^2 is 0.361 based on the acquired data. Hence, it can be implied that 36 % of the variance in LMX results from PSS.

Thus, Hypothesis H2 is accepted.

Finally, the relationship between LMX and TI is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) and the results of the regression analysis suggest that the value R^2 is 0.284. Therefore, it can be expressed that 28 % of the variance in TI can be explained by LMX.

This finding indicates that Hypothesis H3 is accepted.

Table 2

Regression Analysis Results

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	B	β	F	R^2	Adjusted R^2	P
Perceived Supervisor Support	Turnover Intention	-.597	-.611	167.97	.399	.397	.000
Perceived Supervisor Support	Leader-member Exchange	.477	.579	155.83	.363	.361	.000
Leader-member Exchange	Turnover Intention	-.602	-.499	101.867	.287	.284	.000

3.4. The results of hierarchical regression analysis results for the moderator effect of LMX on the relationship between PSS and TI

The presence of moderation can be expressed when the magnitude of the association between two different variables depends on the third variable (Preacher, Rucker and Hayes, 2007). The moderating variable is characterized by its ability to impact the magnitude and direction of the effect of an independent variable on a dependent variable (Baron and Kenny, 1986).

If the existence of another variable, which is regarded to have a moderating effect on the association between two variables, the impacting power of the dependent variable on the independent variable exhibits variation or association between these variables goes in the opposite direction. Initially, there should be a definite link between dependent and independent variables in order to articulate the existence of moderating variable. In the regression equation, the presence of a statistically significant relationship is essential between a dependent variable and the interaction effect as the product of independent and moderating variables (Aiken and West, 1991). Contrary to the above, the existence of a significant relationship between independent and moderating variables may not be necessary.

There are varying methods employed for demonstrating the moderating effect. In this study, it was determined whether LMX has a moderating effect on the association between PSS and TI through hierarchical regression analysis in SPSS software. As is known, the moderating effect model suggests a three-step hierarchical regression analysis. In step 1, dependent and independent variables are inserted in appropriate places in the program. In step 2, the moderating variable is inserted

accordingly. In step 3, the interaction value, which stands for the multiplication of independent and moderating variables, is inserted in the relevant place and the analysis is performed. Each step is expected to be statistically significant based on the findings of the analysis ($p < 0.05$).

The variations in value R2 will be explored if the moderation model is significant. The findings of correlation analysis made a determination regarding the fulfillment of the preliminary condition for the presence of a statistically significant association between dependent and independent variables. The independent variable (PSS) and the moderating variable (LMX) are initially standardized to reach up to the interaction value, as mentioned herein. The multiplication of the standardized variables (PSS*LMX) yields the value of interaction. The above-mentioned steps will be followed, once the interaction value is determined.

Table 3

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Results

	Model	B	S.H.	Standardized β	t	p
1)	(Constant)	2.060	.048		44.408	.000
	Perceived Supervisor Support	-.624	0.48	-.596	-11.939	.000
2)	(Constant)	2.060	.047		43.490	.000
	Perceived Supervisor Support	-.488	.058	-.456	-8.655	.000
	Leader-member Exchange	-.236	.58	-.225	-4.097	.000
3)	(Constant)	1.995	.053		39.907	.000
	Perceived Supervisor Support	-.466	.058	-.445	-8.359	.000
	Leader-member Exchange	-.215	0.58	-.206	-3.693	.000
	(PSS x LMX)	.081	.042	.094	1.934	0.44

<i>Dependent Variable: Turnover Intention</i>					
1)	R=591	R ² =.399		F=167.939	p=.000
2)	R=619	R ² =.433		F= 101.703	p=.012
3)	R=634	R ² =.465		F= 69.324	p=.046

Based on the results of the hierarchical regression analysis given in Table 3, previously developed models are investigated whether they are statistically significant. Regression models in all steps produced p values below 0.05 and were therefore assessed as statistically significant, as shown above. As given in Table 4, the steps are examined separately. In Step 1, the value of R² is 0.399. In Step 2, R² yielded a value of 0.433 with the inclusion of LMX. In Step 3, the R² value increased up to 0.465 by exhibiting little variation with the incorporation of interaction value (PSS *LMX) into the analysis. These values indicate that 40 % of the variance in TI can be explained solely by PSS in Step 1, while 47 % of the variance in TI can be explained with the addition of LMX as well as interaction value in Step 2 and Step 3.

The following graph is suggested for the proper interpretation of regression analysis performed as well as for the observation of variances more concretely. The graph below was generated by using an additional module called *Process*, which is developed by Hayes (2017) and can be added to SPSS software. On the other hand, the moderation model can be tested through this module. The moderation model was initially tested via this program in order to generate the following graph. These findings were consistent with the results of hierarchical regression analysis.

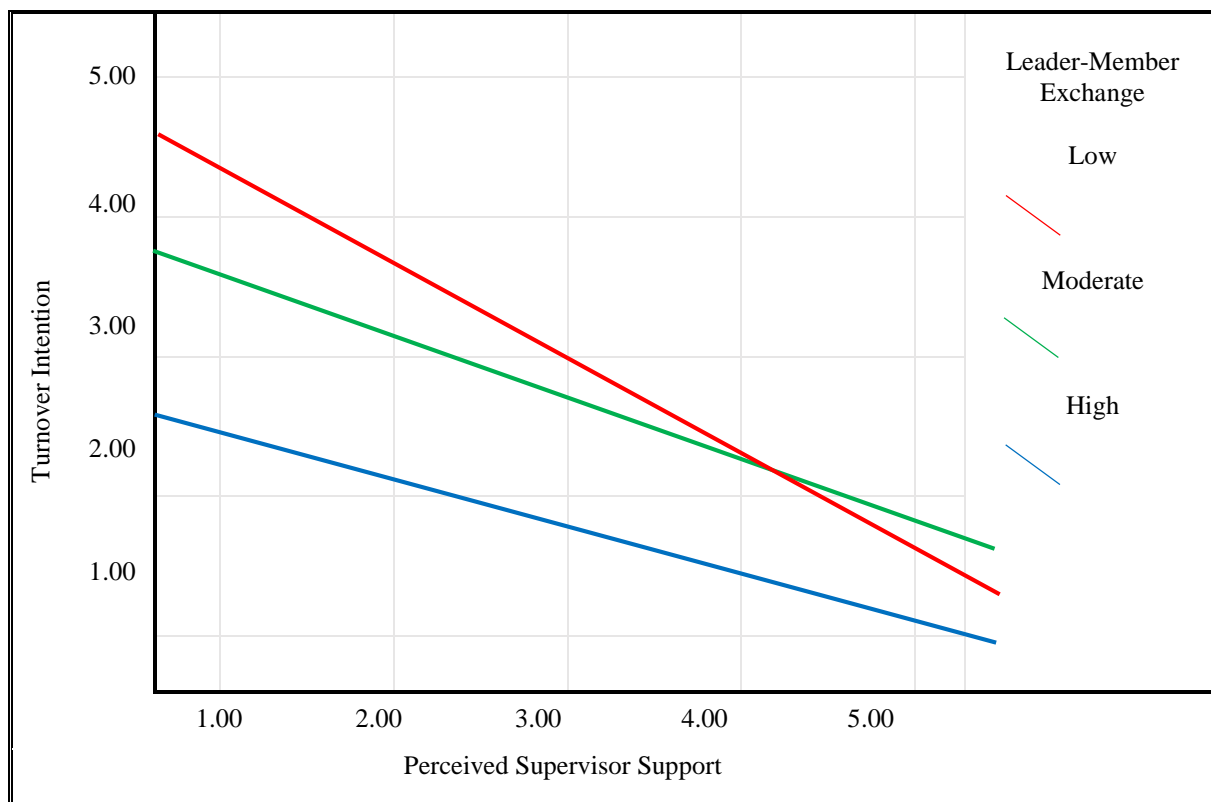


Figure 2. The moderating effect of leader-member exchange between perceived supervisor support and turnover intention.

As shown in Figure 2, the moderating effect of LMX on the relationship between PSS and TI can be observed more concretely. As observed, the level of TI, which is experienced with the lowest levels of LMX and the highest level of PSS, is higher than that of experience with the highest levels of LMX and PSS. Hence, Hypotheses H₄ (LMX has a moderating effect on the relationship between PSS and TI) aligning the argument is accepted.

4. Discussion and conclusion

The moderating effects of LMX were examined in regards to the relationship between LMX, POS and TI in the Turkish Defense Industry. The study implies that the intention of the employees to quit declines and their organizational bond strengthens through a solid interactive relationship between a leader and the subordinates. The earlier studies were made by Kim et al. (2017) are underpinned by this research as they also support the correlation between LMX and TI.

This study initially argues that perceived PSS significantly impacts employees' LMX that has been strongly evidenced through the statistical analysis performed in this research. The research findings are heavily consistent with the past studies in the literature (Wayne et al., 2002) that propose the impact of PSS on LMX. This study confirms the previous argument and suggests a practical view that supports the relevant studies of LMX indicating significant impacts of PSS (Eisenberger et al., 2014) when found in a defense culture that depends on high-tech environments. The results demonstrate that the causal relationship from POS towards LMX is supported by strong evidence arisen from defense culture. This finding offers an alternative approach and highlights that the linkage between LMX and PSS is generalized by comparing public and defense culture. This study secondly shows a significant relationship between PSS and TI. This finding proves that POS is a critical aspect influencing the psychological states of employees and ultimately their levels of TI. POS directly influences the employees' intention to stay on the job and greatly lessens the employees' tendency to quit their jobs, when they are motivated through a perception in which employees believe that they are provided organizational support directly. The findings of this study are likewise the majority of past studies (Dawley et al., 2010). Moreover, these findings provide significant supplementary knowledge

in the context of the specific industry. This study postulated that LMX and POS both will be influential on the TIs of employees. Consequently, this study found a significant correlation between POS and employee TI. H1 is supported and it is also found a significant relationship between LMX and employee TI, H3 is also supported. In short, the main factor for decreased level of employee's TI is directly attributed to employees' POS and LMX. This finding implies that POS and LMX significantly influence employees' intentions to leave or stay in the high-tech industry where competition has reached the ultimate level. It is necessary to carry out subsequent research to analyze whether similar correlations between the variables are detected in industries other than defense as well as diverse cultural leadership styles. Thirdly, the linkage between POS and TI is tacit along with an indirect variable which is moderated by LMX. In addition, the verification of direct, indirect and overall impacts from LMX PSS to TI through PSS, LMX demonstrates significant impacts in the overall and indirect path but not through the direct path. It also can be implied that LMX moderates the relationship from POS towards TI. This finding exhibits the effect of PSS on TI is replaced by the effect of LMX. For instance, the managers become the most communicated individual by their employees within an organization since they are in a position to draft and distribute organizational rules and policies. According to Eisenberger et al. (2014), the leaders are ultimately perceived by employees to represent the organization and the employees believe that their relationship with the organization by their leaders LMX can thereby be considered as a latent variable and influences employees' PSS, which lessens employees' intention to quit the organization. In the statistical analysis of this study, a significant indirect effect is detected from PSS towards TI through LMX; however, no direct impact from PSS to TI. In other words, LMX significantly moderates the correlation between PSS and TI. These findings express that a connection, which relies on support and empathy between supervisors and their subordinates, can be managed and facilitated in an organization, albeit this is an indirect relationship from PSS to TI.

The direct effect of LMX on TI was not explored enough by the researchers in regards to the different industries (Chen et al., 2016). The results of the current study explain the pivotal link from POS to TI via LMX in a larger aspect. It addresses the instrumental role of the leaders for the consistency with behavior of the leaders/managers and employees for gaining the organizational identity (Tavares et al., 2016) and share the principles and goals of the organization to get success in a harsh business environment. Innovative guidelines and a high-tech environment might restructure organizational competitiveness and encourage the welfare of employees. Nevertheless, additional justifications are needed for a realistic conclusion. The study highlights some management consequences to consider for successful leadership of the organization. The findings of the study aim on the organizational support to reduce the TI on every level of the employees. The managers in all positions (department, groups, executive level, division, etc.) have to recognize the issues related to the communication and managerial expectations of the employees so that they can build sustainable confidence over a relationship between the supervisors and the subordinates. The organization will get the benefit through these implications which will produce a steady willingness of the individuals to stick to the organization and consequently reduce the TI and the cost of losing the experienced employees.

Regardless of the detailed analytical outcomes and detailed evaluations in this study, certain limitations are subject to be bring to the attention. This study does not report causal relationships because of the use of cross-sectional design. Despite the study used the literature as the main source of the information to predict the relationships between the supervisors, managers and subordinates, the findings articulate that social solidarity and interaction influence POS and LMX, not in reverse. So, it is required to employ a longitudinal study to make clear the causality of the connection in this regard. The self-reports are a common method to obtain data to measure the employees' behaviors and views in organizational studies and the measures are affected by common method variance. Nevertheless, Bauer and Green (1994) posit that self-reports are valid and effective resources to obtain data in case the employees' behavior to work is measured through the individual perceptions and attitudes. In addition, several categorized levels in these companies are considered to obtain data such as technicians, engineers and managers. Moreover, the findings of this research in the framework of a high-tech industry may be applied to other different industries such as aviation, hospitality or commercial electronics industries since the organizational structures and the employee's perceptions

and attitudes may differ. Additional research in these industries may provide insight to prevent any miss judgments about the employees' behaviors. Therefore, these studies in different industries are highly suggested since they might create a path to obtaining a generalized view of the situation.

Consequently, this study found a significant correlation between POS and employee TI. H1 is supported and it is also found a significant relationship between LMX and employee TI, H3 is also supported. This linear association proposes that employees with low-quality LMX relationships established between supervisors and employees are more likely to result in a higher level of employee TI. Employees who have higher quality LMX relationships with their supervisors than those with low-quality relationships display low levels of TI. Consistent with other studies (Gerstner and Day, 1997; Schyns et al., 2007) in the literature, the results of this research evidences that the LMX negatively impacts TI. On the other hand, there are scholars (Harris et al., 2005; Kim et al., 2010; Morrow et al., 2005) reporting a U-shaped association between the quality LMX and employee TI. Based on this assumption, employees' TI reaches its lowest level at a moderate level of LMX quality and its highest level in the cases of good and bad LMX quality. In short, the main factor for decreased level of employees' TI is directly attributed to employees' POS.

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