THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADER MEMBER EXCHANGE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT: A RESEARCH IN THE SERVICE SECTOR[1]

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ABSTRACT

Psychologically empowered subordinates feel more commitment for their organization, have high job satisfaction, low turnover intention and work tension, are more prone to innovative behaviours, high performance and produce solutions. Psychological empowerment; depends on the conditions in the work environment. In work life; the interaction with the leader and the congruence with the organization are like a manifestation of organization for employees. Some research pointed to the complementary or reinforcing nature of leader-member exchange and person-organization fit. However, we need to learn more about the co-action contraption of these two variables. In order to reveal the interaction of leader-member exchange, psychological empowerment and person-organization fit, it was decided to conduct a research in the hospitality sector, in 5-star hotels in İstanbul. The data were collected by surveying 252 employees, which were reached by convenience sampling. Data analysis have done by SPSS 22, Process Macro v3.4 and AMOS 26.0.0. According to the results, leader-member exchange's effect on psychological empowerment strengthens as person-organization fit increases. However, the effect of leader-member exchange on psychological empowerment becomes insignificant when low person-organization fit values are present. Therefore, the contribution of leaders' supportive behaviours to the psychological empowerment of subordinates depends on the subordinates' perception of their values and characteristics are compatible with the organization's. As it was found that these two variables interactively affect the desired outcomes for the organization, this research is a contribution for the limited literature on LMX and P-O fit.

Keywords: Psychological Empowerment, Leader-Member Exchange (LMX), Person Organization Fit (P-O Fit), Hospitality, Tourism.

LİDER ÜYE ETKİLEŞİMİ VE PSİKOLOJİK GÜÇLENDİRME ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİ: HİZMET SEKTÖRÜNDE BİR ARAŞTIRMA

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ÖZET

Psikolojik olarak güçlendirilmiş astlar kurumlarına daha fazla bağlılık hissederler, yüksek iş tatminine, düşük işten ayrılma niyetine ve iş gerilimine sahiptirler, yenilikçi davranışlara, yüksek performansa ve çözüm üretmeye daha yatkındırlar. Psikolojik güçlendirme; çalışma ortamındaki koşullara bağlıdır. Çalışma yaşamında; liderle etkileşim ve örgütle uyum, çalışanlar için örgütün bir tezahürü gibidir. Bazı araştırmalar, lider-üye etkileşimi ve kişi-örgüt uyumunun, tamamlayıcı veya güçlendirici doğasına işaret etmiştir. Ancak, bu iki değişkenin birlikte hareket etme mekanizması hakkında daha fazla bilgiye ihtiyacımız vardır. Lider-üye etkileşimi, psikolojik güçlendirme ve kişi-örgüt uyumunun etkileşimini ortaya koymak amacıyla, konaklama sektöründe, İstanbul'daki 5 yıldızlı otellerde bir araştırma yapılmasına karar verilmiştir. Veriler, kolayda örnekleme yoluyla ulaşılan 252 çalışana anket uygulanarak toplanmıştır. Veri analizi SPSS 22, Process Macro v3.4 ve AMOS 26.0.0 ile yapılmıştır. Sonuçlara göre, lider-üye etkileşiminin psikolojik güçlendirme üzerindeki etkisi, kişi-örgüt uyumu arttıkça güçlenmektedir. Ancak, düşük kişi-örgüt uyumu değerlerinde, lider-üye etkileşiminin psikolojik güçlendirme üzerindeki etkisi anlamsız hale gelmektedir. Dolayısıyla, liderlerin destekleyici davranışlarının astların psikolojik güçlenmesine katkısı, astların kendi değerleri ve özelliklerinin, örgütün değer ve özellikleri ile uyumlu olduğunu algılamasına bağlıdır. Bu iki değişkenin etkileşimli olarak örgüt için arzu edilen sonuçları etkilediği tespit edildiğinden, bu araştırma LMX ve kişi-örgüt uyumu konusundaki sınırlı literatüre bir katkı niteliğindedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Psikolojik Güçlendirme, Lider-Üye Etkileşimi, Kişi-Örgüt Uyumu, Konaklama Sektörü, Turizm.

INTRODUCTION

When the historical development of management approaches is examined, it follows a path from the "job-oriented perspective of Scientific Management to the employee-oriented perspective of modern management paradigms. For organizations to improve their competitiveness, it is critical for employees to be satisfied, perceives feet with organizational goals, access information and participate in decisions, thus increasing desired work outputs, especially performance.

The term "empowerment" was first expressed by Kanter in 1977 and was defined as a cornerstone to improve service and quality in organizations (Llorente-Alonso et al., 2023). Empowerment; is a process that increases the autonomy and responsibilities, participation and managerial efficiency of employees and where the leader shares their power with subordinates through dynamic relationships (Boudrias et al., 2009; Llorente-Alonso et al., 2023).

There are two main perspectives on employee empowerment. "Structural empowerment" treating empowering managerial practises (such as delegation and information sharing), while "Psychological Empowerment" treating perceptional dimensions of empowerment (Dewettinck et al., 2023).

Leadership is motivating others to take action towards common goals (Locke et al., 1999) and the connection of leader and their members (Bass, 1990). As indicated by "Situational Leadership Theory", the third of the Traditional Leadership Theories, best leadership behaviour may vary according to situations (Koçel, 2010). "Leader-Member Exchange" can be considered as an option to replace "Average Leadership Style, where the leader has the same interaction with the members. A unique interaction relationship develops between each leader-member dyadic (Dansereau et al., 1975).

Organizational fit is about work environment and the employee who is a part of the environment. In fit literature the employee refers to the employee's knowledge, abilities, personality traits and values and the environment includes the characteristics of the business and the organization and the atmosphere they create (Oh I vd., 2014). The employee's fit perception with the environment has some dimensions like organization, supervisor, job and group. The perception of fit about organization fit is the element that most accurately shows the employee's judgment on the congruity of her own values and organizational culture (Cable & DeRue, 2002). Because it refers to the matching of the values of the employee with the organization's (Kristof, 1996).

LITERATURE REVIEW
Psychological Empowerment (PE)

Spreitzer (1995) concluded that psychological empowerment does not consist of a single dimension. As the organizational values and behaviours help the employee to believe his/her job is meaningful, the first dimension is "meaning". The second one is "Competence" or merit; is refers to the believing of the employee can achieve the task. Third one is "Self-determination"; is refers to the believing of the employee that he/she has the right to choose whether to initiate or regulate his/her actions. The fourth is the employee's level of influence on strategic, managerial or operational business outcomes, referred to as "impact".

Spreitzer (1995) also discussed the antecedents of psychological empowerment. He emphasized that it is a concept that varies according to the work, cannot be generalized according to different work and life situations, and depends on the conditions arising from the work environment, regardless of personality traits. "Locus of control"; is self-control without the need for any external control, "Self-esteem"; is the employee sees himself/herself as a valuable resource with talents, "Information"; is the transfer of information about the mission and performance of the organization to the employee, "Rewards" real rewards that show how the employee's actions can affect his/her performance, influence the psychological empowerment significantly and strongly.

Considering the organizational outcomes of psychological empowerment, empowered employees act effectively and autonomously in problem-solving because they see themselves as a part of the organization/job. They tend to be more innovative because they believe they have the power to influence their business and business environment, and they have access to sufficient information (Spreitzer, 1995). As the level of psychological empowerment increases, commitment to the organization and job satisfaction increases, and the intention to leave the job decreases. Employees who are more prone to innovative behaviours, high performance and more solution-generating because they find their work attractive. It has also been found that as psychological empowerment increases, OCB and performance also increase (Llorente-Alonso, 2023). Psychological empowerment practices result in greater satisfaction and organizational commitment (Dewettinck et al., 2003).

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX)

The unique and different quality of the relationship between the leader and each follower is the basis of the leader-member exchange theory, in that the leader changes the way he/she treats followers through different types of exchange. (Dansereau et al., 1975). The leader develops high-quality relationships with some members and low quality with some members. The members of high-quality exchange act as the trusted assistants of the leader and take on duties beyond their job descriptions. The members in low-quality exchanges do not go beyond the job description. The leader can only achieve high-quality exchange with some members because the leaders' time and sources are limited (Graen & Uhl-Bien,1995). Therefore, a leader-member exchange differentiation perception occurs among the employees (Henderson et al., 2009). Members with high-quality exchanges mean the leader provides more resources (such as love, status, service, knowledge, and money). Those with low quality of leader-member exchange may perceive they could be more respected and trusted. This may lead to different groups within the working group, depending on the quality of exchange with the leader. Only some trusted and respected members form the leader's outgroup. In general, it is thought that subordinates will respond to the resource obtained from the leader with a sense of gratitude. This response is in the form of behaviours that will benefit the leader. For example, individuals who receive emotional or material support from the leader (high exchange quality) tend to display behaviours valued by the leader, such as increasing their job performance and demonstrating organizational citizenship behaviour (Graen &Uhl-Bien, 1995).

Person-Organization Fit (P-O Fit)

The employee's perception of fit with the environment is the matching of the components of the work environment and the employee. (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011). It also includes congruence of the employee's characteristics and the organizational culture, employee's needs and organizational sources (Kristof, 1996). Hugo Münsterberg, one of the founders of industrial psychology, conducted studies on the contribution of psychology to business life.

According to him, job satisfaction and productivity increase if employees work in positions appropriate to their emotional and mental abilities. (Kümbül Güler, 2015). In his very interesting work titled "Psychology and Industrial Efficiency"; touched upon person-job fit. In this work, he published testing and selection techniques on how employers can select the best possible person and eliminate the unsuitable ones (Münsterberg, 1913). Person-Organization fit is critical as it affects the employee's perceptions and judgments about the organization. Employees who believe their values match the organization's values feel included in its mission. Thus, organizational identification increases, and they tend to perceive organizational actions positively (Cable & DeRue, 2002). It is important and required measuring the employee's fit perception with the environmental elements to make predictions about his/her behaviour and to have an idea. Person-organization fit is also associated with job satisfaction and intention to leave (Kristof-Brown, 2000; Saks & Ashforth, 1997). As job satisfaction, perceived organizational support and job commitment increase, person-organization fit also increases (Cable & DeRue, 2002).

Psychological Empowerment (PE) and Leader-Member Exchange (LMX)

The employee's connection with the leader is like a reflection of the organization and LMX determines his/her reaction to the organization. All leadership styles and practices affect increasing perceptions of empowerment through motivating employees (Llorente-Alonso et al., 2023). Previous studies have found that as LMX increases, psychological empowerment also increases (Malik et al., 2015).

First, employees with high exchange quality have easier access to information than employees with low exchange quality with their leaders. Therefore, they can undertake more challenging tasks. All these develop the sense of meaning. Secondly, employees with high quality interaction are more supported by their leaders and therefore they feel more successful and have a sense of proficiency. Third, the decision-making abilities of high LMX quality employees allow them to fullfill their tasks with initiative, which means that they are self-determining. Finally, employees who establish quality relationships with their leaders take on more responsibility and feel more successful (Wang et al., 2016).

Person-Organization Fit (P-O Fit) and Psychological Empowerment (PE)

Along with modern management approaches, employee participation in decisions and information flow has gained value from the bottom up and the top down. The main component is "information" for the employee to be empowered. Employees can manage the information and solve problems from down to top because of the information flow. Especially in the service sector, rapid response to demands and problems is required, and this is only possible with empowered employees (Wilkinson, 1998). Organizational principles and managerial practices that give flexibility and autonomy to the employee contribute to the empowerment of the employee (Spreitzer, 1995). The employee's perception of similarity degree about organizational goals and values is is related to the degree of empowerment.

Employees who are more identified with their organizations have a better understanding of what is expected from them and feel a strong sense of psychological empowerment as they are aware of their equipment to adopt themselves for fulfill the requirements (Gregory, Albritton & Osmonbekov, 2010).

Leader Member Exchange (LMX), Person-Organization Fit (P-O Fit) and Organizational Outcomes

Person-organization fit and leader-member exchange are the daily employee experiences of work and consequently influence employee behavior. The employees see leaders embody organizational culture and values (Jutras & Mathieu, 2016). For this reason, the exchange with the leader and the fit perception with the organization are expected to affect work outcomes together and separately. However, more information is needed about the co-action mechanism of these two variables. Kim et al. (2013) found that the individual felt more perceived social exchange with the organization if the exchange with the leader was of high quality and highly aligned with the organization's goals and values. A study conducted in Turkey found that as leader-member exchange increases, undesirable organizational outcomes decrease and that this relationship varies depending on the level of person-organization fit (Derindag et al., 2021).

1. H_1: Person-organization fit moderates the relationship between leader member exchange and psychological empowerment.

MATERIALS AND METHODS
Participants and Procedures

Hotels in Istanbul were chosen as the population. A questionnaire was sent to 350 people, 271 of them answered the questionnaire, but it was determined that 252 questionnaires were filled in completely. For a quantitative study, some researchers suggest that five observations for each explanatory variable would be sufficient (Hair et al., 2010). There are a total of 24 statements in the questionnaire, and therefore, the sample size is sufficient.

Measures

Scales with proven validity and reliability were used to measure the constructs used in this research. Likert type scale was applied.

Leader-Member Exchange

Leader-member exchange was measured with the scale of Liden and Maslyn (1998) and Greguras and Ford (2003).This scale was culturally adapted by Ordun and Aktaş (2014). The LMX-MDM scale consists of 4 dimensions and 12 items. These dimensions are contribution, loyalty, effect and professional respect.

Person-Organization Fit

Person-Organization Fit was measured with the Netemeyer et al. (1997) developed scale. This scale was culturally adapted by Turunç and Çelik (2012). The scale is unidimensional and consists of 4 items.

Psychological Empowerment

Spreitzer (1995) developed the psychological empowerment scale, which was culturally adapted by Vanlı (2019). It consists of 4 dimensions and 12 items: meaning, competence, self-determination and impact.

Data Analysis And Results

Descriptive statistics were obtained with the SPSS 22 program. The measurement model was analyzed via AMOS 26.0.0. Hypotheses were tested using Process Macro v3.4.

Descriptive Statistics

We used descriptive and analytical statistics to evaluate our data. Table 1 includes demographic information about the participants. Analyzed sample (N = 252), 16.7% between the age of 18-25, 21% between the age of 26-35, 34.5% between the age of 36-45, 25% between the age of 46-55, 2.8% older than 55. Table 1 shows that 58% of the sample was male and the remaining 42% was female. Concerning their education, many of them had bachelor's degrees (44.8%). Most of the participants worked in reception (25%), customer relationship (21.8%), food & beverage/kitchen (21%) and housekeeping (17.8%). As for occupational level, many were workers (67.8%). Most worked in this company for 0-1 years (29.8%) and 1-5 years (47.2%).

Table 1: Sample characteristics

Age	N	(%)
18-25	42	16.7
26-35	53	21
36-45	87	34.5
46-55	63	25
55+	7	2.8
Gender	**N**	**(%)**
Female	107	42
Male	145	58
Education	**N**	**(%)**
Middle School	19	7.5
High School	25	9.9
University	113	44.8
Master	48	19
Doctorate	47	18.6

Job Title	N	(%)
Reception	63	25
Housekeeping	45	17.8
Food & Beverage/Kitchen	53	21
Sales & Marketing	20	7.9
Purchasing	16	6.3
Customer Relationship	55	21.8
Other	63	25
Status	**N**	**(%)**
Senior Manager	5	2
Mid-Level Manager	36	14.3
Senior Manager	40	15.8
Worker	171	67.8
Years of employment at the current workplace	**N**	**(%)**
0-1	75	29.8
1-5	119	47.2
6-10	36	14.3
11-20	17	6.7
20+	5	2

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Before confirmatory factor analysis, some assumptions need to be tested. These tests are normality, multicollinearity, homoscedasticity, and autocorrelation. Skewness and kurtosis tests are widely accepted tests for normality. The skewness and kurtosis values of all variables are appropriate (University of Cambridge n.d.). There is no serious multicollinearity problem because the VIF of every variable is less than 5 (Shrestha, 2020).

For linearity analysis, the residual scatter plot was examined, and it was seen that the variances were evenly distributed and linearity was achieved (Tabachnick, 2013). Durbin Watson's value (1,686) is between 1.5 and 2.5 (Garson, 2012). Durbin-Watson's statistic reveals that there is autocorrelation.

CFA results generally showed good model fit (χ2/df= 2.237), adequate goodness (TLI = 0.895, CFI = 0.905, NFI= 0.842), and poor fit indices (SRMR= 0.0648, RMSEA = 0.07) (Byrne, 2010; Hair et al., 2010). Only the GFI (0.820) value is outside the appropriate range. Since GFI values are not far from the appropriate range, they can be accepted at this stage, provided they are re-evaluated in reliability tests.

The standardized loading value should be higher than 0.5. Ideally, this value should be higher than 0.7. The outer loadings of all variables in the research (LMX= 0.92-0.55, POF= 0.81-0.74, PE= 0.91-0.72) are in the ideal range. Cronbach's alpha (LMX=0.914, POF=0.859, PE=0.906) and composite reliability (LMX=0.865, POF=0.933, PE=0.952) values are also seen to be within the appropriate range. AVE values of all variables comply with the relevant condition (LMX=0.608 POF=0.608, PE=0.680). The measurement model was found to have divergent and convergent validity (Table 3, Table 4) (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988; Hair et al., 2010).

Table 2: Goodness of Fit Statistics of CFA Model

Model-fit index	Recommended value	Score
χ2/df	<5	2.237
CFI	> 0,90	0.905
GFI	> 0,92	0.820
NFI	> 0,80	0.842
RMR	<0.08	0.065
TLI	> 0,80	0.895
RMSEA	< 0,07	0.070

Table 3: Divergent and Convergent Validity of Variables

Construct	CA	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV
LMX	0.914	0.865	0.608	0.204	0,130
POF	0.859	0.933	0.608	0.204	0,150
PE	0.906	0.952	0.680	0.096	0,076

Table 4. Fornell-Larcker Separation Analysis of Variables

	LMX	POF	PE
LMX	**0.781**		
POF	0.452	**0.781**	
PE	0.238	0.310	**0.825**

Test of Hypotheses

The moderating effect of person-organization fit was tested with Process Macro v3.4 Model 1. The independent and moderator variables are mean-centred (Dawson, 2014). The whole model is significant (F=12.3868; p<0.001). The model explained 13% of the variation in psychological empowerment (R^2= 0.13). A one-unit increase in leader-member exchange increases psychological empowerment by 0.11 units. (β =0.1150; p=.0130). One unit increase in person-organization fit increases psychological empowerment by 0.12 units (β =0.1245; p <0,001). The interaction term (β =0.1115; p=0.0128) is significant (Tablo 5). The R^2 change caused by the interaction was observed to be small (R^2:0.02) but significant (p=0.0128). The change in R^2 due to the interaction is shown in Table 6.

Table 5. Model Coefficients for The Conditional Process Model

	Results
Variables	Coeff se t p LLCI ULCI
LMX	,1150 ,0460 2,5022 ,0130 ,0245 ,2056
POF	,1245 ,0359 3,4711 ,0006 ,0539 ,1952
LMX x POF	,1115 ,0445 2,5070 ,0128 ,0239 ,1991
Constant	4,0808 ,0270 151,1084 ,0000 4,0276 4,1340
	R^2 = ,1303 F = 12,3868 p <,001

Tablo 6: Change Created by Interaction in R^2

| Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s)					
	R^2-chng	F	df1	df2	P
X*W	,0220	6,2850	1,0000	248,000	,0128

The relationship psychological empowerment and leader-member exchange is positive at low person-organization fit values, but this effect is insignificant (β=0.0268; p=0.5858). The relationship between psychological empowerment and leader-member exchange is positive and significant in the median values of person-organization fit (β =0.1150; p=0.0130). If the person-organization fit is high, this relationship becomes stronger (β =0.2032; p=0.0021) (Table 7). As person-organization fit increases, the line between leader-member exchange and psychological empowerment becomes steeper (Figure 1).

Table 7: Effect of LMX on PE at Different POF Values

Conditional effects of the focal predictor at values of the moderator(s):

POF	Effect	se	t	P	LLCI	ULCI
-,7907	,0268	,0492	,5456	,5858	-,0701	,1237
,0000	,1150	,0460	2,5022	,0130	,0245	,2056
,7907	,2032	,0654	3,1060	,0021	,0743	,3320

Figure 1: The Visual Representation the Moderating Effect of P-O Fit in the Effect of LMX on Psychological Empowerment
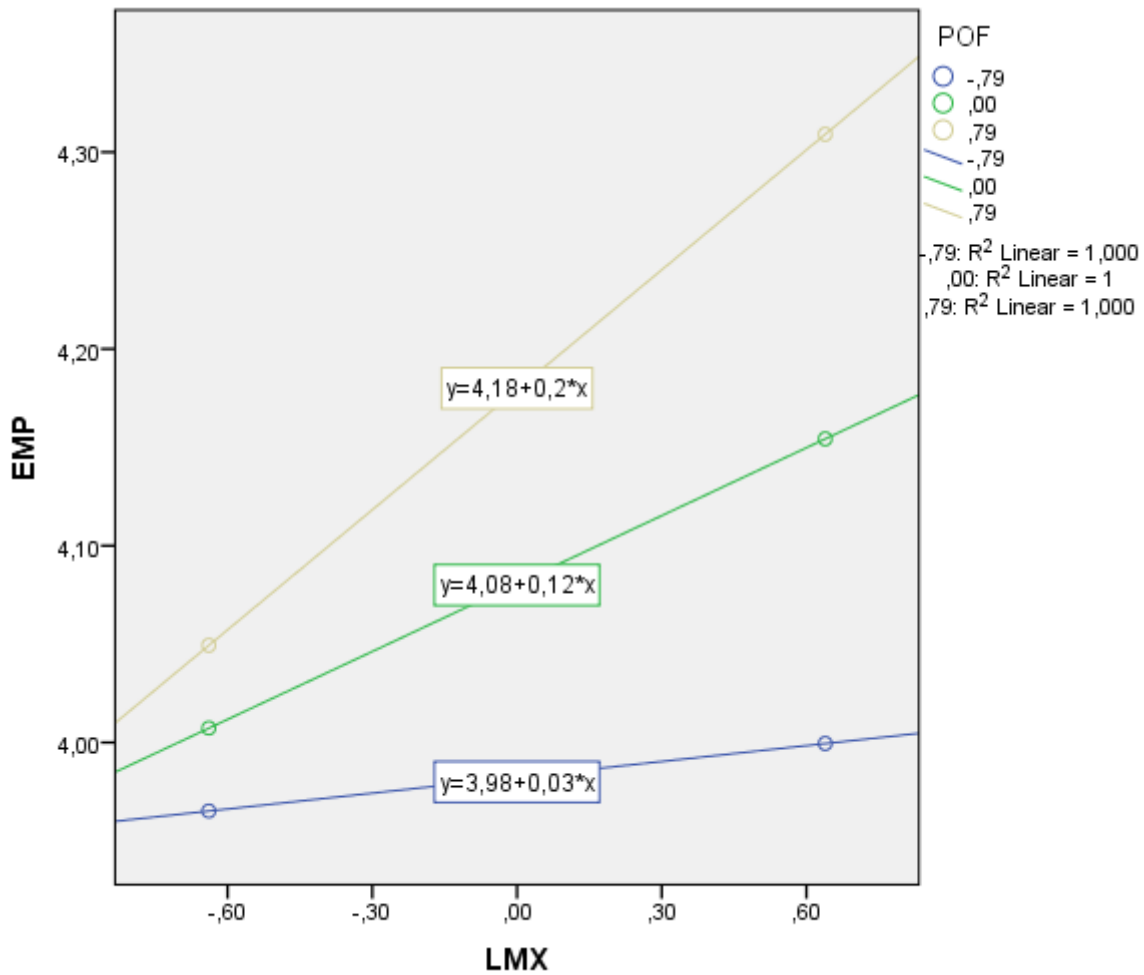
DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the effect on the desired variables for the organization, increasing psychological empowerment has become an important goal. Although the quality of leader–member exchange is important for psychological empowerment, there may also be boundary conditions for this effect. This research revealed that although the relations between the leader and the member are positive, when the characteristics, cultures and values of the individuals do not match with the characteristics, culture and values of the organization, they do not feel themselves psychologically empowered. For this reason, it is important to ensure person-organization fit. Managers need to be aware of whether there is harmony between their subordinates and the organization. Person-organization fit can be increased by selecting personnel suitable for the institution and socialization. The effect of lmx on psychological empowerment is stronger at medium and high values of person-organization fit. Therefore, studies that concluded that the interaction of LMX and P-O fit affected the results were supported. It may be recommended to repeat the research in different sectors and in different countries in future studies. Conducting longitudinal studies will allow us to learn more about the direction of causality. In addition, the inclusion of other variables related to person-environment fit (person-occupation, person-group, person-job fit) in the analysis will increase the understanding of the subject.

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APPENDIX

Multicollinearity Analysis

Coefficients[a]

| Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	3,268	,171		19,058	,000		
	LMX	,082	,044	,123	1,840	,067	,796	1,257
	POF	,136	,036	,254	3,789	,000	,796	1,257

a. Dependent Variable: EMP

Normality Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
POF_o	252	1,25	5,00	3,7024	,79070	-,569	,153	,093	,306
LMX_o	252	1,42	5,00	4,0757	,63889	-1,175	,153	2,697	,306
EMP_o	252	2,75	5,00	4,1061	,42364	,369	,153	,498	,306
Valid N (listwise)	252								

Homoscedasticity and Linearity Test

Scatterplot

Dependent Variable: EMP

R² Linear = 0,892

y=-9,12+2,22*x
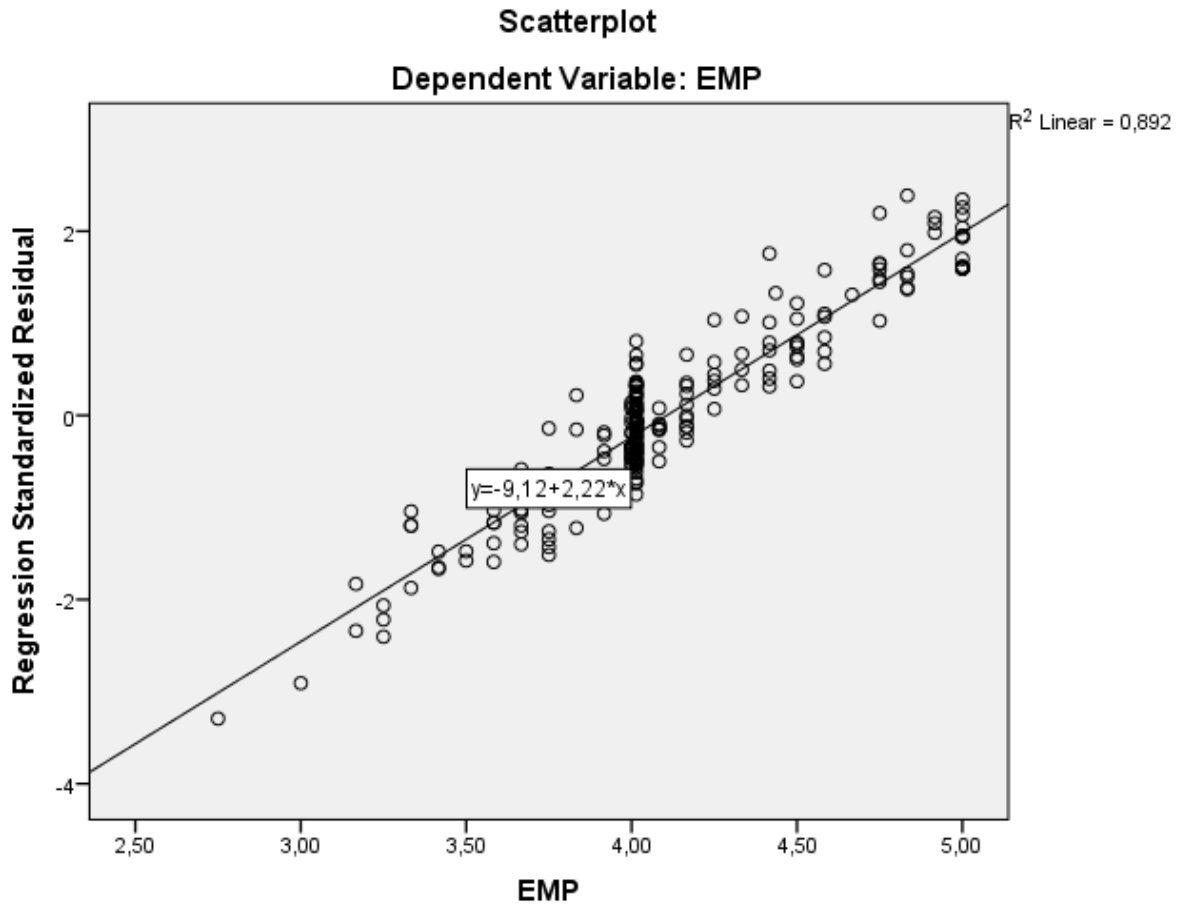
Autocorrelation analysis

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	,329[a]	,108	,101	,40165	1,686

a. Predictors: (Constant), LMX, POF

b. Dependent Variable: EMP

Standardized Regression Weights

			Estimate
PEC	<---	PE	,776
PESD	<---	PE	,912
PEI	<---	PE	,713
PEM	<---	PE	,679
LMXP	<---	LMX	,827
LMXL	<---	LMX	,918
LMXA	<---	LMX	,921
LMXC	<---	LMX	,857
EMP1_1	<---	PEM	,827
EMP2_1	<---	PEM	,815
EMP3_1	<---	PEM	,811
EMP4_1	<---	PEC	,844
EMP5_1	<---	PEC	,906
EMP6_1	<---	PEC	,735
EMP7_1	<---	PESD	,752
EMP8_1	<---	PESD	,721
EMP9_1	<---	PESD	,774
EMP10_1	<---	PEI	,875
EMP11_1	<---	PEI	,905

			Estimate
EMP12_1	<---	PEI	,905
LMX6_1	<---	LMXL	,779
LMX5_1	<---	LMXL	,826
LMX4_1	<---	LMXL	,800
LMX9_1	<---	LMXA	,604
LMX8_1	<---	LMXA	,833
LMX7_1	<---	LMXA	,735
LMX3_1	<---	LMXP	,783
LMX2_1	<---	LMXP	,551
LMX1_1	<---	LMXP	,781
LMX12_1	<---	LMXC	,921
LMX11_1	<---	LMXC	,828
LMX10_1	<---	LMXC	,842
POFIT1_1	<---	POFIT	,781
POFIT2_1	<---	POFIT	,743
POFIT3_1	<---	POFIT	,785
POFIT4_1	<---	POFIT	,810

The Measurement Model