



THE MEDIATING ROLE OF JOB SECURITY IN THE EFFECT OF LEADER-MEMBER EXCHANGE ON CAREER SUCCESS

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Abstract

Leader-Member Exchange Theory explores the intricate dynamics and relationships between leaders and their subordinates, focusing on key aspects like trust, mutual respect, and effective communication. Job Security, on the other hand, represents the employees' confidence in the continuity of their roles, shaped by organizational policies, labor market conditions, individual performance metrics, and broader economic trends. Together, these constructs significantly influence employees' career plans and work-related attitudes, which in turn shape organizational outcomes. This research investigates how job security modulates the interplay between leader-employee dynamics and employees' perceptions of career success. The data for this study were collected from a sample of 308 participants using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling. Research shows that high-quality interactions significantly enhance employees' perceptions of career success. Furthermore, job security emerges as a critical moderating factor, whereby employees with stable job prospects demonstrate greater autonomy in career decision-making, independent of leadership support.

Keywords: In-group member, Out-group member, Career success, Job insecurity, Structural equation modeling.

LİDER-ÜYE DEĞİŞİMİNİN KARIYER BAŞARISI ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİNDE İŞ GÜVENCESİNİN ARACILIK ROLÜ

Öz

Lider-Üye Değişim Teorisi, liderler ve astları arasındaki karmaşık dinamikleri ve ilişkileri araştırmakta ve güven, karşılıklı saygı ve etkili iletişim gibi temel unsurlara odaklanmaktadır. İş Güvenliği ise, çalışanların rollerinin sürekliliğine olan güvenini temsil etmektedir ve bu güven, kurumsal politikalar, işgücü piyasası koşulları, bireysel performans ölçütleri ve daha geniş ekonomik eğilimler tarafından şekillendirilmektedir. Bu yapılar birlikte, çalışanların kariyer planlarını ve iş ile ilgili tutumlarını önemli ölçüde etkilemekte ve bu da kurumsal sonuçları şekillendirmektedir. Bu çalışma, iş güvenliğinin lider-çalışan dinamikleri ile çalışanların kariyer başarıları arasındaki etkileşimi nasıl düzenlediğini araştırmaktadır. Çalışma için gerekli veri, yapılandırılmış bir anket kullanılarak 308 katılımcıdan oluşan bir örneklemden toplanmış ve Yapısal Eşitlik Modellemesi kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Araştırmanın sonucu, yüksek kaliteli etkileşimlerin çalışanların kariyer başarıları algılarını önemli ölçüde artırdığını göstermektedir. Dahası, iş güvenliği, istikrarlı iş beklentileri olan çalışanların liderlik desteğinden bağımsız olarak kariyer karar alma sürecinde daha fazla özerklik gösterdiği kritik bir düzenleyici faktör olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: İç grup, Dış grup, Kariyer başarıları, İş güvenliği, Yapısal eşitlik modellemesi.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Before the introduction of the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory, leadership theories predominantly assumed that leaders adopted a uniform leadership style for all followers. However, LMX Theory posits that leaders establish varying levels of relationships with their subordinates, leading to diverse interaction qualities and subsequently influencing employee performance (Martin et al., 2016). For instance, a strong leader-employee relationship fosters better employee performance (Gutermann et al., 2017). Such relationships enhance the perceived meaningfulness of tasks (Park et al., 2017), increase work efficiency, and contribute to career success by providing resources and support (Le et al., 2023).

In contemporary work environments, career success has shifted from organizational goals to individual achievements. This change emphasizes personal milestones like promotions, salary increments, and status, all of which are outcomes of individual efforts. These goals align with employees' internal satisfaction and the influence of their social contexts (Bekmezci et al., 2020). Subjective career success, therefore, reflects an employee's personal assessment and emotional reaction to their career trajectory (Ng & Feldman, 2014).

Job security, as defined by Azadeh and Ahranjani (2014), refers to "the individual's continued employment in the same organization without any reduction in rights such as seniority, wages, and pensions." Globally, employees rely on stable employment environments to support themselves and their families and to meet financial commitments (Al-Hyari, 2023). Additionally, research indicates that job security enhances employees' willingness to remain in their organizations, contributing positively to overall organizational success (Demirel, 2019; Jarosch, 2023). Positive leader-member relationships further mitigate perceptions of job insecurity. High-quality LMX effectively reduces employees' feelings of job instability (Wang et al., 2019).

This study delves into the intricate dynamics between LMX and employees' subjective career success, with a focus on the mediating role of perceived job security. Employing structural equation modeling, the study systematically examines the interplay among these variables, shedding light on how high-quality leader-member relationships contribute to employees' perceptions of job security and their subsequent career achievements.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. LEADER-MEMBER EXCHANGE

LMX Theory posits that the dynamic and evolving nature of leader-employee relationships plays a pivotal role in organizational success. This theory emphasizes that these relationships are not static but develop through continuous mutual exchanges that cultivate trust, cooperation, and a bidirectional flow of influence (Karcioğlu & Kahya, 2011). LMX Theory is the concept of reciprocity, which underscores the strategic exchange of tangible and intangible resources, such as support and recognition, to foster shared accountability and encourage collaborative behaviors. According to Gouldner's (1960) reciprocity theory, individuals are expected to assist those who have assisted them; consequently, those who have received help bear a social obligation to return the favor. And this tendency serves to maintain balance within social relationships. Effective leaders leverage this principle by implementing targeted strategies such as delivering detailed and actionable feedback, celebrating employee accomplishments in meaningful ways, and nurturing a culture of inclusivity and support within the organization. These deliberate actions significantly enhance workforce engagement and drive productivity. Moreover, by aligning individual contributions with overarching organizational objectives, these practices optimize both interpersonal relationships and organizational performance outcomes (Jha and Jha, 2013).

When leaders perceive their employees as competent, trustworthy, and motivated, strong and meaningful relationships are more likely to develop. These relationships are characterized by reciprocal exchanges that foster mutual trust and respect. According to Bauer and Green (1996),

employees who develop close, supportive relationships with their leaders are categorized as in-group members. These individuals gain greater access to resources, opportunities, and leadership support, which often translates into higher job satisfaction and improved career progression. In contrast, out-group members who maintain weak relationships with their leaders, have limited access to support and resources, and receive lower levels of trust are likely to experience reduced job satisfaction and engagement, which in turn can negatively affect their performance and organizational commitment, as well as hinder their career development (Sürücü, 2021).

The interaction between leaders and in-group members is often referred to as a high-quality relationship, while relationships with out-group members are considered low-quality (Anand et al., 2011). Casimir et al. (2012) highlight that leaders tend to involve in-group members more actively in decision-making, delegate specific responsibilities, and encounter fewer workflow issues compared to their interactions with out-group members. These dynamics significantly shape team cohesion and organizational effectiveness. In-group members often feel empowered and engaged, promoting collaboration and driving innovation within teams. On the other hand, excluding out-group members may result in lower morale, increased employee turnover, and diminished productivity, which could ultimately weaken team cohesion. High-quality LMX, therefore, is defined by open communication, mutual respect, shared trust, and collaborative obligations (Walumbwa et al., 2011). It emerges as an essential element for sustaining long-term organizational commitment and enhancing overall performance (Casimir et al., 2012).

LMX Theory has been extensively investigated concerning various organizational and behavioral constructs. Prior studies have examined the relationship between LMX and perceived organizational support, indicating that LMX plays a critical role in shaping employees' perceptions of organizational support (Wayne et al., 1997). Settoon et al. (1996) also indicated that LMX is associated with organizational citizenship behavior. Analyses have revealed a significant negative relationship between leader-member exchange and intention to quit (Şahin, 2011). Research on burnout indicates that the quality and degree of LMX negatively affect employees' burnout levels (Bolat, 2011; Uğurluoğlu, 2013). Besides, Çankır and Palalar Alkan (2018) found that leader-member exchange positively influences employees' identification with their organizations. Furthermore, findings suggest that LMX positively influences organizational commitment (Göksel & Aydın, 2012). Collectively, these studies highlight the multifaceted nature of LMX and its pivotal role in influencing both individual and organizational performance outcomes.

2.2. SUBJECTIVE CAREER SUCCESS

Success plays a pivotal role in career trajectories, encompassing both psychological fulfillment and professional accomplishments. Career success denotes the positive psychological or work-related outcomes and accomplishments individuals achieve through their professional endeavors. Traditionally, this success has been measured through objective indicators such as salary increments, promotions, and professional status (Abele and Spurk, 2009). However, an increasing amount of evidence highlights the interaction between these objective metrics and subjective dimensions like job satisfaction and personal fulfillment (Hildred et al., 2023). This dual perspective provides a nuanced understanding of career success that integrates both external validation and internal perceptions.

Initially, career success was evaluated through tangible and observable factors like promotions and financial compensation. Over time, shifting employee values have expanded success criteria to include more subjective elements. For instance, contemporary workplaces increasingly prioritize factors such as self-improvement opportunities, flexibility, and work-life balance. Trends like the rise of remote work and the growing emphasis on mental health further underscore this evolution, with employees valuing the attainment of personal and professional goals alongside traditional benchmarks of success (Littler et al., 2003). Accordingly, the concept of subjective career success has emerged and is defined as the perception of attaining career outcomes that hold personal significance (Spurk et al., 2019; Shockley et al., 2016). This includes psychological self-assessments and feelings of career satisfaction

derived from personal achievements (Dyke and Duxbury, 2011). So, subjective career success refers to an individual's cognitive appraisal and affective response to various aspects of their career, encompassing both objective outcomes and elements imbued with idiosyncratic personal values and meanings (Seibert et al., 2024). Ng et al. (2005) found in their meta-analysis that subjective career success is associated with career obstacles related to dispositional traits (e.g., low emotional stability), motivation (e.g., low work engagement), social networks (e.g., low supervisor support), and organizational and job support (e.g., job insecurity).

Subjective career success offers a holistic evaluation of an individual's professional journey by integrating career-related accomplishments with broader life milestones (Rençber et al., 2023). This broader perspective allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how individuals perceive their career outcomes. Moreover, it highlights the dual role of subjective and objective success in achieving strategic organizational goals while fostering personal development, thereby benefiting organizations overall (Ng et al., 2005).

Subjective Career Success (SCS) has been extensively investigated in relation to various individual and organizational determinants. Muk and İnandı (2025) identified a positive correlation between democratic leadership behaviors exhibited by school administrators and teachers' subjective career success, whereas autocratic leadership behaviors were negatively associated with teachers' SCS. Ingarianti et al. (2022) demonstrated that career commitment, professional commitment, leader-member exchange, and perceived organizational support significantly influence teachers' career success. Similarly, Demirel (2019) reported that employees' career commitment levels positively affect their perceptions of subjective career success. Moreover, Bekmezci et al. (2020) found a significant positive relationship between psychological capital and subjective career success. Collectively, these findings underscore the critical role of leadership style, commitment, and psychological resources in fostering subjective career success. As far as it is seen, these studies underscore the multifactorial nature of subjective career success and highlight its dependence on both personal dispositions and organizational dynamics.

The relationship between LMX and career success further illustrates this dynamic. High-quality leader-member relationships significantly enhance employees' access to career development opportunities (Law, Wang & Hui, 2009). Organizations characterized by strong leader-member ties facilitate employee integration into leaders' personal networks, providing access to critical resources and information. This integration positively affects employees' career success by fostering opportunities for growth and advancement (Park et al., 2017). Research evidence highlights the strong connection between LMX and subjective career success, underscoring the importance of mentorship, trust, and support in fostering career satisfaction (Peng, Gao & Zhao, 2019; Ahmed, 2022; Dewi, Ingarianti and Andriany, 2022). Gerstner and Day (1997) conducted a seminal meta-analysis showing that high-quality LMX relates significantly to better job performance, greater satisfaction with supervision, and overall job satisfaction, which are closely related to career success outcomes. In light of these findings, the first hypothesis derived from the literature is as follows:

H₁: *Leader-member relations significantly affect subjective career success.*

2.3. JOB SECURITY

Job security remains a pivotal concern for employees across various organizational settings. It can be conceptualized as a formal employment agreement that ensures the continuity of an individual's role within an organization (Hur, 2022: 929). Beyond this, job security encompasses the assurance that an employee's seniority, wages, retirement rights, and other benefits will remain intact (Altınay et al., 2019). In essence, it reflects an employee's capacity to sustain their position within a workplace.

For many employees, long-term job security represents an optimal condition. Research indicates that employees who operate in environments with robust job security exhibit enhanced performance, driven by the confidence derived from their continued employment (Lu et al., 2017; Umrani et al., 2019). This improved performance is frequently associated with the strength of leader-member

relationships. By fulfilling employees' expectations and creating a sense of security, leaders foster positive and productive connections with their team members (Hur, 2022). Thus, job security emerges as a critical factor in strengthening leader-member relations.

Employees generally anticipate job security as long as they meet organizational standards. These standards typically encompass achieving performance benchmarks, maintaining consistent work quality, adhering to policies, and contributing to team objectives. However, in insecure environments, employees' ability to attain success is often hindered by uncertainties and miscommunications (Ye et al., 2012: 295). A substantial negative correlation exists between job insecurity and subjective career success, underscoring the critical importance of job security in achieving positive career outcomes (Ng & Feldman, 2014).

Beyond structural factors, strategic initiatives aimed at securing employees' futures are equally significant. Establishing predictability and fostering a secure environment enhance organizational commitment and enable employees to perceive themselves as integral components of their organizations. This alignment positively influences organizational outcomes, including managerial effectiveness and operational continuity (Hiltrop, 1995).

Employee motivation has evolved over time, shifting from objective drivers such as status and salary to subjective factors like career satisfaction and organizational loyalty (Özçelik et al., 2019). Employees who perceive support and security from their leaders tend to demonstrate greater job satisfaction and organizational commitment, which in turn leads to enhanced performance outcomes. Nabi (2003) also highlights the symbiotic relationship between job security and subjective career achievements, both of which significantly enhance organizational performance.

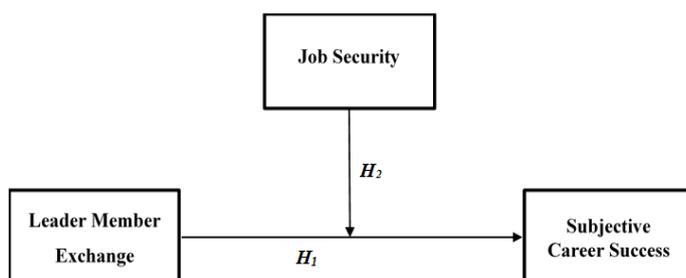
Job security plays a crucial role in enhancing overall organizational outcomes. Bakan and Büyükbeşe (2004) demonstrated that job security is significantly related to general work behaviors such as high motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Complementing this, Lucky et al. (2013) argued that employees who experience higher job security tend to perform their tasks more effectively, which positively affects organizational performance. Furthermore, Artz and Kaya (2014) highlighted that job security increases job satisfaction, leading to higher productivity, decreased absenteeism, and lower turnover rates, thereby enhancing organizational performance. In conclusion, these studies collectively emphasize that job security is a fundamental factor that fosters employee well-being and drives stronger organizational performance.

Organizations with high job security create environments where employees perceive greater stability and trust in their leaders. This perception amplifies the positive effects of leader-member relationships on career satisfaction. Conversely, in environments with limited job security, the focus of employees may shift towards employment uncertainties, diminishing the benefits of strong leader-member relationships on career development. Based on this understanding, the second hypothesis derived from the literature is articulated as follows:

H₂: *Job security has a moderating effect on the effect of leader-member relations on subjective career success.*

The research model, formulated based on the hypotheses, is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. *Research model.*



3. DATA COLLECTION and ANALYSIS

3.1. RESEARCH SAMPLE and DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

A quantitative research method was adopted in this study due to its capacity to systematically measure and analyze variables, enabling objective comparisons and the derivation of generalizable findings. This methodological choice was aligned with the study's objective of exploring relationships and patterns within a large and diverse sample population. The sample comprised employees from both public and private sectors, all aged 18 or older and working under managerial supervision. This demographic was chosen as it represents a structured workforce where hierarchical relationships and organizational dynamics can be effectively studied, ensuring the research objectives remain relevant and targeted.

Data collection was conducted using a convenience sampling method through an online questionnaire. The questionnaire was hosted on a web platform, and the survey link was distributed via email and social media channels to 500 accessible participants. Efforts were made to ensure the inclusion of individuals from various sectors and job roles to achieve a representative sample. However, it is acknowledged that the reliance on convenience sampling may introduce certain limitations to the generalizability of the findings. Out of the distributed questionnaires, 308 completed and usable responses formed the study's final dataset. The questionnaire comprised five demographic items—gender, age, employment sector, education level, and years of employment—alongside 48 items designed to measure the key variables of interest. These variables and the scales used to assess them are outlined as follows:

Leader Member Exchange Scale (LMX): Originally developed by Liden and Maslyn (1998) and subsequently adapted into Turkish by Baş, Keskin, and Mert (2010), this scale consists of 12 items categorized into four sub-dimensions:

- Affect (A): This dimension captures the emotional bonds of closeness that form between leaders and employees, focusing on mutual affection rather than work or professional values.
- Contribution (C): This dimension measures the perceived quantity and quality of employees' efforts towards shared objectives, along with the resources provided by leaders to support these efforts.
- Loyalty (L): This refers to the mutual trust and allegiance cultivated between leaders and members.
- Professional Respect (PR): This relates to employees' progression toward excellence in their professional roles (Law et al., 2009).

Subjective Career Success Scale (SCS): Originally developed by Shockley, Ureksoy, Rodopman, Poteat, and Dullaghan (2015) and later adapted into Turkish by Budak and Gürbüz (2017), the SCS includes 24 items across eight sub-dimensions:

- Authenticity (A): Reflects the alignment of an individual's career direction with personal needs and preferences.
- Growth and Development (GD): Emphasizes the importance of advancing one's career by gaining new knowledge and developing skills.
- Influence (I): Evaluates the ability to impact both individuals within the organization and the organization as a collective entity.
- Meaningful Work (MW): Evaluates the extent to which the work holds personal or social significance.
- Personal Life (PL): Evaluates the positive influence of one's career on life outside work.

- Quality Work (QW): Captures the effort to deliver high-quality products or services.
- Recognition (R): Reflects formal or informal acknowledgment of one’s contributions by respected individuals.
- Satisfaction (S): Represents the overall positive sentiment toward one’s career (Shockley, 2016).

Job Security Index Scale (JSI) and Job Security Satisfaction Scale (JSSS): Probst (1998) developed the JSI and JSSS to measure different aspects of job security. These scales were later adapted into Turkish by Önder and Wasti (2002). Each scale comprises six items, providing a focused framework for assessment. The JSI measures perceptions of job security, while the JSSS evaluates satisfaction with the level of job security.

3.2. METHODOLOGY and RESULTS

In the study, relationships between variables such as LMX, subjective career success, and job security were tested to understand their interdependencies and moderating effects. The data collected as a result of the questionnaire were transferred to SPSS 24 and AMOS 24 and analyzed. The research model was tested using Structural Equation Modeling method.

First, the demographic characteristics of the participants were analyzed. The majority of the participants were men (74,7%) and public sector employees (67,2%). The majority of the participants were aged between 36-45 years (58,8%) and had a bachelor’s degree (60.4%). More than half of the participants have 16 or more years of employment (53,9%). Then, the data distribution was examined by looking at the skewness and kurtosis values. The values were found to be between -3 and +3, thus normally distributed (Shao, 2002). Then, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test and Bartlett Sphericity (BS) test were performed. The KMO value was calculated as 0,941 (KMO>0,5) and Bartlett’s value was calculated as 0.00 (p<0,05) and it was determined that the data set was suitable for factor analysis (Field, 2013). Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was then conducted. EFA results are presented in Table 1. The lower limit for factor loading was accepted as 0,5.

Table 1. EFA Results

Variables	Factors	Items	Factor Loadings	Variance Explained	
Subjective Career Success	SCS_F1	SCS_R_3	0,839	20,327	
		SCS_R_2	0,865		
		SCS_R_1	0,675		
		SCS_QW_3	0,622		
		SCS_QW_2	0,650		
		SCS_QW_1	0,649		
		SCS_MW_3	0,657		
		SCS_MW_2	0,550		
		SCS_MW_1	0,660		
	SCS_F2	SCS_I	SCS_I_3	0,837	10,121
			SCS_I_2	0,794	
			SCS_I_1	0,821	
		SCS_GD	SCS_GD_3	0,750	
			SCS_GD_2	0,765	
			SCS_GD_1	0,714	
		SCS_S	SCS_S_3	0,833	
			SCS_S_2	0,846	
			SCS_S_1	0,745	
SCS_A	SCS_A_3	0,588	4,649		
	SCS_A_2	0,675			
	SCS_A_1	0,536			
SCS_PL	SCS_PL	SCS_PL_3	0,671		
		SCS_PL_2	0,743		
	SCS_PL_1	0,721			

		LMX_PR_3	0,834	
		LMX_PR_2	0,855	
		LMX_PR_1	0,812	
		LMX_L_3	0,836	
		LMX_L_2	0,846	
Leader Member Exchange	LMX	LMX_L_1	0,829	19,035
		LMX_C_3	0,709	
		LMX_C_2	0,700	
		LMX_C_1	0,772	
		LMX_A_3	0,869	
		LMX_A_2	0,845	
		LMX_A_1	0,778	
		JSSS5	0,732	
		JSSS3	0,761	
	JS_F1	JSSS1	0,754	9,365
		JSI5	0,822	
		JSI4	0,831	
		JSI2	0,726	
Job Security		JSSS6	0,778	
	JS_F2	JSSS4	0,646	4,554
		JSSS2	0,800	
		JSI6	0,736	
	JS_F3	JSI3	0,792	4,477
		JSI1	0,640	

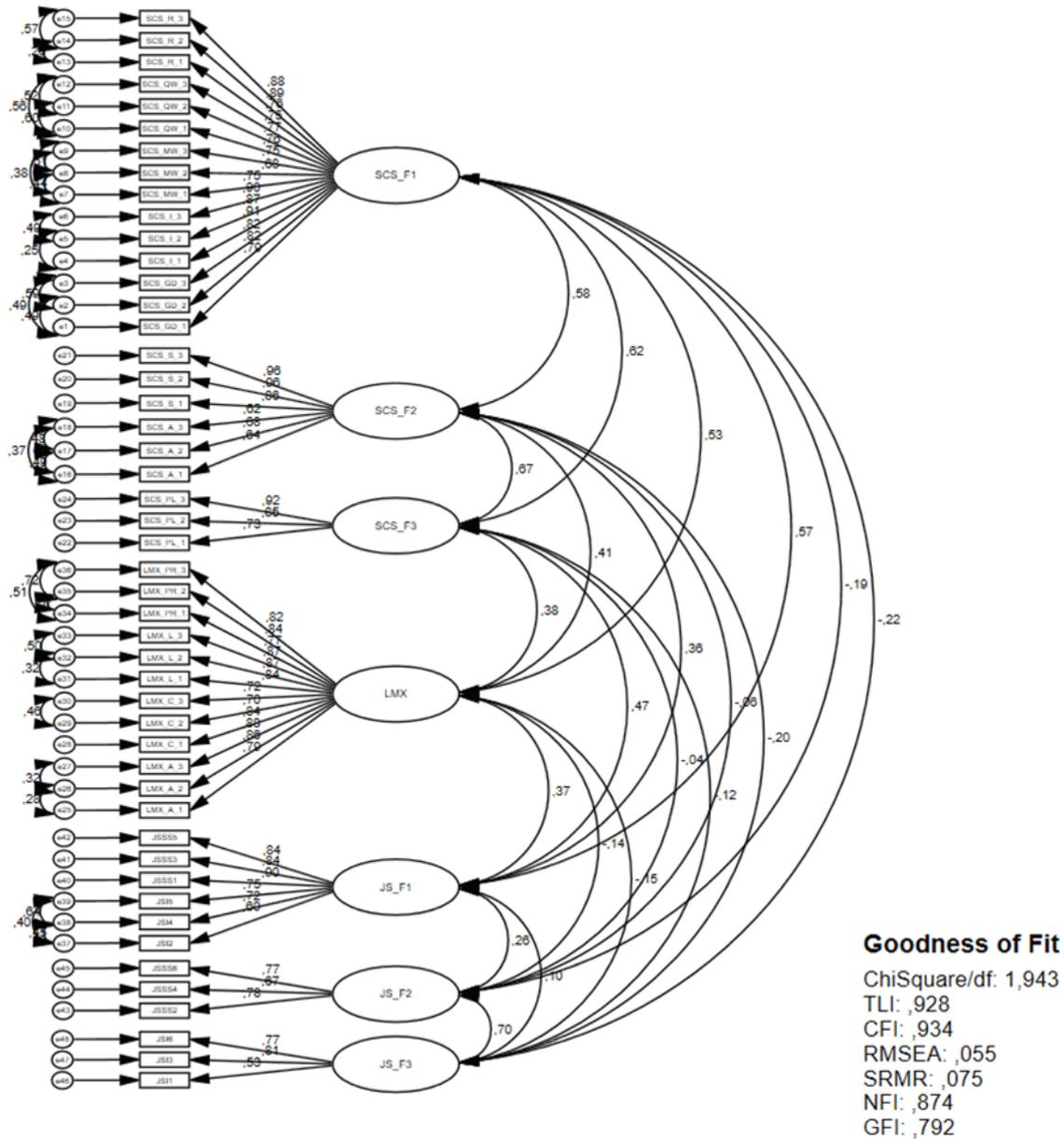
As a result of the analysis, four sub-dimensions of the LMX scale merged to form a single dimension. In the SCS scale, R, QW, MW, I and GD sub-dimensions merged to form SCS_F1 sub-dimension; S and A sub-dimensions merged to form SCS_F2 sub-dimension. The PL sub-dimension was named as SCS_F3. In the JS scale, items 1, 3 and 5 of the JSSS and items 2 and 4 of the JSI combined to form the JS_F1 sub-dimension. The remaining items of JSSS formed JS_F2 sub-dimension and the remaining items of JSI formed JS_F3 sub-dimension. Therefore, seven factors were formed as a result of EFA and the total explained variance was 72.528%. After determining the scale dimensions, reliability and validity analyses were conducted (see Table 2).

Table 2: Validity and reliability analyses.

Dimensions	Sub Dimensions	Cr.'s Alpha	AVE	\sqrt{AVE}	CR	Correlations					
						SCS_F1	SCS_F2	SCS_F3	LMX	JS_F1	JS_F2
SCS	SCS_F1	0,968	0,531	0,729	0,944						
	SCS_F2	0,924	0,509	0,713	0,858	0,582					
	SCS_F3	0,874	0,507	0,712	0,755	0,622	0,672				
LMX	LMX	0,963	0,654	0,809	0,958	0,529	0,409	0,377			
JS	JS_F1	0,918	0,596	0,772	0,898	0,575	0,357	0,466	0,366		
	JS_F2	0,780	0,554	0,744	0,787	-0,186	-0,058	-0,042	-0,144	0,256	
	JS_F3	0,733	0,526	0,725	0,768	-0,222	-0,197	-0,121	-0,155	0,103	0,697

For the reliability analysis, Cronbach's alpha and CR values were taken into consideration. In order for the scales to be reliable, both Cronbach's alpha value (Field, 2013) and CR value (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012) should be above 0,70. Table 2 shows that these requirements are met. Validity was examined through convergent validity and discriminant validity. In order to ensure convergent validity, the average variance (AVE) values should be higher than 0,50 (Hair et al., 2014). As presented in Table 2, all AVE values exceed 0,50. Furthermore, the higher CR values compared to AVE values provide additional support for convergent validity. Regarding discriminant validity, the square root of the AVE for each factor should be greater than the inter-factor correlations (Hair et al., 2014). Since this criterion was satisfied, the scales were deemed to meet the reliability and validity requirements. Subsequently, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to assess the construct validity.

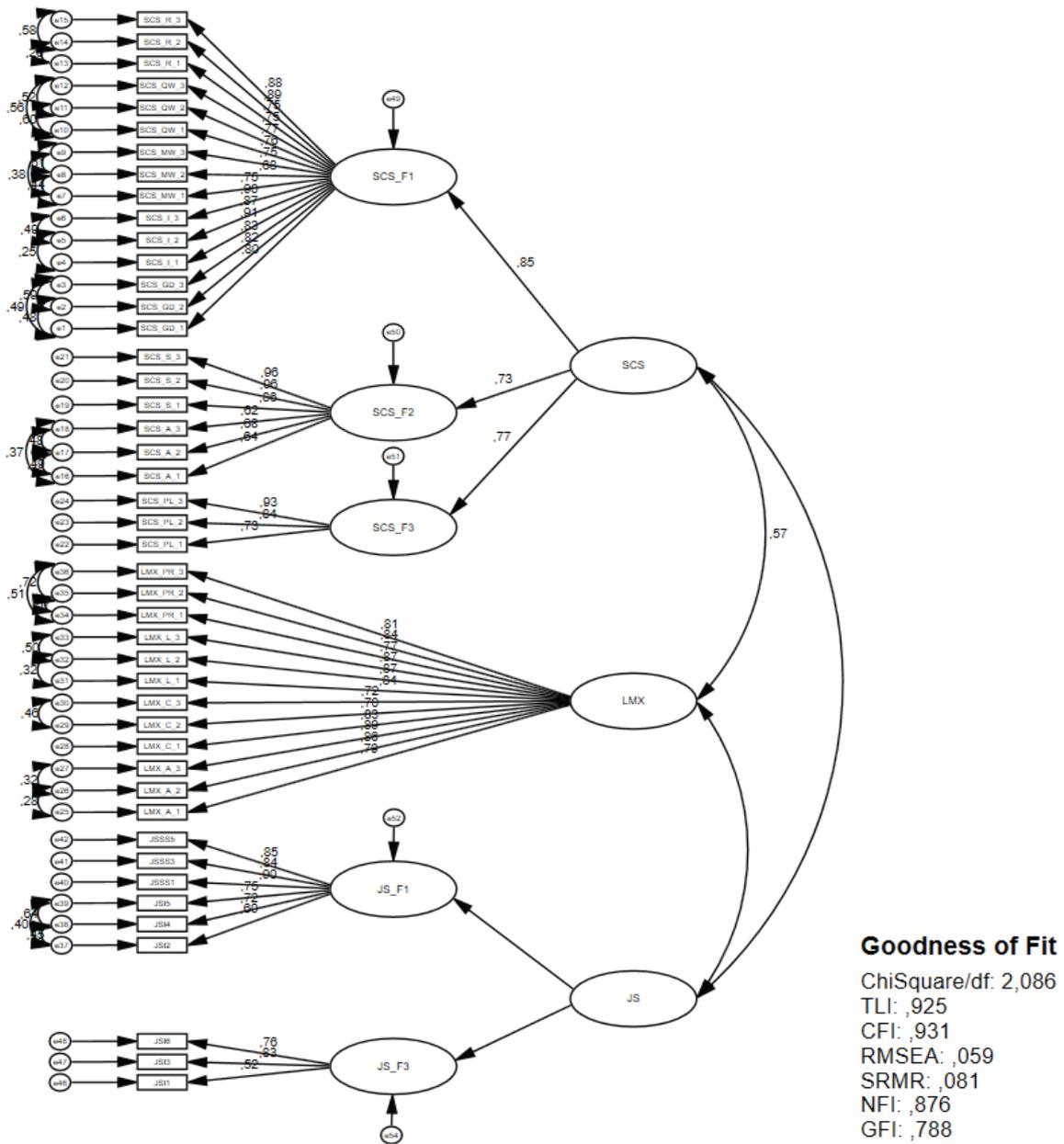
Figure 2. First order CFA.



In this study, the χ^2/df value was taken into consideration for goodness of fit. According to Hu and Bentler (1998), for construct validity, RMSEA and SRMR values should also be at a good or acceptable fit level. Therefore, a good fit for χ^2/df and an acceptable fit for RMSEA and SRMR indicate that construct validity is achieved (Hu & Bentler, 1998).

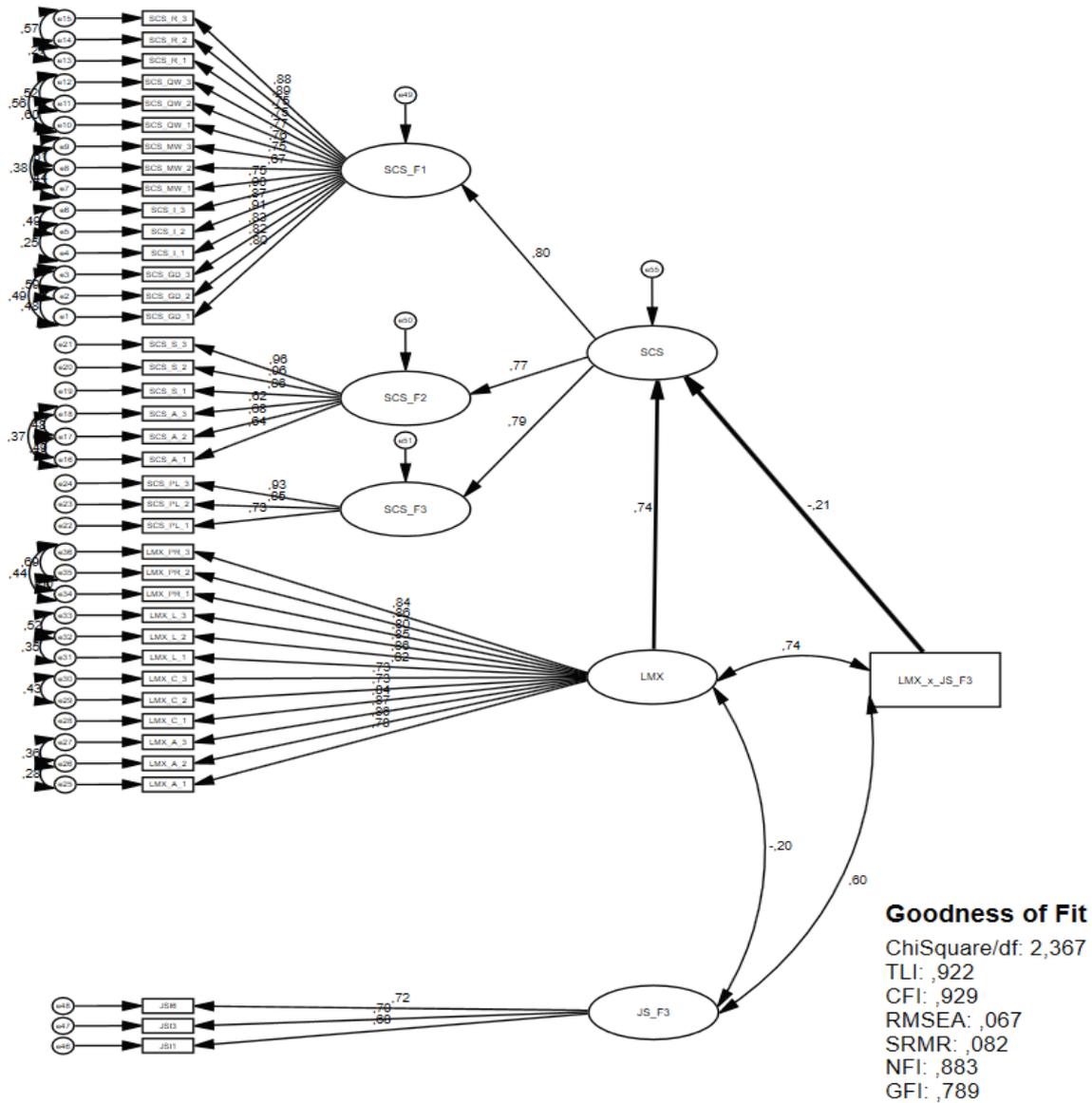
Since the subjective career success and job security dimensions also have sub-dimensions, a second stage CFA was also conducted. At this stage, the sub-dimensions are combined under the main dimensions. However, in the first second-order CFA, the goodness of fit values were not within the desired ranges due to the low correlation between the sub-dimensions of JS. Low correlation between sub-dimensions is an indication that those sub-dimensions cannot be used to measure the same variable. In this case, dimension deletion was necessary. The dimensions with low AVE values were deleted in order and it was tried to determine which dimension would bring the goodness of fit values to the desired range. As a result of the experiments, when the JS_F2 dimension was deleted, the goodness of fit values of the second-order CFA in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Second order CFA.



Thus, construct validity was ensured according to the second-order CFA goodness of fit results (Hu & Bentler, 1998). After CFA, Path Analysis, the last stage of Structural Equation Modeling, was conducted. The model established with path analysis was tested.

Figure 4. Path analysis.



Goodness of fit was not achieved in the first stage of path analysis. At this stage, the JS_F2 dimension was removed from the analysis. The resulting model is shown in Figure 4. As a result of the path analysis, the goodness of fit values were examined and it was determined that the model was acceptable (Hu & Bentler, 1998). Finally, the existence of unidirectional causal relationships between the variables was determined by looking at the significance values. Thus, the acceptance/rejection status of the hypotheses was determined. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Hypothesis Tests.

	Influencing	Affected	St. Reg. Coefficient	Significance	Conclusion
H ₁	LMX	SCS	0,739	< 0,001	Accepted
H ₂	LMX_x_JS_F3	SCS	-0,207	< 0,001	Accepted

According to the hypothesis test results, both hypotheses were accepted. Therefore, LMX positively affects subjective career success and job security plays a moderating role on this effect. The significance levels <0,001 indicate that these effects are statistically very strong.

4. CONCLUSION

LMX Theory explores the dynamic and multifaceted relationships between leaders and employees, emphasizing that these relationships evolve based on mutual interactions and individual characteristics. Effective leadership is often linked to enhanced organizational performance, making it a central focus in management studies. Leaders who exhibit clear communication and strategic vision have been shown to foster greater team productivity and organizational success. While traditional leadership theories describe a uniform approach to leader-employee interactions, LMX challenges this notion by positing that leadership styles vary according to the quality of the relationship between the leader and the employee.

According to LMX Theory, leaders may adopt a more participative and democratic style with employees they trust or perceive as aligned with their objectives. Conversely, leaders might employ a more autocratic approach with employees where trust or alignment is lacking. These differentiated interactions significantly influence employee outcomes, including their perceptions of career success.

This study investigates two primary questions: whether LMX impacts employees' subjective career success and whether job security moderates this relationship. Data collected from 308 participants revealed that strong LMX positively influences employees' sense of career success. Employees who experience supportive and constructive relationships with their leaders report higher levels of career satisfaction and a greater sense of achievement. This finding aligns with previous research (Peng et al., 2019; Dewi et al., 2022; Ahmed, 2022).

Additionally, the study identified a moderating effect of job security on the relationship between LMX and subjective career success. Job security, operationalized as the perceived stability of an employee's position—assessed through metrics like contract permanence, organizational policies, and perceived risk of job loss—influences the extent to which employees rely on leader relationships to evaluate their career success. Employees with high job security tend to evaluate their career trajectories more independently, placing less emphasis on their leader's support. This perspective is supported by the findings of Bakr et al. (2019), which demonstrate that working with supportive leaders, favorable work conditions, and an optimized sense of perceived job security are associated with significantly higher levels of overall academic job satisfaction.

Additionally, weak and/or insignificant correlations were observed between some of the job security sub-dimensions and some of the subjective career success sub-dimensions. Economic fluctuations, differences in job security practices between the public and private sectors, internal policy transparency, employees' perceptions of security and risk (Edmondson, 1999), and employees' sensitivity to alternative employment options (Fugate et al., 2004) affect the significance of the relationships between the dimensions. Indeed, the fact that the JS_F2 dimension reduces model fit in the second-order confirmatory factor analysis indicates that this dimension may have limited power to represent the core structure of job security in the sample context. This is consistent with findings in the literature that job security should be treated as a dynamic and context-sensitive perception (Sverke et al., 2002). Therefore, it is theoretically expected that the sub-dimensions of the variables will not show the same direction and intensity of relationship with each other.

These findings suggest that while strong LMX is valuable, their impact is less critical for employees with secure employment. This highlights the importance of context in understanding leadership dynamics. However, this study has limitations, such as being based on a cross-sectional design, selecting convenience sampling for data collection, and measuring career success subjectively without including objective indicators such as promotion and salary. Therefore, future research should focus on longitudinal designs; working with larger samples; collecting data with a balanced distribution of factors such as sector, seniority, gender, etc.; taking into account objective variables such as promotion, salary, and performance; and including different variables such as perceived economic uncertainty and organizational support in the model will increase the understanding and generalizability of the subject.

Disclosure Statements

1. The authors of this article confirm that their work complies with the principles of research and publication ethics.
2. No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.
3. This article was screened for potential plagiarism using a plagiarism screening program.

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