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Original Research Article

## **Leader-Member Exchange and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour**

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### **Abstract**

*This study was an attempt to examine the extent to which the quality of relationship that exists between leaders and their subordinates often called leader-member exchange (LMX) affects organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) among academic staff of the University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. From the study population of 1,904, a sample size of three hundred and thirty (330) was drawn using the Yamani's (1967) formula with 95% confidence interval. A proportional sampling technique was further used to allot the sample size to the various faculties in the university. Of the three hundred and thirty (330) questionnaires administered, three hundred and eighteen (318) were retrieved and found usable, representing a response rate of ninety-six percent (96%). Therefore, three hundred and eighteen (318) were used for the analyses of the study variables. Data collected were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. To test the impact of the independent variable on the dependent variable, a regression analysis was performed. The findings of the study include: (1) a substantially high quality LMX relationship and a considerably high level of OCB among academic staff in the University of Benin, (2) all four dimensions of LMX- affect, loyalty, contribution and professional respect, were found to have significant impact on OCB among academic staff in the University of Benin. It is recommended that management of the University of Benin should take measures to further foster much higher quality LMX relationships between academic staff and their heads of department in the university and also implement strategies aimed at furthering the exhibition of citizenship behaviour among academic staff in the university.*

**Keywords:** Affect Contribution, Leader-Member Exchange, Loyalty, Organisational Citizenship Behaviour, Professional Respect.

**JEL Classification Codes:** J240, L290, O150

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Leaders, consciously or unconsciously have significant influence on the behaviour and performance of individuals, groups and organizations within which they function. This is evident in findings by Judge, Piccolo and Ilies (2004); Bauer and Erdogan (2014). The above position can further be buttressed by considering the definition that viewed leadership as the ability to influence the behaviour of others towards the achievement of set goals and objectives (Bauer & Erdogan, 2014; Mullins, 2010; Robbins & Judge, 2013). There are very many leadership theories in the literature such as the traits theories of leadership, behavioural theories of leadership, the contingency theories of leadership, transformational theories of leadership, and leader-member exchange (LMX) theory of leadership (Bauer & Erdogan, 2014; Mullins, 2010; Robbins & Judge, 2013). Among all of these theories, LMX theory, introduced by Dansereau and his colleagues in the 70's (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975), which focuses on the quality of relationship between leaders and their subordinates is beginning to gain more attention and has been identified as one of the hallmarks of organisational efficiency and effectiveness (Northouse, 2010). It is also asserted that organisations that employ LMX theory into practice largely attain their goals (Harris, Wheeler, & Kacmar, 2009). The philosophy behind LMX theory is for a leader to develop as many high-quality relationships as possible. This will lead to increases in subordinates' sense of job satisfaction and organisational citizenship behaviour, as well as increased productivity, and attainment of organisational goals (Robert, 2013).

Organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) could be viewed as those specific occasions

when employees go beyond what is formally expected of them to get work done in order to promote the growth, effectiveness, and success of the organisation (Igbinomwanhia & Akinmayowa, 2014; Zhang, 2011). Today's workplace is more dynamic, complex, and highly competitive than before. Organizations are constantly looking for ways to improve their competitive position. Thus, organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) is believed to be one important component of what gives organizations competitive advantage that permits them to successfully accomplish goals (Igbinomwanhia & Akinmayowa, 2014).

LMX is significant in higher education leadership contexts because of its close correlation with transformational leadership, increased productivity, organisational citizenship behaviour among other positive organisational outcomes which have gained prominence due to the frequently expressed need to transform institutions of higher learning to meet the changing demands of society (Robert, 2013).

In the light of the foregoing, this study investigates the quality of LMX and OCB among academic staff in the University of Benin and the extent to which the quality of LMX impacts on citizenship behaviour among academic staff in the University of Benin.

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

### The Meaning of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX)

Vertical Dyad Linkage (VDL), as it was initially described (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975), was originally used to designate the single-person mentoring that often occurred in organizations, and was

later succeeded by leader-member exchange (LMX). LMX is known to be one of the main theoretical approaches in the study of leader-follower relationships (Graham & Witteloostuijn, 2010). LMX theory is premised on the assumption that the type of relationship leaders have with their followers (members of the organisation or employees) is the key to understanding the manner in which leaders influence employees (Bauer & Erdogan, 2014). LMX theory provides a background for researchers to evaluate the impact of superior-subordinate relationships on the behaviour and performance of the organization (both individual and organization) (Robbins & Judge, 2015). LMX is a term that refers to the quality of relationship between a leader and a subordinate and how the quality of such relationship impact on both the leader and the subordinate in an organization (Yukl, 2005). In the words of Glynn and Dejorjy (2010, p. 17),

LMX theory stresses the relational bases and influence tactics that leaders adopt and how they vary in relation to followers: when followers are similar to leaders, LMX predicts that leaders will give them more responsibility, attention, and rewards, but when followers are different, leaders will tend to give them less attention, managing by relying more on formal rules and structures.

The main assertion of LMX theory is that, through different types of exchanges, leaders differentiate in the way they relate with their followers which eventually would result in different quality relationships between the leader and each follower (Dansereau, *et al.*, 1975). The quality of these relationships would have impact on important leader and member disposition and actions (Ilies, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007). According to the theory, leader will develop close working relationship with some of the subordinates which he refers to

as the in-group (high quality LMX) and calls these leader-member interactions “leadership exchanges”. The remaining subordinates are managed through formal authority and are referred to as the out-group (low quality LMX) and these leader-member interactions are termed “supervisory exchanges” (Robbins & Judge, 2015).

High LMX relationships tend to be characterised by mutual respect, liking, and trust. On the other hand, the “out-group” members, those subordinates who experience low-quality leader-member exchanges, are not accorded special treatment but get little support from their superiors (Mullins, 2010; Robbins & Judge, 2015). These in-group and out-group members have also been referred to as “trusted assistants” and “hired hands” respectively (Cogliser, Schriesheim, Scandura, & Gardner, 2009).

Moreover, supervisors have been shown to confer advantageous treatment upon subordinates with whom they have high-quality LMX relationships (in-group members). In return, subordinates have been shown to pay back favorable treatment by engaging in extra role, pro-social behaviours, and extra task effort (Greguras & Ford, 2006; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnytsky, 2002). This position can be justified following the assertion of social exchange theory which posits that individuals feel more obligated and indebted to others when they have received deliberate help and support from them. This sense of indebtedness forces them to reciprocate the received benefits in order to build, maintain and increase interpersonal relationship with the donors (Coyle-Shapiro & Shore, 2007).

**Dimensions of Leader Member Exchange**  
Leader Member Exchange (LMX) was originally viewed as a unidimensional construct (Seers & Graen, 1984). Dienesch and Liden (1986) later recommended that the construct of LMX would more suitably be considered as multidimensional because

a high-quality relationship can develop in numerous ways. They proposed the following dimensions of LMX: affect, contribution, and loyalty. Only later was a fourth dimension, “professional respect”, added by Liden and Maslyn to fully capture LMX relationships (Liden&Maslyn, 1998).

### **Affect**

This refers to the mutual affections or likings members of the dyad have for each other based on interpersonal attraction. It is based on a mutual liking of the leader and member. Some relationships between leader and follower may be dominated by affect, as they simply like each other and build a relationship of mutual friendship (Imen, Jose, Pep & Vicenc, 2018). For example, both the leader and member might have similar hobbies and interests- this may be outside of work. Hence, have more of a friendship than a work-based relationship. This dimension to a large extent is linked to employee attitudinal outcomes, like job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and Perceived Organisational Support (POS) rather than behavioral outcomes (Dienesch & Liden, 1986). Against the above backdrop, we hypothesise in null form that: *Affect dimension of leader-member exchange (LMX) does not have significant impact on citizenship behaviour among academic staff of the University of Benin.*

### **Contribution**

This is how members view current level of work-oriented activity that each member of the dyad puts forth. These individuals contribute a great deal to their work assignments. They are seen as capable and are trusted to complete difficult tasks. These individuals are more likely to receive physical resources (e.g., budgetary support, material, and equipment). Moreover, because this dimension is work-related, it has been linked to employee behaviour like job performance and OCB (Ansari, Lee & Aafaqi, 2007). Therefore, we hypothesise in null form that: *Contribution dimension of*

*leader-member exchange (LMX) does not have significant impact on citizenship behaviour among academic staff of the University of Benin.*

### **Loyalty**

This is the expression of social support among each member of the dyad. This dimension is characterized by leaders and members who publicly defend each other. Loyalty is thought to be important to the development of LMX. Leaders who are loyal to certain followers feel confident in their abilities and will give them a great deal of autonomy with work projects (Liden & Maslyn, 1998). Leaders and followers can develop a relationship of mutual loyalty. In exchange to the loyalty offered by say the subordinate, the leader may reciprocate offering her tasks that require higher judgment or responsibility (Imen, Jose, Pep & Vicenc, 2018). Therefore, we hypothesise in null form that: *Loyalty dimension of leader-member exchange (LMX) does not have significant impact on citizenship behaviour among academic staff of the University of Benin.*

### **Professional Respect**

This is the perception that each member of the dyad has built a reputation of work-related activity. This is essentially the reputation that an employee or supervisor has. In other words, does the individual have a reputation of excelling at his or her job and assignments? It is possible to have formed a perception about an individual before having met him or her based simply on what one has heard about the other individual (Dienesch & Liden, 1986). Organisational members can be interested in developing mutual relationships with individual of high expert power, as they can acquire relevant professional skills and gain access to influential individuals in and out of the organization (Imen, Jose, Pep & Vicenc, 2018).

Take for instance, an employee who is known around the organization as someone

who excels at his or her job would probably be an ideal candidate for a supervisor to form a high-quality relationship with (Dienesch & Liden, 1986). Against this backdrop, we hypothesise in null form that: *Professional respect dimension of leader-member exchange (LMX) does not have significant impact on citizenship behavior among academic staff of the University of Benin.*

### **Concept of Organisational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)**

The concept of organisational citizenship behavior (OCB) was phrased by Dennis Organ (Bateman & Organ, 1983; Organ, 1988). The idea was a build-up on the works of earlier researchers such as Barnard's (1938) concept of the willingness to cooperate, and Katz's (1964) distinction between dependable role performance and innovative and spontaneous behaviour (Barnard, 1938; Katz, 1964).

Organisational citizenship behaviour could be referred to the behavior that is at the discretion of the individual, not directly recognized by the prescribed reward system and that when add up would lead to the effective performance of the organisation (Organ, 1988). He went further to explain that by discretionary, he meant that the behavior is not an enforceable obligation of the role or what is contained in the job description of the employee- that is, the clearly specifiable terms of the person's employment contract with the organization; the behavior is rather a matter of personal discretion, such that not performance would not be punishable.

Organisational citizenship behavior is a concept that covers everything positive and constructive that employees do, out of their own free will, which supports co-workers and benefits the company (Zhang, 2011). Zhang added that OCB includes anything that employees choose to do, spontaneously and of their own accord, which often lies outside of their specified contractual

obligations and which has the capacity to promote the effective functioning of the organization. OCB has also been defined to represent those specific instances where employees go beyond the call of duty to get the organisation's work done (Igbinowmanhia & Akinmayowa, 2014). It suffices to state that critics have asked whether or not OCBs, as conceptualized by Organ (1988), were discretionary in nature and whether they are not formally rewarded (Eastman, 1994). In his subsequent work, Organ (1988), responded and cleared all the criticisms. He noted that, since his original definition, jobs have moved away from a clearly defined set of tasks and responsibilities and have evolved into much more ambiguous roles. However, at some point there must be some sort of distinction in the behaviour of a person as to what the person was actually employed to do (in-role behaviour) and any other discretionary behaviour (extra-role behaviour) (Organ, 1997). In fact, citizenship behaviour has been defined as extra-role performance (Kailash, 2016).

In organization, people are always employed to do specific job as are usually enshrined in the job description for which they are paid. Occasions may arise where demands are placed on employee to do things not directly described in their job description or they may in their own volition do certain jobs in respond to a need in order to salvage a situation and prosper the organization. The behaviour in those occasions would represent organisational citizenship behaviour because they are usually not directly rewarded.

### **Consequences of Organisational Citizenship Behaviour**

Organisational citizenship behavior (OCB) has been shown to have enormous impact on employee performance and wellbeing, and this in turn, has conspicuous spill-over effects on the organization (Zhang, 2011). Considering the consequences of organisational citizenship behavior on the

individual performance and wellbeing, Organ (1988) revealed a positive correlation between OCB and job satisfaction. Zhang (2011) concurred, asserting that there is empirical evidence for a widely held-belief that a satisfy worker perform better. According to him, there are however certain types of performances that are primarily related to OCB and that such types of performances will be affected by job satisfaction. Flowing from the aforementioned points, it is lucid that OCB has very critical implications on the employee performance.

Turning our attention to the organisational outcomes, OCB is believed to be linked to lower rates of employee turnover and absenteeism, but on the organisational level, increased productivity, efficiency and customer satisfaction, as well as reduced costs, have also been observed (Podsakoff, Whiting, Podsakoff & Blume, 2009). Organisational citizenship behavior has also been found to result in improved committee performance in university (Farris, 2018). Going back to the position of Organ, he opined that organisational citizenship behavior when aggregated over time and people, such behavior enhances organisational effectiveness (Organ, 1988). Many reasons could be adduced to the plausibility of Organ's position (Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1997). For example, OCBs may impact organisational success by: (a) improving coworker and managerial productivity; (b) free up resources to be used for more productive purposes; (c) reduce the need to commit scarce resources to purely maintenance functions; (d) help in coordinating activities both within and across work groups; (e) help to strengthen the organization's ability to attract and retain the best employees; (f) help to increase the stability of the organization's performance; and (g) help the organization to adapt more effectively to environmental changes.

### **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

In this study, we employed a cross-sectional survey research design. Data were collected once from respondents with the aid of a structured questionnaire. The population of this study comprised all academic staff of the University of Benin. The number of academic staff in the University of Benin as of 3<sup>rd</sup> of March, 2017 was 1,904 (Registry, 2017). The rationale behind the choice of the population is basically because the study was concerned with the academic and also for convenience. Our effort towards reviewing extant literature showed that there is little or no study aimed at examining the influence of LMX on OCB among faculty leaders and members in universities in Nigeria. This is the gap the study intends to fill. The sample size of 330 was determined using the Yamani's (1981) formula with 95% confidence. A proportional sampling technique was further used to allot the above sample size across the entire faculties in the University of Benin.

The research instrument for this study was the questionnaire aimed at eliciting data from the respondents which we later analyzed quantitatively. The questionnaire consisted of three sections. Section A comprised questions about the personal bio data of the respondents. Section B comprised questions to test the specific dimensions of LMX (that is, the independent variable) while section C related to the level of Organisational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) among the staff (that is, the dependent variable). Three hundred and thirty (330) copies of questionnaire were proportionately administered to members of academic staff across the various faculties in the university. Three hundred and eighteen (318) were retrieved and found usable, representing a response rate of ninety-six percent (96%).

Therefore, three hundred and eighteen (318) have been used for the analyses of the study variables. All data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive analysis was computed

using percentages, frequency distribution tables and averages. A regression analysis was also performed to estimate the relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

**4.0 ESTIMATION RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

**Quality of LMX relationship between members of academic staff and their heads of department in the University of Benin**

**Table 1: Quality of LMX relationship between members of academic staff and their heads of department**

S/N	SCALE	MEAN	SD
1.	AFFECT	4.633124	.5376729
2.	LOYALTY	4.215933	.5856544
3.	CONTRIBUTION	4.715933	.5288897
4.	PROFESSIONAL RESPECT	4.346960	.5183180
5.	LMX	4.477987	.3316800

Source: Researchers’ computation based on the field survey 2018 using SPSS 22.0

Quality of LMX relationship between members of academic staff and their heads of department in the University of Benin is

**Multiples Regression Analysis**

**Figure 4: The Coefficients<sup>a</sup> of regression for our model**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	2.138	.325	6.579	.000	
	AFFECT	.152	.047	.180	3.237	.001
	LOYALTY	.187	.044	.242	4.282	.000
	CONTRIBUTION	.087	.047	.102	2.833	.031
	PROFESSIONAL RESPECT	.124	.049	.142	2.530	.012

showed in table 1 above. Using a possible 5-point rating scale, the overall mean for LMX relationship was 4.48 out of 5.00 (SD = 0.3316). Contribution appears to be the most exhibited LMX relationship between members of academic staff and their heads of departments (Mean = 4.71, SD = 0.5289). However, affect, loyalty, and professional respect all had mean value greater than 4 (Mean = 4.62, SD = 0.5377; Mean = 4.22, SD = 0.5857; Mean = 4.35, SD = 0.5183 respectively). There appears to be high quality LMX relationship between members of academic staff and their heads of department in the University of Benin.

**Level of OCB among Members of Academic Staff in the University of Benin**

**Table 2: Level of OCB among members of academic staff in the University of Benin**

S/N	SCALE	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
1.	OCB	3.761006	.4531748

Source: Researchers’ computation based on the field survey 2018 using SPSS 22.0

As set out in table 3 above, using a possible 5-point rating scale, the overall mean for OCB was 3.76 out of 5.00 (SD = 0.453). The level of OCB amongst members of academic staff in the University of Benin appears to be high.



a. Dependent Variable: OCB

Source: Researchers' computation based on the field survey 2018 using SPSS 22.0

**Figure 5: ANOVA<sup>a</sup> for the regression model**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	9.374	4	2.344	13.163	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	55.727	313	.178		
Total	65.101	317			

a. Dependent Variable: OCB

b. Predictors: (Constant), Professional respect, Affect, Contribution, Loyalty

Source: Researchers' computation based on the field survey 2018 using SPSS 22.0

**Figure 6: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.679 <sup>a</sup>	.144	.133	.4219503

a. Predictors: (Constant), Professional respect, Affect, Contribution, Loyalty

Source: Researchers' computation based on the field survey 2018 using SPSS 22.0

The summary of the regression analysis for affect, loyalty, contribution and professional respect on OCB is shown in tables 4, 5, and 6 above. Table 4 above reveals that affect ( $\beta=0.180$ ,  $P < 0.0005$ ), loyalty ( $\beta=0.242$ ,  $P<0.0005$ ), contribution ( $\beta=0.102$ ,  $P<0.0005$ ) and professional respect ( $\beta=0.142$ ,  $P=0.012$ ) with t-value of 3.237, 4.252, 2.833 and 2.530 respectively, are the factors that have significant positive effect on OCB. In other words, OCB among academic staff in the University of Benin is predicted by all four dimensions of LMX- the mutual affections or likings (affect), the expression of social support (loyalty), the perception of the current level of work-oriented activity of the leader (Contribution) and the perception that the leader has built a reputation of work-related activity (professional respect) between members of academic staff in the University of Benin and their heads of department. Therefore, we reject the null hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 4.

The beta value for the significant predictor variables shows that loyalty tends to have the greatest impact on OCB, followed by affect, professional respect and lastly, contribution.

The ANOVA in table 5 above simply shows that our model is significant ( $F_{6,265}=13.163$ ,  $P< 0.0005$ ). Table 6 above shows the coefficient of multiple determinations for the regression model. The table shows that the coefficient of determination ( $r^2$ ) for the regression model is .133 or 13%. This means that our model accounts for 13% of the variance in OCB. In other words, 13% of the variability in OCB is accounted for by the factors defined in our model.

**Discussion of Findings**

The aim of the study was to investigate how the quality of relationship between leaders and members affects citizenship behaviour of academic staff of the University of Benin. The study specifically sought to ascertain

the extent to which affect, contribution, loyalty and professional respect dimensions of leader-member exchange (LMX) influence citizenship behaviour among academic staff.).

On the issue of quality of LMX relationship between academic staff and their heads of department, the study found a considerably high quality LMX relationship between academic staff and their heads of department in the University of Benin. Specifically, academic staff in the University of Benin were found to exhibit all four dimensions of LMX (affect, loyalty, contribution and professional respect) that were investigated. This study confirms Diensesch and Liden (1986), and Liden and Maslyn (1998) construct of LMX dimensions which fully capture LMX relationship.

The study also found a considerably high level of OCB among academic staff and their heads of department. The citizenship behaviours investigated were found to be exhibited at a well above average level which tends to suggest that OCB is prevalent among the academic staff under consideration. This finding is interesting in that one would have expected that the level of OCB among academic staff would be low due to the general belief that Nigerian workers, university academics inclusive, are not well motivated, and as such are not predisposed to going the extra mile in achieving organisational goals or exhibiting citizenship behaviours. The findings of this study however negated that notion and the possible reason could be attributed to the competition among the Nigerian universities and the resultant drive to excel as suggested by (Barnard, 1938; Katz, 1964).

On the extent to which the quality of LMX affects OCB among academic staff in the University of Benin, the study revealed that all four dimensions of LMX- affect, loyalty, contribution and professional respect, have significant positive impact on

OCB among them. In other words, OCB among academic staff in the University of Benin is predicted by the mutual affections or likings (affect), the expression of social support (loyalty), the perception of the current level of work-oriented activity of the leader (Contribution) and the perception that the leader has built a reputation of work-related activity (professional respect) between academic staff in the University of Benin and their heads of departments.

The existing literature on OCB points to the fact that good quality LMX (which is simply the exchange relationship and manner of interaction between a superior and subordinate) is characterised by mutual trust and liking, and both parties feel inclined to reciprocate courteous and altruistic acts, which facilitate OCB (Zhang, 2011). Empirical researches support this profound relationship between LMX and OCB in organizations (Igbinowmanhia & Akinmayowa, 2014, Chovwen & Ogunsakin, 2013; Wang, Chu & Ni, 2010).

## **5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study examined the extent to which the quality of relationship that exists between leaders and their subordinates often called leader-member exchange (LMX) affects organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) among academic staff in the university of Benin. The study revealed a substantially high quality LMX relationship and a considerably high level of OCB among members of academic staff in the University of Benin. The study also revealed that all four dimensions of LMX- affect, loyalty, contribution and professional respect, have significant impact, with loyalty having the greatest impact as a predictor of OCB among members of academic staff in the University of Benin.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Heads of departments in the University of Benin should be socially supportive

to academic staff in their departments as this has been found to have the strongest impact on citizenship behavior among academic staff.

2. Heads of departments in the University of Benin should identify and appreciate academic staff in their departments with whom they have mutual likings as this would help promote the exhibition of much higher citizenship behaviours among academic staff.
3. Management of the University of Benin should ensure that the work environment for academic staff is conducive- such that there is cooperation and good relationship as this would facilitate the exhibition of much higher citizenship behavior among academic staff
4. Management should ensure that educational facilities are continuously provided so as to enable heads of departments contribute meaningfully towards building larger LMX relationship among academic staff in their departments.

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