

**DYADIC RELATIONAL QUALITY AND COMMUNICATION  
SATISFACTION AMONG UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA  
(UUM) EMPLOYEES.**

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**UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA**

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(UUM) EMPLOYEES.**

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**Thesis submitted to the College of Arts and Sciences in partial  
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**Program Komunikasi  
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## **ABSTRAK**

*Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji kualiti hubungan diadik dan kepuasan komunikasi di kalangan kakitangan Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). Secara spesifiknya, kajian ini mengkaji hubungan di antara kualiti Leader-member-exchange (LMX) dan kepuasan komunikasi subordinat. Analisis regresi berganda telah digunakan untuk mengukur tahap kualiti dan kepuasan komunikasi di kalangan 130 pekerja di UUM. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa kesan, kesetiaan, sumbangan yang diterima dan rasa hormat mempengaruhi kepuasan komunikasi pekerja. Implikasi kajian ini telah dibincangkan dengan lebih jelas.*

## **ABSTRACT**

*This study attempts to investigate the dyadic relations quality and communication satisfaction among employees of Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). Specifically, these studies examine the relationship between Leader-member-exchange (LMX) quality and subordinates communication satisfaction. Multiple regression analysis used to examine the relationship among 130 employees in UUM. Findings indicate that affect, loyalty, perceived contribution and respect are strongly related to subordinate's communications satisfaction. The implications of this study discussed further are elaborated.*

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### 1.0 Introduction

Interpersonal or dyadic communication is a most common communication setting used. Observation in a variety of settings ranging from playgrounds, train depots and shopping malls to other settings shows that most communication is dyadic in nature (Adler & Rodman, 2003). DeVito (2009) defined interpersonal communication involves interdependent individuals, inherently relational, exists on a continuum, involves verbal and nonverbal messages, is transactional and exists in varied forms. DeVito (2007) emphasize that dyadic communication in organization includes explaining order, counseling session, interview process in hiring new employee, employee evaluation, motivation session, analysis problem in organization and conflict resolution.

Studies have shown that dyadic communication in organization have big impact towards organizations activities, achievements and work commitment. According to Rubin (1993), when organization members needs are by communication satisfaction, they will focus more on effective relationship building. An evaluation of communication satisfaction created to collect a data about organizations strength and weaknesses, and it also a based for communication strategy to create a positive working relations. Because of that, communication satisfaction is important because it focus on organization members who play an

important role in process of creating organizations effectiveness (Gray & Laidlaw, 2004).

In explaining the relationship between superior-subordinate, most communication scholars use leader-member exchange theory (LMX) as a basis for their explanations of this dyadic relationship (Lee, 1997). LMX represents another major theoretical and empirical approach to organizational leadership (Gerstner & Day, 1997; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Liden, Sparrowe, & Wayne, 1997). The central premise behind LMX is that within work units, different types of relationships develop between leaders and their subordinates, or members (Epitropaki & Martin, 2005). Managers and supervisors are thought to develop close relationships with only a few subordinates and have high-quality exchanges with them. In the context of these high-LMX relationships, managers show influence and support beyond what is specified in formal descriptions, and the subordinate is given more autonomy and responsibility. Low-LMX relationships, on the other hand, are thought to be limited to the exchanges that take place according to the employment contract (Epitropaki & Martin, 2005).

## 1.1 Problem statement.

Previous study have established and interprets the appropriate level of analysis (dyad and group) based on the correlation between LMX quality, supervisory communication and team-oriented commitment in a Malaysian organization setting (Hassan Abu Bakar, Che Su Mustaffa & Bahtiar Mohamad, 2009). Additionally, Gerstner and Day (1997) argued that more studies are needed to measure LMX from supervisory and subordinate (dyad) perspectives. Few studies have shown the importance of dyadic communication in organization within the LMX framework (Dansereau & Markham, 1987; Hassan Abu Bakar & Connaughton, 2010), however these studies failed to link between dyadic relationships quality towards communication satisfaction in organization context. This link between is very important because of pervious study has suggested that LMX quality has a strong impact on the superior-subordinate interaction and its qualities is differential effect a variety of communication behaviors (Hassan Abu Bakar, Che Su Mustaffa & Bahtiar Mohamad, 2009).

In particular, pervious researches have explicitly showed the quality of LMX affects subordinates' and superiors' communication in areas such as discourse patterns, upward influence, communication expectations, cooperative communication, perceived organizational justice, and decision making practices (e.g., Fairhurst, 1993; Fairhurst & Chandler, 1989; Jablin, 1987; Krone, 1992; Lee, 1997, 2001; Lee & Jablin, 1995; Yukl & Fu, 1999). However, a review of the related research reveals an important omission in LMX-related studies that is

LMX research has not explored communication satisfaction as a meaningful dependent variable (Mueller & Lee, 2002).

In UUM context, there a case when one lecturer, Dr. Abdul Halim Mohamed filed summon to Vice Chancellor of UUM, Tan Sri Dr. Nordin Kardi (Berita Harian, 2010). This case is not supposedly happened especially in organization context. It showed that there is a problem occurs in terms of superior-subordinate relationship in UUM.

## 1.2 Objective

Objectives of this study are :

- 1) to examine the relationship between the affect and communication satisfaction among University Utara Malaysia (UUM) employees
- 2) to examine the relationship between the loyalty communication satisfaction among University Utara Malaysia (UUM) employees
- 3) to examine the relationship between the perceived contribution and communication satisfaction among University Utara Malaysia (UUM) employees
- 4) to examine the relationship between the respect and communication satisfaction among University Utara Malaysia (UUM) employee



### 1.3 Research Question

LMX quality has a strong impact on the superior-subordinate interaction (Hassan Abu Bakar, Che Su Mustaffa & Bahtiar Mohamad, 2009). In particular, previous researches have explicitly showed the quality of LMX affects subordinates' and superiors' communication in areas such as discourse patterns, upward influence, communication expectations, cooperative communication, perceived organizational justice, and decision making practices (e.g., Fairhurst, 1993; Fairhurst & Chandler, 1989; Jablin, 1987; Krone, 1992; Lee, 1997, 2001; Lee & Jablin, 1995; Yukl & Fu, 1999). However, a review of the related research reveals an important omission in LMX-related studies that is LMX research has not explored communication satisfaction as a meaningful dependent variable (Mueller & Lee, 2002). Therefore, the following research question is advanced in this study: What is the relationship between the quality of dyadic relations (affect, loyalty, perceived contribution and respect) and communication satisfaction among University Utara Malaysia (UUM) employees?

#### 1.4 Significant of study

The findings of this study has, to some extent, added to career research stream by substantiating the importance of measuring LMX from more than one perspectives so that more comprehensive investigation into the antecedents and outcomes of LMX can be carried out.

The findings of this study contribute to the literature by providing information on dyadic communication for UUM employees especially admin staff in higher institution organization context. Researcher could benefit from this study since it provides information of the different individual's communication skill.

This study also gives an idea to management in UUM to organize any workshop or talk about leadership skill for leaders in UUM to improve their quality of dyadic communication.

#### 1.5 Limitation and delimitation

The respondents for this study choose only among UUM employees and it is because the researcher more focusing on admin employees in Higher Education Institution. Besides that the researchers decide to concentrate on LMX quality and communication satisfaction

## 1.6 Operational definition

### 1.6.1 LMX quality

The LMX involves the inter-personal relationships between leaders and followers. In general, these dyadic exchanges are thought to range on a continuum from high to low. High-quality exchanges are characterized by a higher level of trust, interaction, support and rewards than low-quality exchanges. High quality LMX dyads exhibit a high degree of exchange in superior-subordinate relationships and are characterized by mutual liking, trust, respect, and reciprocal influence (Dienesch & Liden, 1986).

Kang and Steward (2006) mention that Leader-member exchange is (i) a system of components and their relationships (ii) involving both members of a dyad (iii) involving interdependent patterns of behavior and (iv) sharing mutual outcome instrumentalities and (v) producing conceptions of environments, cause maps and value.

The central ideas of LMX theory - namely, that the exchange relationships leaders form with their members vary in quality, and that these differences are manifested in differentiated member roles between the leaders -lend credence to the key idea of the group engagement model. Through exchange processes, LMX results in differentiated roles among group members. These differentiated roles indicate to members their relative standing within the group. LMX, although originating in

exchange processes, through differentiation engenders the conditions necessary for members to perceive their relative standing within the group. Members, in turn, engage in helping behavior in accordance with their standing within the group (Sparrowe et al, 2006).

According Bhal et al, (2009) LMX is assessed through a two-dimensional scale consisting of “contributions” on the job and “affective” interactions off-the-job. In sum, LMX research over the years has identified and discussed the following potential dimensions of work relationships: affect, loyalty, contribution, professional respect, support, trust, attention, obligation, influence, delegation, latitude, and innovativeness (Ferris et al, 2009).

Findings in transactional leadership produce mixed results. Contingent reward leadership has been found in many studies to be highly correlated to transformational leadership. While contingent reward leadership relates positively to subordinates’ outcomes like satisfaction and performance, the strength of the association is of a lower extent than transformational leadership (Hassan Abu Bakar & Connaughton, 2010).

Mueller and Lee (2002) demonstrate different communication patterns in dyads with high and low levels of exchange. Dyads in high quality LMX relationship enjoy greater openness and frequency in communication, voice, feedback opportunities, attention, participation and involvement in decision making. On the other hand, the communication in dyads in lower quality LMX relationships is

characterized by hierarchical differentiation and the formal rules of the employment contract.

The four dimensions in LMX-MDM are *affect* (mutual affection leader-member dyads have for each other based on interpersonal attractions rather than work or professional values; Dienesch & Liden, 1986), *professional respect* (perception of leader-member dyads with regard to each other's knowledge, competence and skills (Liden & Maslyn, 1998), *contribution* (the perceived amount, direction, and quality of work-oriented activity that each member puts forth towards attaining an agreed mutual goal; Dienesch & Liden, 1986), and *loyalty* (the extent to which both leader and member publicly support each other's actions and character; Dienesch & Liden, 1986).

Seung Yong Kim and Taylor (2001) stated that the greater the perceived value of the tangible and intangible commodities exchanged, the higher the quality of the LMX relationship. With high quality of LMX, dyad members are expected to experience a greater perception of reciprocal contribution and affective attachment to their counterparts (Seung Yong Kim and Taylor, 2001). High quality working relationship is sometimes referred to as cadre; or partnership demonstrated by a high degree of mutual positive affect, loyalty, respect and proficiency in their work. In contrast, the low quality working relationships are mainly governed by their work contract (Liden & Maslyn, 1998). In this study, the dyadic relationship quality refer to superior-subordinate relationship in organizational context based

on interpersonal attraction and including four items which are affect, perceived contribution, loyalty and professional respect to measured.

### 1.6.2 Communication satisfaction

Communication satisfaction is a dimension of global communication influence by a few factors (Keyton, 1991). The factor refers to all the dimensions proposed by Downs and Hazen's (1977) who influence communication satisfaction which are subordinate communication, horizontal or informal communication, superior communication, media quality, organization integration, personal feedback, communication climate and organization perspective.

According to Hecht (1978), communication satisfaction refers to an effective feedback towards aspectation in message exchange process and explained experience satisfactor in communication process. In organization context, communication satisfaction defined as individual satisfaction towards certain aspect of communication in interpersonal, group and organization (Downs & Hazen's, 1977).

Downs and Hazen's (1977) and Pincus (1986) categorized a dimension to measure a level of communication satisfaction into organization perspective, organization integration, personal feedback, relationship with superior, horizontal or informal communication, communication climate, media quality and relationship with subordinate.

Organization perspective refers to an information about organization such as organization goals and achievement. It also include internal information that influence organization. In this study, organization perspective refers to an information about UUM especially in the department that researcher choose as a sample such as department and UUM goals and achievements. Organizational integration revolves around the degree to which individuals receive information about the immediate work environment. Items include the degree of satisfaction with information about departmental plans, the requirements of their jobs, and some personnel news. In this study, it involves all the infotmation received by UUM employees and their oppurtunity to involved in their professions.

The personal feedback dimension contains questions about supervisors' understandings of problems faced on the job and whether or not employees feel the criteria by which they are judged are fair. In this context, its include a satisfaction received by the workers towards their effort into the organization, a great channel to arguing and all the criteria's using to evaluate them. Supervisory communication includes both upward and downward aspects of communicating with superiors. Three of the principle items include the extent to which a superior is open to ideas, the extent to which the supervisor listens and pays attention, and the extent to which guidance is offered in solving job-related problems. In this study, this dimension will measure an openness of leaders in the department towards their workers, their ability and believeness to hear from the workers.

Horizontal and informal communication is accurate and free flowing. This factor also includes satisfaction with the activeness of the grapevine. In this study, it focuses on informal communication used by workers and all the information received by informal channel. Communication climate reflects communication in both the organizational and personal levels. On one hand, it includes items such as the extent to which communication in the organization motivates and stimulates workers to meet organizational goals and the extent to which it makes them identify with the organization. On the other hand, it includes estimates of whether or not people's attitudes toward communicating are healthy in the organization. All the questions will evaluate workers communication competency and level of communication flow in working process, whether it's creating identification with organization.

Media quality deals with the extent to which meetings are well-organized, written directives are short and clear, and the degree to which communication is about right. In this context, a measurement of cooperation, clarity and total of information received by channel using in the department such as memo, meeting, letter, internal publication and announcement. This portion is filled out only by those with supervisory responsibilities, does not appear on the form filled out by nonsupervisory employees, and may be omitted entirely. The last dimension is relationship with subordinate. It taps receptivity of employees to downward communication and their willingness and capability to send good information upward, superiors are also asked whether they experience communication overload. In this research, it will look at how leaders communicate with the



workers and workers ability to giving back their feedback. In this study, communication satisfactions refer to individual satisfaction which is in context superior-subordinate with an aspect of communication which are organization perspective, organization integration, personal feedback, relationship with superior, horizontal or informal communication, communication climate, media quality and relationship with subordinate.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### 2.0 Introduction

A literature review is an examination of the research that has been conducted in a particular field of study. In this part, researcher focus of literature on two variables which are LMX and communication satisfaction.

#### 2.1 LMX

In a field study of 128 middle-managers in similar roles but in different organizations within the UK public sector, Graham and Witteloostuijn (2010) found that the quality of their leader member exchange (LMX) relationship with their immediate supervisor is negatively related to the three dimensions of burnout. As hypothesized, LMX and communication frequency are found to interact in the prediction of emotional exhaustion. For low-quality LMX, the relationship between communication frequency and emotional exhaustion is positive with an increasingly steep upward slope as communication frequency increases. For high-quality LMX, the relationship is not as expected, but is curvilinear with an inverted U-shape. The findings support the importance of the social context of the workplace for the development and persistence of burnout. The results indicate that the quality of the relationship between employees and their manager in combination with the nature and the frequency of their

interpersonal interactions are important factors for employee wellbeing. Furthermore, the study contributes to the literature on LMX by providing further support for the importance of LMX being dependent on how frequently employees and managers interact for a new and very important outcome of emotional exhaustion

Hassan Abu Bakar and Connaughton (2010) conducted a research about a relationship between supervisory communication and commitment to workgroup using a multilevel analysis approach. The focus of that study is to establish and interpret the appropriate level of analysis for the correlation between supervisory communication and commitment to workgroup. These studies present a result from an individual, dyadic and group sample taken from a Malaysian organization. They found that the relationship between supervisory communication and commitment to workgroup are relevant for the whole group. The correlation between these two variables is interpreted as group differences where the individuals in a group are viewed as homogenized, and each workgroup is assigned score on each variable.

Study by Hassan Abu Bakar, Che Su Mustaffa and Bahtiar Mohamad (2009) investigates LMX quality, supervisory communication and team-oriented commitment. A survey from 201 Malaysian organizations using within and between analyses (WABA) indicates that the individual dyad relationships and communication correlates with team-oriented commitment at the group level.

Therefore, LMX quality and supervisory communication influence overall team-oriented commitment in a work group.

The research done by Hassan Abu Bakar, Che Su Mustaffa and Bahtiar Mohamad (2009) about dyadic relationships quality and team-oriented commitment among 201 employees in Malaysian organization found that the individual dyad relationships correlate with team-oriented commitment at the group level. Therefore, supervisor-subordinate relationships quality influence overall team-oriented commitment in a work group. The results also implied that the worker's ability to communicate mutually about relationships (LMX quality) with their immediate supervisor implicates both personal fit and work group functioning. The results extend their understanding of dyadic relationships and team-oriented commitment by identifying the specific form levels of analysis in a Malaysian organization setting. They analyzed on the relationship between dyadic relationships quality and team-orientated commitment using within and between analysis (WABA).

A study about a beyond personal Leader–Member Exchange (LMX) quality and the effects of perceived LMX variability on employee reactions by Hooper and Martin (2008), found that an individual's perception of LMX variability in their team was negatively related to employee job satisfaction and wellbeing (above the effects of LMX), and this relationship was mediated by reports of relational team conflict. Two samples of employed individuals was use to investigate the hypothesized relationships in that study. Because of LMX variability runs counter

to principles of equality and consistency, which are important for maintaining social harmony in groups, they hypothesized that perceptions of LMX variability will have a negative effect on employee reactions, via its negative impact on perceived team relations.

Research by Erdogon and Enders (2007) about supervisors' perceived organizational support (POS) as a moderator of Leader–Member Exchange to satisfaction and performance relationships examine that supervisors' perceived organizational support (POS) would moderate the relationships between leader–member exchange (LMX), job satisfaction, and job performance. On the basis of social exchange theory, supervisors' exchanges with the organization and subordinates should be interconnected. Researchers expected that supervisors with high POS would have more resources to exchange with subordinates. Thus, supervisor POS should enhance the relationships between LMX and job satisfaction and LMX and job performance for subordinates. Hierarchical linear modeling analysis provided support for the hypotheses in a sample of 210 subordinates and 38 supervisors of a grocery store chain. The positive relationship between LMX and job satisfaction was stronger when supervisors had high POS. Moreover, LMX was related to performance only when supervisors had high POS.

According to Tse (2006) in his study, the researcher aim to advance the research on interpersonal exchange relationships by understanding and exploring how vertical exchange relationships between supervisors and subordinates influence

lateral exchange relationships among team members in organizations. Specifically, sought to integrate social exchange theory and research on team climate and workplace friendship to develop and test a multilevel model. At the individual level, the researcher theorized that leader-member exchange (LMX) quality influences individual team members' perceptions of team-member exchange (TMX) quality and also hypothesized that workplace friendship acts as a mechanism to mediate the relationship between LMX quality and TMX quality. At the group level, the researcher hypothesized that affective climate moderates the relationship between LMX quality and workplace friendship. He tested the model with data collected from a sample of 215 manager-employee matched dyads working in 36 teams in a large Australian banking organization. Hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) was used to analyze the multilevel data and results provided support for all individual-level and group-level hypotheses. Findings suggest that effective LMX relationships help strengthen workplace friendship between subordinates and coworkers, especially when affective climate is strong in teams. The results of this study have implications for research on LMX, TMX, teamwork, affective climate and multi-level issues in teams.

Hassan Abu Bakar, Bahtiar Mohamad and Iran Herman (2004) test the quality of relationship between superiors and subordinates as indicated in leader-member exchange (LMX) theory on superior communication behavior . The results of this study indicate that there are no significance differences between out-group and in-group members. However when in-group members were compared to mid-group members the result reveals significance differences between these two groups.

Subjects of this research were primarily employees of a large semi-government corporation and its subsidiary in a northern state in Peninsular Malaysia. Survey packets were sent directly to 317 management employees (under supporting staff categories).

Kacmar, Witt, Zivnuska and Gully (2003) studied about the interactive effect of Leader–Member Exchange and communication frequency on performance ratings among 188 private sector workers. They found that LMX was more strongly related to job-performance ratings among individuals reporting frequent communication with the supervisor than among those reporting infrequent communication. At high levels of LMX, workers reporting frequent communication with the supervisor received more favorable job-performance ratings than did workers reporting infrequent communication. In contrast, at low levels of LMX, workers reporting frequent communication with the supervisor received less favorable job-performance ratings than workers reporting infrequent communication.

A study done by Mueller and Lee (2002) about *Leader Member Exchange* (LMX) quality and communication satisfaction in multiple context found that LMX quality influence subordinate communication satisfactions in interpersonal (individual feedback and superior communication), group (horizontal communication and communication integration in work group) and organization context (corporate communication, communication climate and media quality).

## 2.2 Communication satisfaction

Communication satisfaction in organization involve all organization members from top management until workers. Downs, Adrian, Potvin, Varona, Gribas and Ticehurstl (1996) stated that members work commitment influence by communication satisfaction including the workers relationship dimension with top management. Communication satisfaction achieved also involved communication climate and media quality.

Research by Varona (1996) regarding a relationship between communication satisfaction and organization commitment found that horizontal communication, communication climate and supervisory communication are the factors that influence staff commitment towards organizations. Pearce and Segal (1998) in their study found that communication satisfaction in organization interrelated with workers perception, implimentation and work satisfaction. However, a relationship between communication satisfaction and work satisfaction is more tight compare to communication satisfaction and work implimentation. This study focus more on the effect of communication satisfaction, work performance and firm or organization in small business context.

Varona (2002) study about a communication satisfaction and organization commitment concept, and management found that superior and subordinate are two important element in creating communication satisfaction or unsatisfaction.



There is a positive relationship between both elements towards internal organizations environment and relationship between superior and subordinate.

Research about a level of communication satisfaction done by Gray and Laidlaw (2002) found that communication relationship with superiors playing an important role in terms of identifying members work satisfaction and their level of communication satisfaction. Low level of communication satisfaction is related to low working satisfaction. Meaning, when level of communication satisfaction is low, working satisfaction is also low.

Communication satisfaction includes individual satisfaction towards communication flow and influence variables of relationship in organizations (Pincus, 1986). Smidts, Riel and Pruyin (2000) stated that communication among workers in organizations is important compared with external communication. Means, communication among workers giving a big impact compared to communication with external people. Based on a priority to clarify organizational communication effectiveness, this study focuses on dimensions of organization members' satisfactions towards dimensions of communication satisfaction proposed by Downs and Hazen's (1977).

Mattson and Haring (1998) said communication satisfaction is influenced by interpersonal quality among two persons who communicate. They clarify a few barriers that affect communication effectiveness and create dissatisfaction such as

misunderstanding about subordinate needs and unclear information. These types of barriers reduce an effectiveness and information received by customer.

Grant and King (1994) in their study about communication satisfaction strategy and willingness to fulfill it found that negative message strategy such as traits and unclear information is a low level of satisfaction message. There is positive relationship between communication satisfaction and a desire to follow the order.

Clampitt and Downs (1993) study about workers perceptions towards relationship between communication and productivity. They using all the communication satisfaction dimensions by Downs and Hazens (1977) and found that superior and subordinate communication is the highest level of communication satisfaction and the lowest of dimension is personal feedback. When workers having a higher level of communication satisfactions, their productivity, working performance, profit and customer orientation will increase.

### 2.3 Theory

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) is one theory that is often used to examine interactions between superiors and their subordinates (Hassan Abu Bakar & Connaughton, 2010). LMX theory which is an instance of a transactional leadership approach, proposing that leaders develop different kinds of exchange relationships with their subordinates (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975) wherein exchanges concerning contribution, loyalty, professional respect, and affect are made (Liden & Maslyn, 1998). The dyadic relationships proposed by LMX differ in terms of their quality and are defined as either high quality or low quality relationships. Subordinate-members of these relationships are referred to as either in-group or out-group members in high- or low quality relationships, respectively (Dansereau et al., 1975). High quality dyads are characterized by frequent exchange of valued resources and engagement in activities beyond formal requirement, whereas low quality dyads rely more on the formal employment relationship (Liden & Maslyn, 1998).

The specific kind of exchange relationship influences the amount of work-related resources available to the subordinate (Graen & Scandura, 1987) and determines leaders' behavior towards subordinates insofar as subordinates defined as in-group members are granted higher autonomy and influence in decision-making processes than out out-group members (Dansereau et al., 1975). In return, in-group members reciprocate with higher levels of performance, less inclination to leave, and taking on additional responsibilities (Keller & Dansereau, 2001).

Furthermore, leaders enjoy in-group members' loyalty and gain potentially more influence and higher status (Basu & Green, 1997). Over time, these high-quality exchange relationships turn into social relations (Basu & Green, 1997). A meta-analysis conducted by Gerstner and Day (1997) indicated a positive relationship between LMX and job performance, satisfaction with supervision, overall satisfaction, and commitment, whereas a significant negative relation was observed between LMX and turnover intentions but not actual turnover.

#### 2.4 Hypothesis development

Pelz (1952) found that the supervisor's upward influence moderates the subordinate's satisfaction. The supportive behavior of leaders with high upward influence was related to significantly greater subordinate satisfaction than supportive behavior of leaders with low upward influence. The quality of LMX leads to different interactional patterns and attitudes between superior and subordinates. LMX quality seems to dictate the type and quality of interactional pattern, biased heavily in favor of subordinates involved in high quality as opposed to those in low quality LMX relationships (Hassan Abu Bakar, Bahtiar Mohamad & Iran Herman, 2004).

Thus, members in high quality LMX are likely to have better communication behaviors than their peers in low quality LMXs. Subordinates in high quality LMX expect and enjoy greater openness and frequency in communication, voice and feedback opportunities, participation and involvement in decision making,

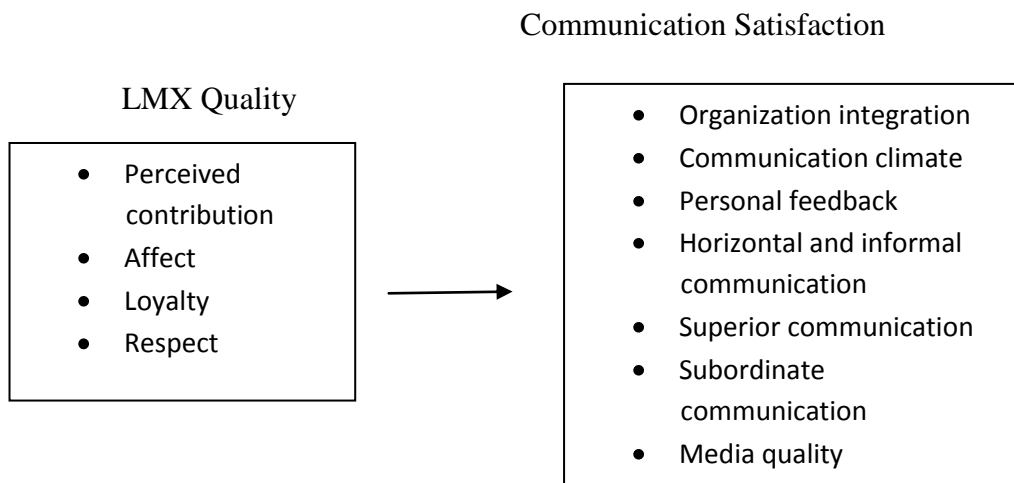
cooperative and receptive information sharing, and person-oriented message exchanges, which in turn affect superior-subordinates communication behaviors (Lamude & Daniels, 1995; Lee, 1997). The quality of LMX is also likely to affect subordinates' perception of satisfaction regarding of communication in work group contexts. Findings from several studies suggest that subordinates' perception of exchange quality with their superiors affects peer communication (Lee, 1997). Therefore, the following hypotheses were advanced:

- H<sub>1</sub> : There is a positive relationship between affect and communication satisfaction
- H<sub>2</sub> : There is a positive relationship between loyalty and communication satisfaction
- H<sub>3</sub> : There is a positive relationship between perceived contribution and communication satisfaction
- H<sub>4</sub> : There is a positive relationship between respect and communication satisfaction

## 2.5 Research Model

Developments of the model of this research are to explain the relationship between LMX quality and communication satisfaction. The framework shown in Figure 1 was developed based on indication of previous study shown that there is a relationship between LMX quality and communication satisfaction. The quality of LMX likely to affect subordinate communication satisfactions (Muller & Lee, 2002; Lamude & Daniels, 1995; Lee, 1997).

Figure 1: Framework of LMX quality and communication satisfaction



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Research Design.

This study conduct a Quantitative approach using measurement in the survey were based on Downs and Hazen's (1977) which is *Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ)* consist of 40 items and Liden and Maslyn (1998) which is *LMX-MDM* who consist 12 questions.

#### 3.1 Population

The population in this study consists of all the employees in University Utara Malaysia including management and professional employees, and support employees. Total all the respondent are 1145 including all level of management employees. The sampling choosen are representative the population. 300 questionare was distributed to the respondent and researcher was collected it back after 7 days only 130 questionnaire.

#### 3.2 Sampling

To ensure the variety and establish in sampling, stratified sampling technique was applied in this research. According to Zikmund (2000) stratified sampling technique will increased an ability in statistical analysis and the quality of the

data. This technique also fit with the dyad an group type of research. Because of that, to decide a sampling sized, five percent (5%) from the total of population proposed by Cooper and Schindler (2000) was applied which is the total of sample are 300.

### 3.3 Instrumentation

The instrument contained 58 items including 12 item of LMX quality, 40 items of communication satisfaction, and another 6 items on demographic information. Leader-member exchange (LMX) quality was assessed by a 12 items scale developed by Liden and Maslyn (1998) aimed at measuring the above mentioned four components of LMX, which is affect, loyalty, perceived contribution and . Items include statements as the following: “I admire my supervisor's professional skills”. Communication satisfaction was assessed by 40 items scale developed by Downs and Hazen’s (1977) measuring subordinate communication, horizontal or informal communication, superior communication, media quality, organization integration, personal feedback, communication climate and organization perspective. Items include statements as the following: “I was informed about how my job compared with others”. All scales were 5-point Likert scales ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.



## CHAPTER 4

### DATA ANALYSIS

#### 4.0 Data analysis

This chapter will discuss about data analysis. Data analysis including respondent background and hypotheses testing on the relationship between the dyadic relational quality (LMX quality- affect, loyalty, perceived contribution, respect) and communication satisfaction.

#### 4.1 Respondent background information

In this part, its explain about a few aspect such as gender, educational qualification, working area, ethnic background, age and the duration of working in Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). Table 1 explain about a total of respondent based on the gender. 130 respondent was selected using stratified sampling among UUM employees. The total for male respondent is 65 and its consist 50 percent of overall total of respondent and, total respondent for female is 65 which is also 50 percent .

Table 1: Respondent's Gender

GENDER	FREQUENCY	%
Male	65	50
Female	65	50
Total	130	100.0

Table 2 explain about the educational qualification of the respondent. The highest total respondent are with the qualification of certificate or Diploma which is 39 respondent and referring to 30.0 percent. Followed by Degree which is 33 respondent (25.4 percent), SPM which is 27 respondent (20.8 percent), STPM which is 15 respondent (11.5 percent), Masters Degree which is 9 respondent (6.9 percent), PMR which is 4 respondent (3.1 percent) and PHD only 3 respondent (2.3 percent).

Table 2: Respondent's educational background

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS	FREQUENCY	%
PMR	4	3.1
SPM	27	20.8
STPM	15	11.5
Certificate/ Diploma	39	30.0
Degree	33	25.4
Masters degree	9	6.9
PHD	3	2.3
Total	130	100.0

Table 3 explained about the working area of the respondent in UUM. Most of the respondent comes from others area such as administration, public relations, publications and etc which is 44 respondent and consist of 33.8 percent and only 8 respondent are working in both marketing and sales area which is consist of 6.2 percent for each area. In customer service area, consist of 21.5 percent which is refer to 28 of respondent, human resources area 22 respondent (16.9 percent) and account 20 respondent consist of 15.4 percent .

Table 3: Respondent's working area

WORKING AREA	FREQUENCY (N)	%
Marketing	8	6.2
Sales	8	6.2
Accounts	20	15.4
Customer service	28	21.5
Human resource management	22	16.9
Others	44	33.8
Total	130	100.0

Table 4 shows about the ethnic background of the respondent. Most of respondent are Muslim which is 127 respondents and the percentage are 97.7 percent. Only 1 respondent are Christian and consist of 0.8 percent, and another 2 respondent (1.5 percent) are from others ethnic.

Table 4: Respondent's ethnic

ETHNIC	FREQUENCY	%
Muslim	127	97.7
Indian	0	0
Chinese	0	0
Christian	1	0.8
Others	2	1.5
Total	130	100.0

Table 5 explain about age of respondent. Total of respondent for below 20 years old are 1 and its consist of 0.8 percent. For 21 – 29 years old, the total of respondent are 55 respondent ( 42.3 percent), 30 – 39 years old are 44 respondent and its consist of 38.3 percent, 40 – 49 years old are 27 respondent (20.8 percent) and, only 3 respondent are 50 – 59 years old which is refer to 2.3 percent.

Table 5: Respondent's age

AGE	FREQUENCY	%
Below 20 years	1	0.8
21 – 29 years	55	42.3
30 – 39 years	44	38.3
40 – 49 years	27	20.8
50 – 59 years	3	2.3
More than 60 years	0	0
Total	130	100.0

Table 6 shows about the time that respondents have been working in Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). 21 respondents have been working in UUM less than 1 year (16.2 percent). About 35 respondents have been working for 1 – 4 years (26.9 percent), 34 respondents for 5 – 8 years working (26.2 percent) and 40 respondents have been working for UUM more than 9 years (30.8 percent).

Table 6: Respondent's tenure

TIME	FREQUENCY	%
Less than 1 year	21	16.2
1 – 4 years	35	26.9
5 – 8 years	34	26.2
More than 9 years	40	30.8
Total	130	100.0

#### 4.2 Statistical analysis

Mean, standard deviation, inter correlations and reliabilities of variables appear in Table 7. Value of mean for affect is 3.61, loyalty is 3.66, perceived contribution is 3.72, respect is 3.73 and for communication satisfaction are 3.59. Standard deviation for affect is .82, .85 for loyalty, .74 for perceived contribution, .90 for respect and .64 for communication satisfaction. Cronbach Alpha values for affect is .794, loyalty is .856, perceived contribution is .829, respect is .860 and communication is .970. It means the cronbach alpha values are high and it showed in the table below.

Table 7: Mean, standard deviation, inter correlations and reliabilities of variables

VARIABLE	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1.Affect	3.61	.82	(.794)				
2.Loyalty	3.66	.85	.599*	(.856)			
3.Perceived contribution	3.72	.74	.620*	.540*	(.829)		
4.Respect	3.73	.90	.594*	.651*	.681*	(.860)	
5.Comm. satisfaction	3.59	.64	.712*	.717*	.678	.760*	(.970)

\*p < 0.05

### 4.3 Multiple regressions analysis

Table 8 shows the multiple regressions analysis for affect, loyalty, perceived contribution, respect and communication satisfaction. 72 percent variances of communication satisfaction are explained by affect, loyalty, perceived contribution and respect. Overall model are fit which means there is a relationship between dyadic relational quality (affect, loyalty, perceived contribution and respect) and communication satisfaction.

H<sub>1</sub> : There is a positive relationship between affect and communication satisfaction

Affect have a positive correlation with communication satisfaction. ( $\beta = .269$ ,  $t = 4.11$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, we failed to reject H<sub>1</sub>. The result indicate that the higher level affect in superior-subordinate relationship, the higher subordinate communication satisfaction

H<sub>2</sub> : There is a positive relationship between loyalty and communication satisfaction

Loyalty have a positive correlation with communication satisfaction. ( $\beta = .263$ ,  $t = 4.013$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, we failed to reject H<sub>2</sub>. The result indicate that the higher level loyalty in superior-subordinate relationship, the higher subordinate communication satisfaction



H<sub>3</sub> : There is a positive relationship between perceived contribution and communication satisfaction

Perceived contributions have a positive correlation with communication satisfaction. ( $\beta = .144$ ,  $t = 2.098$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, we failed to reject H<sub>3</sub>. The result indicates that the higher level perceived contribution in superior-subordinate relationship, the higher subordinate communication satisfaction

H<sub>4</sub> : There is a positive relationship between respect and communication satisfaction

Respects have a positive correlation with communication satisfaction. ( $\beta = .331$ ,  $t = 4.582$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, we failed to reject H<sub>4</sub>. The result indicate that the higher level respect in superior-subordinate relationship, the higher subordinate communication satisfaction

Table 8: Multiple regressions analysis for affect, loyalty, perceived contribution, respect and communication satisfaction

VARIABLE	$\beta$	SE	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>
Affect	.213	.052	.269	4.11*
Loyalty	.200	.050	.263	4.013*
Perceived contribution	.125	.060	.144	2.098*
Respect	.238	.052	.331	4.582*

F = 84.016\*

R<sup>2</sup> = .729

$\Delta R^2 = .72$

*df* = 129

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\*p < 0.05

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

#### 5.0 Discussion and conclusion

The objective of this study was to clarify the relation between leader-member-exchange (LMX) quality which is affect, loyalty, perceived contribution and respect, and employee's communication satisfaction. These relationships have been expected to be mediated by high quality LMX relationships. It was expected that high-quality of LMX relationships will increased a level of subordinate communication satisfaction. Result found that the higher level affect, loyalty, perceived contribution and respect in superior-subordinate relationship, the higher subordinate communication satisfaction. These findings are consistent with theoretical perspective and empirical discovery of LMX to communication behavior and activities in the superior-subordinate relationship. Compared to peers in low-quality of LMXs, subordinate in high-quality LMXs enjoyed consistently more favorable formal and informal rewards and open communication (Mueller & Lee, 2002). This is also supported by Danserau, Graen and Haga (1975), Graen and Scandura (1987), and Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) by concluded LMX quality appears matter greatly with respect to how individual subordinates feel about their communication experiences.

Further, findings from this study indicated that each element in LMX quality affect the level of communication satisfaction in superior-subordinate

relationship. It's supported by Mueller and Lee (2002) when they found that the quality of LMX affects perceptions of communication satisfaction, beyond that of the superior-subordinate context by saying that the quality of LMX appears to be strongly and positively related to communication satisfaction in larger group and organizational context. LMX quality can be as a best predictor to measure a level of communication satisfaction. Based on these findings, it shows clearly and also supported by Mueller and Lee (2002), Jablin and Krone (1994) and Lee and Jablin (1995), the quality of LMX is positively related to communication satisfaction, most notably in interpersonal context, group and organizational.

In order to maintain a level of subordinate's communication satisfaction, superiors should maintain their high-level quality of LMX. In order to enhance their subordinates' perceptions of communication satisfaction, superiors should work on ways in which they can improve the quality of LMXs with subordinates, subordinates can learn about and actively engage in communication behaviors that positively affect the quality of LMX with the superior, and subordinates are likely to experience more informal and formal rewards (including motivators) and interact with their superiors within a more open communication environment (Mueller & Lee, 2002).

## 5.1 Implication of study

This research supports what have been investigated by previous researcher's (e.g., Muller & Lee, 2002, Lee & Jablin, 1995, Jablin & Krone, 1994) deals with leader-member-exchange (LMX) quality and communication satisfaction. It shows that these variables are influence each other. It means that, LMX quality of superior-subordinate relationship can influence subordinate communication satisfaction. This study provide emperical data about LMX quality (affect, loyalty, perceived contribution and respect) and communication satisfaction among employees in organizational context especially in higher institution organization context. As stated in findings of this study, the respondent level of LMX quality in terms of affect, loyalty, perceived contribution and respect are highly related to communication satisfaction.

This finding also has important implication for organizations that are serious about helping their employees experience favorable work outcomes. With a better knowledge of the nature of the quality exchanges gleaned from both the supervisor and subordinate perspectives, organizations can subsequently take the necessary steps to enhance the quality of relationships between superiors and subordinates. Another important implication for future research on LMX is that the quality of exchange relationships could be more reliably measured using not one but two ratings provided by the supervisor and subordinate (Ang Magdalene Chooi Hwa, Muhamad Jantani & Mahfooz A. Ansari, A , 2009).

## 5.2 Recommendation for future research

It is recommended that future research can apply this study in other context of environment. This current investigation is limited in Malaysia higher institution context. Further studies could extend this study in context of other type of organizations such as political environment, ministry or military department. It is because the environment of that are totally difference in terms of leadership, and relationship of superior and subordinate.

Future research also can identify each impact of LMX quality; affect, loyalty, perceived contribution and respect towards each element of communication satisfaction; organization perspective, organization integration, personal feedback, relationship with superior, horizontal or informal communication, communication climate, media quality and relationship with subordinate. This studies will contribute a detail outcome for each element in LMX quality and communication satisfaction.

In addition, future research should adopt a qualitative research design such as interviews, focus group or observations that can strengthen a findings about the level of LMX quality towards communication satisfaction.

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**APPENDIX**



**UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**RESEARCH TOPIC:**

**DYADIC RELATIONAL QUALITY AND COMMUNICATION SATISFACTION  
AMONG UUM EMPLOYEES**

## **Dear Participant**

My name is Aida Suhana Abdul Hamid and I am a student for Master of Science (MSc) Managerial Communication in University Utara Malaysia. I am investigating quality of Leader Member Exchange (LMX) and communication satisfaction. Your assistance is very important because it can greatly help advance academic knowledge and improve a relationship and communication satisfaction among UUM employees. Therefore, I hope you consider participating in this survey. Below is some necessary information and instructions. Thank you.

## **Survey participation**

The survey contains **sections 1, 2 and 3**. Participation in this research involves completing this survey. **Section 1** includes questions about yourself. **Section 2** is about LMX quality and **section 3** is about communication satisfaction.

## **Commitment to the University's Ethical Requirements**

Participation in this research is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time, and you do not have to answer any questions with which you feel uncomfortable. A final copy of the report will also be available upon request.

University Utara Malaysia ethical guidelines requires a participant's consent to participation in all research project. In this case, your submission of the completed survey will constitute your agreement to participate in this research. You are welcome to discuss your participation in this survey with the principal researcher (contactable at [aidasuhanahamid@gmail.com](mailto:aidasuhanahamid@gmail.com)).

All information collected during the research will remain confidential and anonymous. Although result of the study may be published, **no identifying information will used. The researcher promise that she will not release this data in a form that allows others in your organization to identify you; further, your responses will not be revealed to anybody under circumstances.**

## **Contact information**

**Aida Suhana Abdul Hamid**, College of Arts and Science, Universiti Utara Malaysia  
Ph : 0122679447 Email: [aidasuhanahamid@gmail.com](mailto:aidasuhanahamid@gmail.com)

## Section 1 : LMX Quality

The following statements reflect your **superiors' leadership quality**. Please circle the number that the most appropriate response that applies to you for each statement. There are no rights or wrong answers. Please read all the statements carefully and respond to them openly and honestly.

LMX Quality Statements		Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1	I like my superior very much as a person	1	2	3	4	5
2	I think my superior is the kind of person I would like to have as a friend	1	2	3	4	5
3	I think my superior is a lot of fun to work with	1	2	3	4	5
4	I think my superior defends my work actions to a superior, even without complete knowledge of the issue in question	1	2	3	4	5
5	I think my superior would defend me if I were "attacked" by others	1	2	3	4	5
6	I think my superior would defend me to others in the organization if I made an honest mistake	1	2	3	4	5
7	I carry out work tasks for my superior that go beyond what is specified in my job description	1	2	3	4	5
8	I am willing to apply extra effort, beyond that normally required, to further the interest of the work group	1	2	3	4	5
9	I do not mind working my hardest for my superior	1	2	3	4	5
10	I am impressed with my superior's knowledge of his/her job	1	2	3	4	5

11	I respect my superior's knowledge of and competency on the job	1	2	3	4	5
12	I admire my superior's professional skills	1	2	3	4	5

## Section 2 : Communication Satisfaction

The following statements reflect your **communication satisfaction**. Please circle the number that the most appropriate response that applies to you for each statement. There are no rights or wrong answers. Please read all the statements carefully and respond to them openly and honestly.

Communication Satisfaction Statement		Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1	I was informed about how my job compare with others	1	2	3	4	5
2	I was informed about how I am being judged	1	2	3	4	5
3	I was report on how problems in my job are handled	1	2	3	4	5
4	Your supervisor know and understand the problem faced by you as subordinate	1	2	3	4	5
5	This organization recognition for my effort	1	2	3	4	5
6	My supervisor listens and pay attention to me	1	2	3	4	5
7	My supervisor offers guidance for solving job related problems	1	2	3	4	5
8	The organization's communications are interesting and helpful	1	2	3	4	5
9	My supervisor is open to ideas	1	2	3	4	5
10	The amount of supervision given to me is about right	1	2	3	4	5

11	The grapevine is active in my organization	1	2	3	4	5
12	Horizontal communication with other employees is accurate and free flowing	1	2	3	4	5
13	Communication practices are adaptable to emergencies	1	2	3	4	5
14	My work group is compatible	1	2	3	4	5
15	Informal communication is active and accurate in my organization	1	2	3	4	5
16	I was informed about my progress in my job	1	2	3	4	5
17	I was informed about a personal news	1	2	3	4	5
18	I was informed about departmental policies and goals	1	2	3	4	5
19	I was informed about the requirements of my job	1	2	3	4	5
20	I was informed about benefits and payment that I will get in organization	1	2	3	4	5
21	I was informed about company policies and goals	1	2	3	4	5
22	I was informed about government action affecting my company	1	2	3	4	5
23	I was informed about changes in my organization	1	2	3	4	5
24	I was informed about organization's financial standing	1	2	3	4	5
25	I was informed about accomplishments and/or failures of the organization	1	2	3	4	5
26	The organization's communication motivates and stimulates an enthusiasm for meeting its goals	1	2	3	4	5



27	People in my organization have great ability as communicators	1	2	3	4	5
28	My organization's communication makes me identify with it or feel a vital part of it	1	2	3	4	5
29	I receive in time the information needed to do my job	1	2	3	4	5
30	Conflicts are handled appropriately through proper communication channels	1	2	3	4	5
31	My supervisor trusts me	1	2	3	4	5
32	Meetings are well organized in my organization	1	2	3	4	5
33	Written directives and reports are clear and concise	1	2	3	4	5
34	The attitudes toward communication in the organization are basically healthy	1	2	3	4	5
35	The amount of communication in my organization is about right	1	2	3	4	5
36	My subordinates are responsive to downward directive communication	1	2	3	4	5
37	My subordinates anticipate my needs for information	1	2	3	4	5
38	I do not have a communication overload	1	2	3	4	5
39	My subordinates are receptive to evaluation, suggestions and criticisms	1	2	3	4	5
40	My subordinates feel responsible for initiating accurate upward communication	1	2	3	4	5

### Section 3 : Participant's Information

Please tick the appropriate box (es)  for questions. All the data collected will be kept completely confidential and anonymous.

1. What is your gender :  Male  Female
  
2. What is your highest educational qualification?  
 SRP  SPM  
 STPM  Certificate / Diploma  
 University undergraduate degree  Masters degree  
 PHD
  
3. What is your main work area?  
 Marketing  Sales  
 Accounts  Customer service  
 Human resources management  
 Other (*please give details*) .....
  
4. What is your ethnic background?  
 Muslim  Indian  
 Chinese  Christian  
 Other (*please give details*) .....
  
5. What is your age?  
 Below 20  21-29  
 30-39  40-49  
 50-59  More than 60
  
6. How long you have been working in this organization?  
 Less than 1 year  1-4 years  
 5-8 years  More than 9 years

\*\*\*End of Questionnaire\*\*\*

*Thank you very much for your time*

*Kindly check whether all the above questions have been answered!*