

# Strength in Bonds: The Impact of LMX Congruence on Employee Resilience and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

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## Abstract

*This study aims to investigate how congruence or incongruence in leader–member exchange (LMX) quality influences employee resilience as an immediate outcome and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) as a distant outcome. We focus on OCBO rather than OCBI because behaviors that benefit the organization are more directly influenced by role clarity and cognitive evaluations, which are central to leader-member dyadic congruence. This allows us to examine how aligned perceptions of LMX quality shape broader organizational outcomes through employee resilience. Additionally, this study extends LMX research by examining how both the quality of LMX and the congruence between leaders' and members' perceptions of this relationship influence employee developable outcomes, particularly resilience. Data were collected from N = 180 matched leader-member dyads in field settings and were analyzed using polynomial regression and response surface methodology. The findings revealed that incongruence in leader-member exchange (LMX) quality was less effective in promoting employee resilience compared to LMX congruence. Both high and low levels of LMX congruence positively influenced employee resilience and organizational citizenship behavior (OCBO), whereas varying degrees of incongruence had negative effects on these outcomes. Additionally, resilience partially mediated the relationship between LMX (in)congruence and OCBO. By integrating and comparing different dyadic relationship configurations, including high–high and low–low congruence, this study highlights the nuanced effects of leader–member perceptual alignment on employee outcomes such as resilience and OCBO. A key practical insight is that congruence in LMX quality, whether at high or low levels, strengthens resilience and OCBO, but the most favorable outcomes occur when both leaders and members perceive high-quality LMX.*

**Keywords:** LMX congruence; citizenship behavior; employee resilience; polynomial regression.

**JEL Classification:** M12, D91

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## 1. Introduction

The accelerated adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) has intensified workplace uncertainty, particularly in knowledge-intensive sectors. Advances in AI-driven automation, code generation, and decision-support systems have raised concerns about job displacement, skill obsolescence, and the potential replacement of certain roles, contributing to heightened job insecurity and fear of redundancy (Bankins et al., 2024; Frey & Osborne, 2017; Poulouse et al., 2025). For software engineers, AI-enabled transformation has amplified psychological strain while simultaneously demanding continuous learning, adaptability, and emotional regulation. Nevertheless, these challenges provide employees with opportunities to develop and enhance their ability to adapt to a rapidly changing environment. Therefore, research aims to enhance employee capability and flexibility, enabling them to function effectively in rapidly changing company conditions (Kakkar, 2019; Uysal & Kim, 2025). Employee resilience has the potential to achieve this, as it refers to an employee's ability to adapt and overcome problems in new environments (Caniëls & Hatak, 2022; Yunpeng & Zaman, 2024).

Research has linked resilience to improved work performance, happiness, organizational commitment, and employee innovation (Huang & Luthans, 2015; Iqbal et al., 2025; Malik & Garg, 2017; Meneghel et al., 2016; Rurkkhum, 2024). Research suggests external interventions can potentially build employee resilience (Sinclair et al., 2020; Vanhove et al., 2016) while internal resources like positive emotions increase flexibility and optimism under uncertainty (Kakkar, 2019; Leontiev et al., 2024). Leader-member interaction affects employee emotions at work (Harland et al., 2005; Liao et al., 2023). Leaders can enhance employee happiness, productivity, and resilience by fostering an emotional environment that improves performance based on relationship requirements. (Afota et al., 2026; Eisenberger et al., 2010; Liao et al., 2023).

Recent research has examined how different leadership styles influence employee resilience, including transformational leadership (Djourova et al., 2020; Sommer et al., 2016), humble leadership (Seyyedmoharrami et al., 2025; Zhu et al., 2019), charismatic leadership (Feng et al., 2025), authentic leadership (Gaddy, 2016), and servant leadership. Thus far, this line of inquiry has examined how leaders conduct themselves and how their styles affect employee resilience at work. Although this research has provided some useful insights on developing employee resilience, the leadership style-based approaches assume that leaders have similar relationships with all subordinates and that subordinates agree on the leader's style for developing employee resilience. Rather than being a fixed trait, resilience is considered a developable capacity that can be shaped by experience, workplace conditions, and supportive leadership (Kakkar, 2019). This perspective aligns with our focus on how the quality of LMX and agreement between leaders and members can actively help employees adapt and recover in dynamic work environments. Leaders have various relationships with their subordinates; thus, members' preferences for leadership styles may differ (Khan & Iqbal, 2022). Leader-member exchange (LMX) quality meets employees' specific resilience requirements (Deban et al., 2026; Kakkar, 2019). Dyadic LMX congruence may affect member resilience, although the research has not extensively investigated this.

Building on the above, our research aims to address: How does LMX quality, specifically, the amount of agreement or disagreement between leaders and members, impact members' developable resilience and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB)? We expect two significant contributions from our study on this subject. First, from a theoretical perspective, we highlight the importance of having a mutual understanding between leaders and members regarding their Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) relationship. This will demonstrate that LMX quality and dyad agreement are equally important. We also want to know how LMX quality affects the other dyad member. Secondly, our research seeks to understand the impact of this connection on employee behavioral outcomes, including OCB, through resilience.

Practically, a shared perception of LMX quality between a leader and a member is very important. A leader cannot build positive ties with everyone in the organization. Incongruence in LMX within a team may hurt job results (Cobb & Lau, 2015; Liden et al., 2025). Employee behavior and job results may explain the (in)congruence in LMX views (Lee et al., 2019). The congruence or incongruence of LMX perceptions may have an effect on theory and practice. Grounded in role theory, the subsequent part explores how LMX (in)congruence develops employee resilience and extra-role activities, such as OCB. Understanding how LMX (in)congruence affects employee job results requires a thorough analysis, as presented below.

## **2. Concepts, Theory, and Hypothesis Development**

### **2.1 Employee resilience**

Researchers have studied resilience in both individual and organizational contexts, examining it from multiple perspectives (Britt et al., 2016; Hartmann et al., 2020; Waugh et al., 2008). These perspectives see resilience as personal resilience, which is the ability to recover; trait resilience, the propensity to recover quickly in adverse situations; psychological resilience, the ability to manage adversities and stress; ego resilience, the ability to regulate ego control in various situations; career resilience, the skill to resist disturbances at work; and emotional resilience, the ability to adopt appropriate behaviors and perform consistently under pressure (Kotera et al., 2020). We conceptualize employee resilience from the process perspective.

The process perspective views resilience as a dynamic progression that develops in response to various contingencies, ultimately leading to positive adaptation (Britt et al., 2016; Fisher et al., 2019; Kossek & Perrigino, 2016). Additionally, the process perspective of resilience can account for contingencies by allowing for domain specificity, such as within the workplace context. This is particularly significant as recent research indicates that resilience, like other psychological constructs, may be domain-specific (Harms et al., 2017; Kossek & Perrigino, 2016; Todt et al., 2018). Furthermore, the process view posits that a synthesis of actions, adaptable capacities, and trait-like stable elements shapes resilience. So, the process perspective is a comprehensive and unified way to examine resilience, since resilience mechanisms and factors that promote it can affect how resilient someone is (Hartmann et al., 2020).

Previous studies on employee resilience have focused on individual characteristics and perceptions, such as emotional stability and feelings of control, and how these factors influence resilience (Lyons et al., 2015). However, only a few studies have investigated the role of interpersonal relationships at work (Caniëls & Hatak, 2022). These studies suggest that several factors can help build employee resilience, including transformational leadership (Sommer et al., 2016), authentic leadership (Rego et al., 2012), charismatic leadership (Harland et al., 2005), supervisor-subordinate relationships (Peters & Pearce, 2012), peer support (Meneghel et al., 2016), and a supportive and feedback-oriented work environment (Kuntz et al., 2017). These findings highlight the importance of strong relationships between employees and their supervisors in boosting employee resilience.

## 2.2 LMX congruence and incongruence

LMX employs a dyadic level of analysis, indicating that the leader has a unique relationship with each employee and that these interactions affect work performance (Khan & Iqbal, 2022). Traditional leadership studies imply that all subordinates view a leader's style equally, resulting in comparable actions. Leader-member relationships depend on trust, fairness, and reciprocity (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). If members trust and respond to their leaders, any leadership style can work. Some studies believe LMX predicts subordinate outcomes better than leadership style (Chan & Mak, 2012; Şahin, 2012). Relying exclusively on one member's perception while disregarding the leader's perspective can create theoretical flaws in studies on LMX (Caniëls & Hatak, 2022; Khan & Iqbal, 2022; Matta et al., 2015). This omission creates a vacuum that raises a crucial question: why and how does the (in) congruence between leaders' and members' LMX quality influence work outcomes such as resilience?

Role theory (Graen & Scandura, 1987) posits that Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) develops through three stages: role-taking, role-making, and role routinization. Leaders convey expectations to team members, and their reactions shape the relationship. These relationships can vary from high-quality socio-emotional to low-quality transactional relationships. High-quality leader-member relationships involve mutual trust and respect, whereas low-quality relationships are primarily transactional and limited to basic economic exchanges (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

Specific role events influence the strength of these relationships. Leaders test relationships by giving roles to members and measuring their responses in the "role-taking" stage. The leader assigns roles, and the member reciprocates during the "role-making" phase, building the LMX relationship. Finally, "role routinization" formalizes the dyad's relationship (Graen, & Scandura, 1987). According to role theory, unanimity on dyadic relationship quality (LMX) improves "role clarity." A strong leader-member exchange (LMX) fosters agreement among members regarding their socio-emotional roles and builds trust within the group. When a leader and a member view LMX as low quality, they tend to adopt transactional roles centered on economic agreements, like employment contracts. The different perceptions about the LMX quality result in expectations

disparities in role consensus. Such incongruence leads to misalignment in socio-emotional and transactional role expectations between the two members (Matta et al., 2015).

Employee resilience can be affected by the discrepancies in role expectations and the degree of shared understanding between leaders and employees. Dyadic members' satisfaction with their responsibilities increases when they strongly agree on their own and others' roles (Gross, 1969). Disparities in role expectations may cause stress and unhappiness, lowering members' self-esteem (Kahn et al., 1964). When leaders and members have matching views of LMX quality, whether they agree on low or high quality, they collaborate and understand each other better. This alignment enhances resilience and engages employees more effectively in their jobs.

### **2.3 LMX congruence and employee resilience**

Congruence in high-quality LMX. When leaders and members share a mutual understanding of LMX quality, the connection is clear, stable, and predictable. This congruence improves clear communication and workplace expectations, reducing ambiguity and stress. High dyadic congruence, particularly in high-quality LMX interactions, increases the likelihood that employees will obtain the support, feedback, and resources they need to overcome obstacles. Consistent assistance boosts employees' confidence, flexibility, and resilience. Knowing their opinions match their leader's may boost employees' feelings of security and affirmation, helping them recover from setbacks and stay focused.

Since high-quality LMX congruence is reciprocal, members typically go above their fundamental roles (Buch et al., 2014) to adapt and flourish in new contexts (Khan & Iqbal, 2022). High LMX congruence fosters employee resilience via reciprocal exchange and care (Berg et al., 2017; Caniëls & Hatak, 2022; Fisk & Friesen, 2012). High-quality LMX congruence allows members to express themselves (Berg et al., 2017), making them more resilient and thus able to adjust to changes and overcome failures. In high-quality LMX relationships, role consensus increases members' commitment to their leaders, establishing an implicit responsibility to reciprocate that boosts self-efficacy and psychological empowerment (Buch et al., 2014).

Congruence in low-quality LMX. Role agreement between the leader and member about their transactional relationship helps set realistic expectations and promote resilience by lowering misunderstandings and frustration. This happens when congruence occurs in low-quality LMX relationships. Role theory (Graen & Scandura, 1987) purports that role clarity builds resilience via role consensus. In low-quality LMX congruence, members may not be resilient enough for transactional work during change or setbacks. Clear expectations in low-quality LMX interactions help followers understand their duties and responsibilities, which aligns their conduct with organizational objectives and laws (Shore et al., 2006). Transactional relationships help followers to build resilience because they know their responsibilities and expectations.

When a leader and a member agree on a low-quality, transactional leader-member exchange (LMX), they have a clear understanding of task completion expectations. The leader often offers just the resources needed to complete fundamental tasks in such relationships (Cogliser et al., 2009; Khan & Iqbal, 2022). This alignment reduces role disparities and lets both parties concentrate on work rather than relationships. Employees who understand their relationship is transactional and know their boss shares this view are less likely to experience role uncertainty. Thus, role consensus boosts task performance and employee resilience. Reducing the emotional and cognitive weight of relationship irregularities helps people focus on their work and adapt to obstacles, building their resilience. Overall, dyadic congruence in LMX perceptions minimizes role discrepancies, which in turn promotes employee resilience. This leads to the study's initial hypothesis:

*H1: Higher LMX congruence leads to greater employee developable resilience.*

Congruence in high- vs low-quality LMX. Here, we compare high-high and low-low LMX congruence settings to see how LMX quality affects employee resilience. According to role theory, congruence in LMX quality perceptions improves employee resilience more when both the dyadic members perceive high-quality LMX. High-quality LMX connections foster trust, self-efficacy, and self-esteem. Positive behavior and job dedication boost employee resilience (Dulebohn et al., 2012). Though less effective, leader-member congruence in low-quality LMX relationships helps members be more resilient by clarifying role expectations and decreasing conflicts. Transactional relationships prioritize task completion and responsibility fulfillment above building trust and support (Kakkar, 2019; Matta et al., 2015). This hinders positive behavior reinforcement, self-efficacy, and self-image. Thus, low-low LMX dyadic congruence improves resilience less than high-high LMX congruence. Thus, we hypothesize:

*H2: The resilience of a member increases when the leader-member relationship is strong, particularly at high-quality LMX, compared to when it is weak at low-quality LMX.*

## **2.4 LMX incongruence and employee resilience**

Here, we look at the effects on employee resilience through the lens of role theory when we compare two types of LMX incongruence: high-low LMX, which means the leader thinks the relationship is high-quality, but the member thinks it's low-quality; and low-high LMX, which means the leader thinks it's low-quality, but the member thinks it's high-quality.

Leaders who view their LMX relationship as strong and characterized by socioemotional exchange tend to offer substantial support and resources, acting almost as a "trusted ally." However, if the follower interprets the relationship as low in quality and primarily transactional, this well-intentioned support may instead make them feel overlooked or insufficiently valued. This mismatch between the leader's view of the employee as a "trusted assistant" and the

members' perception of a "hired hand" might lower resilience. Even with sufficient resources, the lack of support might lower their confidence and resilience. However, a high-quality, socio-emotional LMX relationship makes the member feel valued and trusted by the leader. Even when the leader gives little assistance, the member's strong self-esteem and faith in their job may help them manage. If they perceive themselves as a "trusted assistant," obtaining fewer resources may lessen their resilience. Respect for their position helps the member cope with the leader's limited assistance and perception of them as a "hired hand." This brings us to the following hypothesis:

*H3: Employees tend to exhibit greater resilience when they view the LMX relationship as higher in quality than their leaders do, compared with situations where leaders rate the LMX quality higher than the employees.*

## **2.5 LMX (in)congruence, resilience, and OCB**

After looking at how dyadic LMX beliefs influence an immediate outcome, i.e., employee resilience, we now examine its broad impact on a distal behavioral outcome, i.e., organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Individuals' voluntary efforts outside of their professional tasks that benefit the company are known as OCBs. The formal reward systems of the organization do not recognize or reward these voluntary efforts (Borman & Motowidlo, 2014). However, role theory (Matta et al., 2015) provides an understanding of OCB in the dynamic and complex business environment, particularly in relation to employees' developable resilience. Certain studies find a positive correlation between resilience and OCB. Literature provides a logic that personal resilience boosts job engagement, which in turn affects organizational outcomes like commitment and OCB (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). Sometimes, even organizational commitment mediates the favorable relationship between resilience and OCB (Paul et al., 2016). Also, being an element of psychological capital, resilience is highly associated with OCB (Gupta et al., 2017; Pradhan et al., 2016).

Like Matta et al. (2015), we focus on OCBs that benefit the organization, that is, at the organizational level (OCBO), rather than those that benefit specific individuals (OCBI). This is done for the following reasons: First, because OCBO is primarily influenced by cognitive processes and OCBI is shaped more by emotional factors (Geiger et al., 2019; Lee & Allen, 2002), OCBO serves as a more suitable indicator when evaluating LMX. Additionally, other emotional factors, such as affect towards the supervisor, may influence OCBI, complicating its analysis with LMX. Second, job-related factors and leader behaviors are more likely to shape OCBO (Lee & Allen, 2002). Finally, OCBO is more directly beneficial to leaders, making it more relevant for studying the supervisor-subordinate relationship (Harper, 2015; Williams & Anderson, 1991).

Role theory states that role initiation and role definition change employee behavior. As positions grow more difficult or broaden, individuals may use their resources to accomplish new duties and societal expectations via discretionary actions that help the business but may not earn

any incentives. Although employees typically view OCBOs as “extra-role” tasks, they may view them as essential to their role and integrate them into their primary tasks (Anglin et al., 2022; Morrison, 1994). The inevitable inquiry is: How can role expansions like OCBs happen? We repeat our employees’ developable resilience arguments to address this issue. Resilient employees make wise decisions rather than rash ones. They operate with purpose, assess problems’ severity, and manage them. Thus, they work well, avoid conflict, and participate in organizational activities.

Resilient people who like to demonstrate OCB may better adjust to workplace changes and retain emotional stability while confronting difficulties and extending their duties (Paul et al., 2016). Earlier studies have shown that the resilience component of psychological capital is positively linked to organizational citizenship behavior (Gupta et al., 2017; Pradhan et al., 2016). According to role theory, each role episode contains a reaction and an experience. Motivational forces from role-related behaviors usually affect an employee’s conduct. Our hypothesis explores the extent to which (in)congruence in leader–member perceptions of LMX shapes employee resilience. We also treat resilience as a key immediate predictor of organizational citizenship behavior (Paul et al., 2016). Following this logic, we argue that employee resilience serves as the mediating mechanism linking LMX (in)congruence to OCBO. Hence, we hypothesize:

*H4: Employee resilience acts as a mediator between LMX (in)congruence and OCBO.*

### **3. Method**

#### **3.1 Data and sample**

We collected data from 180 matched leader-member dyads (N = 360; 80% response rate) of software engineers from three major enterprises in Pakistan. Each leader in the study evaluated only one employee, and each employee was matched with a single immediate supervisor, forming independent leader–member dyads. This matching procedure ensured that no leader rated multiple employees in the dataset. Therefore, the observations can be treated as independent, and issues related to clustering or nested data structures were not present in the analysis. We selected people relevant to our research questions using purposive sampling. We selected them based on their frequent contact with their immediate managers. We selected managers who directly evaluated employees based on information from their employers’ human resource departments. We obtained the data using specified procedures, and we organized and structured the data for accessibility. The HR departments of the participating firms examined the survey questions, validated study participant availability, and verified organizational confidentiality protocols.

We sent a cover letter to inform participants about the research and its conditions. This letter also guaranteed the confidentiality of the participants’ opinions. We informed the organizations about the required leader-member dyads and the estimated time needed to complete the questionnaire. Participants were invited to take part voluntarily, and the questionnaire format

was explained to ensure confidentiality and obtain informed consent. We sent coded leader and member questionnaires in separate envelopes to maintain confidentiality. We asked participants to put their completed surveys in the envelopes for anonymity. We told participants the study's aim. We guaranteed their replies' privacy. Study participation was optional. Typical of this industry in Pakistan, leaders' average age was 46 years, with 85% being male; members had an average age of 31 years, with 72% being male.

As the data were self-reported, we tested for the presence of common method bias (CMB). (Podsakoff et al., 2003) recommended ex-ante and ex-post techniques for this. We pre-designed the questionnaire to avoid jargon and new phrases and give people plenty of time to reply. By stressing anonymity and that there were no right or incorrect answers, a cover letter accompanying the questionnaire reduced disclosure fears. Since all participants could write, read, and speak English, we surveyed that language. We assessed whether common method bias was present using Harman's single-factor analysis, following the guidelines provided by (Brown, 2015). The initial unrotated factor explained 40% of the total variance, which is lower than the widely used 50% benchmark. This implies that common method bias does not appear to be a concern in our dataset.

### 3.2 Measures

A five-point Likert scale was used for participants to respond to every item.

**LMX.** We used the LMX-7 scale to check how similarly leaders and members rated the quality of their LMX relationship.(Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). A sample item is, "How would you characterize your working relationship with your leader (follower)?" The reliability coefficients, Cronbach's alpha, were 0.87 for leader-rated and 0.89 for member-rated scales.

**Employee resilience.** We measured employee resilience using the nine-item scale developed by (Näswall et al., 2019). An example item is "I resolve crises competently at work." (Cronbach's alpha = 0.84).

**Organizational citizenship behavior.** We measured it using the leaders' rated OCBO for their members using the (Lee & Allen, 2002) scale. An example item is "This employee takes action to protect the organization from potential problems." (Cronbach's alpha = 0.85). OCBO was selected over OCBI since we were primarily concerned with organizational-level behaviors. Previous research (Matta et al., 2015; Lee & Allen, 2002) shows that OCBO is more directly influenced by role expectations and cognitive evaluations of the work environment, whereas OCBI is more affected by interpersonal affect and emotions. Since our study examines dyadic LMX congruence, which operates through shared perceptions of roles and responsibilities, OCBO provides a more precise and theoretically consistent outcome variable for testing the influence of alignment in leader-member relationships.

### 3.3 Data analysis approach

For testing Hypotheses 1 to 3, the following regression equation was employed (Aiken et al., 1991; Edwards & Parry, 1993):

$$ER = b_0 + b_1LMX_L + b_2LMX_M + b_3(LMX_L)^2 + b_4(LMX_L \times LMX_M) + b_5(LMX_M)^2 + e_R$$

Before we found the three second-order polynomial terms ( $b_3 (LMXL)^2$ ,  $b_4 (LMXL \times LMXM)$ , and  $b_5 (LMXM)^2$ ), the leader and member perceptions of LMX (LMXL and LMXM) were median-centered to minimize multicollinearity in the analyses. The block variable was calculated by multiplying the estimated polynomial regression coefficients by their corresponding raw predictor values and summing these weighted terms into a single composite score. This procedure captures the overall influence of LMX (in)congruence on employee resilience and allows it to be used as a predictor in the mediation analysis. We then used the resulting block variable to examine how LMX (in)congruence influences OCBO through employee resilience, using a bootstrapping approach. Using the regression coefficients, we constructed a three-dimensional response surface plot in which the horizontal axes represent leaders' and members' LMX quality perceptions, and the vertical axis reflects employee-reported resilience (Edwards & Cable, 2009; Matta et al., 2015; Zhu et al., 2019). The response surface includes two key reference lines: the congruence line, which reflects aligned leader and member perceptions ( $LMXL = LMXM$ ), and the incongruence line, which reflects discrepant perceptions ( $LMXL = -LMXM$ ). Edwards and Cable (2009) suggested employing the block variable approach to examine how LMX (in)congruence affects OCBO through employee resilience, as proposed in Hypothesis 4. To test the indirect effects, we used bootstrapping with 10,000 resamples to obtain bias-corrected confidence intervals, following the recommendation of (MacKinnon et al., 2004).

To ensure the robustness of the regression estimates, we conducted additional diagnostic tests. We examined variance inflation factors (VIFs) to assess potential multicollinearity among the polynomial terms. All values were below the threshold of 5. Therefore, multicollinearity was not considered a concern.

### 3.4 Results

The following table reports the descriptive statistics, means, correlations, and reliability coefficients along the diagonal.

Table 1  
*Descriptive Statistics*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Age leader	46	4.6	—					
2. Age member	31	5.3	.09	—				
3. LMX (leader reported)	3.3	1.0	.09	-.01	(.87)			
4. LMX (member reported)	3.4	1.1	.12	.14	.36**	(.89)		
5. Employee resilience	3.3	1.1	.07	.11	.38**	.82**	(.84)	
6. Organizational citizenship behavior	3.2	1.0	.11	.10	.26**	.66**	.75**	(.85)

\*\* $p < .01$ ,  $N = 180$  paired dyads

Following established guidelines for response surface analysis (Edwards, 2002; Edwards & Cable, 2009), we examined four key surface parameters. These include the slope and curvature along the line of congruence ( $LMXL = LMXM$ ), representing aligned perceptions between leaders and members, and the slope and curvature along the line of incongruence ( $LMXL = -LMXM$ ), representing discrepant perceptions. These parameters correspond to the standard response surface tests: a1 (slope along the congruence line), a2 (curvature along the congruence line), a3 (slope along the incongruence line), and a4 (curvature along the incongruence line). The results for these surface tests are reported in Table 2.

Hypothesis 1 states that LMX congruence positively impacts employees' developable resilience. To find out what the congruence effect was, we looked at the curve along the line of incongruence ( $LMX_L = LMX_M$ ). It was clearly curved downward ( $b_3 - b_4 + b_5 = -0.17$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This establishes the congruence effect's first condition as shown in Table 2. The response surface plot (Figure 1) further corresponds with and reinforces the results supporting Hypothesis 1. The dotted line at the base of the graph represents the line of congruence ( $LMX_L = LMX_M$ ). In contrast, the incongruence line ( $LMX_L \neq LMX_M$ ) extends from the upper-left to the lower-right corner and is shown as a solid line. Figure 1 displays the highest level of employee resilience in the back corner of the graph, where both leader-rated LMX and employee-rated LMX are high. This finding proposes an additive model of LMX congruence, which enhances employee resilience when leader-member dyads perceive high-quality LMX. This supports Hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 2 proposes that employee resilience will be higher when leaders and members are in high congruence regarding LMX quality than when their perceptions are low and aligned. For this hypothesis to be supported, the slope along the congruence line, where the leader and member report the same LMX level, must be positive and statistically significant. Table 2 shows

that this condition is met, as the combined slope is positive and significant ( $b_1 + b_2 = 0.86, p < 0.001$ ). Furthermore, Figure 1 illustrates that employee resilience reaches higher levels when both leaders and members perceive their LMX relationship as high in quality, compared with instances where both parties view the relationship as low quality. These results provide evidence in support of Hypothesis 2.

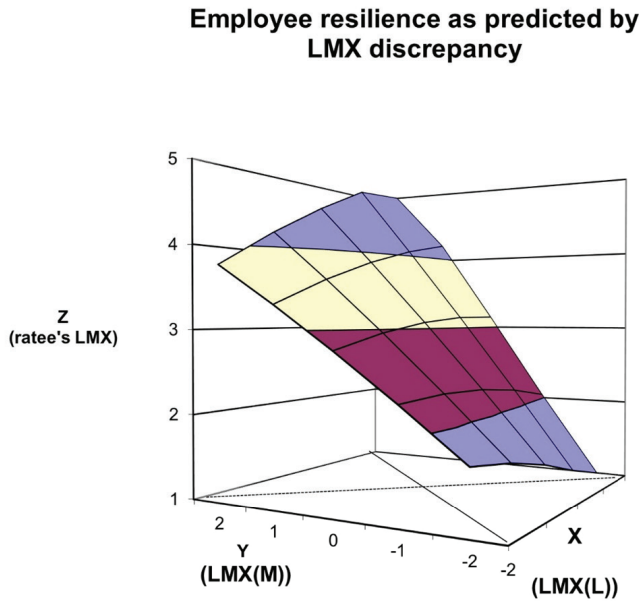


Figure 1: Employee Resilience as Predicted by LMX Discrepancy

Hypothesis 3 states that employees are more resilient when they view the quality of their LMX relationship as higher than the way their leaders assess it. This anticipates an asymmetrical incongruence effect. The negative and statistically significant slope of the incongruence line ( $b_1 - b_2 = -0.17, p < 0.05$ ), supports the asymmetrical incongruence effect. Figure 1 illustrates these results, showing that in the left corner of the graph, where employee-rated LMX is high and leader-rated LMX is low, and employee resilience remains relatively high. However, in the right corner of the graph, where employee-rated LMX is low and leader-rated LMX is high, and employee resilience is very low. Employee resilience declines less when employees view LMX quality as higher than their leaders do, compared with situations where leaders rate LMX quality higher than employees. Thus, hypothesis 3 is supported.

Table 2  
Test of Hypotheses

Variables	Resilience		Organization Citizenship Behavior (OCBO)			
	Model 1		Model 1		Model 2	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Constant	3.05 **	(.07)	2.96 **	(.07)	.94 *	(.32)
<i>Polynomial terms</i>						
b <sub>1</sub> LMX <sub>L</sub>	.07	(.04)	.02	(.06)	-.04	(.06)
b <sub>2</sub> LMX <sub>M</sub>	.78 **	(.04)	.72 **	(.06)	.16	(.10)
b <sub>3</sub> (LMX <sub>L</sub> ) <sup>2</sup>	-.02	(.05)	-.07	(.07)	-.06	(.06)
b <sub>4</sub> (LMX <sub>L</sub> × LMX <sub>M</sub> )	.13 **	(.04)	.16 **	(.05)	.07	(.05)
b <sub>5</sub> (LMX <sub>M</sub> ) <sup>2</sup>	-.01	(.05)	.01	(.07)	.02	(.06)
<i>Mediator</i>						
Resilience					.66 **	(.10)
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.71 **		.44 **		.47 *	
$\Delta R^2$					.11 **	
<i>Congruence line (LMX<sub>L</sub> = LMX<sub>M</sub>)</i>						
Slope (b <sub>1</sub> + b <sub>2</sub> )	.86 **	(.06)	.75 **	(.08)	.11	(.11)
Curvature (b <sub>3</sub> + b <sub>4</sub> + b <sub>5</sub> )	.10	(.05)	.10	(.08)	.04	(.07)
<i>Incongruence line (LMX<sub>L</sub> = -LMX<sub>M</sub>)</i>						
Slope (b <sub>1</sub> - b <sub>2</sub> )	-.71 **	(.08)	-.70 **	(.11)	-.21	(.12)
Curvature (b <sub>3</sub> - b <sub>4</sub> + b <sub>5</sub> )	-.17 *	(.08)	-.23	(.12)	-.11	(.10)
<i>F</i> for the three quadratic terms	4.06 **				2.89 *	
$\Delta R^2$ for the three quadratic terms	.02 **				.02*	

*N* = 180 matched dyads

\**p* < .05, \*\**p* < .01, \*\*\**p* < .001

To examine the mediating role (hypothesis 4) of employee resilience in LMX (incongruence) and OCBO, the “a” and “b” paths were calculated in a mediation model as shown in Table 3. The LMX block variable was created, as detailed in the “Analysis” section. We multiplied the estimated coefficients from the polynomial regression by the raw data. This created a weighted linear composite, which we used to calculate the path from the LMX polynomial terms to employee resilience (Edwards & Cable, 2009) Table 3 presents the regression coefficients between employee resilience and OCBO. Hypothesis 4 is supported, as shown from the bootstrapping analysis presented in Table 3. This is because the effect of LMX (in)congruence on OCBO through employee resilience was 0.71, and the confidence interval did not include 0 (0.563; 0.875).

**Table 3**  
*Indirect Effects*

Variable <sup>†</sup>	LMX congruence (block variable) to employee resilience	Employee Resilience → OCBO	LMX (In)congruence → Indirect Effect → OCBO
	<i>path a</i>	<i>path b</i>	<i>path ab</i>
Unstandardized coefficients with 95% bias-corrected bootstrapped intervals	1.03**	.68**	.71**
Indirect effect confidence interval			(0.563, 0.875)
Standardized results	0.84**	.66**	.56**

*N* = 180 matched leader-member dyads

\*\**p* < .01, \*\*\**p* < .001.

††Bootstrapping method: 10,000 resamples with bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals.

#### 4. Discussion

The LMX theory has shaped leadership-member relationships for decades. Numerous studies have examined how leadership affects employee performance. LMX theory, which emphasizes the vertical dyadic interaction between leaders and subordinates, has proven unique and disruptive. LMX suggests that leaders have different interactions with their subordinates. This indicates that leaders can have unique relationships with each subordinate, which may influence employees' attitudes and behaviors. At the same time, theory and research suggest that leaders and members often perceive these interactions differently (Matta et al., 2015; Sin et al., 2009). Previous studies on dyadic relationships frequently overlooked the leader's viewpoint and focused on the employee's perspective.

When assessing LMX quality's influence on employee outcomes, ignoring one side of the dyadic interaction leads to substantial disparities. Due to LMX's focus on leader-member relationships, it's important to include one member's opinion. This neglect necessitates further investigation into leader-member perspectives on relationship quality and their impact on employee outcomes (Erdogan & Bauer, 2014; T. Khan & Iqbal, 2022; Liden et al., 2025; Matta & Dyne, 2015; Sin et al., 2009).

Drawing on role theory, we examined how leaders' and members' shared perceptions of LMX quality within their dyadic relationship shape employee resilience and organizational citizenship behaviors. To examine the effects of LMX congruence and incongruence between leaders and employees, we employed polynomial regression combined with response surface analysis (Edwards, 2002). We wanted to know how congruence affects immediate and distant employee outcomes. Overall, this thorough study on LMX quality perceptions shows that it boosts employees' developable resilience. Additionally, it improves employees' organizational citizenship. It exceeds the LMX quality perception of a single dyad member.

Our findings also provide an important nuance regarding LMX congruence. The response surface results indicate that employee resilience is highest when both leaders and members report high-quality LMX. Although congruence at lower levels of LMX is less detrimental than situations in which leaders and members hold discrepant perceptions of their relationship, low congruence still allows employees to maintain resilience and engage in OCBO, albeit to a lesser extent than high-quality congruence. This can be explained through role theory and the process perspective of resilience: when both leaders and members perceive their relationship as low quality, they share a clear understanding of their transactional roles and expectations. This alignment reduces ambiguity and role conflict, allowing employees to focus on task completion and effectively manage challenges, supporting resilience and discretionary behaviors. Unlike high-quality congruence, which benefits from socio-emotional support, trust, and mutual affirmation, low-quality congruence relies primarily on role clarity and predictability, highlighting that perceptual alignment itself, regardless of quality, plays a role in shaping employee resilience. These results suggest that alignment between leaders and members is important for employee resilience, but the most beneficial outcomes occur when both parties perceive their relationship as high in quality. While this aligns with much of the existing LMX research (Dulebohn et al., 2012; T. Khan & Iqbal, 2022; Matta et al., 2015) it introduces an important nuance: high-quality LMX relationships work best when both people see their roles and relationship in the same way. If they do not agree, even a high-quality LMX rating from one person does not do much to improve employee resilience or organizational citizenship behavior (OCB).

We examined LMX quality discrepancies between leaders and members using response surface analysis. We assumed members' LMX quality perceptions would predict resilience and OCB more than leaders. Role theory emphasizes how each views their position (R. L. Kahn et al., 1964) and how self-perception builds employee resilience (W. A. Kahn, 1992). Understanding LMX quality requires evaluating both quality and congruence. The widely held view that high-quality LMX yields positive outcomes holds particularly true when both the leader and the member share similar perceptions of their relationship. This alignment becomes especially important in situations where either party perceives the relationship as low in quality. Lower-quality LMX is safer if both parties agree, but less useful otherwise. To evaluate LMX's influence on organizational behavior, we must investigate quality and congruence from both viewpoints (Caniëls & Hatak, 2022).

#### **4.1 Practical implications**

The ever-changing workplace necessitates adaptability, making employee resilience crucial. Our research proposes practical ways to boost employee resilience.

First, reciprocal, long-term, trust-based LMX partnerships boost employee resilience, which can further improve OCB. Training managers and staff to create and maintain high-quality LMX may help. Leaders may do this by narrowing their control and engaging in

coaching, mentoring, and counseling (Schyns et al., 2012). We should support, reward, and encourage leaders to demonstrate empathy and prioritize relationships (Caniëls & Hatak, 2022). Achievement-focused behaviors, including improving work techniques, team dynamics, and organizational procedures, may deepen relationships. They should be proactive when they see task difficulties or obstacles. They may gain their leader's confidence, respect, and support by turning these obstacles into opportunities (Xu et al., 2023). Organizations must educate leaders on the value of positive relationships. Developmental HR practices may achieve this (Khan & Malik, 2017). Mentoring programs that provide non-threatening feedback approaches may be beneficial in this environment. These programs might also encourage members to show their bosses how their proactive behaviors can benefit the organization.

Second, encouraging leaders and members to see their LMX interactions similarly may benefit them. Leaders should create strong relationships and share their thoughts with each subordinate. Since leaders have relative influence, they may be able to change a subordinate's view of LMX quality from low to high, giving them the benefits of alignment and quality. Leadership cannot establish high-quality LMX with all members. In such instances, the leader-member dyad must see the relationship similarly. If a leader clarifies responsibilities and expectations, a subordinate may see a lasting, low-quality relationship as congruent. Subordinates may be hesitant to address relational concerns with their boss, but they may display relationship congruence by replicating the leader's actions and agreeing on the relationship. It is important to note that while low-low LMX congruence is less detrimental than incongruence because it provides role clarity and reduces conflict, it does not offer the same benefits as high-high congruence. Organizations should therefore continue to strive for high-quality LMX relationships, as these maximize employee resilience and OCBO. By understanding the nuances of LMX congruence, organizations can better target interventions to strengthen dyadic relationships, support employee adaptation, and encourage proactive behaviors that benefit the organization.

#### **4.2 Research Limitations and Directions for Subsequent Studies**

This study methodology uses data from raters and ratees who report leader-member exchange quality, which is a strength. As proposed by Caniëls and Hatak (2022), we collected data from leaders to compare their impressions of socio-emotional or transactional LMX with those of their members. Leaders and members reported LMX quality, which may help determine the influence of congruence or member-rated outcomes. However, the study's shortcomings must be considered while assessing its contributions.

First, the cross-sectional nature of our data set limits our ability to draw causal inferences. We can only assert the relationship between these two variables; we cannot assert that LMX causes employee resilience. Nevertheless, from a theoretical standpoint, it is reasonable to assume that LMX quality influences members' behavior, including employee resilience and OCB. To evaluate causality, future research should consider adopting a longitudinal, process-oriented approach or exploring an experimental setting.

Second, we measured LMX congruence from an external observer's perspective, capturing the objective or actual agreement between leader and member. Even so, when leaders and employees see their LMX relationship in a similar way, it can strongly influence how resilient employees feel and how they behave at work. Our results support the main idea that LMX agreement helps build employee resilience and encourages organizational citizenship behavior. However, incorporating measures of perceived LMX congruence could enhance our study's findings.

## 5. Conclusion

Many people feel that LMX quality affects members' work practices and outcomes. Leaders' perceptions of LMX quality impact members' resilience and OCB, as we demonstrate in this research. Our findings demonstrate that examining leader and member views of LMX quality incongruently, rather than separately, is necessary to fully understand members' actions and good work outcomes. When a leader and member perceive high-quality LMX (high-high LMX), employee and organization results are best. Complexities develop when perceptions differ (high-low LMX). If both parties agree, low-quality LMX is less harmful than high-quality LMX. In circumstances when leader-member dyads agree on LMX's transactional character, employee resilience beats incongruence. Studies that just examine one partner's LMX views may overlook these subtleties. Therefore, assessing LMX quality perceptions and dyadic partner (in)congruence has the potential to enhance our understanding of workplace behavior and outcomes.

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