

# Perceived Organizational Support as a Mediator: The Relationship Between Leader-Member Exchange and Job Satisfaction

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## ABSTRACT

This study will examine the impact of Leader-member Exchange (LMX) on employee job satisfaction, mediated by perceived organizational support (POS), at the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Banda Aceh City. Data from 105 employees were analyzed using a quantitative research approach that included structural equation modeling (SEM) and AMOS software. The results showed that LMX has a strong influence on POS and job satisfaction. In addition, POS has a favorable impact on employee job satisfaction. In addition, POS was found to mediate the relationship between LMX and job satisfaction fully. These findings underscore the important role that excellent leader-member relationships play in generating employee views of organizational support, which leads to higher job satisfaction.

**Key Word:** *Leader-member Exchange, Perceived Organizational Support, Job Satisfaction.*

## INTRODUCTION

Human resource managers need to have a deep understanding of the dynamics of individual employee behavior, considering that each individual has unique

characteristics and responses to the work environment. Employee behavior is not only influenced by the level of job satisfaction, but also by other factors such as perceived organizational support (POS). The concept of job satisfaction is multidimensional, covering employee evaluations and attitudes toward various aspects of work, ranging from job content to the work environment (Ning et al., 2023).

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Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory describes the unique dynamic relationship between a leader and each member. This approach is one of the main frameworks in modern leadership studies, which emphasizes the quality of interactions between leaders and followers. At the core of LMX is the assumption that leaders tend

to develop different relationships with each member, resulting in diverse relationship qualities (Martin et al., 2018). Social exchange theory provides a framework for understanding the relationship between LMX and job satisfaction. According to this idea, all social interactions, including those that occur in the workplace, entail the sharing of resources, both tangible (e.g., pay and benefits) and intangible (e.g., support and recognition). Through this exchange, leaders can accomplish organizational objectives, and subordinates can obtain the resources and support they need to do their jobs well. Therefore, a solid conceptual foundation for comprehending how the caliber of leader-member connections can impact employee job happiness is offered by social exchange theory (Uranus & Suyasa, 2021).

Perceived Organizational Support (POS) refers to an employee's belief that the organization they work for values their contributions and cares about their well-being. This perception is formed based on how much employees feel that the organization meets their social-emotional needs and appreciates the performance they provide (Wati et al., 2024).

Observations in the field indicated a decline in the level of employee job satisfaction at the Banda Aceh City Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The factors contributing to this decline include declining work motivation and unfair promotion practices. Subjective promotion practices, in which positions are given more often to the leader's favorite employees, have triggered dissatisfaction and complaints among employees.

In addition, it should be noted that low Perceived Organizational Support (POS) is also influenced by the lack of professional development opportunities for employees at the Banda Aceh City Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The inequality in access to further education, such as master's programs and special training, hinders the improvement of employee competence. In addition, leaders' lack of responsiveness to

employee aspirations and complaints also reduced POS.

The phenomenon of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) in the office also shows a less-than-optimal quality of relationships. Interactions between leaders and employees are still personal and not fully based on organizational goals. This is reflected in the low level of mutual support between leaders and subordinates, particularly in formal situations. A lack of loyalty between the two indicates a lack of commitment to common goals.

Based on the previously outlined thoughts and inquiries, the researcher planned to conduct a thorough investigation of the problem. Using the problem formulation:

1. How does the leader-member exchange relationship affect perceived organizational support in employees of the Banda Aceh City Ministry of Religion Office?
2. How does perceived organizational support affect employees' job satisfaction at the Banda Aceh City Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs?
3. How does the leader-member exchange relationship affect the level of employee job satisfaction at the Banda Aceh City Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs?
4. Does perceived organizational support mediate the relationship between the leader-member exchange relationship and the level of employee job satisfaction at the Banda Aceh City Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Job Satisfaction**

Based on previous research, job satisfaction is defined as an individual's emotional and affective response to work (Lestari et al., 2020). A similar definition was proposed by Paparang et al. (2021), who stated that job satisfaction is an individual's positive attitude towards work and their work environment, which involves cognitive and

behavioral aspects. To measure employee job satisfaction at the Banda Aceh City Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, this study adopted Sugiyarti's (2012) conceptual framework using indicators of motivation, physical working conditions, job design, and promotion opportunities.

### **Perceived Organizational Support**

Robbins and Judge (in Sari, 2019) define Perceived Organizational Support (POS) as employees' belief that the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. To measure POS at the Banda Aceh City Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, this study adopted the eight indicators proposed by Rhoades and Eisenberger (Harthantyo & Rahardjo, 2017):

1. Fairness in the provision of salaries and benefits.
2. There is a fair opportunity for promotion.
3. Availability of competency development opportunities.
4. There is support in completing job tasks.
5. There is organizational attention to employee welfare.
6. There is organizational support when employees experience difficulties.
7. There is organizational support for employees' personal problems.
8. There is a good response from the organization to employee complaints.

### **Leader-member Exchange**

Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory, according to Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) as cited by Aggarwal et al. (2020), is a leadership approach that emphasizes the quality of the relationship between leaders and subordinates. This relationship is formed through social interaction and resource exchange. Furthermore, Aseanty and As'ad (2024) argue that LMX can be a reflection of the quality of the organization as a whole.

To measure the LMX variable at the Banda Aceh City Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, this study adopts the

following three indicators proposed by Suci et al. (2021):

- a. Affective LMX: Indicates the level of emotional closeness between leaders and subordinates, which is characterized by social interactions outside the work context.
- b. LMX-loyalty: Describes the level of mutual loyalty between leaders and subordinates, reflected in support for each other's actions and decisions.
- c. LMX-contribution: Refers to the level of involvement and effort given by leaders and subordinates in achieving organizational goals.

### **Hypothesis**

Referring to the research conceptual framework that has been prepared, four hypotheses can be formulated as follows:

H1: Leader-member exchange has a positive effect on perceived organizational support at the Banda Aceh City Ministry of Religion Office.

H2: Perceived organizational support has a positive effect on employee job satisfaction at the Banda Aceh City Office of the Ministry of Religion.

H3: Leader-member exchange has a positive effect on employee job satisfaction at the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Banda Aceh City.

H4: Perceived organizational support mediates the effect of leader-member exchange on employee job satisfaction at the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Banda Aceh City.

### **MATERIAL & METHODS**

This study aimed to confirm the effect of LMX on employee job satisfaction by testing the mediating role of POS. The study sample consisted of 105 civil servants at the Banda Aceh City Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Data were collected through a questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale. The sampling technique adopted SEM guidelines, considering the

number of indicators and parameters in the model. Data analysis was performed using SEM to test the research hypothesis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### SEM Analysis

Testing the full SEM model before modification aims to see the extent to which the basic model formed in this study meets the criteria for goodness of fit so that the model can describe the research phenomenon without modification.

The full SEM model before modification can be seen in Figure 1 below:

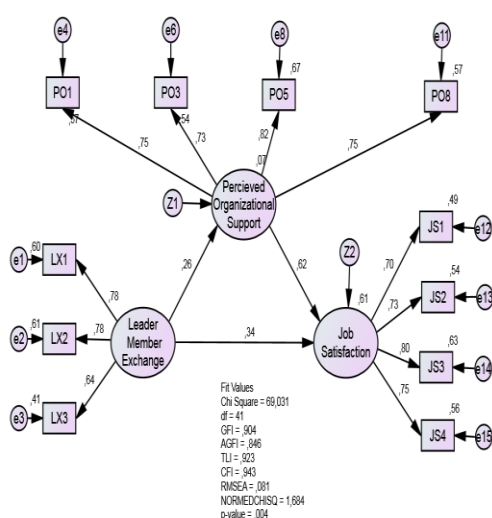


Figure 1. Full Model before Modification

Table 1 displays the results of the model fit test:

Table 1 CFA Full Model Fit Test Results before Modification

Goodness of Fit Index	Cut-off Value	Analysis Result	Model Evaluation
X <sup>2</sup> -Chi-Square	Expectedly small	69,031	Good
Probability	≥0,05	0,004	Marginal
GFI	≥0,90	0,904	Good
AGFI	≥0,90	0,846	Marginal
CFI	≥0,95	0,943	Good
TLI	≥0,95	0,923	Good
CMIN/DF	≤2	1,683	Good
RMSEA	≤0,08	0,081	Good

Based on Table 1 above, it shows the final results of the full model confirmatory factor analysis. In general, all constructs used in

forming this research model, both in confirmatory analysis (CFA), regression values between constructs, and goodness of fit tests consisting of X<sup>2</sup>-Chi-Square, GFI, CFI, TLI, CDMIN/DF, and RMSEA, have met the required criteria except for probability and AGFI, which are at unfavorable values; therefore, modifications need to be made.

Because the model does not fit the data, the model needs to be modified and analyzed again. The following is presented in the full model of Figure 2 after modification.

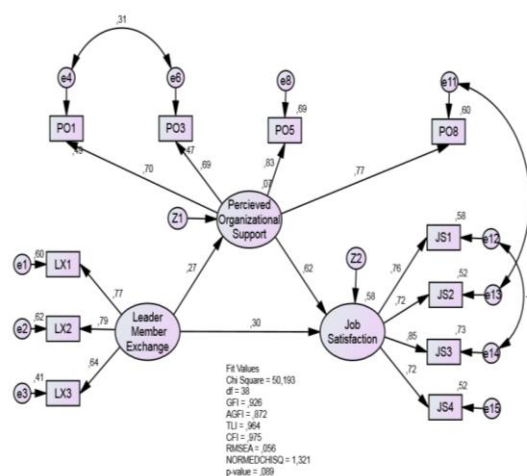


Figure 2. CFA of Full Model Constructs after Modification

Table 2 displays the results of the model fit test:

Table 2 Full CFA Model Fit Test Results after Modification

Goodness of Fit Index	Cut-off Value	Analysis Result	Model Evaluation
X <sup>2</sup> -Chi-Square	Expectedly small	50,193	Good
Probability	≥0,05	0,089	Good
GFI	≥0,90	0,926	Good
AGFI	≥0,90	0,872	Marginal
CFI	≥0,95	0,975	Good
TLI	≥0,95	0,964	Good
CMIN/DF	≤2	1,320	Good
RMSEA	≤0,08	0,056	Good

Figure 2 and Table 2 show the final results of the CFA of the full model. In general, all constructs used in forming this research

model, both in confirmatory analysis (CFA), regression values between constructs, and goodness of fit tests consisting of CDMIN/DF probability, TLI, CFI, GFI, and RMSEA, met the required criteria except AGFI, which is still marginal. AGFI with a value greater than 0.8, which generally indicates an acceptable fit model (Kim et al. 2019). Therefore, the overall model was a fit. Furthermore, to see how much influence the exogenous variables (leader-member

exchange) have on the endogenous variables (perceived organizational support and job satisfaction) is shown in Table 3.

**Direct Effects**

Table 3 presents the standardized regression weights to illustrate the effect of leader-member exchange (LMX) on perceived organizational support (POS) and job satisfaction.

**Table 3 Effect of Exogenous Variables on Endogenous Variables**

			Estimate	S. E	C.R	P
Perceived Organizational Support	<---	LMX	0,328	0,151	2,174	0,030
Job Satisfaction	<---	POS	0,464	0,096	4,827	0,0001
Job Satisfaction	<---	LMX	0,276	0,091	3,016	0,003

Based on Table 3, it can be explained that of the three direct effects of exogenous variables on endogenous variables, all have a significant effect, namely: (1) the effect of leader-member exchange on perceived organizational support at the Banda Aceh City Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs; (2) the effect of perceived organizational support on employee job satisfaction at the Banda Aceh City Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs; and (3) the effect of leader-member exchange on

employee job satisfaction at the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Banda Aceh City.

**Mediation Tests**

To assess the mediating effects of perceived organizational support (POS) on leader-member exchange (LMX) and job satisfaction, the direct, indirect, and total effects were analyzed using AMOS 21.0. Detailed results are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4 Standardized Direct, Indirect & Total Effects**

	Leader-member Exchange	Perceived Organizational Support	Job Satisfaction
<b>Direct Effects</b>			
Perceived Organizational Support	0,269	-	-
Job Satisfaction	0,302	0,620	-
<b>Indirect Effects</b>			
Perceived Organizational Support	-	-	-
Job Satisfaction	0,167	-	-
<b>Total Effects</b>			
Perceived Organizational Support	0,269	-	-
Job Satisfaction	0,469	0,620	-

The results of testing the effect of mediating (intervening) the relationship between leader-member exchange variables and job satisfaction variables mediated by perceived

organizational support variables are displayed in the form of Figure 3:

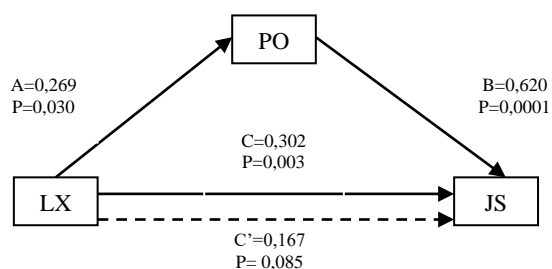


Figure 3. LX-PO-JS Mediation Effect Test Results

Figure 3 shows that the coefficients of paths A, B, and C are significant and that the significance value of path C' is not significant. Because the probability of path C' is not significant, it can be concluded that there is a full mediation relationship; in other words, the variable perceived organizational support mediates perfectly (full mediation) between leader-member exchange and employee job satisfaction at the Banda Aceh City Ministry of Religious Affairs Office.

## DISCUSSION

### 1. The Effect of Leader-member Exchange on Perceived Organizational Support

Based on the test results using SEM through the AMOS program, it is proven that leader-member exchange influences perceived organizational support. The analysis results prove that the probability value generated from the model is 0.030 ( $<0.05$ ); thus, it can be stated that there is a significant influence between leader-member exchange on perceived organizational support or, in other words, H1 is accepted. This means that the better the leader-member exchange, the better the perceived organizational support of employees at the Banda Aceh City Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

The results of this study are in line with Gutama et al. (2015), who concluded that leader-member exchange has a positive and significant effect on perceived organizational support. In other words, leader-member exchange can increase perceived organizational support when working in an organization. Based on the description above, it can be concluded that

this study accepts the first hypothesis that leader-member exchange has a significant effect on the perceived organizational support of employees at the Banda Aceh City Office of the Ministry of Religion.

### 2. The Effect of Perceived Organizational Support on Job Satisfaction

Based on the test results using SEM through the AMOS program, it was proven that perceived organizational support has an influence on job satisfaction. The analysis results prove that the probability value generated from the model is 0.0001 ( $<0.05$ ); thus, it can be stated that there is a significant effect of perceived organizational support on job satisfaction or, in other words, accept H2. This means that the better the perceived organizational support, the better the employee job satisfaction at the Banda Aceh City Ministry of Religion office. The results of this study are also in line with those of Julio et al. (2013), who stated that perceived organizational support has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction.

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that this study accepts the second hypothesis which states that perceived organizational support has a significant effect on employee job satisfaction at the Banda Aceh City Ministry of Religion Office.

### 3. The Effect of Leader-member Exchange on Job Satisfaction

Based on the test results using SEM through the AMOS program, it was proven that leader-member exchange has an influence on job satisfaction. The analysis results prove that the probability value generated from the model is 0.003 ( $<0.05$ ); thus, it can be stated that there is a significant influence of leader-member exchange on job satisfaction or, in other words, H3 is accepted. This means that the better the leader-member exchange, the better the employee job satisfaction at the Banda Aceh City Office of the Ministry of Religion.

The results of this study are also in line with the research of Valensia et al. (2014), who

state that leader-member exchange has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction. Based on the description above, it can be concluded that this study accepts the third hypothesis that leader-member exchange has a significant effect on employee job satisfaction at the Banda Aceh City Ministry of Religion Office.

#### 4. The Perceived Organizational Support Mediates between Leader-member Exchange and Job Satisfaction

The results of testing the effect of the mediation (intervening) relationship between leader-member exchange variables and job satisfaction variables mediated by perceived organizational support variables are displayed in graphical form in Figures 3 and 4. To determine the significance of path C', we used the Sobel test, an interactive calculation tool for mediation tests that produces the Sobel test, Aroian test, and Goodman test. In this study, the test results used to determine the test statistic, standard error, and p-value were the numbers or values from the Sobel test. By using online, it is known that the significance value of path C' is as shown in Figure 4:

Input:	Test statistic:	Std. Error:	p-value:
a 0.269	Sobel test: 1.71732173	0.09711634	0.0859204
b 0.620	Aroian test: 1.69850477	0.09819225	0.08941253
s <sub>a</sub> 0.151	Goodman test: 1.73677827	0.09602838	0.08242632
s <sub>b</sub> 0.096	Reset all	Calculate	

Figure 4. Results of the Sobel Test, an Interactive Calculation Tool for Mediation Tests

Figure 4 shows the calculation result obtained from the Sobel test, an interactive calculation tool for mediation tests where the test statistic value is 1.717, which is much smaller than the minimum required C.R of 1.96 ( $1.717 < 1.96$ ), a p-value of  $0.085 > 0.05$ , and a standard error value of 0.067. Based on the results of the

calculation of the significance value for path C' using the Sobel test, as shown in Figure 4, the significance values for all paths (A, B, C, and C') are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3 shows that the coefficients of paths A, B, and C are significant, and the significance value of path C' is not significant. Because the probability of path C' is not significant, it can be concluded that there is a full mediation relationship; in other words, the variable perceived organizational support mediates perfectly (full mediation) between leader-member exchange and employee job satisfaction at the Banda Aceh City Ministry of Religious Affairs Office.

## CONCLUSION

1. The results show a positive and significant relationship between leader-member exchange (LMX) and perceived organizational support (POS). A significance value of 0.030 indicates that improving the quality of relationships between leaders and team members significantly contributes to improving employee perceptions of organizational support. Furthermore, analysis of LMX indicators shows that the affect and contribution dimensions are well-developed, but the loyalty dimension still needs to be improved.
2. The results also show that POS has a positive and significant influence on employees' job satisfaction. A significance value of 0.0001 indicated a strong relationship between these two variables. This finding is consistent with previous research that highlights the importance of organizational support in increasing employee job satisfaction. Further analysis shows that employees feel that the organization has provided fair benefits and is responsive to complaints; however, there is still room for improvement in terms of career development opportunities and attention to employee welfare.
3. The results of the analysis show a positive and significant relationship

between leader-member exchange (LMX) and employee job satisfaction. A significance value of 0.003 indicates that improving the quality of relationships between leaders and team members significantly contributes to increased job satisfaction. Furthermore, an evaluation of LMX dimensions showed that physical working conditions and job design met good standards. However, the dimensions of motivation and promotion opportunities need to be improved.

4. Mediation analysis showed that POS acts as a full mediator between LMX and job satisfaction. This indicates that the effect of LMX on job satisfaction is largely mediated through perceived organizational support. These findings highlight the importance of building strong relationships between leaders and team members and creating a supportive work environment to increase employees' job satisfaction.

## SUGGESTION

1. To improve employee engagement and commitment, leaders at the Banda Aceh City Ministry of Religion Office should increase two-way communication, provide constructive feedback, and effectively delegate tasks. Additionally, greater visibility of leadership in daily office activities can foster a stronger sense of ownership among employees.
2. To foster employee well-being, organizations should cultivate supportive work environments through equitable rewards, comprehensive welfare programs, and development opportunities. Additionally, involving employees in decision-making, encouraging social activities, and providing positive feedback can significantly enhance perceived organizational support and job satisfaction.
3. Research indicates that perceived organizational support is crucial for enhancing employee job satisfaction. To

foster this perception, organizations should prioritize employee involvement in decision-making, encourage participation in social activities, and provide regular, positive feedback.

## Declaration by Authors

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