

The Relationship Between Social Interaction, Voice Behavior, and Job Satisfaction

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Abstract– This study aimed to examine the effect of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) and Team-Member Exchange (TMX) on employee voice behavior (EVB) and how EVB subsequently increases job satisfaction (JS). The study was conducted with 445 employees of a consulting service organization located in major cities in Indonesia. Validity testing was carried out using factor analysis, while reliability was assessed through internal consistency using Cronbach's Alpha to determine the questionnaire's suitability for the variables. Accordingly, correlation analysis was used to examine the relationships between variables, and structural equation modeling (SEM) with Smart-PLS was adopted to test the mediation model in accordance with theory and previous results. The results showed that TMX significantly increased EVB, whereas LMX did not. EVB was also observed to play a role in increasing JS. Furthermore, EVB effectively mediated the effect of TMX on JS but did not mediate the effect of LMX on JS. These results invariably strengthen the social exchange theory (SET) and the social penetration theory (SPT) that underpin the relationship models tested. Future research still needs to test the relationship model between the variables in this study to confirm the theory tested in the hypothesis.

Keywords: *employee voice behavior, job satisfaction, leader-member exchange, team-member exchange*

INTRODUCTION

Employee voice behavior (EVB) is essential for building a healthy organization because it serves as a driver of success and change (Kim et al., 2022). Based on this insight, employees are expected to be both able and courageous enough to voice the changes and improvements the demographic perceives as necessary. As stated in a prior study, EVB enables individuals to share ideas for organizational growth (Nyfoudi et al., 2024). However, the consequences and risks attached to this courage often push employees toward silence instead. Scholars have further found that the willingness to speak up is a product of supportive and reciprocal social exchanges, both among employees themselves and between employees and their leaders or supervisors (Rashid et al., 2018).

This form of willingness must be nurtured within a supportive environment. Several studies connect this courage to power dynamics and social relationships with those around employees, such as leaders, supervisors, and coworkers (Kim et al., 2022; Mete & Sökmen, 2021). However, the majority of the existing explorations draw on samples from individualistic Western countries, where speaking up is generally not a cultural barrier (Kim et al., 2022). In Eastern countries such as Indonesia, speaking up is a far more pressing issue, one with significant implications for an organization's capacity to navigate globalization and change (Mete & Sökmen, 2021). Employees within these contexts are expected to uphold principles of harmony, observe mandatory hierarchies, and meet strong demands for loyalty (Mete & Sökmen, 2021). As a result, EVB tends to be reserved for leaders or senior employees within the organization. Indonesia's multicultural character, which is marked by diverse values, ethnicities, beliefs, opinions, experiences, and individual characteristics, further complicates employees' ability to freely express their ideas (Afsar et al., 2019).

Based on status attainment theory, employee participation in EVB enhances their organizational standing (Weiss & Morrison, 2018), often earning demographic recognition

as informal leaders. Employees who speak up generally do so because they receive support, trust, and protection from their environment, specifically from their leaders, or because they have accumulated sufficient tenure within the organization. Previous studies have found that high-quality leadership promotes EVB (Ajmal et al., 2025; Yang et al., 2024). More specifically, employees within the leader's inner circle benefit from greater attention and protection when speaking up. Employees within this inner circle are said to have high-quality LMX, while those outside it are characterized by low-quality LMX (Petrilli et al., 2024).

Prior research has further reported that the quality of LMX shapes the quality of the relationship between employees, a dynamic known as TMX (Mumtaz & Rowley, 2020; Shang et al., 2024). It has also been shown that LMX can boost employee motivation depending on the nature of TMX among employees (L. C. Wang & Hollenbeck, 2019). On the flip side, peer relationships tend to strengthen as LMX quality rises (Seong & Choi, 2019). According to SET, EVB increases with high-quality TMX and LMX (Mumtaz & Rowley, 2020). This is understandable, particularly given that social relationships with coworkers and leaders shape cognitive evaluations of both message senders and receivers. High LMX employees are more confident in expressing their respective ideas and suggestions than those with low LMX (Rashid et al., 2018). Similarly, employees with high TMX feel more supported by coworkers when they voice ideas (Shih & Wijaya, 2017). High-quality TMX promotes knowledge sharing among team members and reduces feelings of isolation in the workplace (Z. Zhang & Takahashi, 2024).

Several studies have established a positive relationship between EVB and JS (Farooq et al., 2025; Kim et al., 2017). According to SET, employees whose voices are heard, acknowledged, valued, and acted upon tend to experience greater JS. Simultaneously, SPT suggests that high-quality LMX and TMX provide security and social support, thereby strengthening EVB (Dong et al., 2020). In light of this result, the present study examines the relationships among LMX, TMX, EVB, and JS among employees in the consulting services sector, a rapidly growing field where constant change, development, and innovation are not optional but necessary. Employees in consulting firms maintain direct contact with customers and clients, positioning the demographic at the forefront of innovation. As observed in various prior explorations, employees' capacity for innovation is directly associated with the fresh ideas and concepts the demographic communicates to their leaders. Both LMX (Ajmal et al., 2025; Dong et al., 2020; Mumtaz & Rowley, 2020; Rashid et al., 2018) and TMX (Chen & Liu, 2022; Shih & Wijaya, 2017; Z. Zhang & Takahashi, 2024) have been shown to support EVB, thereby improving JS.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee Voice Behavior (EVB)

EVB refers to the behavior of submitting ideas, opinions, thoughts, criticism, and constructive suggestions aimed at sustainable organizational development (Um-e-Rubbab et al., 2023). Voluntary EVB is essential because employees are generally considered to have a deeper understanding of the work and operational activities within an organization (Jiang et al., 2022). This behavior takes several forms, including prohibitive expressions, which communicate concerns and aim to prevent negative consequences, and promotional expressions, which aim to promote positive change (MacMillan et al., 2020; Morrison, 2023). These expressions may be direct or face-to-face, indirect or mediated through digital platforms, and can occur both formally and informally (Ajmal et al., 2025). EVB is not merely a form of speaking; it carries meaning and actively participates in organizational decision-making to sustain progress (Nyfoudi et al., 2024). Typically, employees are expected to proactively improve processes and prevent serious problems within an organization

(Farooq et al., 2025; Wang et al., 2025). As a result, EVB is predominantly directed upward, toward leaders and those in positions of authority (Kee et al., 2025).

EVB demands both courage and effective communication skills. This is primarily because good, creative, and change-oriented ideas are frequently rejected and may even precipitate workplace bullying, particularly where the status quo is entrenched and where leaders offer little support or trust (Afsar et al., 2019). Beyond leadership dynamics, feelings of discomfort with coworkers or seniors can equally deter employees from expressing positive ideas or suggestions. Providing employees with genuine opportunities to voice respective ideas has been shown to increase the demographic's JS (Yuan et al., 2023).

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX)

LMX is a leadership dimension that reflects the quality of the relationship and the nature of exchanges between leaders and their subordinates (Assefa et al., 2024). It is grounded in role theory (RT) and SET (Liden & Maslyn, 1998). From an RT perspective, leaders and followers hold distinct roles and responsibilities perceived and internalized by each party (Anglin et al., 2022). Leaders assign tasks, and employees are expected to comply. LMX develops gradually as subordinates demonstrate compliance, competence, and trustworthiness, qualities that attract them into the leader's inner circle and thereby achieve a high LMX. From a SET perspective, various elements, such as instructions, work processes, discussions, and even interpersonal friendships, can be exchanged between leaders and followers (Madison et al., 2025), enabling leaders to cultivate relationships that support diverse types of interaction (Zhang et al., 2015).

LMX exists on a continuum: high-quality LMX is characterized by loyalty, respect, friendship, contribution, and professionalism, while low-quality LMX is marked by an absence of these qualities. LMX comprises four dimensions, namely affect, or emotional bonding between parties; loyalty, referring to the allegiance of followers toward their superiors; contribution, reflecting mutual recognition of each party's roles; and professional respect, expressed through acknowledgment of each other's competencies in pursuit of better performance (Robert & Vandenberghe, 2020). The interplay of these dimensions invariably shapes whether a leader-member relationship attains high or low quality.

Team-Member Exchange (TME)

Beyond leadership, Shih and Wijaya (2017) found that employees' willingness to speak up is also meaningfully shaped by their coworker environment. While most studies had examined the influence of LMX and peer relationships on EVB in isolation (Kim et al., 2022), TMX, which is defined as the social exchange among employees within an organization characterized by mutual contributions, offers a complementary lens (Shih & Wijaya, 2017). TMX has been shown to affect employee engagement through the quality of peer social exchanges, and EVB itself represents a form of creative work engagement (Rashid et al., 2018). The social environment exerts a strong pull on employees' courage to speak up, but coworker dynamics have received comparatively little study attention in recent years (Bain et al., 2021; Weiss & Morrison, 2018). According to SET, TMX builds employee confidence in voicing ideas and deepens organizational engagement through a sustained sense of peer support (Shih & Wijaya, 2017).

Job Satisfaction (JS)

JS refers to an individual's physical, emotional, and intellectual response to personal circumstances and work environment (Gazi et al., 2024). Prior explorations have consistently shown that JS is shaped by both personal and work-related factors, including

the broader work environment (Lee et al., 2023; Zeng et al., 2025). As a multidimensional construct, JS has been associated with a wide range of variables, among which include organizational climate (Xia et al., 2024), working conditions (Zhang et al., 2019), individual characteristics (Lange, 2021; Mesurado et al., 2021), leadership quality, rewards, and coworker relationships (Joshi, 2019). In other words, job satisfaction can be shaped by intrinsic factors within the individual and by extrinsic factors such as rewards and the surrounding work environment (Zychová et al., 2024; Sudirman, 2024).

The Effect of Leader-Member Exchange on Team-Member Exchange

Several investigations have confirmed a relationship between LMX and EVB (Assefa et al., 2024; Gürler & Şimşek, 2018). These results are consistent with SET, which posits that a high-quality LMX deepens interaction and nurtures mutual acceptance and reciprocity (Sjibom & Koen, 2021; Sun et al., 2022). Social exchange, in this regard, requires mutual trust, a shared understanding of obligations (Li et al., 2024), and awareness of how one's actions affect others (Rashid et al., 2018). Closeness to their leaders makes employees feel empowered and secure, essentially easing the fears and anxieties associated with speaking up (Assefa et al., 2024; Sjibom & Koen, 2021).

The relationship between LMX and EVB, however, has been inconsistent across the literature. Some explorations have found that LMX exerts a direct influence on EVB (Assefa et al., 2024; Dong et al., 2020; Mete & Sökmen, 2021; Rashid et al., 2018), while others have found the reverse, that EVB shapes LMX (Dong et al., 2020; Liang & Yeh, 2020). Employees may be more willing to speak up when they receive support and trust through high-quality LMX, but those who do speak up may earn their leaders' trust and be drawn into the inner circle, thereby elevating LMX quality. Still, other investigators have positioned LMX as a moderating variable rather than a direct predictor (Kim et al., 2022). The hypothesis being tested is:

H₁: LMX has a positive effect on EVB

The Effect of Team-Member Exchange on Employee Voice Behavior

TMX reflects effective relationships defined by mutual respect, trust, cooperation, and collaboration among employees, all of which are qualities with direct implications for JS (Bratek et al., 2026). According to SPT, the depth and quality of relationships shape both verbal and nonverbal self-disclosure, as well as broader behavioral expression (Berger & Roof, 2016). High-quality TMX is characterized by strong emotional bonds that motivate employees to articulate their ideas more freely (Rashid et al., 2018), and the comfort to speak up grows naturally when employees feel genuine closeness and social protection within their peer network (Peng & Wei, 2020). Shih and Wijaya (2017) confirmed that TMX increases EVB, thereby promoting greater employee engagement in the workplace. Although still a developing area of inquiry, several studies have begun to examine the joint influence of LMX and TMX on EVB (Kim et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2017). The hypothesis being proposed is:

H₂: TMX has a positive effect on EVB

The Effect of Employee Voice Behavior on Job Satisfaction

Studies have established a relationship between EVB and JS (Kee et al., 2025; Lin et al., 2020). For instance, Rabiul et al. (2025) reported that employees' willingness to speak up is grounded in psychological safety and trust derived from their environment. Another exploration stated that when EVB is listened to, acknowledged, and acted upon, employees tend to feel genuinely satisfied (Alfayad et al., 2017). On the flip side, when EVB is dismissed or rejected, it can give rise to dissatisfaction (Nawakitphaitoon & Zhang, 2021).

According to SET, recognition, appreciation, support, and a positive environment each serve to promote EVB (Mete & Sökmen, 2021; Nazir et al., 2020) and, by extension, increase JS (Curado et al., 2023; Nawakitphaitoon & Zhang, 2021). Liang & Yeh (2020) further found that the relationship between EVB and JS cannot be fully understood without accounting for the roles of LMX and TMX. The hypothesis being formulated is:

H₃: EVB has a positive effect on JS

Employee Voice Behavior as a Mediator of the Influence of Leader-Member Exchange and Team-Member Exchange on Job Satisfaction

The quality of relationships with superiors and coworkers can encourage employees to express their opinions. This courage can lead to a sense of relief and satisfaction in the workplace. According to SET, employee contributions through EVB can be rewarded with appreciation, recognition, and trust, all of which contribute to employee satisfaction (Cropanzano et al., 2017). EVB can also increase JS when positive ideas or suggestions from employees are acknowledged and accepted.

EVB is an informal and voluntary act through which employees seek to drive positive change and contribute more meaningfully to organizational success (Mete & Sökmen, 2021). Though intended to be constructive, EVB carries inherent risks and requires a degree of readiness from employees. High-quality LMX equips employees with the confidence to speak up while minimizing the risks attached (Leong et al., 2026). Open interaction between leaders and followers is a hallmark of high-quality LMX; within such relationships, both parties experience increased trust, which further reduces the perceived risks of speaking up (Nazir et al., 2020). According to SET, high LMX also strengthens positive workplace behaviors, cultivating mutual support, collaboration, acceptance, and constructive advice (Mete & Sökmen, 2021). Based on this explanation, the hypothesis is:

H₄: EVB mediates the effects of LMX and TMX on JS

METHODOLOGY

Sample and Procedures

This study used primary data collected through questionnaires distributed to employees of consulting services firms in education, law, construction, and accounting across major cities in Indonesia. These organizations were selected because they operate in environments requiring constant innovation and change. Beyond internal dynamics, service firms maintain close contact with their customers and must continuously adapt to evolving clients. The minimum sample size was determined using multivariate criteria, namely 10 times of indicators or question items. There were 21 questions, resulting in a minimum sample size of 210 individuals. The data collection method used was convenience sampling. The questionnaire, using a 1-5 point Likert scale, was distributed over a six-month period, from April to October 2025. A total of 445 respondents completed the questionnaires, enabling a comprehensive series of statistical tests. Validity was assessed using factor analysis, with a loading factor greater than 0.5 considered practically significant, alongside a Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO) > 0.5, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (BTS) significance < 0.05 (Amerioun et al., 2018), and reliability through internal consistency using Cronbach's Alpha (α) > 0.6 (Rak & Wrześniowski, 2023). The relationship model was subsequently tested using Smart-PLS, beginning with confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) validity (outer loadings), convergent validity, discriminant validity, and composite reliability (ρ_A). Convergent validity is indicated by an expected outer loading value of > 0.70 and an average variance extracted of > 0.50. Discriminant validity is indicated by a heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio < 0.90 and a root mean average variance (AVE) higher than the correlation between constructs. Meanwhile, reliability is

indicated by a rho_A value of ≥ 0.70 (Hair Jr. et al., 2017). Hypotheses were then tested for both direct and indirect effects, including the presence of mediating variables. Table 1 below describes the characteristics of the respondents in this study.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Category	Subcategory	N	%
Gender	Male	250	56.18
	Female	195	43.82
Age	Less than 30	162	36.40
	30 – 39 years	193	43.37
	40 – 49 years	58	13.03
	More than 50 years	32	7.20
Education Level	Senior High School	77	17.30
	Diploma/ D3	97	21.80
	Bachelor/ S1	234	52.59
	Magister/ S2	37	8.31
City	Jakarta	215	48.31
	Bandung	85	19.10
	Semarang	38	8.54
	Yogyakarta	44	9.89
	Surabaya	63	14.16

Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents were male (56.18%) and aged 30-30 years (43.37%). The majority of respondents in this study had a bachelor's degree (52.59%), and the majority worked and resided in Jakarta (48.31%).

Measurement

This study questionnaire was adapted from Kim et al. (2017) for the LMX, TMX, EVB, and JS instruments, and subsequently translated into Indonesian. Validity test results confirmed that 10 LMX questionnaire items were valid (loading factors 0.725-0.868, KMO = 0.930, classified as very good, BTS = 3290.641, sign. = 0.000). Six TMX questionnaire items were valid (loading factor 0.710 to 0.835, KMO = 0.703, classified as good, BTS = 1147.643 with sign. = 0.000). Five EVB questionnaire items were valid (loading factor 0.604 to 0.860, KMO = 0.785, classified as good, BTS = 767.596 with sign. = 0.000). Six JS questionnaire items were equally valid (loading factor 0.765-0.879, KMO = 0.852, classified as very good, BTS = 1636.152, sign. = 0.000). Internal consistency testing using Cronbach's Alpha confirmed that all four variables were reliable: α LMX = 0.937 (very good reliability), α TMX = 0.844 (very good reliability), α EVB = 0.797 (good reliability), and α JS = 0.897 (very good reliability). The results of correlation testing between variables and their descriptive statistics are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation

Variables	μ	Std. Dev.	LMX	TMX	EVB	JS
LMX	3.852	0.647	1.000			
TMX	3.766	0.562	0.527**	1.000		
EVB	3.378	0.802	0.186 **	0.163 **	1.000	
JS	4.090	0.583	0.534 **	0.560 **	0.174**	1.000

**sign at p = 0.01

Table 2 presents the results of the correlation test and descriptive statistics for the variables studied. All inter-variable correlations were significant at p = 0.01. The mean scores were high for LMX, TMX, and JS (all greater than 3.67) and moderate for EVB, measured on a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This pattern suggests that

social relations with both coworkers (TMX) and leaders (LMX) within these organizations are generally positive. It also implies that employees are reasonably satisfied with their current workplace. The relatively moderate EVB score, however, signals that employees remain somewhat reluctant to voice their ideas or suggestions. The standard deviation for each variable exceeded 0.5, indicating that respondents' responses were independent.

RESULT

This study examined the relationship between LMX, TMX, EVB, and JS. Drawing on theory and prior explorations, LMX and TMX were expected to shape EVB, which would, in turn, increase JS, though prior results on these relationships have not always been consistent. The present study tested a relationship model in which EVB serves as a mediating variable between LMX and TMX on the one hand, and JS on the other. Smart-PLS was employed to test the model.

Measurement Model Testing Results – Preliminary Analysis

Prior to hypothesis testing, Smart-PLS was used to assess the questionnaire's validity and reliability. Outer loadings were used to test convergent validity, with values above 0.7 indicating strong item-to-item correlations within each variable. Reliability was evaluated using $\alpha > 0.90$ and composite reliability with hierarchical omega ($\rho_A > 0.70$) (Hair Jr. et al., 2017). Convergent validity was further assessed using $AVE \geq 0.50$ (Hair Jr. et al., 2017). Table 2 also presents collinearity test results for the indicators, expressed as variance inflation factors (VIFs), with a recommended threshold of 5 or lower. Table 3 presents the outer loading (α), ρ_A , AVE, and VIF values.

Table 3. Items listing, Outer Loading, CR, AVE, VIF

Construct	Indicators	Weights (B)	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	AVE	VIF
Leader-Member Exchange	LMX1	0.793	0.938	0.841	0.644	2.633
	LMX2	0.705				2.150
	LMX3	0.880				3.904
	LMX4	0.804				3.115
	LMX5	0.842				3.813
	LMX6	0.788				2.555
	LMX7	0.801				2.993
	LMX8	0.781				2.281
	LMX9	0.790				2.313
	LMX10	0.800				2.571
Team-Member Exchange	TMX3	0.929	0.904	0.853	0.563	2.013
	TMX4	0.863				1.994
	TMX5	0.707				2.355
	TMX6	0.468				1.918
Employee Voice Behavior	EVB2	0.878	0.916	0.880	0.734	1.886
	EVB3	0.800				1.730
	EVB5	0.899				2.244
Job Satisfaction	JS1	0.706	0.900	0.904	0.668	1.864
	JS2	0.842				2.150
	JS3	0.839				2.497
	JS4	0.867				3.366
	JS5	0.792				2.977
	JS6	0.816				2.710

Table 3 confirms that the AVEs for all variables exceed 0.50, substantiating the convergent validity results. Cronbach's Alpha for each variable surpasses 0.90, and composite reliability exceeds 0.7, placing all variables in the very good reliability category (Zikmund et al., 2013). The VIF values reported in Table 2 are all below 5, indicating no multicollinearity among the indicators. Discriminant validity was subsequently tested using the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio, with a threshold of less than 0.90 (Hair Jr et al, 2021). The HTMT ratio results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Discriminant Validity (HTMT Ratio)

Latent Construct	LMX	TMX	EVB	JS
LMX				
TMX	0.561			
EVB	0.219	0.275		
JS	0.590	0.633	0.215	

All HTMT ratios in Table 3 fall below 0.9, confirming that discriminant validity has been achieved and all tested variables are empirically distinct from one another. To further substantiate this, the Fornell-Larcker test was performed, requiring the square root of the AVE to exceed the inter-variable correlations (Hair Jr et al, 2021). The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Fornell-Larcker

Latent Construct	LMX	TMX	EVB	JS
LMX	0.799			
TMX	0.482	0.763		
EVB	0.204	0.306	0.860	
JS	0.535	0.515	0.198	0.809

Table 5 reinforces the discriminant validity results, confirming that there is no meaningful overlap among the variables. Collectively, all validity and reliability tests conducted via Smart-PLS confirm that each variable was measured using an appropriate instrument, with no single question item loading onto two variables simultaneously. The question items proved robust and dependable in measuring the variables studied. Collinearity testing was then conducted between the independent variables, with the recommended threshold set at $VIF < 5$ (Hair Jr et al, 2021). For formative variables, elevated VIF values may be tolerated, though they can compromise the stability of model estimation. The results of the inter-variable VIF test are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Collinearity Statistic

Latent Construct	Inner VIF Values
EVB → JS	1.000
LMX → EVB	1.302
TMX → EVB	1.302

Source: Authors

The collinearity results in Table 6 confirm the absence of multicollinearity between the independent variables, suggesting no instability in the relationship model estimation. These results indicate that model testing can be continued and there is no disruption in increasing the beta coefficient value (β).

Hypothesis Testing Results

Direct Effect

Prior to testing the mediation model, the direct effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable were examined through Hypotheses 1-3. The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Structural Model

Hypothesis	Variable Relationship	β	t-values	R ²	p-values	Results
H1	LMX → EVB	0.074	1.121	0.094	0.236	Not Significant
H2	TMX → EVB	0.270	4.634		0.000	Significant
H3	EVB → JS	0.198	3.585	0.037	0.000	Significant

The direct effect test results indicate that LMX does not significantly influence EVB ($\beta = 0.074$; $t = 1.121$; $p = 0.236$), thereby failing to support H1. TMX, by contrast, has a significant positive influence on EVB ($\beta = 0.270$; $t = 4.634$; $p = 0.000$), and EVB equally exerts a significant positive influence on JS ($\beta = 0.198$; $t = 3.585$; $p = 0.000$). Accordingly, Hypotheses 2 and 3 are both supported.

Mediation Model Test Results

Figure 1 and Table 7 present the results of the mediation model test.

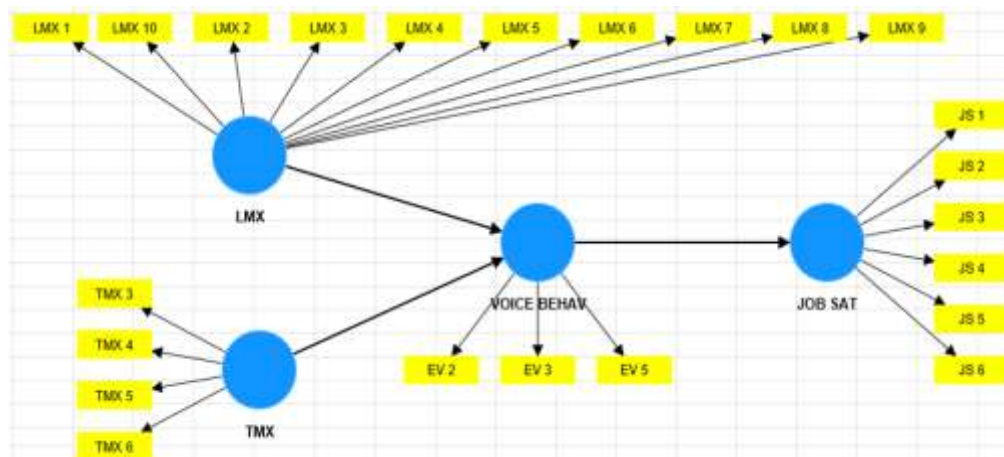


Figure 1. Relationship Model

Table 8. Mediation Effects

Variable Effects	Coefficient	t-values	p-values	Results
Indirect Effect (LMX → EVB → JS)	0.015	0.764	0.445	Not Significant
Indirect Effect (TMX → EVB → JS)	0.053	2.521	0.012	Significant

Figure 1 and Table 8 present the mediation test results. Based on the observations made, EVB did not partially mediate the effect of LMX on JS ($\beta = 0.0158$; $t = 0.764$; $p = 0.445$), but effectively mediated the effect of TMX on JS ($\beta = 0.053$; $t = 2.521$; $p = 0.012$). Hypothesis 4 is therefore partially supported.

DISCUSSION

The Effect of Leader-Member Exchange on Employee Voice Behavior

Employees are expected to courageously communicate their concerns regarding improvements in working conditions, methods, policies, procedures, and rewards, both

formally and informally, directly and indirectly, individually and collectively (Wilkinson et al., 2020). This demands not only courage but also well-developed communication skills. However, courage does not arise in a vacuum; environmental factors play a decisive role in shaping it. Leadership behavior has been widely shown to be a key driver of EVB (Afsar et al., 2019; Elsetouhi et al., 2018; Gyensare et al., 2019; Özkan et al., 2023; Peng & Wei, 2020; Yang et al., 2024; Zhu et al., 2022). More recently, many scholars have adopted LMX as a leadership variable, showing that high-quality LMX can strengthen EVB (Assefa et al., 2024; Dong et al., 2020; Jiang et al., 2018; Mete & Sökmen, 2021; Rashid et al., 2018; Zhu et al., 2022).

The present study's results, on the flip side, do not support this body of literature. LMX was found to have no significant effect on EVB, a result that warrants contextual explanation. Correlation tests did confirm a significant association between LMX and EVB; however, the structural model did not sustain a direct effect. This discrepancy can be attributed to the organizational realities prevalent in Indonesian workplaces, including rigid hierarchical cultures, highly perfectionist leadership styles, low organizational justice, limited employee experience in expressing ideas, and a pervasive sense of job insecurity (Azzahrah & Prihatsanti, 2018; Yuniarto & Waruwu, 2017). Several studies have similarly found that the influence of LMX on EVB is not direct, but is contingent on mediating and moderating variables such as organizational focus (Wang et al., 2023), perceived organizational justice (Assefa et al., 2024), trust in leaders (Prince & Rao, 2020), organizational-based self-esteem and team differential atmosphere (Wang & Zhou, 2022), self-perceived status (Leong et al., 2026), self-efficacy (Liu et al., 2021), role clarity, as well as psychological empowerment (Wang et al., 2016).

The Effect of Team-Member Exchange on Employee Voice Behavior

The present study supports the prior studies showing that TMX can increase EVB (Kim et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2017; Seong & Choi, 2019; Shih & Wijaya, 2017). Few explorations have specifically examined the TMX-EVB relationship; TMX has more broadly been associated with employee creativity (Dhir & Vallabh, 2025; Liao et al., 2010). The present study equally confirms prior results that EVB positively influences JS (Kee et al., 2025; Liang & Yeh, 2020; Lin et al., 2020). Correlation test results further showed that LMX and TMX were significantly related, confirming that leadership quality and peer exchanges are meaningfully correlated.

In line with previous reports, this exploration showed that high-quality TMX strengthened EVB (Kim et al., 2017; Mete & Sökmen, 2021; Rashid et al., 2018), particularly since the concept reflected mutual respect, appreciation, active listening, trust, and acknowledgment among coworkers, all qualities that can collectively build a peer environment conducive to open expression. These characteristics were consistent with SET and SPT, both of which emphasize the importance of social support and the quality of interpersonal relationships as foundational conditions for enhancing EVB.

The Mediating Effect of Employee Voice Behavior on the Influence of Leader-Member Exchange and Team-Member Exchange on Job Satisfaction

This study examined the relationship between LMX, TMX, EVB, and JS among employees of consulting firms operating across major cities in Indonesia. Consulting firms occupy a distinctive position in this regard, given that the sector is growing 11 percent faster than manufacturing and employs approximately 55 percent of the Indonesian workforce (Kambono et al., 2024). Therefore, studies on employees in the service sector are of considerable practical importance. Organizational innovation is significantly connected to employees at the operational level, making employee voice an essential vehicle for driving change from within.

EVB acts as a mediating variable in the relationship between TMX and JS. High-quality relationships between team members create a supportive and psychologically safe work environment. This encourages employees to express ideas, suggestions, and criticism constructively. Furthermore, engaging in voice behavior increases feelings of appreciation, job engagement, and job meaning, ultimately positively impacting JS. EVB does not mediate the influence of LMX on JS because EVB does not always emerge as a consequence of LMX and does not always have a positive impact on JS. This is because voice can create interpersonal risks and conflict. Therefore, the indirect pathway through EVB is insignificant.

Future research is needed to examine the influence of LMX on EVB to further confirm SET and SPT. Closer relationships with leaders actually encourage employees to speak up more. However, in Indonesia, with high power distance, this can make employees afraid to speak up. Furthermore, there is psychological uncertainty caused by the perception that speaking up can trigger conflict within the organization. Therefore, similar research is needed for other types of organizations.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the analysis conducted during this study showed that social relationships among coworkers carry far more organizational weight than is often acknowledged. Accordingly, team-member exchange (TMX) was observed to motivate employees to contribute positively to the organization, facilitate greater creativity and engagement in the demographic's work, and build meaningful collaborative capacity for organizational development. Beyond these behavioral outcomes, TMX shaped working conditions in ways that directly affected EVB and showed potential for reducing employee turnover intentions by cultivating a more cohesive and supportive work environment. This study primarily examined the joint influence of LMX and TMX on EVB and, through EVB, on JS within a consulting firm context in Indonesia. Although prior research has typically examined either LMX or TMX in isolation, this study tested both variables simultaneously, offering a more complete picture of the social-relational factors driving employee voice. The results further clarified that, in the Indonesian context, shaped by cultural norms, leadership styles, workplace conditions, and employees' perceptions of security and fairness, LMX did not significantly predict EVB, underscoring the need for mediating and moderating variables in future models.

LIMITATION AND IMPLEMENTATIONS

The present study has several limitations, including the use of cross-sectional data, which constrained causal inference within the mediation model, and the reliance on self-assessment questionnaires for both dependent and independent variables, which introduced common-method bias as a potential concern. Therefore, future explorations should consider longitudinal designs, alternative assessment methods, larger samples, and broader organizational or industry contexts to strengthen and extend the obtained results.

The implementation of this research result is the need for organizations to increase social interaction, especially among coworkers, to foster the courage to express opinions. EVB is crucial to organizational progress across various fields, particularly for service organizations or companies closely connected to customers or clients. This research was conducted in Indonesia, with employee respondents who adhere to a paternalistic culture with a highly hierarchical structure. This results in LMX having no effect on EVB.

Although the average LMX is high, it is unable to encourage EVB or still cannot encourage employees to voice their ideas.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We extend our sincere gratitude to the respondents who willingly completed this research questionnaire. We also extend our thanks to UMBY for providing funding for our research.

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