

SOCIAL EXCHANGE APPROACH AND HAPPINESS AT WORK: EXPLORING THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

ENFOQUE DE INTERCAMBIO SOCIAL Y LA FELICIDAD EN EL TRABAJO: EXPLORANDO EL EFECTO MEDIADOR DEL COMPROMISO ORGANIZACIONAL

Rigoberto García-Contreras

Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México, México
rgarciac@uaemex.mx
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7951-9205>

Lourdes Pineda-Celaya

Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara, México
lourdes.pineda@uagtabasco.edu.mx
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4479-8259>

J. Patricia Muñoz-Chávez

Universidad Tecnológica de la Zona Metropolitana del Valle de México, México
j.chavez@utvam.edu.mx
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8485-8594>

Julia I. Rodríguez-Morales

Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, México
julia.rodriguez@correo.buap.mx
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0355-8080>

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Abstract

This article aims to determine the direct and indirect effects of social exchange relationships Leader Member Exchange and Team Member Exchange (LMX and TMX) on organizational commitment and happiness at work. Based on the literature review and relying on the Social Exchange Theory perspective, the authors constructed the hypothetical structure, including the four variables under study. The sample comprised 177 employees from Mexican firms, and the proposed hypotheses were under examination through a path analysis. Results show that LMX, TMX, and happiness at work have a direct effect on organizational commitment. We also found an organizational commitment to be a partial relationship mediator between LMX and happiness at work.

Keywords: Leader Member Exchange; Team Member Exchange; organizational commitment, happiness at work.

Resumen

Este artículo tiene como objetivo determinar los efectos directos e indirectos de las relaciones de intercambio social, intercambio líder miembro e intercambio entre miembros del equipo (LMX y TMX) sobre el compromiso organizacional y la felicidad en el trabajo. Con base en la revisión de la literatura y apoyándose en la perspectiva de la Teoría del Intercambio Social, los autores construyeron la estructura hipotética, incluyendo las cuatro variables en estudio. La muestra estuvo compuesta por 177 empleados de empresas mexicanas, y las hipótesis propuestas fueron examinadas a través de un análisis de trayectoria. Los resultados muestran que LMX, TMX y la felicidad en el trabajo tienen un efecto directo sobre el compromiso organizacional. También encontramos que el compromiso organizacional media la relación parcial entre LMX y la felicidad en el trabajo.

Palabras clave: Intercambio líder miembro; intercambio entre miembros del equipo; compromiso organizacional; felicidad en el trabajo.

1. INTRODUCTION

Firms often face various challenges and competition in the business world is unavoidable and necessary for their sustainable existence (Yildiz *et al.*, 2017). Some of the fundamental factors to consider within the business world are the satisfaction and well-being of the collaborators. In this regard, organizations transcend beyond the formal work requirements and achieve competitive advantages and organizational success (Chernyak-Hai & Rabenu 2018; Guest 2017; Muñoz-Chávez & López-Chau 2018; Werther & Davis 2000; Yao *et al.*, 2019). Organizations must consider and promote the well-being of employees, minimizing psychosocial risks (Golik 2013; Herrera *et al.*, 2019; Sigahi *et al.*, 2021), such as stress, anxiety, depression, and exhaustion (Silva & Neto 2021), which generate problems like personal, financial, organizational, and social burdens (Schermuly & Meyer 2015). In addition, they should strive to create the necessary conditions to provide a workplace where commitment, positive communication, shared satisfaction, equity, group support, recognition, and integral well-being prevail; i.e. to foster leadership and group cohesion that function as antecedents of trust and collective commitment to achieve individual well-being and the group strength, required in overcoming important challenges that organizational goals need (Bass *et al.*, 2003; Olivier 2018; Sadehi & Pihie 2012). Hence, social exchange in the work context implies an exchange of interpersonal relationships between leaders, subordinates, and peers (Herderson *et al.*, 2008; Lan *et al.*, 2020), where actors make contributions and receive benefits (Kamdar & Van Dyne, 2007).

Nowadays, the interest of researchers in organizational effects derived from the relationships above mentioned has increased, so it is necessary to analyze the impact of exchange relationships and their predictive capacity (Aggarwal *et al.*, 2020; Chung & Jeon 2020), because of their essence, which is mutual trust and reciprocal obligation; representing two of the most significant exchange relationships in the organizational field (Meng *et al.*, 2017).

Therefore, based on the social exchange theory applied to the workplace (Blau, 1964; Chung & Jeon 2020), this article explores the direct and indirect effects of the leader-member-exchange (LMX) and

team-member-exchange (TMX) on organizational commitment and happiness at work. Likewise, arguing that organizational commitment mediates the effects of social exchange relationships (LMX and TMX) with happiness at work.

This study contributes to organizational theory through the construction of a theoretical-hypothetical structure, which aims to show the relationship and the predictive effect of the variables under study (Whetten 1989) with the theoretical basis of social exchange at work (Chung & Jeon 2020). It also analyses the mediating capacity of organizational commitment concerning the other variables under study (Colquit & Zapata-Phelan 2007).

The rest of the paper proceeds as follow: The first section presents the literature review on social exchange relationships in the workplace (LMX and TMX), organizational commitment and happiness at work. Also, the mediating role of organizational commitment is addressed, and it has been established in the set of hypotheses. The second section focuses on the research methodology, as well as how the data were collected and analyzed. Section three examines the results that allowed the hypotheses to be tested. The last section presents the discussion of the findings and conclusions of the study. Limitations and suggestions for future studies are also included.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

2.1. Literature review

2.1.1. LMX and TMX relationships

According to Chiaburu *et al.*, (2011), a social exchange relationship occurs between the employee and its organization which offers four features to distinguish them from economic exchanges: 1) trust; 2) investment; 3) duration, and 4) socio-emotional aspects.

The social exchange relations in the organizational sphere have been conceptualized as the relationship leader-member-exchange and team-member-exchange (Blau 1964; Chung & Jeon 2020). First, LMX implies a reciprocal interaction between leaders and their followers within a working group; this is a leadership approach based on this relationship (Graen & Uhl-

Bien 1995), which develops through interactions and exchanges (Schermuly & Meyer 2015). Indeed, LMX refers to the quality of relationships between leaders and group members and it gets determined by the level of communication, information exchange, interaction, trust, support, and respect (Bauer & Green 1996; Chernyak-Hai & Rabenu 2018).

Whereas, TMX refers to the quality of the exchange relations between the team members in the organization. This type of relationship involves the contribution of ideas, information exchange, feedback, willingness to help teammates, and mutual recognition (Seers 1989; Seers *et al.*, 1995). The perception of reciprocity in this exchange is decisive to establish the level of quality in this interaction (Lee *et al.*, 2016). Therefore, TMX is based on reciprocal horizontal relationships between team members on behalf of the team (Banks *et al.*, 2014; Chen & Wei 2020).

2.1.2. Organizational commitment

Overall, organizational commitment represents a psychological state characterized by the employee's relationship with his organization and the decision to continue or put it to an end (Caillier 2016). Currently, this type of attitude is widely valued by organizations. Therefore, it is essential to evaluate the degree of organizational commitment because it supports the level of employee-organization connection and is observed in the bond's strength that the worker establishes voluntarily, personally, morally, affective, and calculated with his organization in which three types of bonds are distinguished: 1) The affective one that refers to the emotions and sentiments; 2) The normative one that implies the sense of obligation with the company, and 3) The continuation one that aims to continue in the organization by feeling that it is necessary. (Meyer & Allen 1997).

2.1.3. Happiness at work

A relevant construct in the quality of life at work is happiness or psychological well-being; whose components address affective well-being, aspiration, autonomy, integrative functioning, and job satisfaction (Rego *et al.*, 2021), so its analysis is essential because perfectly aligned and motivated collaborators are essential for the organization (Salas-Vallina *et al.*, 2018). Indeed, a series of research have shown positive associations of happiness at work with success,

superior performance, and willingness to collaborate among colleagues (Tadić *et al.*, 2013).

Overall, happiness upgrades the quality of life of the human being that denotes well-being (Dhingra & Dhingra 2021); from two different perspectives: the global or trait level and the experienced or episodic (Schwarz *et al.*, 2009). The first one refers to the evaluation that people make as an overall of their life; while the second relates to specific life activities and emotions, for example, work (Tadić *et al.*, 2013; Veenhoven 2009). Therefore, happiness at work represents a short-term state of mind and emotion (Salas-Vallina *et al.*, 2018), which allows them to enjoy what they do and auspicious personal and organizational efficiency.

2.2. Hypotheses development

2.2.1. LMX-TMX and organizational commitment

One of the most representative paradigms of organizational behavior is the social exchange theory. To begin with, LMX postulates that leaders make a difference in the way they treat their followers through different types of exchanges (Dansereau *et al.*, 1975). While TMX shows the effectiveness in the relationships between the team members (Seers 1989); both paradigms, each one with its particularities, highlight the value of quality in positive social relationships in the company to contribute to effective decision-making and sustainable power in the organization (Alge *et al.*, 2003; Lee *et al.*, 2016), by promoting reciprocal behaviors, such as organizational commitment (Meng *et al.*, 2017).

In this context, it argues that there are LMX and TMX effects on organizational commitment. López-Ibort *et al.* (2020), for example, showed that there is a positive correlation between the quality of the leader-member exchange and the organizational commitment. Furthermore, Loan *et al.* (2019) showed that LMX and TMX are directly related to organizational commitment and that the relationship with the leader is their best predictor. Finally, Casimir *et al.* (2014) found synergistic effects on affective commitment in LMX.

The findings of the abovementioned studies support the argument that those employees who perceive high levels of LMX and TMX exchange relationships will experience a higher commitment to the organization

(Chernyak-Hai & Tziner 2014; Chung & Jeon 2020; Tziner *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: LMX has a positive effect on organizational commitment

H2: TMX has a positive effect on organizational commitment

2.2.2. LMX-TMX and happiness at work

According to Collewet *et al.* (2017), social interactions in the organization are drivers of individual subjective well-being. As an example of these, teamwork can be seen in teamwork, shared value among members of the organization, group bonding, and acceptance among colleagues. On the other hand, in terms of bosses and subordinates, it is vital that leaders motivate, create awareness, dedication, assertiveness, transparent and two-way communication, and promote a good work environment.

Similarly, Gooty *et al.* (2010), refer that the leader's emotions impact the results and affective reactions of each follower, as well as the work team, such as anger or happiness (Van Kleeff *et al.*, 2009). Therefore, these feelings are affected by the perception of the quality of the LMX and TMX exchange relationships. Even Carnevalea *et al.* (2019) suggest that leaders who motivate and have a genuine interest in their employees generate perceptions of identity and shared values among themselves, making their followers feel more satisfied and more willing to help their colleagues. Based on the previous approach, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H3: LMX has a positive effect on happiness at work

H4: TMX has a positive effect on happiness at work

2.2.3. Organizational commitment and happiness at work

We identified several studies showing the relationship between organizational commitment and happiness at work or the relationship between some of its dimensions with other organizational variables. Subsequently, Wen & Liu-Lastres (2021) confirmed the positive impact of psychological capital on organizational commitment and happiness at work. Additionally, Salem *et al.* (2021) showed that the ethical climate negatively influenced the association between job satisfaction and

organizational commitment and that job satisfaction partially mediates the association between support for employees, including organizational commitment. Not to mention that Lambert *et al.* (2021) pointed out that trust among management and co-workers has a positive effect on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. And Sparrowe (2020) highlighted that the quality in the LMX relationship predicts attitudes such as organizational commitment and job satisfaction; in contrast, Panaccio & Vandenberghe (2009) demonstrated that affective organizational commitment mediates the relationship perceived between organizational support and employee well-being. The previous arguments lead to the conclusion that employees who present high levels of commitment to the organization will perceive greater satisfaction and well-being at work, which allows establishing the following hypothesis:

H5: Organizational commitment has a positive effect on happiness at work

2.2.4. The mediating effect of organizational commitment between LMX-TMX and happiness at work

There is empirical evidence that proves the positive predictive effect of LMX on organizational commitment and that the employees' perceived support of the leader will impact their level of commitment to the organization (Casimir *et al.*, 2014; Iborr *et al.*, 2020; Rashid *et al.*, 2018). Likewise, reciprocal exchange between employees (TMX) has shown a positive relationship with organizational commitment (Chernyak-Hai & Tziner 2014; Loan *et al.*, 2019). The way in which social exchange relationships (LMX-TMX) predict the well-being and positive emotions of employees, has been evidenced (Carnevalea *et al.*, 2019; Gooty *et al.*, 2010).

Regarding the organizational commitment construct, empirical studies have shown its predictive capacity in various organizational psychological variables, such as employee well-being (Panaccio & Vandenberghe 2009), job satisfaction (Lambert *et al.*, 2021), burnout (Meng *et al.*, 2021), and in others of an attitudinal and behavioral nature (Yao *et al.*, 2019). The mediating effect of organizational commitment has even been explored with respect to some organizational variables, for instance, Yeh & Hong (2012) investigated the mediating effect of organizational commitment on

leadership type and job performance and found that organizational commitment has a partial mediating effect on the relationship between leadership type and job performance. Macedo et al. (2015) showed how the relationship between the mission statement and the organizational performance is better understood if the organizational is found in said relationship, as a mediating variable. Taba (2018), studied the mediating effect of job performance and organizational commitment on the relationship between the reward system and employee job satisfaction and its main findings showed that the extrinsic reward system and the intrinsic reward system had a significant direct effect on job performance and organizational commitment, and that job performance and organizational commitment had a significant direct effect on job satisfaction.

On the other hand, Rua & Araújo (2016) analyzed whether organizational commitment exerts a mediating effect between the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational trust and suggested that organizational commitment does not exert a significant influence on these variables, and that it does not have a significant effect mediator in their relationship.

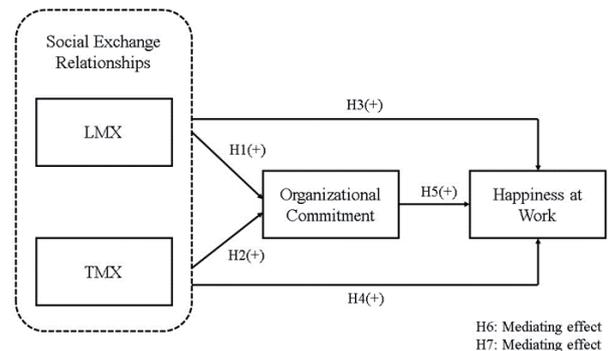
In this context, organizational commitment is a key variable in the organization, because it implies the employee's desire to continue in the organization, loyalty, willingness to make an effort for the organization, as well as the congruence between their goals and the values of the organization. same. Likewise, the understanding of other organizational variables is a fundamental indicator (Lopez-Ibort et al., 2020). In this sense, LMX and TMX may have an influence on organizational commitment (Préstamo et al., 2019), since communication, information exchange, interaction, trust, support, and respect are perceived as positive by the members of the organization. Therefore, this conjunction between LMX, TMX and organizational commitment can produce effects on the mood and emotional state of workers, which will lead to a greater feeling of happiness at work. In this regard, Dhammika (2016), evaluated the effect of visionary leadership on organizational commitment with LMX as a mediating variable, but no previous studies were found that have examined the relationship proposed in this study. This supports the interest in exploring the mediating capacity of organizational commitment

on the proposed model (Figure 1) and leads to the following hypotheses:

H6: Organizational commitment mediates the relationship between LMX and happiness at work

H7: Organizational commitment mediates the relationship between TMX and happiness at work

Figure 1. The proposed hypothetical model.



3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Sampling and data collection

The respondents of the survey were employees of Mexican firms. To collect the data, an electronic questionnaire was distributed during the period from March 29 to April 30, 2021. A voluntary participation of 177 employees of various organizational levels was obtained. After collecting the data, descriptive statistics were performed to have an overview of the demographic characteristics of the sample. The proportion of employees' gender was relatively homogeneous: 50.8% female and 49.2% male. The ages of the participants were as follows: 20-30 years (20.4%), 31-40 years (35.6%), 41-50 years (35%), 51-60 years (7.3%), and over 61 years (1.7%). Regarding education: 61% were graduates of bachelor's or engineering, 24.9% with master's degree, 5.1% with a Ph.D. degree, 4.5% technical, and 4.5 did not have professional studies. The hierarchical level of the respondents was: 57.1% operational, 23.1% boss or supervisor, and 19.8% executive or management. The work experience for most of the respondents was from 1 to 5 years (49.2%); followed, 6 to 10 years (16.9%), less than a year (11.9%), 16 to 20 years (9.6%), 11 to 15 years (6.8%) and more than 20 years of experience (5.6%).

3.2. Measurement scales

All constructs were measured with a four-point Likert scale with a range from “totally disagree” to “totally agree”. The study used English measures and changed into Mexican Spanish through a translation/retranslation process (Chung & Jeon, 2020). The use of measures and tests created in other contexts is a usual practice around the world, especially in countries or regions with less scientific development (e.g., Latin America). Moreover, there are studies that demonstrate these actions such as the case of Chung & Jeon (2020) who adapt scales to the Korean context; or Rashid et al. (2018) adapting the scales to the Pakistani context. These adaptation processes are important because most of the theories are developed in countries advanced in science and the use and adaptation of these measures contribute to prove their universality (Tornimbeni *et al.*, 2008).

According to Liden & Maslyn (1998), Social exchange relationships (LMX and TMX) were measured by using 5 items, and 6, proposed by Lee *et al.* (2016), respectively. Cronbach’s alpha scores were tested to examine the reliability of the scales (SPSS 24). The reliability of the scale for LMX was 0.83, while for TMX it was 0.84. Organizational commitment was measured using a 7-item scale (Blom 2019; Cheng *et al.*, 2016). Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was 0.91. Happiness at work was measured by the 6-item proposal of Del Junco *et al.* (2013) and Lutterbie & Pryce-Jones (2013). The

reliability of this scale showed a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.83. The alpha values of the scale show acceptable values $-\alpha \geq 0.70$ – (Reidl-Martínez, 2013). Table 1 shows the items of the questionnaire for measuring each construct.

To determine the validity of the measurement instrument, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed (SPSS 24). The Kaiser-Meyer-Okin sample adequacy index showed satisfactory results (KMO = 0.88). Likewise, Bartlett’s sphericity test was statistically significant ($p = 0.00$). Both demonstrated an adequate sample (Castañeda, 2010; Fierro-Moreno *et al.*, 2017). Additionally, the EFA is one of the most frequently used statistical techniques to evaluate the adaptation of a construct. A principal components method and a varimax rotation were used to determine the factor structure. No dimensionality problems were found; that is, the results reveal that the constructs do not belong to a unique factor and the factorial structures obtained from the analysis considered four factors. Subsequently, an EFA was performed for each construct (Software Factor 10) and the results showed factorial loadings greater than 0.50 and an explained variance of 72.64%. The aforementioned indicates that the internal consistency indices and those of the EFA are acceptable (Table 1). Therefore, the instrument is considered to be functional (Tornimbeni *et al.*, 2008; Fierro-Moreno *et al.*, 2017; Fierro-Moreno *et al.*, 2018).

Table 1. Results of exploratory factor analysis.

Constructs	Factor loadings	Reliability
<i>LMX (Factor 1)</i>		0.83
My supervisor is the kind of person one would like to have as a friend	0.68	
My supervisor defends my work actions to a superior, even without complete knowledge of the issue in question	0.80	
My supervisor would come to my defense if I were "attacked" by others	0.79	
I respect my supervisor's knowledge and competence on the job	0.85	
I admire my supervisor's professional skills	0.83	
<i>TMX (Factor 2)</i>		0.84
Other volunteers let me know when I did something that makes their jobs easier	0.83	
Other volunteers recognized my contribution	0.51	
In busy situations, other volunteers often asked me to help out	0.70	
In busy situations, I often volunteered my efforts to help other volunteers	0.83	
I helped finish work that had been assigned to other volunteers	0.79	
The other volunteers were willing to help me finish the work that was assigned to me	0.66	
<i>Organizational Commitment (Factor 3)</i>		0.91
I feel like "part of the family" at my organization	0.65	
This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me	0.79	
I really feel as if the organization's problems are my own	0.65	
I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond what is usually expected to help this organization be successful	0.79	
The organization inspires me to put forth my best effort	0.78	
I am so glad that I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined	0.77	
Overall, I am very committed to this organization	0.59	
<i>Happiness at work (Factor 4)</i>		0.83
I enjoy doing my job well	0.65	
The internal motivation of my position is high	0.82	
I feel that in my job, I am doing something worthwhile	0.79	
I would recommend to a friend to work in my organization	0.50	
I want to stay in my current job		
In my work, I can develop topics that are important to me		

Exploratory factor analysis: KMO = 0.88. Bartlett's sphericity: $p = 0.00$.

Explained variance: 72.64%. No dimensionality problems: four factors.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Assessing the model fit

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was applied to evaluate the fit of the model; precisely, a path analysis with observed variables (Manzano-Patiño, 2017) with the assistance of AMOS 23. The following indicators were considered: (1) RMSEA: mean square error of approximation (expected value less than 0.08); (2) CFI: comparative adjustment index (value equal to or greater than 0.90); (3) IFI: incremental adjustment index (value equal to or greater than 0.90); (4) NFI: normalized fit index (value equal to or greater than 0.90), and (5) X^2 / df : chi-square between degrees of freedom not greater than 2.5 (Hair *et al.*, 1999; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001).

The test of the model with two exogenous variables (LMX and TMX), one endogenous (happiness at work) and another variable with direct and mediating function (organizational commitment) showed the following results: CFI = 0.95, IFI = 0.93, NFI = 0.93, $X^2 / df = 2.23$ and RMSEA = 0.083. These results show that the model presents a good quality in the fit. Therefore, the research model adequately fits the observed data (Hair *et al.*, 1999).

4.2. Descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients

As shown in Table 2, Pearson's correlation coefficients indicated <medium and high> positive relationships between variables (Pallant, 2007). In summary, the social exchange relations, LMX and TMX, were positively related ($r = 0.47$). In addition, the LMX and TMX relationships were positively related to organizational commitment ($r = 0.48$ and $r = 0.44$); as well as happiness at work ($r = 0.50$ and $r = 0.38$). Finally, organizational commitment was positively related to happiness at work ($r = 0.79$).

Similarly, it is shown that some demographic variables had <small and medium> correlations with the study variables. Specifically, Age had a positive correlation with organizational commitment ($r = 0.23$).

The organizational level had positive correlations with organizational commitment and happiness at work ($r = 0.35$ and $r = 0.26$). Likewise, tenure at work had positive correlations with organizational commitment and happiness at work ($r = 0.26$ and $r = 0.15$).

As can be seen, happiness at work had the highest mean (mean = 3.30, s.d. = 0.56); followed by organizational commitment (mean = 3.08, s.d. = 0.64); TMX (mean = 3.00, s.d. = 0.53); while LMX obtained the lowest mean (mean = 2.94, s.d. = 0.62).

It is necessary to mention that the correlation analysis made it possible to determine the degree of association and direction of the changes in the variables. Likewise, correlation analysis allows determining the multicollinearity between variables, as there are no correlations greater than 0.80. The aforementioned demonstrates the absence of multicollinearity problems and indicates discriminant validity (Chung & Jeon, 2020).

results supported H1; which proves the positive direct incidence of LMX on organizational commitment ($\beta = 0.35$). Backed by the results, H2 suggested the relationship between TMX and organizational commitment, which indicates the positive direct effect of TMX on organizational commitment ($\beta = 0.27$). The H3 and H4 stated that the social exchange relations, LMX and TMX, have a positive effect on happiness at work. However, the results only support H3; that is, the direct positive effect of LMX on happiness at work ($\beta = 0.15$); while H4 was statistically rejected, unable to demonstrate the result of TMX on happiness at work. Finally, the results supported H5, that is, the direct positive relationship ($\beta = 0.73$) between organizational commitment and happiness at work (Figure 2).

The H6 and H7 focused on the indirect effects of LMX and TMX on happiness at work, having organizational commitment as a mediating variable. According to Baron & Kenny (1986) the following conditions must be met to consider indirect effects: 1)

Table 2. Means, standard deviations and correlations.

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. LMX	2.94	0.62								
2. TMX	3.00	0.53	0.47**							
3. Organizational commitment	3.08	0.64	0.48**	0.44**						
4. Happiness at work	3.50	0.56	0.50**	0.38**	0.79**					
5. Age	3.34	0.94	-0.11	-0.05	0.23**	0.11	0.12			
6. Educational level	3.21	0.79	0.12	-0.04	0.02	0.06	-0.06	0.15*		
7. Hierarchical level	1.73	0.84	0.03	0.09	0.35**	0.26**	0.09	0.43**	0.14	
8. Organizational tenure	2.70	1.35	-0.02	-0.08	0.26**	0.15*	-0.04	0.33**	0.10	0.31**

* $p < 0.05$.

** $p < 0.01$.

4.3. Hypotheses testing

The study examined the causal relationships between the four variables under examination through a path analysis (Figure 2). The empirical results reported a satisfactory model fit (Table 3). The standardized trajectory coefficients were statistically significant for almost all relationships ($p < 0.01$); except, the trajectory of TMX and happiness at work. The hypothesis tests showed the following results:

H1 raised the relationship between LMX and organizational commitment. Statistically significant

Direct significant effect of the independent variable on the mediating variable; 2) Direct significant effect of the mediating variable on the dependent variable, and 3) Direct significant effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

The bootstrap method (AMOS 23) was used to demonstrate the mediating capacity of organizational commitment. The analysis results (Table 3) show that there are indirect effects that support the positive mediating role of organizational commitment in the relationship between LMX and happiness at work.

Specifically, the bootstrap confidence shows the significance of the indirect effect between LMX and happiness at work ($p < 0.01$); therefore, supporting H6, a positive partial mediation ($\beta = 0.26$) is indicated when the conditions are met, but without making the direct relationship between independent and dependent variable null. However, even though an indirect effect ($\beta = 0.20$) is observed between TMX and happiness at work (bootstrap confidence), the mediation presented in H7 is not supported, as the mediation conditions are not met (Baron & Kenny 1986; Etchebarne *et al.*, 2008; Hayes, 2015; 2017).

5. LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

Although the current research has given valuable information, some study limitations should be noted when interpreting our results. The first of a cross-sectional design, and the second limitation was that sample size was relatively small. However, our findings were consistent with the literature (Carnevalea *et al.*, 2019; Chung & Jeon 2020). Nevertheless, future studies with longitudinal designs and a larger sample are necessary.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The study findings provide information about the causal relationships determined in the theoretical model. First, social exchange relationships (LMX and TMX) were examined as predictors of organizational commitment (Chernyak-Hai & Tziner, 2014; Loan *et al.*, 2019) and happiness at work (Collewet *et al.*, 2019; Gooty *et al.*, 2010). Second, the direct and mediating role of organizational commitment was examined; concerning the other determinant variables (Meng *et al.*, 2017; Wen & Liu-Lastres 2021).

Figure 2. Testing hypotheses (path analysis).

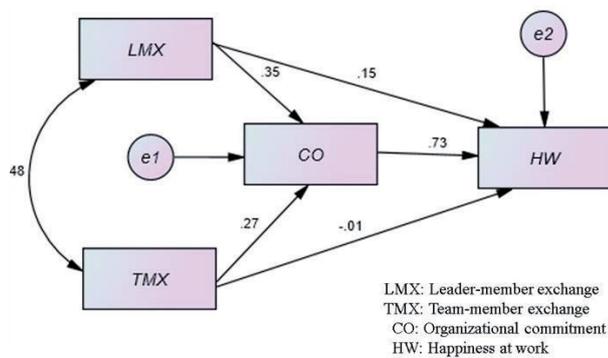


Table 3. Path analysis coefficients.

Path	Direct effect	S.E.	C.R.	P	Result
H1: LMX → Organizational commitment	0.35	0.07	4.91	***	Supported
H2: TMX → Organizational commitment	0.27	0.09	3.79	***	Supported
H3: LMX → Happiness at work	0.15	0.05	2.83	***	Supported
H4: TMX → Happiness at work	-0.01	0.05	-0.20	0.84	Rejected
H5: Organizational commitment → Happiness at work	0.73	0.05	13.87	***	Supported
Path	Indirect effects				Result
H6: LMX → Organizational commitment → Happiness at work	$\beta = 0.26$. Bootstrap two tail significance: $p = **$ (95%) Mediation assumptions				Supported
H7: TMX → Organizational commitment → Happiness at work	$\beta = 0.20$. Bootstrap two tail significance: $p = **$ (95%) Non-mediation assumptions				Rejected

Goodness of fit: $\chi^2/df = 2.23$; CFI = 0.95; IFI = 0.93; NFI = 0.93; RMSEA = 0.083

**P < 0.01

Moreover, the most important practical implication of our study is the contribution we make to organizational theory through the construction and demonstration of our theoretical-hypothetical structure, which demonstrate the relationship and the predictive effect of the variables under study. Hence, on the basis of this study we found that the highlights showed that LMX has a positive impact on organizational commitment. It represents that those workers who perceive a high quality in their relationships with their leaders feel more committed to the organization. Thus, the employees with the highest quality in the reciprocal relationship with their leader perceive a high level of communication, information exchange, interaction, trust, support, respect, and reciprocity (Bauer & Green 1996; Chernyak-Hai & Rabenu 2018; Graen & Uhl-Bien 1995; Liden & Graen 1980) leading them to establish a voluntary link with the organization. These results are consistent with previous studies (Chernyak-Hai & Tziner 2014; Loan *et al.*, 2019; López-Ibort *et al.*, 2020).

Likewise, the results showed that TMX positively affects organizational commitment, which implies that team members who perceive a high quality in the exchange relationships with their colleagues feel more committed to the organization and contribute to sharing ideas, exchanging information, and being more willing to help others for the benefit of all and everything. These results follow previous studies (Chung & Jeon 2020; Farmer *et al.*, 2015; Loan *et al.*, 2019).

After establishing the relationship between LMX and TMX with organizational commitment, the relationships of social exchange, LMX and TMX with happiness at work were raised. The findings demonstrated a positive effect of LMX on happiness at work. This result implies that human interaction is basic, and high-quality interaction, derived from the recognition of the person, also leads the leader to generate strategies that make the collaborators see it as a positive support that contributes to their job satisfaction and to achieve success (Chung & Jeon 2020).

Indeed, each organization member can experience happiness at work if the employee's feelings are considered, their autonomy and way of conceiving work are respected. Then, a high-quality LMX helps to fulfill this slogan; the above is in line with previous research (Carnevalea *et al.*, 2019). On the other hand,

TMX did not demonstrate an effect on happiness at work, as positive interaction within the group usually marks a favorable work environment (Geue 2018); however, this is not a determining factor in the perception of happiness at work. A high-quality TMX is desirable in any organization because it favors the prevalence of reciprocal positive attitudes and behaviors in the organization (Chung & Jeon 2020). But in this study, the results have shown that it is not decisive in the experimentation of happiness at work. More research is necessary in this field, so it can be also taken into consideration for future works (Fong, 2017) that to be happy at work implies that an employee not only exhibits high positive affect about their general company environment, but also has an active work engagement state about the task environment.

In addition, the findings supported a direct positive relationship between organizational commitment and happiness at work, in this way, employees reconcile their ideal self with the organizational self, that is to say, there is a link between not only the economic, the individual, and the organization, but also affective that makes them feel valuable and creates the need to continue in the organization, a strong bond that translates into well-being and job satisfaction (Chiaburu *et al.*, 2011; Mete *et al.*, 2016). In this way, the results obtained corroborate the positive relationship between the individual's commitment to the organization and their perception of happiness at work. So, these findings are consistent with related research (Salem *et al.*, 2021; Wen & Liu-Lastres 2021).

Previous studies have analyzed the direct relationship between the variables object of this study (LMX, TMX, organizational commitment and happiness at work). However, their research is not light upon the set of their relationships. Furthermore, in this study, it was found that organizational commitment plays a mediating role (Rashid *et al.*, 2018; Rego *et al.*, 2021) between LMX, and happiness at work. These findings support the understanding of the variables under study and demonstrate the reciprocal importance of organizational commitment to organizational and business environment (Lopez-Ibort *et al.*, 2020; Meng *et al.*, 2017). Indeed, managers can use it as a catalyst to improve working conditions for employees and the company searching for integral well-being. An unexpected finding in our study was

that organizational commitment did not mediate the relationship between TMX and happiness at work, as commitment based on personally identifying with the organization's goals and values and being affectively attached to the organization would be considered part of happiness at work (Fisher, 2010). More research is necessary to distinguish if organizational commitment may be considered for mediating the relationship between TMX and happiness at work.

Therefore, companies should opt for programs and actions that contribute to socialization outcomes (Chiaburu *et al.*, 2011) by improving exchange and trust relationships between leaders-employees and employee-employee to strengthen cohesion among them and provide security and openness when communicating and when they fully share their capabilities. In addition, the positive impact of exchange relations on commitment is a decisive factor for the overall well-being of the organization.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES**RIGOBERTO GARCÍA-CONTRERAS**

Ph.D. Professor at the Autonomous University of the State of Mexico. His research interests are related to the Management of Intangibles and the Economics of Knowledge in Organizations. He holds a Ph.D. in Economic and Administrative Sciences, a Master's Degree in Administration with a specialization in Organizational Management, and a Bachelor's Degree in Administration. He is a member of the Mexican National System of Researchers.

J. PATRICIA MUÑOZ-CHÁVEZ

Ph.D. Professor at the Technological University of the Metropolitan Area of the Valley of Mexico. Her research interests are related to Organizations, Higher Education, and Organizational Behavior. She holds a Ph.D. in Strategic Planning and Technology Management. She has publications in several national and international journals and publishers. She is a member of the Mexican National System of Researchers.

LOURDES PINEDA-CELAYA

Ph.D. Professor at the Autonomous University of Guadalajara. Her research interests are related to Organizational Culture and Strategic planning of regional-local development. She holds a Ph.D. in Strategic Planning and Technology Management, a Master's Degree in Technology Agribusiness (Postgraduate College), and a Bachelor's Degree in Industrial Design and Industrial Engineering.

JULIA I. RODRÍGUEZ-MORALES

Ph.D. Professor at the Meritorious Autonomous University of Puebla. Her research interests are related to Information and Communications Technologies Development, CIO, Project Management, Soft Skills, Sustainable Development Goals, Strategic Management, and Innovation. She holds a Ph.D. in Strategic Planning and Technology Management, and MBA, a Postgraduate Degree in Industrial Operations Management.

