LEADER-MEMBER EXCHANGE, JOB SATISFACTION, ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY, AND INNOVATION BEHAVIOR

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Abstract

This research investigates the direct impact and mediation roles of leader-member exchange (LMX), organizational commitment, and innovative employee behavior. Employee innovation plays a crucial role in enhancing a company's performance and competitive edge. While the strong link between LMX and employee innovation has been well-documented, some studies have yielded inconsistent findings (Evers et al., 2024). To address this discrepancy, this study introduces organizational commitment and job satisfaction as mediating factors. The data, gathered from a survey of 245 employees in West Surabaya, Indonesia, were analyzed using partial least square structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM). The findings reveal that LMX positively influences job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and innovative behavior. Organizational commitment emerged as a key mediator between LMX and innovative behavior, whereas job satisfaction did not serve as a mediator. This study confirms that strong relationships between leaders and team members boost job satisfaction and organizational commitment, which in turn, foster innovative behavior among employees. However, job satisfaction alone is insufficient to mediate the effect of LMX on innovative behavior. The practical implications underscore the need to reinforce organizational commitment to fully harness employee innovation through strong LMX relationships.

Keywords: LMX, Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, Innovative Behavior, Sustainability

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1. INTRODUCTION

Employee innovation is essential to improve the company's performance and competitiveness. Several manuscripts prove that employee innovation reduces production time and costs while improving the company's operational efficiency. Innovation improves the quality of products or services, thereby increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty. Innovation will also help companies stay relevant in a rapidly changing market, allowing them to compete more effectively (Chae et al., 2021; Yakhlef & Rietveld, 2020).

One of the crucial factors in encouraging employee innovation is the leader-member exchange (LMX). LMX will increase the tendency of leaders to be more open to employees, so that there is an exchange of information that can increase innovation. A high LMX will make employees feel supported and valued by leaders, so that employees will be motivated to behave innovatively and creatively. Furthermore, a high LMX will increase employee engagement and participation in decision-making so that it can give rise to innovative new ideas (Tan et al., 2021; Wu & Chi, 2020). Therefore, research on the relationship between LMX and innovation is fundamental because it is one of the driving factors for company performance and the creation of the company's competitiveness.

Nevertheless, several past studies have found that LMX does not always influence employee innovation behavior. LMX does not affect innovation because the quality of the relationship between leaders and team members varies so much that the impact of LMX on innovation is not significant (Mustafa et al., 2023). The absence of LMX and innovation relationships can also be caused by employees' perception of their relationships with different leaders, thus influencing employees to innovate (Mascareño et al., 2020). Moreover, employees with low LMX experience are less likely to experience the same benefits as employees with a high LMX, so they cannot increase innovation. In addition, other factors, namely organizational culture, type of work, and work environment, may be dominant factors for increasing employee innovation (Mulligan et al., 2021). The inconsistent relationship between LMX learners on innovation is that some studies find an influence (for example, LMX will shape the psychology of individuals that influence innovative behaviors) while other studies find no influence, where a good relationship with a boss does not automatically make employees innovate, if the employee does not feel involved in their work. They may be "familiar" with their boss, but remain innovatively passive, making this research urgent to be carried out to ascertain the relationship between LMX and innovation.

Although some research indicates LMX may not always directly affect employees' innovative behavior, this relationship cannot be totally neglected. In the context of an organization, a good relationship between leaders and employees not only promotes innovative behavior but also shapes other elements of the employee's working experience, such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Wang et al., 2022). This study found that among healthcare professionals, job satisfaction significantly enhances organizational commitment, which in turn is positively associated with improved job performance. This suggests that employees who feel satisfied and committed are more likely to contribute actively, which can ultimately facilitate innovation. organizational commitment refers to the employees' intention to remain with the organization and their dedication to achieving its goals (Ledimo & Martins, 2014). When leaders have a good relationship with their employees, employees tend to feel attached and involved in the organization. This can undoubtedly increase employee commitment through participation in the innovation process. Meanwhile, job satisfaction, which is how employees feel satisfied with their work, will encourage employees to innovate. Satisfied employees occur because of good relationships with their leaders, which allows them to create ideas that become known innovations in the organization (Prinhandaka et al., 2023).

A scientific manuscript examining the influence of LMX on employee innovative behavior, with job satisfaction and organizational commitment as mediators, is essential. The quality of LMX fosters psychological and social resources that help employees feel valued, supported, and engaged in their work. This, in turn, promotes job satisfaction and organizational commitment, which facilitate creativity and innovation in the workplace. Empirical evidence demonstrates that LMX is positively correlated with innovative behavior through mediating mechanisms such as mindfulness and engagement (Mulligan et al., 2021). This fact underscores that LMX enhances innovative work behaviors by fostering both work engagement and mindfulness. Another example in a study by Yusuf et al. (2024) highlights that LMX influences organizational commitment and job satisfaction, which subsequently affect outcomes such as performance and turnover intention.

The link between LMX and employee innovative behavior, incorporating mediating variables such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment, is also important because previous research has primarily confirmed only the direct effect of LMX on innovation or its effect on job satisfaction or organizational commitment individually. In other words, this study aims to address a gap in the literature by providing new insights, as few studies have explored the dual mediation pathway involving LMX, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and innovative behavior. For instance, Sanders et al. (2010) found that satisfaction with human resources practices mediates the relationship between LMX and innovative behavior. On the contrary, specific findings emphasizing innovation remain limited. Investigating a model that includes these two mediators simultaneously helps clarify how and why the quality of LMX relationships can boost innovation through the combined influence of attitudes and organizational bonds, rather than through direct relationships alone. As well, previous research has not comprehensively examined the causal relationships among these variables, which would offer a deeper understanding of the mechanisms by which high-quality supervisor-subordinate relationships foster innovation (Latifoglu et al., 2023). This limitation is evident in the paper by

Ünler Öz et al. (2013), where LMX influences organizational commitment and job satisfaction separately.

The direct relationship between LMX and employee innovative behavior, as well as the indirect relationship mediated by job satisfaction and organizational commitment among employees in the trading, services, and manufacturing companies, warrants further investigation. This is because theoretical and empirical gaps remain in understanding the psychological mechanisms that link LMX quality to innovative behavior across various professional fields. The relevance of this inquiry is underscored by the belief that high-quality LMX fosters commitment, satisfaction, and trust, which ultimately encourage employees to innovate. Be that as it may, most previous studies have examined only direct relationships, neglecting potential double mediation effects. The application of the partial least square structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) method enables researchers to test complex relationships between latent variables more comprehensively and accurately within a cross-industry context characterized by diverse attributes.

This study examines the impact of LMX on employee innovative behavior, with job satisfaction and organizational commitment as mediating variables. Also, this study aims to investigate the influence of LMX on employee satisfaction by using organizational commitment and job satisfaction as mediating variables. Investigating existing models not only enriches the literature on the relationship between innovation and leadership but also provides practical implications for organizations to design interventions that enhance LMX quality and develop strategies to increase satisfaction and commitment, thereby fostering employee innovation.

The structure of this paper is organized into six sections. Section 1 describes the phenomenon under study, its relevance, contextualisation, objectives, and main contributions. Section 2 provides a basis and framework for formulating hypotheses. Section 3 details the data, including samples, and the analytical model. Section 4 presents the key findings. Section 5 interprets the results by comparing them with previous studies. Finally, Section 6 summarizes the main findings, addresses the study's limitations, and suggests directions for practical decision-making.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical basis

In social exchange theory (SET), Blau (1964) underscores the significance of relative gain in social relationships. According to this theory, individuals engage in social exchanges as long as they perceive that they are benefiting from the relationship. When the relative advantage diminishes or disappears, social relationships are likely to weaken in intensity or even terminate. Wang et al. (2021) highlight that social exchange underpins many human interactions, both personal and professional. In the workplace, employees may engage in social exchanges with coworkers or supervisors, contributing their work in the expectation of receiving rewards or other benefits. The SET is a psychological framework that explains the dynamics of human interaction and decision-making within relationships (Nazir et al., 2021). This theory is closely linked to leadership, as leaders are often placed in positions that require them to manage relationships effectively, build trust, and engage in negotiations with others to achieve common goals (Ahmed et al., 2024; Bataineh et al., 2022). LMX is a theoretical concept that describes the impact of leadership on employee performance, reflecting the quality of social exchange interactions between supervisors and subordinates (Santoso et al., 2019). These relationships are grounded in human nature and the prevalence of dyadic relationships between leaders and followers (Jyoti & Bhau, 2015).

High-quality LMX are regarded as an incentive or reward from managers to employees, in alignment with the principles of SET. To reciprocate this exchange, employees may feel compelled to respond in kind (Mihardjo et al., 2019). The result is the transformation of workplace practices into more positive environments (Xerri & Brunetto, 2013). As a result, individuals can foster a system of positive social exchange, wherein employees share ideas, knowledge, and voice their opinions to top management, thereby contributing to innovation within the organization (Sharif et al., 2021). By incorporating both mediators into a single pathway, this study reinforces the foundations of syntheses such as SET in the scope of organizational innovation. LMX can be viewed as a source of social support that fosters job satisfaction and strengthens organizational commitment, which in turn influences innovative behavior. Yet, the literature remains limited in explaining the mediation sequence between attitudes (job satisfaction) and organizational bonds (commitment) within the LMX-innovation relationship. Studies that construct this pathway model not only address an empirical gap but also offer practical implications for managerial interventions (Pakpahan & Sambung, 2022; Prasetyo et al., 2021). For example, organizations should focus on enhancing high-quality LMX to increase employee satisfaction, ultimately building employee commitment and promoting innovation.

2.2. Hypothesis framework

2.2.1. LMX on job satisfaction, organizational commitment and innovative behavior

LMX is the interaction between leaders and subordinates that embodies quality interpersonal connections (Martin et al., 2016). These interactions shape the way leaders adjust their leadership style, as well as the way subordinates interpret their roles and responsibilities in the organization. Hence, the quality of the exchange relationship that is formed — whether high or low — is influenced by how the two parties influence each other in the process. This shows that the perception of leadership qualities is not solely determined by informal social closeness, but can also be strengthened through formal structures and task-based interactions.

As explained by LMX theory, it has been consistently demonstrated to enhance job

satisfaction and organizational commitment through social exchange mechanisms. For example, a meta-analysis by Rockstuhl et al. (2012) found that LMX positively impact job satisfaction, as well as normative and affective commitment, across various national cultures. Besides, specific scientific work by Saputra and Ariyanto (2019) indicates that LMX and job satisfaction together systematically explain organizational commitment. In the context of organizational research, it can be argued that LMX drives employee job satisfaction, which in turn increases their commitment to the organization.

Ali et al. (2021) and Santalla-Banderali and Alvarado (2022) argue that there are three indicators of LMX measurement, and the first is mutual respect between employees. Second, the aspects of trusting relationships can continuously change. The third role must be carried out, which is interactive. Al Bloushi et al. (2024) mentioned that the team members with good relationships with leaders tend to feel more satisfied and committed to their work. In a strong LMX relationship, leaders involve team members in decision-making and support their ideas more significantly (Graen & Schiemann, 2013). This kind of supportive work environment creates a sense of appreciation among team members, which in turn increases their involvement in innovative activities. The study by Wang (2022) shows that LMX positively and significantly affects innovative work behavior. Shunlong and Weiming (2012) found that high-quality LMX stimulates employee innovation. The first, second, and third hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H1: LMX has positive significant effect on job satisfaction.

H2: LMX has positive significant effect on organizational commitment.

H3: LMX has positive significant effect on innovative behavior.

2.2.2. Job satisfaction towards innovative behavior and its role as mediation

Normally, when employees are satisfied with their work — that is, when they have a positive evaluation of their working conditions, the rewards they receive, and their interpersonal relationships — they tend to be more motivated to generate new ideas, promote them, and translate them into concrete actions. Budiarti et al. (2025) revealed that job satisfaction mediates the influence of belief and person-environment fit on creative ability and creative performance. In organizations that encourage innovative behavior, job satisfaction serves as a positive motivator for employee innovation, as satisfied employees are more intrinsically motivated to innovate and drive change.

The concept underlying the role of job satisfaction as a mediator in the relationship between LMX and innovative behavior is grounded in the job demands–resources (JD-R) model. According to this model, when leaders cultivate high-quality relationships with their subordinates — characterized by open communication, support, and trust — employees feel valued and receive social rewards that enhance job satisfaction (Li et al., 2025; Tummers & Bakker, 2021). This state of satisfaction then fosters intrinsic and emotional motivation to reciprocate this support through positive contributions, such as innovative behavior. The JD-R model supports this landscape by emphasizing that the quality of LMX functions as a job resource that drives job satisfaction and, consequently, encourages innovation as an adaptive response to job demands. Ultimately, job satisfaction serves as a crucial psychological mechanism that bridges the influence of LMX on innovative behavior within organizations (Yasmin et al., 2024).

Employees who are satisfied with their salary tend to build strong relationships with their superiors, fostering responsibility and commitment to their tasks, which ultimately enhances their performance (Wang, 2023). Meanwhile, job satisfaction is a pleasant feeling for employees regarding their perception of their work (Mendoza & Maldonado, 2014). Job satisfaction is the level of affection of workers to work where the situation is related to the attitude of workers towards their work (Negoro & Wibowo, 2021). Maharani et al. (2013) stated that there are several indicators of job satisfaction, the first being the work itself, giving exciting tasks. The second is the payment system, which is the number of salaries earned and the level obtained that is considered appropriate and reasonable. The paper by Pinheiro and Palma-Moreira (2025) found that job satisfaction has a significant positive effect on employee performance. The fourth and sixth hypothesis can be developed as follows:

H4: Job satisfaction has a positive significant effect on innovative behavior.

H5: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between LMX on innovative behavior.

2.2.3. Organizational commitment to innovative behavior and its role as mediation

The basic concept of organizational commitment is the attachment of individuals to the organization where the individual works by carrying out the goals and values embraced by the organization (Grego-Planer, 2019; Silva et al., 2022). Organizational commitment has been defined as the relative strength of an individual in identifying their involvement in an organization. In this view, commitment is a characteristic of solid belief and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, a willingness to make the most of it, and a strong desire to maintain membership. Commitment to the organization is reflected in the worker's belief in the company's mission and goals, the ability to devote effort and ability to work in the company, and the intention to continue working for the company.

Organizational commitment, which encompasses employees' psychological attachment to their organization, serves as a crucial foundation for fostering innovative behavior. Employees who feel a strong sense of attachment are more likely to identify with taking initiative and aligning with organizational goals. In general, Abdelwahed and Soomro (2024) note that innovative behavior is closely linked to contextual components such as commitment, organizational culture, and leadership. Consequently, organizational commitment acts as an antecedent to employees' innovative behavior, with higher levels of commitment promoting greater quality and frequency of individual innovation in the workplace. Previous research by Leow and Khong (2009) showed that LMX positively impacts organizational commitment. They found that LMX has a positive effect on organizational commitment,

especially on affective commitment and normative commitment because quality relationships between superiors and subordinates increase emotional attachment and a sense of responsibility to the organization. Though their impact is less than in the other two commitments, donations in LMX have also been found to help increase continuity commitments. The research by Hayati and Rifani (2025) strengthened the idea that LMX has a positive relationship with organizational commitment. This is shown by the leadership's attention to compensation, attendance, needs, and conditions of subordinates. The leadership has a strong belief in the abilities and potential of the subordinates, which indicates that the leader has run the LMX well. Leaders with good work skills and competencies will increase organizational commitment for employees. Job satisfaction and organizational commitment are positively linked to innovative behavior, as team members feel more motivated to contribute and participate in the organization's innovation process. Employees will see leaders as role models and create a sense of pride in their work and company. When people feel emotionally, normatively, and sustainably attached to the organization they work for, they tend to be more eager to make a positive contribution and innovate as a manifestation of their loyalty and adherence to the organization. The fifth and seventh hypothesis is proposed as follows:

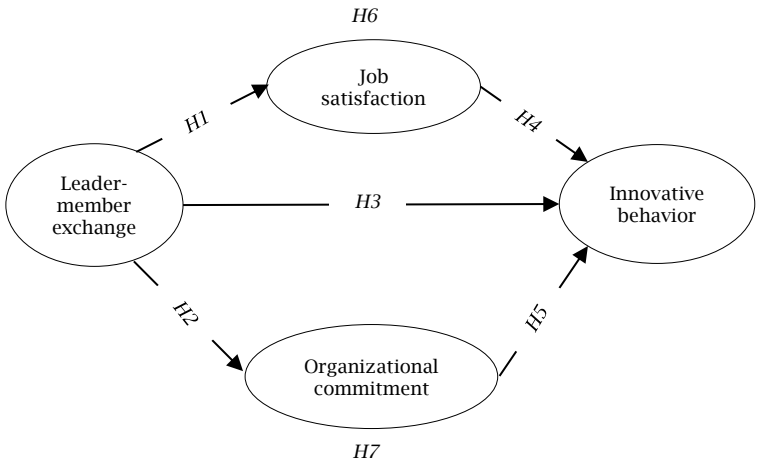
H6: Organizational commitment has a positive significant effect on innovative behavior.

H7: Organizational commitment mediates the relationship between LMX on innovative behavior.

2.3. Conceptual model

The conceptual model of the research is to test the hypothesis that has been determined, so the research model is used, as shown in Figure 1. Three relationship paths were tested. *H1*, *H2*, and *H3* propose a direct relationship between LMX on innovative behavior, organizational commitment, and innovative behavior. Both *H4*, and *H5* emphasize the link between job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and innovative behavior. *H6*, and *H7* suggest indirect relationships between LMX and innovative behavior, mediated by job satisfaction and organizational commitment, respectively. In this model, LMX serves as the independent variable, innovative behavior as the dependent variable, and job satisfaction and organizational commitment as mediating variables.

Figure 1. Research model



Source: Authors' elaboration.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Data type

This study is based on primary data obtained through field surveys. The data were collected directly from the respondents. Field surveys were conducted from July 2025 to September 2025. Prior to the survey, we identified the target subjects, specifically companies in the trade, service, and manufacturing sectors located in West Surabaya, Indonesia. We then requested permission from the managing director or, at a minimum, the human resources development division to explain the research objectives and obtain approval. Finally, we interviewed the respondents after confirming their willingness toparticipate and ensuring that no conflicts of interest existed during the data collection process.

3.2. Sample and analysis procedures

This study employeed a survey method. Sampling was carried out by distributing questionnaires through the convenience sampling technique to employees working in the West Surabaya area. West Surabaya was chosen as the sampling location because West Surabaya is a rapidly developing business area in the Surabaya area, so employee innovation is an important thing. We distributed 300 questionnaires, and 245 questionnaires returned and can be processed (return rate of 82%). We can process all of the data that was returned, which is as many as 245 questionnaires. In addition to the strategic location, the use of convenience sampling to select employees from three vital sectors — trade, service, and manufacturing — is logically justified. These sectors exhibit highly dynamic and heterogeneous work patterns and structures, necessitating quick and easy access to respondents to efficiently capture a diverse range of

perceptions and work experiences. Convenience sampling enables this study to reach employees across various job types in a short time without the need for complex sampling procedures. This technique is particularly appropriate given that the research aims to explore relationships among general organizational behavior variables rather than to generalize findings to the entire population (Memon et al., 2025). Selecting employees from these three sectors through convenience sampling can be considered conceptually representative for describing variations in work behavior arising from differences in industrial contexts, while also providing practical ease of access to support the research. The questionnaire was designed to be a seven-point Likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7).

The data was analyzed using multivariate analysis using the PLS-SEM. The PLS-SEM approach involves two key components: outer model testing and inner model testing. First, the outer model assesses the model's feasibility through validity testing, reliability testing, and discriminant validity evaluation. Substantively, validity is measured using the average variance extracted (AVE), reliability is assessed by composite reliability (CR), and discriminant validity is evaluated through cross-loading values. Second, the inner model determines whether each tested variable aligns with the proposed hypotheses. The inner model analysis includes two key metrics: the probability value (p) and the R-squared (R^2). A significance level of 5% is used as the threshold for the probability value. The R^2 value is employed to evaluate the strength of the causal relationships between variables.

3.3. Variable components

The variables examined in this study include: 1) *LMX*; 2) job satisfaction (*JS*); 3) organizational commitment (*OC*); 4) innovative behavior (*IB*). In total, these variables are measured using 26 indicators. Each variable has a different number of indicators: *LMX* has five indicators, *JS* has nine, and both *OC* and *IB* are supported by six indicators each. The specifications of these research variable components are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Measurement of variables

Variables name (code)	*Indicators*	*Statement items*	*Adapted from*
Leader-member exchange (*LMX*)	Affection	LMX1: I really like my boss as a person.	Bing and Yusoff, (2012), Sayidina and Fitriastuti (2025)
	Loyalty	LMX2: I feel a high level of loyalty to my superiors when facing challenges at work.	
	Contribution	LMX3: I took initiative beyond my formal duties for the success of my boss.	
	Professional respect	LMX4: I admire my boss's professional skills.	
	Quality of overall exchange	LMX5: I receive adequate support from my superiors at work.	
Job satisfaction (*JS*)	Remuneration	JS1: I feel that my salary is commensurate with the workload I have.	Al Shuaili (2025), Kvist et al. (2012), Pepe et al. (2017)
	Promotion	JS2: There are clear opportunities for career advancement in this organization.	
	Workload	JS3: My workload is within my capacity, not excessive.	
	Supervisor	JS4: I feel that my boss values my opinions and input.	
	Coworker relations	JS5: I feel comfortable and accepted by my coworkers.	
	Recognition	JS6: The organization gives both formal and informal recognition for employee contributions.	
	Autonomy	JS7: The organization gives me the space to develop ideas and innovations in my work.	
	Value	JS8: This job aligns with my values and beliefs as an individual.	
	General	JS9: Overall, I am very satisfied with my current job.	
Organizational commitment (*OC*)	Affective commitment	OC1: I feel emotionally attached to this organization.	Al-Hussami et al. (2025), Mitonga-Monga et al. (2018), Moore and Moore (2014)
	Continuance commitment	OC2: I would feel like I'm missing out if I left this organization.	
	Normative commitment	OC3: I feel obligated to remain in this organization.	
	Identification with organization	OC4: These organizational values align perfectly with my personal values.	
	Investment in the organization	OC5: I have invested a lot of time and energy in this organization.	
	Perceived organizational support and reciprocity	OC6: I feel that this organization has always treated me fairly.	
Innovative behavior (*IB*)	Idea generation	IB1: I actively seek new ideas to improve my work.	Lukes and Stephan (2017), Sanhokwe et al. (2023), Steyn and De Bruin (2019), Zhang et al. (2018)
	Idea promotion	IB2: I am trying to build a network or alliance to help promote innovative ideas.	
	Idea realization	IB3: I took concrete steps to implement innovative ideas in the workplace.	
	Idea exploration	IB4: I am looking for new experiences, training, or information that can spark new ideas.	
	Overcoming obstacle	IB5: I am able to overcome resistance or concerns from others about my ideas.	
	Idea collaboration	IB6: I shared my new ideas with the team and openly asked for feedback.	

Source: Authors' elaboration.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Descriptive analysis

Table 2 presents a description of respondent demographics. More than half of the respondents were female (58%), compared to 42% male respondents. The majority were under 30 years old (54.3%), while 22% were aged 31–40, 18.8% were aged 41–50, and the remaining 4.9% were over 50 years old. Regarding education, 69% had completed undergraduate studies, 21.2% were high school graduates, 5.3% held diplomas, and 4.5% had postgraduate degrees.

Table 2. The sample profile

Characteristics	*Frequency*	*Percentage (%)*
Gender		
Female	142	58
Male	103	42
Age		
≤ 30 years old	133	54.3
31–40 years old	54	22
41–50 years old	46	18.8
> 50 years old	12	4.9
Last education		
Postgraduate	11	4.5
Undergraduate	169	69
Diploma	13	5.3
High school	52	21.2
Position		
Manager/supervisor	96	39.2
Staff	149	60.8
Status		
Permanent employees	245	100
Work experience		
< 5 years	117	47.8
5–10 years	55	22.4
> 10 years	73	29.8
Company business field		
Trading	95	38.8
Services	122	49.8
Manufacturing	28	11.4

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Of the 245 respondents surveyed, 49.8% worked in service companies, 38.8% in trading companies, and 11.4% in manufacturing companies. Regarding workplace roles, 60.8% were staff members, while 39.2% were supervisors or managers. Notably, all respondents were permanent employees. In terms of work experience, 47.8% had less than five years, 22.4% had between five and ten years, and 29.8% had more than ten years of experience.

4.2. Outer model testing

Validity and reliability testing are shown in the following Table 3. Convergent validity is assessed using AVE. In this study, the AVE value should exceed 0.5, and all constructs in the latent variable construct indeed have values above 0.5. Alongside validity tests, a construct reliability test was also performed, measured by CR from the indicator blocks that define the construct. A construct is considered reliable if the CR exceeds 0.7 (Lestariningsih, 2025).

Table 3. Convergent validity and composite reliability

Variables	*AVE*	*CR*
LMX	0.709	0.924
JS	0.654	0.975
OC	0.647	0.948
IB	0.650	0.917

Source: Authors' elaboration.

In comparison, the highest AVE value was observed in the *LMX* variable, reaching 0.709, while the lowest was in the *OC* variable, at 0.674. Conversely, the *JS* variable exhibited the highest CR at 0.975, whereas the *IB* variable had the lowest CR at 0.917. Overall, the AVE and CR values across the four variables are relatively close, indicating that the model under investigation is highly relevant and merits further testing.

Table 4. Summary of discriminant validity

Items	*Innovative behavior*	*Job satisfaction*	*LMX*	*Organizational commitment*
IB1	**0.816**	0.416	0.473	0.539
IB2	**0.838**	0.441	0.565	0.580
IB3	**0.722**	0.445	0.505	0.489
IB4	**0.865**	0.491	0.561	0.619
IB5	**0.765**	0.440	0.509	0.616
IB6	**0.822**	0.534	0.614	0.630
JS1	0.507	**0.821**	0.628	0.693
JS2	0.473	**0.760**	0.564	0.644
JS3	0.400	**0.721**	0.481	0.531
JS4	0.447	**0.773**	0.545	0.599
JS5	0.378	**0.736**	0.542	0.551
JS6	0.341	**0.723**	0.410	0.451
JS7	0.420	**0.836**	0.544	0.634
JS8	0.411	**0.825**	0.507	0.645
JS9	0.492	**0.852**	0.569	0.697
LMX1	0.537	0.521	**0.790**	0.539
LMX2	0.548	0.567	**0.856**	0.626
LMX3	0.543	0.657	**0.871**	0.648
LMX4	0.525	0.546	**0.833**	0.588
LMX5	0.657	0.639	**0.857**	0.705
OC1	0.630	0.635	0.625	**0.797**
OC2	0.652	0.682	0.682	**0.851**
OC3	0.363	0.367	0.320	**0.780**
OC4	0.556	0.651	0.592	**0.815**
OC5	0.625	0.738	0.717	**0.885**
OC6	0.658	0.688	0.665	**0.845**

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Table 4 shows that the discriminant validity for the reflective indicator is observed through cross-loading between the indicator and its construct. For the record, discriminant validity is used to ensure that the constructs (latent variables) in a research model are truly distinct from one another — that is, each construct measures a unique concept and does not overlap excessively with other constructs. The cross-loading results from the PLS algorithm output are displayed in Table 4. Each indicator's correlation with its construct is stronger than with other constructs, indicating that the latent construct more accurately predicts its own indicators than those in other blocks. Similar to CR, the threshold for discriminant validity is 0.7. It can be concluded that none of the cross-loading values of the indicators within each construct fall below this specified criterion. For comparison, consider the cross-loading values of the indicators for each variable. First, in the *IB* variable, *IB4* has the highest value (0.865), while *IB3* has the lowest (0.722). Second, in the *JS* variable, *JS9* is the highest indicator (0.852), and *JS3* is the lowest (0.721). Third, for the *LMX* variable, *LMX3* has the highest cross-loading value (0.871), whereas *LMX1* has the smallest (0.790). Fourth, in the *OC* variable, *OC5* is the indicator with the highest cross-loading (0.885), and *OC3* is the lowest (0.780).

4.3. Inner model testing

Statistically, *LMX* directly influences *JS*, *OC*, and *IB* in a significant direction ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). *OC* also has a direct and significant impact on *IB* ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$), but not on *JS*, which has an insignificant effect on *IB* ($p = 0.151 > 0.05$). Regarding indirect causality, it was demonstrated that *LMX* mediated by *JS* has an insignificant effect on *IB* ($p = 0.156 > 0.05$). Meanwhile, *LMX* has a significant effect on *IB* through *OC* ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$).

Table 5. Hypothesis testing

Linkages	*Original sample*	*p-values*	*R^2*
Direct effect			
LMX → JS	0.700	0.000	0.490
LMX → OC	0.742	0.000	0.551
LMX→ IB	0.323	0.000	0.565
JS→ IB	–0.103	0.151	
OC→ IB	0.564	0.000	
Indirect effect			
LMX → JS→ IB	–0.072	0.156	
LMX → OC→ IB	0.419	0.000	

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Table 5 indicates that *LMX* has a crucial impact on enhancing *JS*, *OC*, and *IB* through positive pathways. Consequently, *H1*, *H2*, and *H3* are supported. *H4* is rejected because *JS* is found to negatively affect *IB*, whereas *OC* positively influences *IB*, supporting *H5*. Then, *JS* negatively mediates the relationship between *LMX* and *IB*, leading to the rejection of *H6*. *H7* is accepted, as *OC* effectively mediates the relationship between *LMX* and *IB*.

One approach to testing the inner model involves examining the R^2 value in the dependent construct. If the structural model has an R^2 value above 0.19, it is considered "weak". An R^2 value above 0.33 is classified as "moderate", while an R^2 above 0.67 indicates the model is "good". The R^2 value for each dependent construct in the model estimate is presented in Table 5. The *JS* variable can be defined or explained by the *LMX* variable of 0.490 (moderate) or 49%. In comparison, the remaining 51% is explained by other variables that have not been included in the research model. *OC* can be defined or explained by the *LMX* variable of 0.551 (moderate) or 55.1%. In comparison, the remaining 44.9% is explained by other variables not found in the research model. Meanwhile, the *IB* variable can be defined or explained by the variables *LMX*, *JS*, and *OC*, which are 0.565 (moderate) or 56.5%. In comparison, the remaining 43.5% is explained by other variables not yet included in the research model.

5. DISCUSSION

This study found that the higher the LMX quality, the more employee satisfaction will increase. Likewise, leaders and employees with solid relationships create an environment where team members feel comfortable sharing their feelings, challenges, and concerns with their leaders. This emotional support can increase job satisfaction by providing comfort and support in challenging situations. This study found that LMX affects job satisfaction, so this study supports some previous studies that state that LMX affects job satisfaction (Shang et al., 2024; March et al., 2023; Mursanty et al., 2023).

LMX influences organizational commitment. The higher the quality of the LMX, the closer and more trusting the relationship between the leader and team members will be, able to increase the organization's commitment. This creates a climate where team members feel valued and recognized for their hard work and dedication, which can increase their commitment to the organization. This research supports research conducted by Al-bataineh et al. (2023) and Gara Bach Ouerdian et al. (2021). These two studies found that organizational commitment occurs through quality interpersonal relationships between superiors and subordinates, which are characterized by trust, mutual respect, and support. Their findings show strong LMX increases employee affective engagement, which ultimately strengthens emotional attachment and loyalty to the organization.

LMX influences innovative behavior. In a high LMX relationship, leaders tend to provide more support and empowerment to trusted team members, encouraging them to be more confident and willing to take risks in generating new and innovative ideas. These findings support Sharif et al. (2024) that LMX influences innovative work behaviors by building supportive interpersonal relationships, which encourage the exchange of ideas and proactive contributions. Team members with good relationships with the leader tend to feel more satisfied and committed to their work (Al Bloushi et al., 2024). This satisfaction and commitment are positively linked to innovative behavior, as team members feel more motivated to contribute and participate in the organization's innovation process. Supporting the SET, which holds that quality interactions between leaders and subordinates produce a sense of reciprocity that

promotes positive behavior in the workplace, the findings of this study show that LMX significantly influences employees' innovative behavior (Bataineh et al., 2022; Nazir et al., 2021). These results fit with Choi et al. (2021) as well as Jung et al. (2021), which suggest that employees are more inclined to participate in innovation by means of higher trust and interaction with their leaders when LMX relationships are high. These findings also help to explain variations in the earlier research showing contradicting correlations between LMX and innovation (Mascareño et al., 2020; Mustafa et al., 2023).

Job satisfaction does not affect innovative behavior. This study found that although job satisfaction can positively contribute to good working conditions, it is not always the main determining factor in motivating innovative behavior. Innovative behaviors are often triggered by intrinsic motivations such as curiosity, a desire to solve problems, and to make a difference. While a person may be satisfied with their work, it does not always guarantee that they will be innovative. Job satisfaction does not always impact the availability of the resources needed to perform innovative behaviors (Mustafa et al., 2021). An employee may be satisfied with their job. Still, if the organisation does not provide the necessary resources or support for innovation, it may be unable to execute innovative ideas (Chesbrough, 2010). Each individual has different preferences, motivations, and needs. Although there is a positive correlation between job satisfaction and innovative behavior in some individuals, it does not always apply to everyone.

This study found that organizational commitment influences innovative behavior. The more a person has a high organizational commitment, the more they will have high innovation behavior. This result supports the research of Rangkeskam and Chienwatanasook (2019) because this study shows that employees' innovative behavior is influenced by their organizational commitment, particularly through programmatic commitment that motivates their participation in reaching organizational goals, fostering creativity and proactive behavior in search of innovation prospects. Likewise, individuals committed to the organization tend to be more receptive and open to the changes necessary for innovation. They see innovation as a way to improve the performance and success of the organization as a whole, not as a threat to the status quo (Ivanov & Avasilcăi, 2014). Consequently, organizational commitment can be a significant factor in motivating innovative behavior. Employees with a high level of commitment to the organization tend to be more engaged, motivated, and willing to innovate for the organization's overall success.

This study found that job satisfaction could not mediate the LMX relationship on innovative behavior. While several studies demonstrate that job happiness can boost innovation (Maharani et al., 2013; Xie et al., 2020), this observation reveals that job satisfaction does not significantly influence the association between LMX and employee creativity. This runs counter to earlier studies by Febriyana (2015), who said that happy workers are more likely to be creative. LMX can influence innovative behavior through support, empowerment, and access to resources, which are not always directly related to job satisfaction. In contrast, innovative behavior is often triggered by intrinsic motivations such as curiosity, a desire to solve problems, and a desire to make changes, which may not entirely depend on job satisfaction.

This research found that the higher the quality of the LMX, the more committed the organization will be, and the more satisfied employees will increase their ability to behave innovatively. Supporting earlier conclusions that individuals who feel emotionally linked to the company are more likely to innovate, the study indicated that organizational commitment is a major mediator in the link between LMX and innovation (Rangkeskam & Chienwatanasook, 2019). The result also supports earlier studies by Hayati and Rifani (2025), which revealed that a strong LMX raises organizational commitment and promotes creative activity. This study clarifies the discrepancy of past papers (Mascareño et al., 2020; Mulligan et al., 2021) by claiming that organizational commitment mediates the effect of LMX on innovation to be more powerful. This implies that employees might not have enough drive to convert LMX interactions into creative activities without emotional commitment to the company. The strong relationship between the leader and team members makes the team members feel recognized and supported by their leader (Amabile et al., 2004). When a leader has a strong relationship with team members, the team members tend to feel more committed to the organization because of the support and recognition provided by the leader (Casimir et al., 2014). This quality of good relationships gives team members the confidence to contribute innovatively.

6. CONCLUSION

The conclusions of this study are as follows. LMX influences organizational commitment, innovation behavior, and job satisfaction. Meanwhile, organizational commitment affects innovative behavior. Nonetheless, job satisfaction does not affect innovative behavior. This study also found that job satisfaction could not mediate the LMX relationship on innovative behavior, even though there was a direct relationship between LMX and innovative behavior. On the other hand, this finding concludes that organizational commitment can mediate the LMX relationship on employee innovative behavior.

This study introduces a novel approach by simultaneously incorporating two mediators — namely, job satisfaction and organizational commitment — within a model that links LMX quality to employee innovative behavior across various industries (trading, services, and manufacturing) in the context of emerging markets such as Indonesia. This contrasts with many previous studies that have typically employed only one mediator or focused on a single industry type. Utilizing PLS-SEM on a large sample size, the study enables a more comprehensive examination of both direct and indirect paths. Even so, the existing study design has limitations that should be addressed in future research. Specifically, the cross-sectional design precludes confirmation of causal

relationships among variables. Additionally, data were collected via self-report questionnaires, which may introduce respondent bias and common method variance. Moreover, while sampling from three different industries enhances generalizability, it complicates the identification of industry-specific contextual effects. The minimal sample type and size are also a further concern. Sample size with minimal numbers is also a continuing concern. Therefore, future research should consider longitudinal designs, multi-source data collection methods, and industry-specific analyses to enhance causal validity and contextual understanding.

Practically, the study's findings have fundamental managerial implications for companies in the trading, services, and manufacturing sectors. Explicitly, improving LMX is essential for fostering innovative behavior among employees. Leaders who cultivate relationships based on trust, support, and open communication can enhance job satisfaction and strengthen employee commitment to the organization. These factors serve as psychological pathways that encourage employees to take risks, generate new ideas, and actively participate in improving work processes. Therefore, management should invest in developing transformational and relational leadership through initiatives such as two-way communication training, team empowerment, and a fair reward system to boost employee satisfaction and loyalty. By adopting this strategy, companies not only reinforce harmonious working relationships but also create an organizational environment that is innovative and adaptable to cross-sector market dynamics.

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