



# The Moderating Role of Job Satisfaction in the Effect of Leader-Member Interaction on Workplace Happiness in Academia

## Akademide Lider-Üye Etkileşiminin İşyeri Mutluluğuna Etkisinde İş Tatmininin Düzenleyici Rolü

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### Özet

Çalışmanın amacı, lider-üye etkileşiminin işyeri mutluluğuna etkisinde iş tatmininin düzenleyici rolünü test etmektir. Nicel araştırma modeli ve ilişkisel araştırma tasarımı kapsamında yürütülen bu araştırmanın verileri Türkiye’de sosyal bilimler alanında görev yapmakta olan 322 akademisyenden kolayda örnekleme yöntemiyle toplanmıştır. Elde edilen bu veriler SPSS 25 istatistik programı kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Yapılan analizler sonucunda lider-üye etkileşimi, işyeri mutluluğu ve iş tatmini değişkenleri arasında pozitif yönlü ve anlamlı düzeyde ilişkilerin olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Ayrıca lider-üye etkileşiminin işyeri mutluluğuna etkisinde iş tatmininin düzenleyici role sahip olduğu belirlenmiştir. Diğer bir ifade ile iş tatmininin yüksek olması durumunda, algılanan lider-üye etkileşiminin işyeri mutluluğuna etkisi daha yüksektir. İlgili yazında lider-üye ile işyeri mutluluğu arasındaki ilişkiyi inceleyen çalışmalarda iş tatmininin düzenleyici rolünü birlikte değerlendiren çalışma bulunmamaktadır. Dolayısıyla bu araştırmanın kaynak ve katkı sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Lider-Üye Etkileşimi, İş Yeri Mutluluğu, İş Tatmini, Akademisyenlik Mesleği.

### Abstract

The aim of the study is to test the moderating role of job satisfaction in the effect of leader-member exchange on workplace happiness. The data of the research, which was conducted using the quantitative research model and correlational research design, were collected by convenience sampling method from 322 academics working in the field of social sciences in Türkiye. These data were analyzed using SPSS 25 statistical program. The analysis revealed that there were positive and significant correlations between the variables of leader-member exchange, workplace happiness, and job satisfaction. In addition, it was found that job satisfaction had a moderating role in the effect of leader-member exchange on workplace happiness. In other words, if job satisfaction is high, the effect of perceived leader-member exchange on workplace happiness is greater. There is no study in the relevant literature that evaluates the moderating role of job satisfaction in studies examining the relationship between leaders and members and workplace happiness. Therefore, this study is expected to provide a source and contribution to the field.

**Keywords:** Leader-Member Exchange, Workplace Happiness, Job Satisfaction, Academic Profession.

The pursuit of happiness is one of the most persistent and primary goals of human beings throughout ages across the world and has been described as the *raison d'être* of the individual (Salas-Valina et al., 2021, p. 333). The idea that what matters in life is not just to live but to live well has occupied the minds of philosophers since time immemorial (Kesebir & Diener, 2008, p. 117). Many definitions have been made of happiness, which has attracted the attention of many philosophers, from Aristotle and Plato in ancient Greece to the present, and the ways to attain it have been discussed (Veenhoven & Dumludağ, 2015, p. 48). Due to the importance it carries, happiness, a frequently handled topic in various disciplines such as psychology,

sociology and philosophy, has become not only a sought-after goal in an individual sense, but also a concept that is taken into account and used as an object to be achieved in terms of employees in organizational life (Demirel & Erer, 2022, p. 75). In working life, it continues, as it did in the past, to be at the center of the individual’s whole life today. The fine line between work and life has almost disappeared. As a natural consequence of this situation, the individual’s dream of being happy at work and in the workplace where s/he spends most of the day, socializes, develops themselves day by day, chases their dreams and tries to reach their goals, has taken its place among the individual’s primary goals (Kjerulf, 2015).

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Since happiness is a relative notion that differs from person to person, many factors affect workplace happiness, and numerous academic studies have been conducted in this context to determine the conditions for workplace happiness (Tadic et al., 2013; Mehdad & Iranpour, 2014; Wesarat et al., 2015; Joo & Lee, 2017; Turan, 2019; Uzunbacak & Karagöz 2022). Considering the research cited above, it can be said that the factors affecting workplace happiness are diverse and vary extensively across countries, societies, sectors, professions, individuals and organizations, and as a result no consensus has yet been reached on this issue (Turan, 2022, p. 452). Another example is a research on workplace happiness conducted in Türkiye for people working in various titles in the private sector (multiple institutions). Individual factors, managerial factors, organisational factors, work-related factors, and environmental factors were determined to be the five antecedents of workplace satisfaction in this study (Erer, 2021). As a matter of fact, it can be argued that leader-member exchange, which provides positive work outcomes such as performance, organizational commitment, innovative work behavior and organizational identification, also affects workplace happiness. In other words, when there is high-quality leader-member exchange, the motivation of the employee to be happy at work increases (García-Contreras et al., 2022). In addition, job satisfaction, which has multiple goals such as improving the conditions of employees and ensuring organizational effectiveness, also supports the workplace happiness of individuals (Elayan et al., 2023). Therefore, job satisfaction becomes more important in the relationship between the quality of the interaction that occurs between the manager and the employee and workplace happiness.

In line with the the above explanations, the present research aims to examine the relationships between leader-member exchange, workplace happiness and job satisfaction. In this context, first, the relationship between the leader-member exchange as perceived by the academicians and workplace happiness was examined, and in the second stage the moderating role of job satisfaction in this relationship was determined. When the literature was examined, it was seen that various studies had been conducted on leader-member exchange and workplace happiness, but no study was found that addressed these two concepts together. On the other hand, the role of job satisfaction in this relationship had not been examined, either. In this sense, it can be said that the current research is a pioneering study investigating the relationship among these three variables in the context of higher education. In addition, the academic profession, which involves such basic functions as teaching, research, management and community service (Marsh & Hattie, 2002, p. 603), is an occupation that has a prominent place in society as it is acquired through a master-apprentice relationship, is difficult to obtain and perform, touches on all aspects of life, disregards financial interests and enjoys self-control and social prestige (Tülübaş & Göktürk, 2018, p. 36). The happiness of academics, considered to be among

prestigious occupational groups owing to all these features, is also extremely important due to their responsibility to raise people and their direct or indirect effects on many segments of the society (Çakır, 2019, p. 5).

## Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis Development

### Leader-Member Exchange

The theoretical foundations of the leader-member exchange theory, which was brought to the literature by Dansereau, Graen and Haga (1975), are based on the Vertical Dyad Linkage (VDL) model. However, this model changed in the course of time and became a system that incorporated the functioning and elements of bilateral relations. Subsequently, it transformed into an independent behavior model and began to be called “Leader-Member Exchange (LMX)” (Scandura et al., 1986, p. 580).

The LMX theory differs from traditional leadership theories due to the principles it is based on and the different perspectives it has developed (Dulebohn et al., 2012, p. 1718). For example, many studies have found that the social exchange between the leader and the member will also improve the standard of LMX, and the theory of social change has been accepted as one of the theoretical foundations of LMX. (Masterson et al., 2000; Hofmann et al., 2003; Coyle-Shapiro & Conway, 2004). If there are economic interests between the leader and the member, the quality of LMX is low. Since the relationship between the parties is unrequited, i.e., neither party expects anything from the other, the parties have no expectations of each other. On the other hand, the quality of LMX is high in relationships based on social change since the extent of the relationship between the parties is endless and tends to be longer lasting (Walumba et al., 2011, p. 743-744). Traditional leadership theories consider all subordinates in the same group and are based on the assumption that leaders develop similar relationships with all of their subordinates (Kılıç & Bulgurcu, 2022, p. 2452). However, LMX theory presents a different perspective, arguing that the relations developed by the leader with all group members do not have similar or the same level of exchange, and focus on exchange rather than a hierarchical relationship between the leader and the subordinates (Scandura & Pellegrini, 2008, p. 101; Manata & Grubb, 2022, p. 2).

According to the LMX theory, two types of relationships emerge between the leader and the subordinates: “in-group” and “out-group”. While high quality positive relationships are established between subordinates and their leader based on the criteria of trust, love and mutual respect in the in-group relationship, in the out-group relationship, formal, low-quality and sometimes even negative relationships are established between



subordinates and leaders, which do not go beyond the roles defined for work and duty (Murphy et al., 2003, p. 64). In this case, in-group subordinates benefit more from the leader's positional resources such as knowledge and trust than out-group subordinates, and the leader is more sensitive to the needs of in-group subordinates (Luthans, 2010, p. 423). In-group subordinates who can establish a closer relationship with their leader, in turn, tend to put a higher level of effort into their work (Schriesheim et al., 2001, p. 525). The LMX theory attributes the main reason why the leader has relationships of different qualities with their subordinates to the fact that the leader has limited time and resources (Bauer & Green, 1996, p. 1539). In addition to these constraints, factors such as follower characteristics (competence, agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, neuroticism, openness, positive or negative affectivity, locus of control, goal orientation, performance, effort, impression management), leader characteristics (trustworthiness, positive expectation of subordinates, transformational leadership, rapport management, extroversion, power, agreeableness, contingent reward behavior) and interpersonal relationship (perceived similarity, positive expectation, affect/liking, interactional justice) also determine the quality of the relationship between the leader and his/her subordinates (Kang & Stewart, 2007, p. 533; Dulebohn et al., 2012, p. 1717).

Studies on leader-member exchange indicate that the theory has important relationships with many work outcomes. Leader-member exchange is negatively correlated with intention to quit (Kim et al., 2016), organizational silence (Chan & Yeung, 2016), cyberloafing behavior (Baş et al., 2022), burnout (Huang et al., 2010), organizational cynicism (Mumcu, 2021) and compulsory organizational citizenship behavior (Koçak, 2018), whereas it is positively associated with innovative work behavior (Ghulam et al., 2022), organizational identification (Zeynel, 2021), work performance (Loi et al., 2011), organizational commitment (Windeler & Riemenschneider, 2016), job satisfaction (Epitropaki & Martin, 2005) and job dedication (Michael et al., 2005).

### The Relationship Between Leader-Member Exchange and Workplace Happiness

People have been interested in happiness since the earliest times of history. In line with this interest, answers have been sought to questions like What is happiness? What is the nature of happiness? What are the determinants of happiness? and Can lasting happiness be achieved? (Doğan et al., 2014, p. 48). In this context, happiness, one of the most sought-after objectives in history, has been accepted as the supreme purpose in human life (Gilman et al., p. 135) and it has been defined as “a positive emotion that expresses a beautiful mood, intuitions that an individual has experienced at any given moment, evaluation of one's life as good, or subjective well-being”

(Diener & Ryan, 2009, p. 391). Happiness means that the individuals' positive feelings and thoughts about life outweigh negative ones, they enjoy spiritual contentment and internal satisfaction, and have a favorable view of their total quality of life (cited in. Eleren & Sadykova, 2016, p. 190). In short, as a subjective concept, happiness is satisfaction with life (Erer, 2021, p. 216).

For individuals to be happy in their daily life or to have a happy life, they must also be happy in their professional life, which constitutes a significant part of their life. Although it exhibits variation depending on other factors, individual happiness is definitely influenced by happiness in the workplace environment (Arslan & Polat, 2017, p. 614). Hence the notion of happiness at work or happiness at the workplace emerges. Workplace happiness is conceptually multidimensional in itself and includes both organizational and individual aspects (Suojanen, 2017, p. 24). Therefore, although there are many definitions of the term in the relevant literature, it is generally expressed as “individuals' satisfaction and happiness with the job they perform, their adoption of a positive approach towards the institution they work for, and the feeling of exhibiting positive attitudes and behaviors based on their developing good relations at the workplace” (Turan, 2018, p.187). It is also defined as “higher creativity, rapid promotion at work, receiving more support, demonstrating good performance and establishing good relations with colleagues and managers” (Pryce-Jones, 2010, p. 2-3).

Workplace happiness is important both individually and organizationally. When considered from an individual point of view, it contributes positively to the quality of life, family life and social relations of the individual, while it provides positive outputs such as high performance, motivation and productivity in organizational terms (Keser, 2018, p. 48). This situation can be explained by the diffusion theory. The diffusion idea is based on the work and non-work roles of relationships between porous boundaries in an individual's living areas. This concept asserts that the boundaries of an individual's living environment are permeable, that no position assumed at work or in family is static and isolated from the other, and that experiences in one area can influence attitudes and behaviours in other areas (Dolan & Gosselin, 1998, p. 1). Diffusion takes place in two directions. An individual's work life to home life; their lives at home also diffuse towards their work lives (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). Furthermore, it can be positive or negative from one place to the next. The transfer of pleasant experiences from one place to another is called positive diffusion. Negative diffusion occurs when negative experiences in one domain have a negative impact on the other domain (Sok et al., 2014, p. 459). In this case, workplace contentment contributes positively to both work life and life outside of work.

When studies handling such an important phenomenon are examined, it is seen that the importance of the leader is emphasized in most of them (Chaiprasit & Santidhirakul, 2011; Williams et al., 2017; Salas-Valina & Alegre, 2018; Erer, 2021). Studies dealing with workplace happiness in the context of leader-member exchange reveal that leader-member exchange has determinative effects on workplace happiness (Güner & Bozkurt, 2017; Dose et al., 2019; Salas-Valina et al., 2021; García-Contreras et al., 2022; Yalvaç, 2022). In other words, employees who have a high-quality exchange with their leaders may enjoy higher levels of happiness at work. Based on this information, the first hypothesis of the research is as follows:

**H1:** High quality Leader-member exchange positively affects workplace happiness.

### Moderating Role of Job Satisfaction

Studies on job satisfaction indicate that there are many factors affecting the job satisfaction of employees. Leader-member exchange is one of these factors (Loi et al., 2014; Matic et al., 2017; Meliana, 2018; Kim & Yi, 2019; Sökmen 2020). In this study, the importance of job satisfaction regard in the effect of leader-member exchange on workplace happiness was investigated.

The concept of job satisfaction, which has not been investigated extensively or in fact ignored in classical organizational approaches, has begun to be given importance as a consequence of the rise of modern and post-modern management approaches (Tekin, 2019, p. 181). Indeed, it has recently taken its place among the favorite topics of various disciplines such as organizational behavior, work psychology and industrial-organizational psychology, thanks to both its theoretical basis and its relevance in practical life (Unanue et al., 2017).

It is seen that the concept of job satisfaction, which does not have a universal definition, is defined in different ways by different academicians and researchers (Gönül & Çalık, 2022, p. 42). According to Hoppock (1935), who made one of the first definitions of job satisfaction in this context, the concept is a combination of physiological, psychological and environmental conditions that enable a person to say “I am satisfied with my job”. Locke (1976, p. 1304), who offered one of the most widely used definitions of the concept, sees job satisfaction as “the shaping of the value that an individual places on his/her job or work experience with a positive and satisfying mood”. Spector (1997, p. 2), on the other hand, defines job satisfaction as the positive reaction of individuals to a particular job and the employees’ enjoying their work. Similarly, Thiagaraj et al., (2017, p. 464) defined job satisfaction as an expression of the individual’s complex attitude towards their job in the form of a pleasurable emotional state emerging from the individual’s evaluation of his or her job as an achievement that facilitates appraisal of

their job. In general, job satisfaction refers to the level of emotionally positive or negative feelings that employees have towards their jobs (Wang et al., 2020).

The organizational importance of job satisfaction is based on its relationship with concepts such as productivity, alienation, leave of employment, conflicts and work accidents (Kök, 2006, p. 294-295). Consequently, lack of job satisfaction affects not only the working life of individuals, but also their life outside of work. Emotions and thoughts experienced by individuals who spend most of their daily lives working will affect both their private and social lives and lead to a low level of satisfaction with life (Erer & Tekin, 2021). In addition, job dissatisfaction negatively affects the health of individuals. It has been determined that nervous problems (insomnia, headache, etc.) and emotional depressions (stress, frustration, etc.) occur in employees with low job satisfaction and that these conditions have a significant correlation with job dissatisfaction (Miner, 1992, p. 119).

These results show the importance of job satisfaction both individually and organizationally. When the studies on job satisfaction are examined, it is seen that many attitudes and behaviors such as life satisfaction (Lambert et al., 2018), motivation, organizational commitment (Tobing & Kennedy, 2018), performance (Öztürk & Aygün, 2020), psychological ownership (Işık & Uçar, 2019), work engagement, resiliency and sense of coherence (Derbis & Jasinski, 2018), organizational identification (De Moura, 2009) and person-organization fit (Turunç & Çelik, 2012) have a positive effect. On the other hand, some studies (Butt et al., 2020; Hwang, 2019; Karabti et al., 2019; Elayen et al., 2023) have revealed that job satisfaction positively affects workplace happiness. In addition, the results of many studies indicate that job satisfaction is used as a moderator variable (Darrat et al., 2017; Chen et al., 2019; Al Sabei et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2022; Xue et al., 2022).

Based on these explanations and the results of previous research, the following hypothesis was formed:

**H2:** Job satisfaction has a moderator role in the effect of leader-member exchange on workplace happiness.

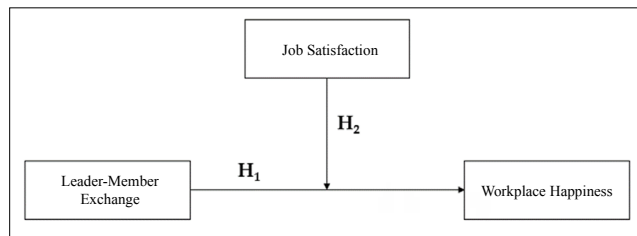
## Method

### Research Model

Based on the above-mentioned studies, the theoretical assumptions and the hypotheses that were formed, leader-member exchange was taken as the predictor variable, job satisfaction as the moderating variable, and workplace happiness as the dependent variable. The model that deals with these variables is presented in ■ Figure 1.



**Figure 1.**  
Research model.



### Population and Sampling

The population of the research is academicians in Turkish Higher Education. The research was conducted on academicians working actively in the field of social sciences in public and private universities in Konya and Aydın. The convenience sampling method, one of the non-

random sampling methods, was used in the study. In this context, a questionnaire form was sent electronically to the academicians who agreed to participate in the research between 06.03.2023 and 30.04.2023. Fifteen of the submitted questionnaires were excluded from the analysis for various reasons, and 322 valid questionnaires were deemed suitable for evaluation. In multivariate studies, it is stipulated that the sample size should be 10 times or more than the number of variables in the research, and the sample size to be selected for the research should be at least 200 (Büyüköztürk, 2012, p. 22). Therefore, the required condition for the sample size was met in this study. The demographic information about the participants is presented in Table 1.

According to the information in Table 1, the academicians working in public universities constitute the largest group in the sample with 91.3 %. 51.2% of the participating academicians are female and 48.8 % are male.

**Table 1.**  
Demographic information regarding the participants.

Variables	Characteristics	N	%
Gender	Female	165	51.2
	Male	157	48.8
Marital Status	Married	145	45
	Single	177	55
Age	25 and younger	30	9.3
	26-35	135	41.9
	36-45	96	29.8
	46-55	57	17.7
	56 and older	4	1.2
Administrative Duty	Yes	74	23
	No	248	77
Administrative Position	Head of Department	38	11.8
	Assistant Head of Department	17	5.9
	Director	2	0.6
	Associate Director	12	3.7
	Dean	3	0.9
	Associate Dean	2	0.6
Title	Research Assistant	49	15.2
	Lecturer	71	22
	Assistant Professor	110	34.2
	Associate Professor	58	18
	Professor Doctor	34	10.6
Duration of Working	Less than 5 years	49	15.2
	6-15	158	49.1
	16-25	59	18.3
	26-35	51	15.8
	More than 36 years	5	1.6
Type of University Worked	Public	294	91.3
	Foundation	28	8.7

In addition, 41.9 % of them are between the ages of 26 and 35, and in terms of their titles, the assistant professors form the largest group with 34.2 %. 77 % of the participants do not have administrative duties. 11.8 % of the 23 % who have administrative duties are department heads.

Detailed information about the scales (leader-member exchange, workplace happiness and job satisfaction) used in the research is given below. Each item in the scales was graded according to a five-point Likert scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5)”.

### Scale of Leader-Member Exchange

The “Leader-Member Exchange” scale developed by Graen and UhlBien (1995) was used to determine the leader-member exchanges of the participants. The scale, the validity and reliability of which was analyzed for Turkish by Çiçek and Çiçek (2020), consists of 7 items and one dimension, and the reliability coefficient of the scale was determined as 0.95 by the researchers. The leader-member exchange scale has only one factor, and the factor loads of the items in the factor range from 0.672 to 0.945. The scale’s goodness-of-fit values are within an acceptable range ( $\chi^2/df = 3.18$ ; GFI = 0.92; CFI = 0.95; RMSEA = 0.074). The scale, which does not have reverse coded items, contains statements such as “My manager understands my problems and needs” and “My manager knows my potential”.

### Scale of Workplace Happiness

The short version of the “Happiness at Work” scale developed by Polatçı and Ünüvar (2021) was used to determine the happiness of the participants at workplace. The reliability coefficient of the scale, which consists of 8 items and one dimension, was determined as 0.95 by the researchers. The workplace happiness scale consists of four factors, with factor loads ranging from 0.703 to 0.841. The scale’s explained total variance rate is 61.882 %. The results of the scale’s confirmatory factor analysis revealed that the goodness of fit values were suitable for testing the scale ( $\chi^2/df = 2.5$ ; GFI = 0.85; CFI = 0.98; RMSEA = 0.058 ve SRMR = 0.056). The scale, which does not contain any reverse coded items, has statements such as “My manager is friendly towards his/her employees” and “Our relations with my colleagues are sincere and cordial”.

### Scale of Job Satisfaction

The “Job Satisfaction” scale, developed by Brayfield and Rothe (1951) and summarized by Judge, Locke, Durham, and Kluger (1998), was used to determine the job satisfaction levels of the participants. The scale, the validity and reliability of which was analyzed for Turkish by Başol and Çömlekçi (2020), consists of 5 items and one dimension, and the reliability coefficient of the scale was determined as 0.95 by the researchers. The job satisfaction scale has only one factor, and the factor loads of the items in the factor range from 0.841 to 0.932. Furthermore, the explained variance

rate of the job satisfaction scale was reported to be 77.99 %. The scale’s goodness of fit ratings are within an acceptable range ( $\chi^2/df = 2$ ; GFI = 0.98; AGFI = 0.95; CFI = 0.99; NFI = 0.99; RMSEA = 0.06). The scale, which does not have any reverse coded items, has statements such as “I find my job enjoyable” and “I am satisfied with my current job”.

### Data Analysis

IBM and SPSS programs were used to analyze the data obtained in the research. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to test the structural validity of each of the variables, and a reliability analysis was made to determine internal consistency. The research analyzed the theoretical model that included the moderating effect of job satisfaction in the effect of leader-member exchange on workplace happiness. In this context, correlation analysis was performed to determine the relationships between the variables, regression analysis was used to prove the effect of the predictor variable on the dependent variable, and moderating effect analysis was used to reveal the existence of the moderating effect role.

### Ethical Permission

In order to conduct the study, permission was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee of KTO Karatay University, numbered 55437 and dated 06.03.2023. The academicians were informed beforehand that participation in the study was voluntary and that the collected data would only be used for scientific purposes.

## Findings

### Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Reliability Analysis

Before testing the hypotheses proposed within the scope of the research model, CFA was conducted to determine the structural validity of the scales used in the research. During the analysis, care was taken to ensure that the standardized regression coefficient of the items in the scale should not be lower than 0.70 and the p value should not be higher than 0.05 (Hair et al., 2009, p. 679). “CMIN/DF, GFI, AGFI, CFI, NFI, RMSEA and SRMR” values were examined in order to determine the fit of the model. As a result of the analysis, the necessary reference values could not be reached in some values and modifications were made to the statements for improvements. ■ Table 2 shows the fit index values obtained after modification.

When ■ Table 2 is examined, it is seen that the fit indices of the scales are in the range of the fit index values taken as reference (Thakkar, 2020).

Subsequent to the CFA analyses, the analyses required for the reliability of the scales were made. As a result of the reliability analyses, it was seen that the Cronbach Alpha coefficient ( $\alpha = 0.959$ ) was higher than 0.70, so they met the reliability coefficient criterion.



**Table 2.**  
Criteria for Goodness of Fit Values

Model	p	α	χ <sup>2</sup>	df	CMIN/DF 2<x2/df<5	GFI >.90	AGFI >.90	CFI >.90	NFI >.90	RMSEA <.080	SRMR <.080
Model of Measurement	0.000	0.959	534.842	161	3.422	0.895	0.839	0.936	0.922	0.077	0.0677

In addition to these analyses, calculations of the AVE (average variance extracted), CR (composite reliability), MSV (maximum squared variance) and ASV (average shared square variance) values of the scales were made. As a result of the calculations, it was determined that the said values (Leader-member exchange: AVE=0.65, CR=0.79; workplace happiness: AVE=0.74, CR=0.87; job satisfaction: AVE=0.63, CR=0.85) were within the range of the reference values (AVE > .5; CR > .7; CR > AVE) (Hair et al., 2014, p. 619). The factors have been observed to provide convergent validity. Moreover, the observation that the values of AVE exceed those of MSV and ASV provides evidence of discriminant validity (Kline, 2016). Table 3 presents the convergent and discriminant validities of the variables.

**Table 3.**  
Values of Validity for Factors.

	CR	AVE	√AVE	MSV	ASV
Leader Member Exchange	0.79	0.65	0.81	0.53	0.51
Workplace Happiness	0.87	0.74	0.86	0.71	0.70
Job Satisfaction	0.85	0.63	0.80	0.51	0.50

Because the measurement model was validated, hypothesis tests were initiated.

### Basic Statistics on Variables

The descriptive statistics regarding the variables used in the study and the relationships between the variables are presented in Table 4.

When Table 4 is examined, it is seen that the skewness and kurtosis coefficients of the scales meet the condition of ±1.5 range. The fact that the coefficients in question are within this range shows that the data exhibit a normal distribution (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013, p. 481-498). The results of the correlation in Table 4 indicate that there is a positive (r = 0.722), strong and significant relationship between

**Table 4.**  
Descriptive Analysis Results and Relationships Between Variables

	$\bar{x}$	s.d.	Skewness	Kurtosis	1	2	3
1. Leader Member Exchange	3.27	1.17	-0.36	-1.41	1		
2. Job Satisfaction	3.45	1.13	-0.66	-1.08	.722**	1	
3. Workplace Happiness	3.28	1.07	-0.38	-1.32	.855**	.856**	1

Note: \*\* There is a significant relationship at the level of p < 0.01

leader-member exchange and job satisfaction, a positive (r = 0.855), strong and significant relationship between leader-member exchange and workplace happiness, and a positive (r = 0.856), strong and significant relationship between job satisfaction and workplace happiness.

### Analysis of Hypotheses

A hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to assess the impact of the connection between leader-member exchange and workplace satisfaction. Due to the normal distribution of the data, the Maximum Likelihood calculation method was used (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2018). The results of the analysis are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5.**  
Hierarchical Regression Analysis Results (N = 321)

Variables	Model 1		Model 2	
	B	S.E.	B	S.E.
LMX	0.49**	0.03	0.48**	0.03
JS	0.49**	0.03	0.55**	0.04
LMX x JS			0.07**	0.03
R	0.85		0.92	
R <sup>2</sup>	0.73		0.85	
Mod. R <sup>2</sup>	0.73		0.85	
▲R <sup>2</sup>	0.73		0.84	

Dependent Variable: Workplace happiness.  
Note: R<sup>2</sup>=0.73; \*\* There is a significant relationship at the level of p < 0.01,  
S.E.: Standard Error, Standardized beta coefficients (β) are reported.

The findings of the hierarchical regression analysis indicate that the variables of leader-member exchange and job satisfaction within the first group exhibit statistically significant contributions to the regression model (F<sub>2,319</sub> = 908.029, p < 0.01).

The adjusted R-squared value is 0.73. This result indicates that the leader-member exchange and job satisfaction variables account for 73 % of the variance in workplace happiness. In the second group, the inclusion of the interaction term in the regression model resulted in an increase of 12 % in the explained variance of workplace happiness and this change in R2 was found to be significant ( $F_{3,318} = 618.194, p < 0.01$ ). Leader-member exchange ( $\beta = 0.48, p < 0.01$ ) and job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.54, p < 0.01$ ) were found to have a significant and positive impact on workplace happiness when all the variables were incorporated into regression. The results in Table 5 show that high quality leader-member exchange positively affects workplace happiness, thus supporting the H1 hypothesis.

In order to determine the direction and seriousness of the effect of job satisfaction between leader-member exchange and workplace happiness, moderating effect analysis was applied (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

The analysis results obtained from the observed variables were evaluated based on the data presented in Table 5. Before the analysis, the values of the predictor variable and the moderator variable were standardized. The reason for standardizing the values is to accurately determine the effect of interaction term on the outcome variable (Alken & West, 1991, p. 11).

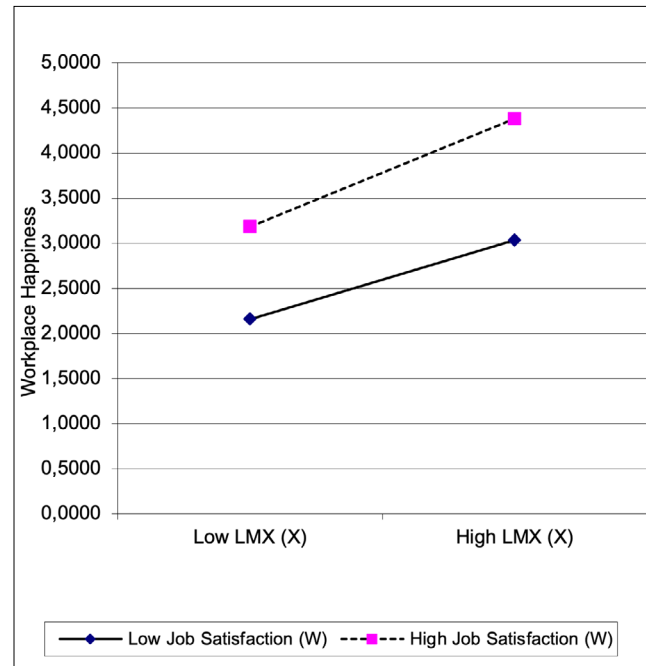
For moderator effect to exist in the relationship between the predictor variable (leader-member exchange) and the dependent variable (workplace happiness), it is necessary to show that the relationship between these two variables differs as the moderator variable (job satisfaction) takes different values (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2018, p. 292). In this respect, it was determined that leader-member exchange had positive and significant effects on workplace happiness ( $\beta = 0.48, p < 0.01$ ) and that job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.55, p < 0.01$ ) also had positive and significant effects on it. It was found that the moderater effect of the leader-member exchange and job satisfaction variables on workplace happiness was significant ( $\beta = 0.07, p < 0.01$ ).

It was seen that job satisfaction had a moderater role in the effect of leader member exchange on workplace happiness. However, a slope analysis was performed to examine the level of the moderating effect in case of low and high job satisfaction (Alken & West, 1991). The effects of the moderator variable as a result of the slope analysis are shown graphically in Figure 2.

The effects of the moderator variable observed as a result of the slope analysis are shown graphically in Figure 2. When the details of the moderating effect were examined, it was observed that the effect of leader-member exchange on workplace happiness increased further when job satisfaction was high ( $\beta = 0.598, p < 0.01$ ). In the case where the effect of job satisfaction was low ( $\beta = 0.438, p < 0.01$ ), it was seen that the leader-member exchange had a low and significant effect on workplace happiness. It was found that the moderater

Figure 2.

Graphic Representation of the Moderating Effect of Job Satisfaction.



effect of the leader-member exchange and job satisfaction variables on workplace happiness was significant ( $\beta = 0.07, p < 0.01$ ). According to the moderator effect analysis proposed by Baron and Kenny, it is necessary to establish a substantial relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable in order to discuss the presence of an effect. “Furthermore, it is imperative that the interaction variable, which is derived from the multiplication of the independent variable and the moderator variable (perceived risk), have a statistically significant impact on the dependent variable” (Koç et al., 2017, p. 243). Despite a decrease in the beta coefficient for interaction variables, Table 5 reveals that both independent variables and interaction variables have a statistically significant effect on the dependent variable. As a result of the findings obtained, the H2 hypothesis was supported. In conclusion, it can be said that if job satisfaction is high, the effect of leader-member exchange on workplace happiness is also high, which means that the relationship between leader-member exchange and workplace happiness is moderated by job satisfaction.

## Conclusion, Limitations and Future Research

Investing in society and people is a necessity for the development of a country (Gür, 2017, p. 177-178). Education is one of the best investments in people. Universities have a very important role in that in addition to education and training, they share the outputs of the information they have obtained through the researches they conduct. In this context, academicians undertake very critical tasks for the development of countries, nations





and humanity by producing and transferring knowledge, educating individuals in society, bringing them into social life, employing them and contributing to scientific studies (Serinkan & Tülü, 2020, p. 50). This is because the scientific studies undertaken by academicians lie at the center of many advances that contribute to social life.

This study was conducted to determine the moderator role of job satisfaction in the effect of leader-member exchange among academicians on workplace happiness. When the relevant literature was reviewed, no studies were found investigating the moderator effect of job satisfaction on the relationship between leader-member exchange in academia and workplace happiness. In this context, a research was conducted on 321 academicians in order to draw attention to the subject and contribute to the field. This size of the sample, which was reached through the online survey method, was deemed to be able to represent the population (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013, p. 123).

In the research, descriptive statistics and the relationships between the variables were checked before the analysis was initiated. Then, hypothesis tests were conducted using regression analysis and moderator effect analysis. Confirmatory factor analysis was performed to evaluate the construct validity of the measurement tools. According to the CFA results, the leader-member exchange scale was analyzed with seven items in one dimension, the workplace happiness scale with eight items in one dimension, and the job satisfaction scale with five items in one dimension, and goodness of fit values were found to be good and acceptable. It was determined that the reliability levels of the measurement tools were also within acceptable limits.

One of the major purposes of the research was to determine the effect of leader-member exchange on workplace happiness. As a result of the regression analysis performed, it was revealed that there was a positive and high-level relationship between leader-member exchange and workplace happiness. Hence, as the leader-member exchange increased, workplace happiness increased accordingly, and workplace happiness decreased as leader-member exchange decreased. In this context, it is clear that when academics feel that they are taken into consideration and cared for by their leaders, their workplace happiness is also positively affected. The results of the studies conducted by Amirullah, 2017; Büyükyılmaz & Yenici, 2021; García-Contreras et al., 2022; Greguras & Ford, 2006; Salas-Vallina et al., 2021 and Turan, 2022 also support this interaction.

The most important result of the study emerged as a result of the moderator effect analysis. A moderator effect analysis was conducted to determine the moderator role of job satisfaction in the effect of academics' leader-member exchange on workplace happiness. According to the analysis, it was seen that the leader-member exchange of the academicians explained a significant portion of the variation

in workplace happiness, and the effect was significant and positive. It was also determined that academicians' job satisfaction had positive and significant effects. In addition, it transpired that the moderating effect of leader-member exchange and job satisfaction variables on academicians' workplace happiness was significant. In order to understand the effect of leader-member exchange on workplace happiness when the moderator effect of job satisfaction was high or low, slope analysis was carried out. As a result of the analysis, it was observed that the effect of leader-member exchange on workplace happiness increased further when the job satisfaction of academicians was high. This means that the relationship between leader-member exchange and workplace happiness is moderated by job satisfaction. When the effect of academicians' job satisfaction was low, it was observed that the effect of leader-member exchange on workplace happiness was low and significant. As a result, the moderator effect of job satisfaction was reflected in the effect of leader-member exchange of academicians on workplace happiness (Fisher, 2010, p. 388). Although the findings cannot be generalized to all academics, they highlight the value of leader-member exchange in workplace happiness. Academics' perception of themselves as employees close to their manager causes them to develop more positive reactions to their work and positively affects their workplace happiness. Similar findings seem to have been reached in previous studies (Büyükyılmaz & Yenici, 2021; Hesli & Lee, 2013; Li et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2017).

It is believed that the findings and inferences obtained as a result of the research may contribute to the discipline together with other studies in the literature, because academics contribute, directly or indirectly, to the development of societies. Therefore, better leader-member exchanges of academicians will enable them to enjoy their work more and increase their workplace happiness. This, in turn, will enhance their productivity and efficiency.

The most important limitation of the study is that its data were collected only from public and private universities in a certain region. In addition, since there are perceptual evaluations concerning the managers in the survey, the assumption that there is no bias in the answers given to the statements, in other words, existence of participant bias is another limitation.

In the light of the results obtained from this study, some suggestions have been made for researchers who want to work on this subject in the future and the academicians in the management position and are presented below:

- In this regard, public and foundation universities can be examined comparatively in studies to be conducted on academicians.
- The study was conducted using quantitative research method. Researchers who want to work on this subject can analyze this situation both quantitatively and qualitatively by using mixed method.

- In addition to the results obtained, the inclusion of other variables in the analysis and more comprehensive studies may increase the usefulness of this study.
- In the studies planned to be carried out in the future, different findings can be reached and research results can be developed by not limiting the sample to academicians.
- When doing research on academics, researchers may choose different variables to assess the moderating impact of job satisfaction on workplace happiness.
- The leader has a function that can perform many activities in the organization. The interaction of the leader with his/her followers can also provide very useful outputs from an organizational point of view. In this respect, it is necessary to strengthen the leader-member exchange in academia in order to increase workplace happiness and job satisfaction.
- In academic organizations, the harmony of manager-manager, manager-subordinate and subordinate-subordinate relationships must be ensured. In order to achieve this, the values, ideas and suggestions of all academic groups should be taken into account and their active participation in the necessary processes should be ensured.
- Managers should not engage in behaviors that reduce job satisfaction in order not to disappoint academics, not to harm their general happiness in the working environment, and not to reduce the quality of leader-member exchange.

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