

**Interactional Justice, Leader-Member Exchange, Job Satisfaction: An Internal Marketing Perspective****Dr Zia Khalid<sup>1</sup>, Muhammad Farhan Munir<sup>2</sup>, Dr Ishtiaq Ahmed Malik<sup>3</sup>**<sup>1</sup> Lecturer MUST Business School, Mirpur University of Science & Technology. [zia.ms@must.edu.pk](mailto:zia.ms@must.edu.pk)<sup>2</sup> Faculty of Economic Sciences and Media, Technische Universität Ilmenau Germany.  
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[ishtiaqahmed.malik@hotmail.com](mailto:ishtiaqahmed.malik@hotmail.com)**DOI: <https://doi.org/10.70670/sra.v3i4.1405>****Abstract**

Current conceptual work is rooted in internal marketing and Social Exchange Theory (SET) theories. The relationship between interactional justice and leader–member exchange (LMX) is the focus of this research with job satisfaction in the moderating role. Job satisfaction is a central construct in organizational behavior, HRM, and services marketing; having been greatly examined other than the condition shaping leadership processes. Research in the past demonstrates that fair interpersonal treatment by leaders enhances the quality of leader–follower relationships. Existing studies, however, have not discussed employees’ affective evaluations of their work. Employing organizational justice, LMX, and internal marketing literature, present work proposes that job satisfaction can strengthen the positive effects of interactional justice on LMX. It does so by enhancing employees’ willingness to reciprocate fair treatment through high-quality social exchanges. Thus, putting job satisfaction in moderation role this paper advances understanding of justice–exchange dynamics from a new perspective.

**Introduction**

One change that can be broadly experienced in contemporary organizations is about the status of employees. Their status is now of internal stakeholders; influential in organizational effectiveness and sustainability (Isazadeh et al., 2025). Internal marketing perspective conceptualizes employees as internal customers. The emphasis is clear: organizational success depends on the value these internal customers receive from their work environment (Brown, 2025; Isazadeh et al., 2025; Khalid & Hadi., 2021<sup>a</sup>; Khalid & Hadi., 2021<sup>b</sup>). Goals, emotions, and evaluative judgments of employees prepare the ground for their commitment, and performance; centralizing relational leadership in organizational functioning (Vadilla et al., 2025; Pinheiro & Palma-Moreira, 2025). Leadership behaviors that promote respect, transparency, and meaningful interpersonal interaction make up the core of managerial purposes and cover strategic internal marketing objectives.

Organizational justice offers employees a mechanism to evaluate leadership practices and employer’s intentions. Among its dimensions, interactional justice occupies a salient position, capturing the quality of interpersonal treatment employees receive from leaders (Qandeel et al; 2025. Zhang et al; 2024) Interactional justice refers to whether employees feel dignified and they get adequate, and honest information and explanations in those interactions. Compared to other dominating forms of justices, distributive and procedural justice, which focus on outcomes and formal processes; it follows on how decisions are actually

communicated. It reduces emotional exhaustion and burnout, fosters commitment, enhances performance, and is a reliable talent retention mechanism (Du et al., 2024; Köksal & Mert, 2024; González-Cánovas et al., 2024).

Interactional justice aptly explains relational outcomes through LMX theory. LMX has its roots in SET and conceptualizes leadership as a dyadic exchange process in which leaders develop relationships of varying quality with subordinates (Ahmad 2025 et al.,; Jain et al., 2025; Shang et al., 2024). SET posits that social relationships evolve through reciprocal exchanges of valued resources, including trust, respect, support, and information (Asseefa et al., 2024). High-quality LMX relationships have open communication, mutual trust, and emotional support while low-quality exchanges are quite transactional and role-bound (Willie, 2025). Thus, when leaders show interactional justice, employees value relational commitment. Research confirms that interactional justice is a significant antecedent of LMX quality (Assefa et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2024). Poor interpersonal behaviors on the other end may not be received positively and, thus, undermining leader–follower relationships (González-Cánovas et al., 2024). From an IM standpoint, it encourages employees to perceive themselves as valued internal customers.

Extant literature suggests this important relationship has not come under discussion in the light of job satisfaction (Alshahrani et al., 2025). Thus, employees' affective and attitudinal states need to be talked about. Job satisfaction is the evaluation of an employee's own job experiences (Mujtaba et al., 2025). Improved commitment and morale, retention, discipline, positive work environment, individual performance, financial performance, organizational performance are some of its valuable outcomes (Jogi et al., 2025; Mujtaba et al., 2025; Pinheiro & Palma-Moreira, 2025; Vadilla et al., 2025). Moreover, reviews of leadership and interactional justice literature call for greater attention to boundary conditions that can effect these outcomes (Bennouna et al., 2025). Satisfaction according to SET can, therefore, moderate employees' reciprocation of interactional justice-LMX relationship.

## **Literature Review**

### **Leader-Member-Exchange(LMX)**

Researchers have focused a great emphasis upon leader member exchange due to the obvious effects it has on staff performance (Aggarwal et al., 2020). The leader- member exchange theory investigates leadership at the dyadic level between both the leader and a follower (Anand et al., 2018). Leader member exchange is based on social exchange theory and believes that supervisors have a unique connection with each employee that is negotiated through time as a consequence of job requirements and desires involving member and leader (Atitumpong & Badir, 2018). With LMX relation, the feeling of respect motivates employees to get a more optimistic consciousness. Additionally, supervisors' encouragement, facilities and cooperation can boost employees' moral and worth, which helps them to adopt their organization's image and enhance employee commitment. A supervisor who has a supporting style of leadership demonstrates care for followers and considers their unique requirements. This approach may result in an effective leader-follower connection (Keskes et al., 2018). The main objective of Leader member exchange is to refute the widespread perceptions about homogenous interaction of leaders in terms of behaviour. Thus, shifting the emphasis of study away from the leader and onto the supervisor- subordinate interaction (Zhao et al., 2019).

Leader-member interaction continues to be among the most famous and effective methods for improving our theoretical and practical knowledge of, how leader-follower relationships impact workplace phenomena (Yu et al., 2018). A strong connection between leader and the followers is linked with a number of favorable work-related benefits, including organisational commitment and job satisfaction(Saeed et al., 2019). Executives who are more engaged with their followers are more likely to develop and sustain higher level LMX. Leader member exchange may be seen as a tool for increasing employee satisfaction (Gutermann et al., 2017). Supervisors use a range of methods to develop connections with their subordinates, depending on their unique requirements, mind-sets, and characteristics (Herman et al., 2018). Leaders who openly appreciate and

applaud their followers' accomplishments are more likely to create a bond of mutual loyalty with their followers. This connection is seen as an advantage by followers, who fear losing it if they leave the group, thus increasing their devotion to the organization (Keskes et al., 2018). Employees evaluate not only the absolute quality of their connection with their superiors, but also the relative quality of their relationship with their superiors by comparing it to the relative LMX (Zhao et al., 2019).

Supervisors may help workers develop a positive body by reminding them of their importance to the business. This strategy may be especially effective if workers are made to feel necessary in the creation of high-quality commodities (Lindsey Hall et al., 2016). In the absence of social contact among followers and leaders, followers' participation may be reduced, thus diminishing the benefits of LMX (Anand et al., 2018). Leaders sometimes put these efforts in a various way to different employees by treating some of the workers with higher interactional justice and some with a comparatively low level. This heterogeneous treatment at the group level is known as high interactional justice differentiation (He et al., 2017). Higher level of Leader-member exchange relationships are based on trust, respect and loyalty, low LMX relationships are defined as a reflection of distrust, a lack of respect and disloyalty (Saeed et al., 2019). A Standard leader member exchange connection fosters mutual respect between members and leaders. In exchange, the leader improves employee's empowerment in work environments by providing scarce resources, decision-making freedom, and so on. This demonstrates the need of developing a good working relationship in order to maximize the benefits of these manager-empowering methods (Aggarwal et al., 2020).

There are two types of LMX relations discussed in the literature in-group and out-group LMX (Lian, 2017; Madlock et al., 2007). Employees in in-group classifications have higher-quality leader-member exchange connections as compared to employees in out-group categories, owing to their closeness to their leaders and their improved overt and covert ties with their leaders. This is in contrast to outgroup members, who have less engagement with their leaders, have worse formal and informal connections with respective leaders, and ultimately they have lower-quality leader-member exchange relationships (Buch & Kuvaas, 2016; J. Singh & Rukta, 2018).

### **Interactional Justice**

Individuals' concerns about the caliber of interpersonal treatment they get during the execution of organizational procedures are termed as interactional justice (He et al., 2017). The rationale for interactional justice in the organizations is based on social exchange theory as well as the norm of reciprocity as an element of organizational culture (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Interactional justice can be elaborated as the contextual performance or interpersonal aspect of organizational activities, i.e., how organizational authorities behave and communicate with one another. It relates particularly to the manner in which managers treat workers with concern, fairness, and civility (Van Dijke et al., 2019).

Members are highly concerned over how someone is behaved in organizational structure, and they prefer to avoid and even condemn those who treat others unfairly, particularly when it comes to offenses involving interactional justice (O'Reilly et al., 2016). Interactional justice results in a considerable number of positive results so the leaders should put their time and struggles to secure the self-respect and reliability of their workers (He et al., 2017).

Wellbeing of an employee is harmed by a lack of interactional justice, which leads to unpleasant feel or stress, as well as work discontent (Van Dijke et al., 2019). Employees' stress levels are reduced and their well-being is increased as a result of leader member exchange (Herman et al., 2018). People who had a more positive feeling of interactional justice at their company than their peers did not score as highly on the scale of negative emotions as those who did not have a pleasant sense of interactional fairness. Apperception of insufficient interactional justice is connected with verbal harshness directed towards colleagues or superiors, as well as with a decrease in employee participation (Van Yperen et al., 2000). When employees recognize they are being treated fairly by officials such as leadership and management in terms of respect, and politeness in making

reward decisions and have gained sufficient explanations for the officials' reasons for enforcing certain guidelines and restrictions to determine outcomes, this situation may result as an increased sense of interactional justice (Guan & Hsu, 2018).

Following a review of the literature, it was determined that there are three distinct kinds of organizational justice, Distributive, procedural and interactional justice (Jayus, 2021; Martínez-Tur et al., 2006). Distributive justice represents the views of the result fairness that workers get, whereas procedural justice relates to being aware of fairness regarding, methods or processes utilised to produce such outcomes. While Interactional justice is concerned with workers' views of the fairness in the term of decision-makers' interpersonal treatment at a workplace (Phong & Son, 2020). Interactional justice, contrasting distributive or procedural justice, is not restricted to resource distribution and decision-making settings. Instead, it comprises the whole range of everyday interpersonal relationships involving executives and their workers (He et al., 2017). Evaluating all the three aspects (Yadav, 2017) and (X. Wang et al., 2010) considered interactional justice as the strongest predictor of organizational commitment. As procedural and distributive justices are primarily concerned with outcomes at organizational level, while, interactional justice is concerned with individual-level outcomes such as an employee's behavior and attitudes (Bies, 2001). When this comes to matters of organizational justice, the majority of studies address the aspects of procedural justice. However, in this study, special importance is placed on the interpersonal component of fairness, which is known as interactional justice (Guan & Hsu, 2018).

Furthermore, two aspects of interactional justice had been determined as informational justice and interpersonal justice (Bosselut et al., 2018; Fein et al., 2013). Interpersonal Justice relates to the level at which workers are treated respectfully inside the company with dignity, while informational belongs to the level at which information/explanations are provided in line with the choice that has been made (Wijaya et al., 2020). When you take individual consideration into account, every employee is inspired to perform with concentrated effort while the influence of group motivation becomes more apparent on broader perceptions of interactional fairness (Khan et al., 2020). The higher the degree of employee performance, the more satisfied the employee is with his work (Dewi & Amar, 2019). (Miharja et al., 2020) also found that if employees in organizations are treated with respect and given with the knowledge necessary to do their jobs, workers are more likely to sense their managers' support.

### **Interactional Justice and Leader Member Exchange**

Effectiveness in connection between a management and workers is related to interactional justice, which is often determined by the leader's orientation toward members (Ali et al., 2019). In the perspective of organizational justice, an absence of adequate connection between the leader and a member may hinder the growth of high-quality leader-member interaction (Vanić et al., 2019). In comparison to procedural justice, interactional justice is a more powerful predictor of LMX (Cropanzano & Byrne, 2000). Leader member exchange consists of two dimensions: methods to developing positive relationships with workers, which include trust support and loyalty. This favorable connection is established as a consequence of positive justice views among working groups, which affects the quality of relationship between leader and member (Siswanti et al., 2020). Leaders and their members both evaluate the relationship's quality. A high-quality relationship is defined by an abundance of information sharing, an abundance of respect and trust with broad support, an abundance of reciprocity engagement and rewards (Fein et al., 2013).

Generally, literature has established that managers do make trade distinctions amongst their subordinates. It is advantageous to be in a dyad with a high Leader member exchange since it is connected with increased trust, warmth, and support, as well as more frequent contact between the dyad members (Lo et al., 2006). Due to the fact that people are constantly in contact with their team members and leaders, both leaders and team members may be found liable for views of interactional justice. As a result, we propose that interactional fairness will associate favorably with LMX (Murphy et al., 2003). Through a process of social comparison,

members may compare their ratio of contributions and rewards to those of other group members. In the context of LMX, a high-quality connection is defined as one that extends beyond the contractual relationship and is likely to result positive behaviors (Bhal,2006).

Interactional justice would be essential in shaping the degree of organizational social exchanges, as demonstrated by organizational support and leader-member interaction (Waskito et al., 2020). Interactional justice is critical in enabling high-quality leader– member exchanges that have a positive effect on employee engagement. However, little attention has been paid to the wider environment in which these impacts occur (Lu, 2014). Due to the fact that a choice about whether to be an in-group or out-group member is made based on the quality of the connection, interactional justice is a critical component of LMX. Interactional justice is important to LMX, since communication is a critical domain of LMX, and interactional justice emphasizes cooperation among leaders and members about choices (Eyüpoğlu,2017).

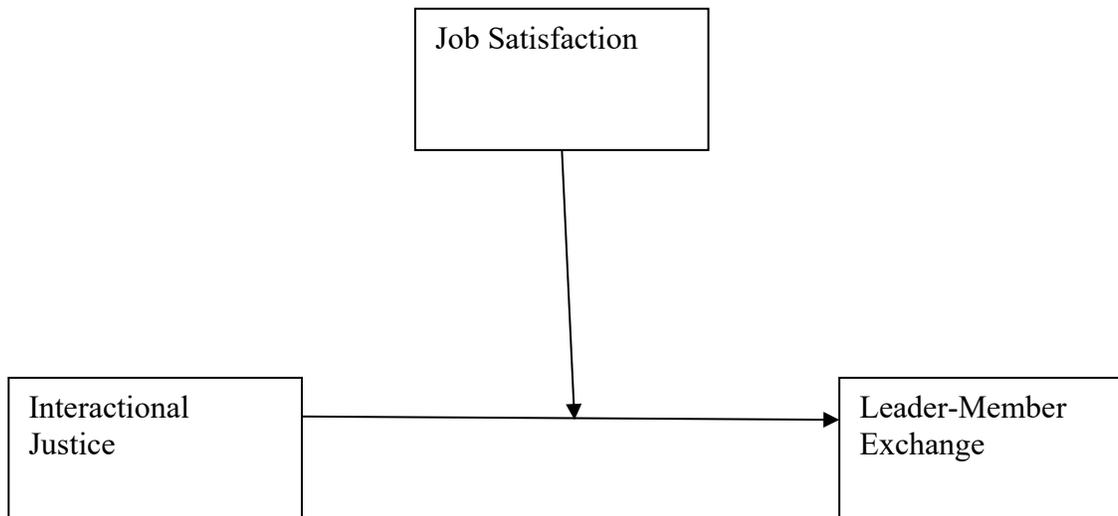
P1: Interactional justice has a significantly positive impact on leader-member exchange.

### **Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction, at its most general level, refers to an individual's overall assessment of their job (Hoff et al., 2020). Job satisfaction is a joyful or good emotional state that occurs as a consequence of one's evaluation of job or work experience (Asbari et al., 2020). Finding and keeping quality employees is directly related to employee job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is a person's attitude towards his or her job, as well as his or her workplace. A good measure of work satisfaction in this context takes into account an employee's assessment of various elements of the job, according to his or her own objectives (Ladebo et al., 2008). When it comes to managing staff, one of the most challenging areas for present era's managers is job satisfaction.

The increased level of job satisfaction will also result in better service quality, helping employees learn to become customer-oriented (Ping & Ahmad, 2015). Administration must put a huge emphasis on job satisfaction in order to boost efficiency and provide superior service. Employees who are delighted with their jobs are seem to be capable of performing at a better level (Karem et al., 2019). Job satisfaction had transformed into a foundation around which employees' performance is evaluated. When individuals discuss employees' job attitudes, they are most often talking to their job satisfaction (Kong et al., 2018). Employee job satisfaction is influenced by their working environment. Bad working circumstances make it difficult for employees to demonstrate their talents and reach their full potential, thus it is critical that businesses recognize the value of a positive working environment (Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015). Management should establish a dynamic corporate culture and undertake effective supporting actions to improve the employees' job satisfaction. Job satisfaction refers to a negative or positive feeling elicited by an employee's assessment of his or her degree of job satisfaction (Asbariet al., 2020). Since numerous individual and organizational outcomes are contributed by job satisfaction (Eliyana & Ma'arif, 2019; Jogi et al., 2025; Mujtaba et al., 2025; Pinheiro & Palma-Moreira, 2025; Vadilla et al., 2025), so it is proposed:

P2: Higher job satisfaction will strengthen the interactional justice and leader-member exchange relationship.



**Figure:** Theoretical Model

### Theoretical Contribution

Very first theoretical contribution is it deals with internal marketing theory, organizational justice, and LMX in a single study where employees as internal customers are proposed to make possible organizational outcomes. Secondly, SET also finds advancement when job satisfaction is a psychological condition necessary to enable reciprocal exchange processes. Thirdly, justice and leadership literature finds new meanings with the internal job satisfaction as a moderator to develop high-quality leader–member exchanges.

### Limitations and Future Directions

As a conceptual paper, this study does not provide empirical validation of the proposed framework. Future research should empirically test the moderating role of job satisfaction using longitudinal and multi-source designs across different sectors and cultural contexts. Additionally, future studies may examine other internal marketing variables, such as internal communication or psychological empowerment, as complementary boundary conditions in justice–LMX relationships. Exploring these dynamics in developing economies may further enrich understanding of contextual influences on leadership effectiveness.

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