Leader-Member Quality Relationship, Perceived Organizational Support and Employee Voice Behavior: Moderating Role of Core Self-Evaluation.

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***Abstract*— The purpose of this research is to investigate the impact of relational exchange and individual differences on the employee voice. In the light of social exchange theory, the present study proposed the relationship between Leader-member quality relationships and employee voice. This study explains 'how' this relationship establishes and 'why' this relationship keeps carrying on. It has been proposed that perception of organizational support mediates the association between leader-member quality relationships and employees' promotive and prohibitive voice behaviors. Moreover, personality trait is another important factor which is inseparable from developing perceptions and behaviors. The perceptions about organizational support and the strength of raising voice can be highly predictable by individual's personality traits. So, this study has undertaken core self-evaluation as personality trait and explores people having different core self-evaluation (CSE) shows different strengths for promotive and prohibitive voicing based on leader-member quality relationships (LMQR) and perceived organizational support (POS).**

***Index Terms*-- Leader-member relationship, perceived organizational support, employee voice, core self-evaluation and social exchange theory**

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background

For over six decades of organizational research work, scholars and practitioners have recognized the importance of those behaviors which are not although specified in employee work role but it contributed a lot to the organizational social and psychological development (LePine & Van Dyne, 2001). Voice as discretionary and constructive extra-role, is an expression of employees' positive opinions and concerns about their constructive work-related issues (Botero & Van Dyne, 2009). It cannot be specified in advance; neither can be predictable by reward system nor be held for punishment when not performed (Liang, et. al. 2012; LePine & Van Dyne, 2001; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998).

Employee voice behavior is often change-oriented behavior. It is raised when the attention of higher authority is required towards organizational betterment and some adjustments are required. Voice is usually a positive challenge in favor of organization from an employee's point of view. Although an employee voice can raise provocation against organizational status quo but leader's and organization's affiliation with an employee can provide basic support to implement or adjust the employee's expected demand present in his voice (Liang, et. al. 2012; LePine and Van Dyne, 2001). Employee's utmost priority is to analyze the situation and organization's commitment to him/her before voicing.

Employees give value to that organization support which is without any enforcement and its implication is highly in donor's control. When employees receive valuable and dignifying treatment from their organization then they also try to reciprocate it as an obligation with discretionary extra-role behaviors. These discretionary behaviors clearly indicate that donors' and recipients' positive valuation of each other.

Leaders, donor or recipient of discretionary behavior, act as agents of an organization. Their actions are indicatives of overall organization's intention rather than their own motives only.

In social exchange theories (Graen & Scandura, 1987; Eisenberger, et. al. 1986), the quality of leader-member relationship relays on the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), felt obligation and the idea of repaying obligation (Wayne, et. al. 1997). When one party, either leader or employee, provides extra-role benefits to other party then there arises expectation in one party and obligation on other party to fulfill the future returns. Behaviors automatically reciprocate when benefits go beyond the demands of in-role. The social exchange theory not only presents the importance of reciprocity norm, it also highlights the employee's positive attitudinal evaluation (organizational support). Positive attitudinal evaluation makes one party to perceive the other party's behavior as in favor and encourage paying back that behavior as an obligation (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

In the light of social exchange framework, this study is intended to propose LMQR and employee voice relationship. It will also be explained 'how' this relationship is established and 'why' this relationship is kept carrying on in an organization. It is proposed that POS mediates the relationship between LMQR and employee's prohibiting or promoting voice. Moreover, there is another important factor of personality traits which are inseparable and assist in developing perceptions and behaviors (Bono & Judge, 2003). Traits affect individual's propensity to

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analyze and respond to perception of organizational support and voicing. This study also explores that how people having different personality traits show different strengths of promotive and prohibitive voicing based on LMQR contextual organizational support.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Intense business competition has provoked the organizations to rely more upon employees' abilities and contribution for continuous innovation. The role of leader-member relationship is proven to be very supportive for constructive voice behavior because it can disclose problems and solution to problems as well as point out some other ideas that may help (Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009; Van Dyne & Lepine, 1998). LMQR further turns more effective when it becomes representative of POS.. Employee high on LMQR. is also high on POS. (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2006; Eisenberger, *et al*. 2002). Employee's POS further make him/her acceptable to raise his/her voice.

The underlying frame work in this area research is social exchange theory. It provide prominent theoretical basis for LMX and POS (Wayne, *et al.* 1997). Both of these variables are based upon the discretionary exchange philosophy. LMX is dyadic exchange relationship between a leader and follower (Zhang, *et al.* 2012; Graen & Uhl-Bein, 1995). In the social exchange relationship "*each party must offer something the other party sees as valuahle and each party must see the exchange as reasonably equitable or fair*" (Graen & Scandura, 1987: 182).

LMX's vertical dyadic linkage develops over time during a series of exchange processes, which includes 'role-taking', 'role-making', and 'role-routinization' (Zhang, *et al.* 2012). In 'role-taking' stage, a relationship between leader and member is tested. Leader sends some roles to a follower and evaluates the responses. If follower fulfils all the requirements of that role then leader sends him other role and in this way relationship continue. At 'role-making' stage, both leader and member send roles to each other and evaluate each other's responses. At 'role-routinization' stage, the relationship becomes more established and influential (Graen & Scandura, 1987). As a result of these exchange processes, leaders develop unique relationship with their followers. The quality of these relationships ranges from low (LQR) to high (HQR) quality relationship, from transactional to transformational, from money orientation to respect, trust and mutual obligation (Zhang, *et al.* 2012; Wayne, et. al., 1997).

As far as social exchange theory is concerned, it encompasses the transformational social exchange between leader and members more clearly and evidently. In other words social exchange includes psychological exchanges or favors like respect, trust, support and mutual obligations (Graen & Uhl.Bien, 1995).

Thus this social exchange is what comprises the LMQR and POS. Wayne, et. al. (1997) have clearly discussed LMX and POS as discretionary behavior and unspecified obligation (Gouldner, 1960) which highly dependent upon the will of one party to give benefit to other party. Although the donor of benefit does not know when and in what form that favor will be reciprocated but in the social exchange norm, recipient of benefit has feelings of obligation. Those feelings of obligation are beyond the scope of usual job description and expectation.

A. LMQR and POS

POS is *"employees develop global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being"* (Eisenberger, *et. al*., 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Mainly, POS deals with psychological processes affecting the consequences of POS.

POS makes employees to feel obligation towards their organization's betterment and help it to reach its objectives. When organization cares and values employees' contribution then employees also carry organizational membership and role status into their social identity.

LMQR and POS usually take time to get establish because the balance and the quality in reciprocation are determined over time. It also ensures employees' easy access to leader, better communication, material, information, emotional support, and better roles (Graen & Scandura, 1987). Provision of aforementioned benefits to employees lead to have overall organizational support (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002) in a job. Therefore before raising the voice employee must read the wind to estimate how much interpersonal environment is favorable for voicing (Liang, et. al. 2012).

POS also increases performance reward expectancies (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2006; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002) in employee. All these psychological processes have favorable results for employees and organizations. Employees normally show affective commitment, high performance, decreased turnover, satisfaction, and pleasant mood which may lead them to extra-role behaviors. Employees clearly believe that their organization has a general positive or negative attitude towards them which encircles employees' contribution and well-being.

Employees' this general belief is normally developed through three major factors: fairness, supervisory support and organizational rewards and job conditions (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Eisenberger, et. al., 2001). How much an employee will get supervisor's support is highly dependent upon LMQR. Although several research work in literature had shown indirect relationship between LMX and POS (Yoon, Han, & Seo, 1996), but the work of Wayne and colleagues (1997) had first empirically tested this relationship. They supported the positive relationship between leader-member quality relationship and POS (0.727). The work of Rhoades & Eisenberger (2006) on the LMX and POS relationship has shown significant and positive correlations (0.50).

General belief about POS develops when supervisors evaluate employees' performance, positively or negatively, and employees view their leader's favorable or unfavorable orientation towards them as indication of organizational support (Ng, Feldman & Butts, 2014; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2006). Leaders are actually viewed as an organizational agent, having responsibilities of leading and evaluating employees' performance. Leader's evaluation also provokes the positive

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or negative feelings about respective employee in upper management which in return contribute to POS. Hence, linking leader-member exchange to POS. Positive evaluation of employee behavior creates positive and supportive POS (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

When organization gives value to employee's contribution and cares about his/her welfare then obviously there would be some indication of doing so. Wayne, et. al. (1997) suggests some indicators of POS such as employee recognition, higher positions, higher rewards, increased salary, trainings and job security (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2006). Following proposition can be derived:

P1: LMQR has positive association with POS.

B. POS and Employee Voice

Support from leader and organization are core social support employees received in the work place. Using the theoretical aspect of social exchange theory, researchers frequently conceptualized POS as the "quality of social exchange between an employee and his or her employing organization (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). When employees have perceived organizational support then they believe that organization values their contribution to its well-being, helps when they need a special favor, considers their goals and values, cares about their well-being and reward their increased efforts (Eisenberger, et. al. 1986). In the norm of reciprocity employees feel obligation to care about organization's welfare and even go beyond the expected job description, i.e. extra-role behavior (Loi, Ao & Xu, 2014).

Voice as an extra-role has been initiated by Van Dyne and his colleagues (1998, 2003, 2008). Two typologies of extra-role as Promotive and prohibitive voice were although well conceptualized by (Van Dyne, et. al. 2008; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998; Liang, et. al. 2012; Maynes & Podsakoff, 2014) but these two types of voice have been less investigated as an distinctive constructs. Very less literature is available in which promotive and prohibitive voice has been studied as extra-role and their relationship has been investigated with different individual and organizational social or relational variables.

Different types of voice have been studied in literature but as an outcome of some dissatisfaction, bad or abusive management rather than as extra-role behavior which is indeed based on employees' basic satisfaction with an organization. In literature, Maynes & Podsakoff (2014) recently developed an expanded set of employee voice behaviors and tried to validate voice measures for four different types of voice: *supportive voice*, which provide support for valuable work-related policies, programs, objectives, procedures, etc., or speaking out in defense of these same things when they are being unfairly criticized.; *constructive voice, which s*uggest improvements to standard operating and proposing ideas for new or more effective work methods procedures*; defensive voice*, which is opposing changes to procedures, work policies, and speaking against policies, even when change is necessary; and destructive voice, which is harshly criticizing work policies, practices and procedures. Maynes and Podsakoff (2014, p. 88) authors also suggested a revised definition of employee voice as *"an individual's voluntary and open communication directed toward individuals within the organization that is focused on influencing the context of the work environment"*.

Liang *et al*. (2012) describe two types of voice: promotive voice and prohibitive voice. Among all above mentioned voices; Liang, et. al. (2012) has described voice into two types with definite boundaries.

Voice is usually a positive challenge and constructive response in the favor of organization from an employees' side. Liang et. al. (2012) proposed that voice can be both promotive and prohibitive. When it is raised to promote the importance of new ideas, innovations and how they will work practically to improve the present organizational status quo; this is Promotive voice. Voice can become threatening along with its 'a-positive-challenge' property when raised to prohibit the harmful employee behaviors, work practices, processes, and incidents; then voice becomes a Prohibitive voice.

Prohibitive voice is a symptom of an organizational ailment, which is an alarm signaling towards organizational inefficiency and ineffectiveness (Liang, et. al. 2012). Although an employee voice can raise provocation against organizational status quo but leader's and organization's affiliation with an employee can provide basic support to implement or adjust the employee's expected demand present in his voice (LePine & Van Dyne, 2001).

POS signifies to the service employees that they are being cared, valued, and recognized by the organization. When they need support, they trust that organization is willing to give a helping hand (Chiang & Hsieh, 2012). According to social exchange theory, employees will be obliged with the norm of reciprocity to pay back in constructive way. Tucker, Chmiel, Turner, Hershcovis & Stride, (2008) comment that when employee behavior is perceived as meeting social obligations then exchange process is generative and the cycle continues.

Promotive voice is an ideal behavior for fulfilling such obligation since it is future-focused and points to construct a better state of the organization. By proactively suggesting new ideas and improvements to the organization, foreign workers should have a strong sense that they can help the effective functioning of the organization in the long run (Loi, Ao & Xu, 2014).

By nature, promotive voice is future-focused and aims to develop a better state of the organization through the provision of innovative ideas and suggestions. It should ultimately enhance organizational adaptability and competitiveness in the long run (Liang et al., 2012). In line with the theoretical underpinning of social exchange theory, promotive voice should be a more favorable and valued currency of exchange to the organization than to leader only.

In view of the above arguments, following hypothesis is proposed:

P2: POS is positively related to promotive voice.

Prohibitive voice as indicator of existing workplace problems ((Maynes, & Podsakoff, 2014; Liang et. al. 2012).

Liang et al. (2012) found that under high-quality social exchange relationship, employees possessed felt obligation to provide prohibitive voice to reciprocate to the exchange donor's supportiveness and caring. Maynes & Podsakoff, (2014) research was conducted to a sample of executive MBA students studying at a large university in the United States indicated that supportive work environment commenced employees' willingness to take the risk of voicing out.

Organizational relevant and socio emotional support from the leader and organization enhance employees' belief that their organizations and leaders value their contribution and will support them up when they are in need. Thus, this research expects that POS should encourage employees to speak in 'prohibitive voice' due to the norm of reciprocity inherited in their social exchange relationships. They may consider that pointing out the past or future problems and practices which are harmful to the organizational functioning is beneficial to the organization by the cost reductions and negative effects of process losses (Liang, et. al., 2012) in a timely manner. In addition, taking responsibility of detecting, and correcting mistakes can eventually solidify their relationship with the organization which may help them to cultivate a long-term relationship. Therefore, when employees perceive organizational support then they tend to provide prohibitive voice in the terms of reciprocation.

P 3: POS is positively related to prohibitive voice.

C. LMQR and EemployeeVvoice:

High quality of leader member relationship may engage an employee in extra-role behaviors (Trybou, Gemmel, Pauwels, Henninck & Clays, 2014). When the relationship between leader and member becomes more affect laden and influential then automatically both parties has developed respect, trust and support for each other at subconscious level. This kind of relationship encourages employee to commend extra-role behaviors like voicing (Van Dyne & Lepine, 1998). Research work on LMX and extra-role behaviors found in literature highlighted many aspects of extra-role behaviors except voice (Trybou, et. al., 2014; LePine & Van Dyne, 2001; Van dyne & Lepine, 1998).

A positive relationship was found between perceived organizational support and extra-role behavior and a trend towards significance between leader–member exchange and extra-role behavior (Trybou, et. al., 2014). Voice is being studied as a positive and constructive behavior in an existing literature. It is an expression of employees' positive opinions and concerns about their constructive work-related issues (Botero & Van Dyne, 2009). It cannot be specified in advance; neither can be predictable by reward system nor be held for punishment when not performed (Liang, et. al. 2012; LePine and Van Dyne, 2001).

Employees with high on LMQR have more opportunity to speak up, communicate their ideas with their leader, and use more than one communication channels as compare to those in low-LMQR (Botero & Van Dyne, 2009). They have more access to organizational resources like money, services and information, and social resources like respect, trust, support, love and status (Botero & Van Dyne, 2009; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

Very less work has been done on direst relationship between LMX and employee voice however other research work on leadership has shown indirect support for positive linkages between leader-member relationship and voice. For example the research on leader personality traits and employee voice behavior has shown that leader with more agreeableness and consciousness traits influence employees' voice behavior. This relationship is also partially mediated by employee psychological safety (Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009). Two studies of Van Dyne and his colleagues (Van Dyne, Kamdar & Joireman, 2008; Botero & Van Dyne, 2009) have undergone the direct testing of LMX and employee voice.

Van Dyne, *et. al.* (2008) in their study identified voice not only as extra-role but as in-role-behavior which amplifies the positive effect of high-quality LMX on voice. In-role or as extra-role behavior, LMX has positive effect on employee voice. Botero and Van Dyne (2009) has clearly and directly found that LMX is positively related to employee voice and negatively related to voice when there is power distance between leader and member. So in the context of above literature following propositions are derived:

P4. LMQR has positive association with employee promotive voice.

P5. LMQR has positive association with employee prohibitive voice.

Employees view their leader's favorable or unfavorable orientation towards them as indication of organizational support (Ng, Feldman & Butts, 2014; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2006). POS completes all psychological processes implicitly which are required for an employee to raise voice. POS builds up confidence, courage and his acceptance in an organization which ensure him that his suggestions, innovative ideas and even prohibition of harmful activities will be taken as positive and constructive towards them and organization. In the light of social exchange theory, this study investigates that LMQR and employee voicing behavior have indirect and distal relationship. Employee perceived organizational support underlie this relationship (Loi, Ao & Xu, 2014).

P6. POS mediates the relationship between LMQR and employee promotional voice.

P7. POS mediates the relationship between LMQR and employee prohibitional voice.

This study will try to focus on individual and situational factors engaging employees in voicing behavior which take their organization towards more productivity and betterment. Although much of the research works regarding voice (Trybou, et. al., 2014; Botero & Van Dyne, 2009; LePine & Van Dyne, 2001; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998) and specially on the relationship among social exchange variables and voice

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behavior has considered only one type of voice which is challenging but promotive (Maynes & Podsakoff, 2014).

Maynes & Podsakoff (2014) recommended that lots of work is remained in finding the distinguishable relationships among organizational variables and other types of voice behaviors. As this study is considering 'voice as an extra-role' and other types of voice (defensive and destructive voice) cannot be considered as an extra-role behaviors. So this study has considered two types of voice: Promotive and Prohibitive; as an extra-role behavior in a relationship with POS and LMX in the context of social exchange theory. These two voices are clearly distinctive constructs (Liang, et. al., 2012). Furthermore, how employee's personality traits will affect the way of their behaving patterns.

D. Moderating Role of CSE

Following Social Cognitive View of individuals which emphasizes upon person-situation interaction , this study focuses on individual differences. CSE is taken as individual difference in this research study because in previous researches CSE has been evidenced as representation of proactive behaviors such as voice and career initiative etc. (Aryee, et. al., 2014). Proactive behaviors take new initiatives, generate constructive change, and lead in a proactive fashion. It tackles issues head-on and works for constructive reform (Bateman & Crant, 1999).

Proactive behavior is a function of both individual dispositions and the work environment (Bateman & Crant, 1999). Cognitive social view suggests that psychological effect of a situation depends on how a person interprets the situation; differences in interpretations occur due to significant individual differences. This research explores that not all individuals will respond to LMQR and POS in the same way, rather they react differently depends upon their personality dispositions. Trait theory is a genetically rooted concept that holds that individual behaves differently because they possess varying amount of certain measurable traits.

The motivation of employees to engage in to the voice behavior requires few attributes to raise voice for positive consequences; like employees assessment of risk associated with voice, and expectancy that his voice benefits will be considered. Although, LMQR and POS act as contextual factors which shape up facilitative situation for employees to engage into voice then why all employees do not engage into voicing (Aryee, Walumbwa, Mondeja & Chu, 2014). It is their individual trait factor which makes the outcomes of same situation different (Aryee, et. al., 2014).

CSE as a trait theory was first brought forward by Judge, Locke & Durham (1997). CSE represents personality traits which include individual's evaluation of self, their abilities and have power over on their abilities. People with high CSE feel self-assured and think positively of themselves whereas people with low self evaluation will lack confidence. CSE is defined as any individual's subconscious, bottom-line evaluations about oneself and evaluations about their abilities (Judge, et. al., 1997). They conceptualized the CSE by integrating it to job satisfaction. Later on its relationship with job performance was studied in terms of tasks, OCB, individual and organizational deviant behaviors (Aryee, et. al. 2014; Bono & Judge, 2003; Judge & Bono, 2001).

CSE is comprised of four traits; Locus of control, self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy and emotional stability. These traits were selected on the basis of three criteria. Self-evaluative, which means core traits to be evaluate by oneself rather than description of oneself or others; fundamentality, which means core traits should be fundamental or deep-seated traits rather than surface traits; lastly, scope which means core traits should be wide in scope or those traits that dominate an individual's whole life, cardinal traits (Judge, et. al., 1997; Bono & Judge, 2003). Self esteem is about how an individual accept, respect and like him/herself (Judge & Bono, 2001).

Self-esteem is what an individual thinks about oneself as capable and successful. It is self-acceptance, self-worthiness and self-respect of any person. Generalized self-efficacy is how any person cope, perform, and be successful across many context. It is one's confidence in one's capabilities on cognitive basis (Bono & Judge, 2003). Locus of control is a trait which determines the extent to which people agree they can handle events affecting them. It is a belief about causing of events in one's life internally or externally. It is an ability of individual to control anything happening to that person. Emotionally stable individuals seem to be confidant, secure, and steady. All these four traits are argued to be indicative of core self-evaluations (Judge, Heller & Klinger, 2008; Judge & Bono, 2003; Bono & Judge, 2001).

Individuals of high-CSE are described by a sense of agency which give them courage, confidence and motivation to engage into voice behavior (Kammeyer-Mueller, Judge & Scott, 2009). These individual take less stress or no stress even in challenging environment. That's why these individual are able enough to cope with challenge-oriented nature voice for a constructive purpose. Based on this, following propositions can be derived:

P8. CSE moderates the relationship between POS and promotive voice; such as high the CSE, stronger the relationship between POS and promotive voice.

P9. CSE moderates the relationship between POS and prohibitive voice; such as high the CSE, stronger the relationship between POS and prohibitive voice.

Leader-member quality relationship and perceived organizational support provides such an organizational situation which made employees to feel obligation to engage into voice as an extra-role behavior. As every individual is different in his/her dispositions so definitely it effects on his perceptions and behaviors. This research will study moderating effects of CSE on the relationship between POS and employee voice.

Overall, in the above context, POS engender by LMQR will support employees high in CSE to engage in voice behavior; both promotional and prohibitional voice behavior. It is estimated that the moderating effect of CSE construct will

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be more as compare to the buffering effect of individual self-evaluating traits.

CONCLUSION

The present study has proposed the relationship between LMQR and employee voice. This study has explained 'how' this relationship established and 'why' this relationship kept carrying on.

This study would help organizations to learn the impact of leader-member relational approach on the employee's perception of organizational support and their reciprocal behavior in the form of positive voicing so that the organizations can develop a mechanism to promote the long-term innovations and suggestions for harmful activities. From organizational perspective, it will save organization's hiring procedural and time costs. From employee's perspective, POS improves employee's symbolic and material resources. Employee will develop his/her interest to use best abilities by getting the courage of speaking up in the return of leader-member mutual respect, trust and obligation. Lastly, empirical study of proposed model is exceedingly recommended for providing evident basis.

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