

**INCREMENTAL AND RADICAL IDEA GENERATION:
EXAMINING A MODERATED MEDIATION MODEL OF FEEDBACK SEEKING,
EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, AND LEADER-MEMBER EXCHANGE**

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

Employees' innovative work behavior is critical to creating a sustainable competitive advantage for public and private organizations. There is a missing puzzle piece in the linkage of leader-member exchange and idea generation, a dimension of innovative work behavior. Based on the social exchange theory, this study aims to investigate how and when leader-member exchange relationships may contribute a positive influence on employees' incremental and radical idea generation through feedback-seeking behavior. In addition, this study proposed a moderated mediation model to test emotional intelligence as a potential moderator.

Purposive sampling was applied to select a sample of 63 dyads at a telecommunication company with unique "talent-first" culture in Hong Kong. Supervisor and subordinate participants responded to an online questionnaire. Data were analyzed by using Hayes PROCESS Marco with SPSS. Factor analysis was employed to assess all study variables. The hypothesized mediation model and moderation models were respectively examined with Model 4 and Model 7.

The results showed that leader-member exchange had a positive impact on incremental and radical idea generation. Positive and negative feedback-seeking behavior fully mediated the positive relationship between leader-member exchange and radical idea generation. The mediating effect of negative feedback-seeking behavior was stronger than that of positive feedback-seeking behavior. Emotional intelligence did not play a moderating role in the association between leader-member exchange and radical idea generation via positive or negative feedback-seeking behavior. However, emotional intelligence had a negative impact on positive and negative feedback-seeking behavior.

This study answered the call for exploring potential mediators in the linkage between leader-member exchange and innovative behavior as a kind of adaptive performance. Little research has examined how leadership influences employees' incremental and radical idea generation. This study is the first of its kind to empirically examine the roles and interrelationships of leader-member exchange and two desired forms of idea generation through two types of feedback-seeking behavior. Theoretical and managerial implications as well as future research directions are discussed at the end.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

For more than two decades, numerous studies have demonstrated a growing interest in studying the linkage between leader-member exchange and innovative work behavior. Previous studies have shown that employees' innovative work behavior is treated as one of the key ingredients that helps organizations build competitive advantages for survival and success in the market environment (e.g., West, 2002; Slatten & Mehmetoglu, 2011; Yildiz, Uzun, & Coskun, 2017; Nasifoglu Elidemir, Ozturen, & Bayighomog, 2020). Researchers have called for studies to clarify why the leader-member exchange relationship can act as a strong predictor to affect adaptive performance such as innovative behavior (Matta & Van Dyne, 2015). There is a missing puzzle piece in the linkage between leader-member exchange and idea generation, a dimension of innovative work behavior.

On the basis of social exchange theory perspective and instrumental perspective, this current study aims to fill the gap in the literature and extend the body of knowledge in the field of leadership and innovative behavior by exploring how a phenomenon occurs with the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and two forms (incremental and radical) of idea generation, under a moderated mediation model linking feedback-seeking behavior (mediator) and emotional intelligence (moderator). The research questions related to two main issues: (a) the mediating role of feedback-seeking behavior on the relationship between leader-member exchange and idea generation, and (b) the moderating role of emotional intelligence on the linkage between leader-member exchange and feedback seeking, respectively. The hypothesized moderated mediation model was tested in a Hong Kong's telecommunication company. This study helped managers and supervisors understand what type of feedback-

seeking behavior may be more effective for stimulating subordinates' radial idea generation to building sustainable competitive advantage. Chapter 1 includes the background, research objectives, research questions, significance and contributions, and thesis outline.

1.2 Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed companies to adapt to digital transformation for improving business performance. Digital transformation is about how companies can use technology to evolve and respond in the best possible way to unpredictable and ever-changing customer expectations, market conditions, and local or global events (Kane, 2017). For example, Hong Kong Broadband Network Limited, a leading integrated telecom and technology solutions provider, recognized that the widespread adoption of mobile commerce platforms and digital wallets provided a new opportunity for introducing online shopping services. The company responded to the opportunity by partnering with a consumer product distributor and a logistics company to meet changing customer expectations (HKBN, 2022).

Facing the tremendous challenge of the fifth wave of COVID-19, the online shopping platform launched a "Spend \$1 Get 2\$" promotion campaign to engage new service subscribers (HKBN, 2022). The online shopping platform not only helped transform the company's residential business but also helped increase the residential revenue. Despite the challenging economic environment, the company's revenue (for the year ended 31 August 2022) grew year-on-year at 1% to HK\$11,626 million (HKBN, 2022). The implementation of this digital transformation has shown the impact of a "talent-first" culture as a critical success factor to drive the company to innovate and stay competitive. To engage high-potential talents, the department of human resources will be managed to recruit talents with key behaviors such as innovation competency, openness to feedback, and risk-taking (HKBN, 2015).

Previous studies have stated that innovative behavior may help organizations remain competitive, effective, and viable in a dynamic business environment (Pertes & Waterman, 1982). McKinsey & Company, one of the world's largest strategy consulting firms, suggested that companies have to invest in innovation for capturing new growth opportunities (Bar Am, Furstenthal, Jorge, & Roth, 2020). If an organization does not embrace innovative behavior and continues to produce products or services in the same way, it may lead to the decline or demise of the organization (Drucker, 2014; Amabile, 1997). If top management would like to make an organization more innovative, one of the ways is to capitalize on employees' ability to innovate (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007). Apart from organizational competitive advantage, employees could benefit from financial bonuses or promotions by performing innovative behavior, which is appreciated by their supervisors (Purc & Laguna, 2019).

1.2.1 Incremental and Radical Idea Generation

The concept of innovative work behavior was launched by Scott and Bruce (1994). West and Farr (1990) defined innovative work behavior as 'the intentional introduction and application, within a role, group or organization of ideas, processes, products or procedures, new to the relevant unit of adoption, designed to significantly benefit the individual, the group, organization or wider society' (p. 9). Innovative work behavior can be considered a unique concept that focuses on all employee behavior that has to do with innovation in all phases (De Spiegelare, Van Gyes, & Van Hootegeem, 2014).

According to the literature on innovative work behavior, it is a complex process. Some scholars treat the innovation process as two phases, namely idea generation and idea implementation (e.g., Park & Jo, 2017; Nazir, Qun, Hui, & Shafi, 2018; Bani-Melhem, Al-Hawari, & Quratulain, 2020; Choi, Kim, Han, Hahn, Park, Yoo, & Jeong, 2021). Mascareno and colleagues (2020) have considered the innovation process as two stages: creativity (idea

generation) and innovation (idea championing and idea implementation). Some scholars treat innovative work behavior as a process of three stages including idea generation, idea championing (seeking support for the idea), and idea implementation (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010).

This current study tends to focus on employees' idea generation, a dimension of innovative work behavior. Several researchers treat the generation of creative ideas as the first stage of innovation and the crucial stepping stone to implementing ideas (Anderson, Potocnik, & Zhou, 2014; Niesen, Van Hootegem, Handaja, Battistelli, & De Witte, 2018). Having reviewed the literature on the linkage between leader-member exchange and innovative work behavior selected from 1994 and 2022, only one study focused on the topic of supervisors' idea generation, a dimension of innovative work behavior (Niesen et al., 2018).

De Spiegelare and colleagues (2014) pointed out that the innovative work behavior literature lacks a detailed conceptualization of innovative work behavior including the difference in the phases of the innovation processes as well as incremental (small) and radical (large) innovations. Previous studies have explored the concept of incremental and radical creativity (Gilson & Madjar, 2011; Gilson, Lim, D'Innocenzo, & Moye, 2012). Some researchers suggested that innovative behavior is closely associated with employee creativity (e.g., De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007). The importance of appreciating different forms of creativity may lead to organizational benefits depending on task contingencies (Dane, 2010; Mainemelis, Kark, & Epitropaki, 2015). Incremental and radical creativity can act as a powerful driver of organizational innovation, survival, prosperity as well as long-term development (Woodman, Sawyer, & Griffin, 1993; Madjar, Greenberg, & Chen, 2011; Zhou & Hoever, 2014; Amabile & Pratt, 2016).

Creativity can be treated as the idea generation stage of innovative work behavior (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010). Surprisingly, little attention has been paid to the distinction between incremental and radical idea generation in the workplace. This study adopted the concept of incremental and radical creativity to distinguish the two forms of idea generation, a dimension of innovative work behavior. Incremental idea generation can be defined as the generation of new ideas that are “focused on finding new applications for existing methods, processes, or products, and adapting what is currently done” (Gilson et al., 2012, p. 173). For example, Hong Kong Broadband Network Limited developed the idea of setting the price ceiling for its 100Mbps residential fibre broadband services to benefit customers (Hong Kong Social Entrepreneurship Forum, 2020). The price ceiling was set at 1% of the median monthly household income in Hong Kong.

In contrast, radical idea generation is focused on “the generation of new ideas that are revolutionary to a field, is risk-taking in nature, and focus on experimentation and paradigm shifts” (Gilson et al., p. 173). For example, the company encouraged the talents to explore and develop the idea of launching Hong Kong’s first-ever cyber wellness movement to enhance the Digital Intelligence of 2,000 primary school students. This movement not only offered solutions for the students to tackle potential cyber risks but also led to new business opportunities. The company provided the solution of routers to help parents monitor their children’s internet usage (Hong Kong Social Entrepreneurship Forum, 2020).

1.2.2 Leader-Member Exchange and Idea Generation

The determinants of innovative behavior including the idea generation dimension can be classified into three ways including individual, organizational, and environmental factors (Damanpour, Szabat, & Evan, 1989; Damanpour, 1991). Among the antecedents to innovative work behavior, leader-member exchange is commonly treated as the organizational

determinant that can affect individual employees to perform innovative behavior in the workplace (Scott & Bruce, 1994). The leader-member exchange theory is defined as the quality of exchange relationship between an employee and his or her supervisor involving interdependencies and influence (Graen, 1976; Uhl-Bien, 2006). Researchers have stated that leader-member exchange is the “only leadership theory that focuses tightly on the relationship between a leader and his or her followers” (Day & Miscenko, 2015, p. 39).

Some researchers have argued that leader-member exchange quality is tied to innovative behavior in the workplace (Scott & Bruce, 1994; Basu & Green, 1997; Chen, Lam, & Zhong, 2012; Tsai, Chen, & Shen, 2015; Kheng, June, & Mahmood, 2016; Alsughayir, 2017; Atitumpong & Badir, 2018; Miller & Miller, 2020). Previous empirical studies have shown that high-quality leader-member exchange has a positive impact on innovative work behavior (e.g., Scott & Bruce, 1994; Tsai et al., 2015). In the study by Alsughayir (2017), leader-member exchange is positively related with the idea generation dimension.

Drawing from social exchange theory, leader-member exchange is considered a low-quality exchange with economic benefits, and high-quality exchange with social resources (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) or both economic and social benefits from the high-quality leader-member exchange relationships (Goodwin, Bowler, & Wittington, 2009). When employees engage in innovative behavior in the workplace, they may need to take risks (Pundt, Martins, & Nerdinger, 2010) and face unintended consequences such as failures, greater work demands, and conflicts with other employees (Janssen, Van de Vliert, & West, 2004). When employees are engaged by their leaders leading to a strong feeling of security, self-efficacy, and freedom to take risks, individual employees may engage in innovative behavior (Miller & Miller, 2020).

However, the findings of the association between leader-member exchange and innovative work behavior sometimes are inconsistent. Mascareno and colleagues (2020) found that leader-member exchange has no direct effect on employee innovation (idea promotion and idea implementation), but employee creativity (idea generation) helps mediate the relationship between leader-member exchange and employee innovation. The explanation of this linkage between leader-member exchange and the two dimensions of innovative work behavior (idea promotion and idea implementation) may be affected by the nature of the innovation process. Idea generation cannot make an intended impact unless creative ideas are implemented (Levitt, 1963).

Moreover, the generation of creative ideas is not always implemented. It means if the stages of idea generation and idea implementation are combined as one dependent variable to measure, the influence of leader-member exchange on innovative behavior may not be significant. Furthermore, previous studies have shown that leader-member exchange quality may not always be sufficient to stimulate employees' innovative behavior (Mascareno et al., 2020). It is believed that the linkage between the two variables may require an intervening variable (Suhaimi & Panatik, 2016).

Researchers have called for exploring how the exchange processes and norms of reciprocity between leader and member feed into the positive association between leader-member exchange and innovative work behavior (Liden, Sparrowe, & Wayne, 1997). Obviously, the linkage between leader-member exchange and innovative behavior (especially focused on idea generation) is not fully understood. It provides the research justification for (a) distinguishing incremental and radical idea generation, (b) focusing on the relationship between leader-member exchange and two forms of employees' idea generation, and (c) exploring the potential

intervening factors to explain the relationship between leader-member exchange and incremental/radical idea generation.

1.3 Research Objectives

The purpose of this current study is threefold:

- (a) To examine the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and employees' incremental/radical idea generation.
- (b) To investigate the mediating role of subordinates' positive/negative feedback-seeking behavior in the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and employees' incremental/radical idea generation.
- (c) To explore the moderated mediation model linking employees' emotional intelligence as moderator in the relationship between leader-member exchange and subordinates' positive/negative feedback seeking behavior leading to employees' incremental/radical idea generation.

1.3.1 Leader-Member Exchange as Predictor

The primary research objective is to examine the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and employees' incremental/radical idea generation. I propose that a high-quality leader-member exchange relationship may influence subordinates' intrinsic motivation to engage in incremental and radical idea generation, a dimension of innovative work behavior. It is believed that innovative work behavior can be considered as a desired outcome or adaptative performance influenced by leader-member exchange (e.g., Matta & Van Dyne, 2015). When individual employees engage in a high-quality leader-member exchange, they

tend to receive more resources, more information on career development, and better social support (e.g., Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Settoon, Bennett, & Liden, 1996; Gerstner & Day, 1997; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997).

From the perspective of social exchange theory, employees who receive high-quality exchange from their organization will respond to the organization with a greater level of affective commitment (Nazir et al., 2018). Therefore, employees may be willing to take risks to be involved in innovative work behavior. In this study, I argue that a high-quality leader-member exchange relationship may have a positive impact on employees' incremental idea generation as well as radical idea generation.

1.3.2 Feedback-Seeking Behavior as Mediator

The second research objective is to investigate the mediating role of subordinates' positive/negative feedback-seeking behavior on the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and employees' incremental/radical idea generation. I propose that leader-member exchange quality may influence subordinates' intrinsic motivation to generate (a) incremental ideas through the mediating effect of subordinates' positive feedback-seeking behavior and (b) radical ideas through the mediating effect of subordinates' negative feedback-seeking behavior. Some researchers (Sung, Rhee, Lee, & Choi, 2020) found that feedback-seeking behavior has a positive impact on incremental and radical creativity (idea generation). Feedback seeking is defined as an employee's proactive and self-regulatory effort to search for evaluative information from his or her manager about the adequacy or/and inadequacy of overall work performance, role fulfillment, and customer service (Ashford & Tsui, 1991). Employees can make use of the information obtained from feedback seeking to correct their behavior performance continuously in the workplace. (Ashford, 1986).

Facing highly unpredictable and complex business environments, leaders are not possible to provide information to each employee for specifically clarifying the job role and expected goal every day. When employees are requested by their supervisors to perform creative tasks, they can seek feedback to achieve constant modifications and improvement through feedback-seeking behavior (De Stobbeleir, Ashford, & Buyens, 2011). In addition, employees can monitor their working progress and adjust task procedures as well as strategies to enhance their performance with their proactive self-regulatory efforts (Devloo, Anseel, & De Beuckelaer, 2011; Whitaker & Levy, 2012).

Based on the instrumental perspective, several researchers (Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Ashford & Tsui, 1991; VandeWalle, Ganesan, Challagalla, & Brown, 2000; Ashford, Blatt, & VandeWalle, 2003) have suggested that feedback is a valuable resource for individuals to enhance their performance, and thus subordinates may choose to initiate feedback exchanges. Feedback can be positive or negative. Previous studies have discovered employees' negative feedback-seeking behavior will help employees obtain information about inadequacies in their work behavior and work performance (Ashford & Tsui, 1991; Moss, Valenzi, & Taggart, 2003). Kwon and Oh (2020) surveyed 381 members working in South Korean companies and the result showed that negative feedback-seeking behavior is positively associated with employee innovative behavior.

Under a high-quality leader-member exchange relationship, how do employees know when and how to perform incremental or radical idea generation in the daily activities in the workplace? When employees engaged in a high-quality leader-member exchange relationship, it may be easier to seek feedback and inquire about information from trusted supervisors for clarifying their job roles (Chen et al., 2007) as well as achieving the tasks to generate incremental or radical ideas. Matt and Van Dyne (2015) pointed out that negative feedback-

seeking is one of the key mediators of the association between leader-member exchange and task performance. In this study, I argue that feedback-seeking behavior could act as a mediator linking leader-member exchange and idea generation dimension.

Moreover, I argue that positive feedback-seeking behavior could mediate the relationship between leader-member exchange and incremental idea generation. Furthermore, I argue that negative feedback-seeking behavior could mediate the linkage between leader-member exchange and radical idea generation. Nonetheless, negative feedback sometimes hurts employees' feelings, and it may discourage employees to seek negative feedback from supervisors to engage a higher level of performance (Anseel, Beatty, Shen, Lievens, & Sackett, 2015). A high-quality leader-member exchange relationship may help employees to take risks (e.g., failing to generate useful ideas and damaging their image among their teammates) to seek negative feedback from their supervisors for achieving the task of radical idea generation.

1.3.3 Emotional Intelligence as Moderator

The third research objective is to explore the moderated mediation model linking employees' emotional intelligence as moderator in the relationship between leader-member exchange and subordinates' positive/negative feedback-seeking behavior leading to employees' incremental/radical idea generation. Employees' individual factors such as their emotions or emotional intelligence may affect the relationship between leader-member exchange and innovative work behavior. Employees' emotions may change every moment of their work which influences their behavior and performance (Wu, Wang, He, Estay, & Akram, 2020). Emotional intelligence is defined as "the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings, and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 189). It

is believed that emotional intelligence can affect employees to deal with environmental demands and pressures (Bar-On, 1997).

Innovative behavior in the workplace could be risky and could have unintended consequences for employees including failures, greater job demands, and conflicts with other teammates and or supervisors (Janssen et al., 2004). These unintended consequences may contradict the employees' interests such as job and income security, career, and developmental perspectives (Pundt et al., 2010). Negative feedback-seeking behavior could benefit innovative behavior in the workplace, but it involves great social risks (losing face), which may damage employees' pride and ego (Park, Schmidt, Scheu, & DeShon, 2007; Parker & Collins, 2010).

How do employees manage their emotions and negative feelings when they face the risks of innovative work behavior as well as seeking negative feedback? Zeidner and colleagues (2004) have stated that emotional intelligence may have an impact on a mix of work behaviors such as employee commitment and innovation. When people face situations of deliberate violation of social exchange, higher-emotional intelligence individuals may perform better because they can attune to the affective implications of the situations (Reis, Brackett, Shamosh, Kiehl, Salovey, & Gray, 2007). Evidence showed that emotional intelligence can act as a moderator of leader-member exchange quality and work-related outcomes (Clarke & Mahadi, 2011). It is believed that emotional intelligence can be a facilitator connecting leaders and subordinates to build stronger emotional attachments.

In the study by Sung and colleagues (2020), employees' emotional competence had a positive impact on incremental and radical creativity through feedback-seeking behavior. I argue that employees' emotional intelligence could help subordinates manage their emotions to face the risks, stress, and negative feelings caused by the task of idea generation, which may lead to the

willingness to seek negative feedback from their trusted supervisors for achieving radical idea generation. Previous studies provided support for this study to explore the moderating role of emotional intelligence (individual context) in the relationship between leader-member exchange and feedback-seeking behavior, which may influence the idea generation dimension. Some researchers explored the moderating effects of emotional regulation (a dimension of emotional intelligence), which could provide job and personal resources for firefighters to reduce the negative effect of burnout caused by work-family conflict (Wu, Yuan, Yen, & Xu, 2019). Not surprisingly, little attention has been paid to studying the moderating effect of emotional intelligence on the association between leader-member exchange, feedback-seeking behavior, and idea generation in the literature on leader-member exchange and innovative work behavior.

1.4 Research Questions

The key research question of this study is stated as:

“How do leader-member exchange relationships stimulate employees to perform the desired form of idea generation in the workplace through feedback-seeking from the trusted supervisors?”

The sub-questions of this study are stated as:

1. What is the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and two forms of employees' idea generation (incremental and radical)?
2. What is the relationship between feedback-seeking behavior and two forms of employees' idea generation (incremental and radical)?

3. How does subordinates' positive feedback-seeking from their trusted leaders motivate employees to generate incremental/radical ideas?
4. How does subordinates' negative feedback-seeking from their trusted leaders motivate employees to generate incremental/radical ideas?
5. How does subordinates' emotional intelligence affect employees' motivation to seek positive/negative feedback from their trusted leaders to generate incremental/radical ideas?

The research questions related to two main issues: (a) the mediating role of feedback-seeking behavior on the relationship between leader-member exchange and idea generation; and (b) the moderating role of emotional intelligence on the linkage between leader-member exchange and feedback-seeking, respectively.

First, I argue that subordinates' feedback-seeking behavior positively may influence the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and idea generation, a dimension of innovative work behavior. When proactive employees seek positive feedback from supervisors, employees can clarify their performance in idea generation which are close to the organizational goal. In this case, employees will perform incremental idea generation. When proactive employees seek negative feedback from supervisors, employees can clarify their performance in idea generation which is not sufficient to reach the organizational goal. In this case, employees have to regulate his or her performance to achieve radical or a higher degree of idea generation. Second, I further argue that the association between leader-member exchange and idea generation through subordinates' feedback-seeking behavior is strong when employees engage in high emotional intelligence (mental abilities).

The major theoretical basis of this thesis is the leader-member exchange theory which is based on the social exchange theory. This study will cover the literature review of the leader-member exchange theory in Chapter 2. In this section, the concept of social exchange theory will be briefly presented. Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) stated that social exchange theory is an influential framework that can explain work behavior. Homans (1958) developed the concept of social exchange theory by explaining social behavior as an exchange of tangible and intangible goods. According to the theory, individuals involved in a series of interdependent interactions including communication that generate obligations among the exchange parties (Homans, 1958; Blau, 1964). It means when one party gives another party a beneficial resource such as information, an obligation is generated for returning a beneficial resource. Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) have reviewed the theory and highlighted that reciprocity rules have existed in the process of interdependent exchange. Unlike an economic exchange, a social exchange can make people have a strong feeling of obligation, gratitude, and trust that will strengthen social bonding (Blau, 1964).

Leader-member exchange has been viewed as the exchange relationship between an employee and his or her supervisor in the workplace (Wayne et al., 1997). The quality of the exchange relationship between supervisor and employee will influence the exchange of benefits and resources. The high-quality leader-member exchange relationship caused the exchange of more benefits including economic and social resources (Goodwin et al., 2009), and the low-quality exchange relationship caused the exchange of economic benefits. From the perspective of social exchange theory, leader-member exchange can be viewed as benefits or rewards from a supervisor for his or her subordinates (e.g., Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Chen et al. 2007). Some researchers believe if supervisors can build a high-quality relationship with their subordinates, it will create a strong supervisor feedback environment (Qian, Wang, Han, & Song, 2017).

In short, the concepts of social exchange theory and leader-member exchange theory provide the foundation for the arguments. Therefore, when a supervisor asks an employee to perform a task that requires him or her to generate a small or big idea, the employee will be willing to perform incremental (small) or radical (big) idea generation. Behind the social exchange process, there are several reasons for explaining the employee's work behavior. First, the high-quality exchange relationship between the supervisor and the employee provides a positive feedback environment that can engage the employee to seek different types of feedback. Second, the supervisor will give the employee feedback on useful information, and the employee will use feedback to perform idea generation as an obligation for returning the benefit of social exchange.

1.5 Significance and Contribution

This study aims to find the missing link between leader-member exchange and idea generation, a dimension of innovative work behavior. It is the first attempt to examine how leader-member exchange predicts feedback-seeking behavior and consequently incremental and radical idea generation based on social exchange theory. This study will combine the individual and social factors in a moderated mediation mechanism to extend our understanding of leader-member exchange and idea generation relationships. The purpose of this study is threefold:

- (a) To investigate the influence of leader-member exchange on employee incremental and radical idea generation.
- (b) To examine the mediating role of active feedback-seeking behavior as the determinant of different types of idea generation.

- (c) To explore the moderating role of employee emotional intelligence on the linkage between leader-member exchange and feedback-seeking behavior, which in turn shapes the idea generation of subordinates.

1.5.1 Theoretical Contribution

This study will contribute to the literature in four ways. The first theoretical implication of this study is that will contribute to a deeper understanding of the social exchange theory and leader-member exchange theory by exploring the effect of leader-member exchange leadership on two distinct forms of idea generation (incremental and radical), a dimension of innovative work behavior. One of the earliest studies on leader-member exchange theory was conducted by Dansereau and colleagues (1975) to focus on how leadership affects employees' behavior under the condition of interpersonal exchange relationships. After 40 years, Bauer and Erdogan (2015) worked with a group of scholars to publish a handbook summarizing the recent studies of the leader-member exchange theory.

In the article written by Tierney (2015), the researcher suggested the future study of the leader-member exchange and employee creativity relationship could consider deeper issues such as “when does leader-member exchange matter the most for creativity” (p. 354), and “what are the mediating mechanisms at play for leader-member exchange and creativity”. This current study will address the issue of when leader-member exchange affects incremental and radical idea generation. Also, this study will address the issue of what is the moderated mediation mechanism at play for leader-member exchange and two types of employee idea generation.

Regarding the concept of idea generation, a dimension of innovative work behavior, Niesen and colleagues (2018) have conducted a study to examine the relationship between job insecurity and idea generation. However, this concept is underdeveloped in leader-member

exchange and innovative work behavior literature. De Spiegelaere and Van Gyes (2012) stated that it may be more meaningful to study “the distinguishing between dimensions referring to the content or the radicalness of the innovative behavior” (p. 11). Idea generation can be considered an adaptive performance outcome. Crossan and Apaydin (2010) stated that future research can clarify the magnitude (incremental and radical) of innovation to answer the question of “what kind” of innovation outcomes. It is critical for top management to know “what type of creativity they are seeking from their employees, so that they can ensure that the motivation and supervision strategies used to match the desired creativity type” (Gilson et al., 2012, p. 170). Since prior studies have not covered the concept of employees’ incremental and radical idea generation, a dimension of innovative work behavior, this current study will test the constructs of two types of idea generation adapted from the concept of incremental and radical creativity (e.g., Gilson & Madjar, 2011; Gilson et al., 2012).

The second theoretical implication is that will contribute to feedback-seeking behavior literature by investigating the mediating role of feedback-seeking behavior on the association between leader-member exchange and idea generation. Prior studies have not considered feedback-seeking behavior as an intervening variable in the relationship between leader-member exchange and innovative work behavior. Chen and colleagues (2007) have proposed and tested a mechanism to understand the relationship between leader-member exchange and in-role performance with negative feedback-seeking behavior as the mediator. Innovative work behavior can be treated as in-role performance (De Spiegelaere et al., 2014). This study will extend the concept to treat two types of feedback-seeking behavior (positive and negative) as intervening variables in the leader-member exchange and idea generation relationship. It is assumed that a proactive employee will try to seek negative feedback to clarify his or her work role which may lead to a higher level of innovative behavior for better performance in the workplace. In the study by Kwon and Oh (2020), the findings demonstrated a significant

relationship between employee negative-feedback seeking behavior and innovative behavior. In this current study, I argue that negative feedback-seeking behavior acts as a determinant of radical idea generation, and positive feedback-seeking behavior is a determinant of incremental idea generation.

Although many scholars apply social exchange theory to explain many social phenomena, Cropanzano and colleagues (2017) identified several issues including unclear distinctions among numerous social exchange related constructs and theoretically imprecise behavioral predictions. The proposed mechanism will provide a new angle for understanding social exchange processes (Chen et al., 2007) and social influences (Anderson et al., 2014) on individual innovative behavior. I propose a conceptual framework to distinguish two dimensions of feedback-seeking behavior (positive and negative affect in maintaining reciprocity) and two dimensions of desirable action (incremental and radical idea generation) for social exchange theory. This study will fill the knowledge gap by examining the strength of positive/negative feedback-seeking behavior on incremental/radical idea generation under the social exchange process between a subordinate and his or her immediate supervisor.

The third theoretical implication is that will contribute to emotional intelligence literature by examining the moderating effect on the connection between leader-member exchange and idea generation through feedback-seeking behavior. In this study, I argue that emotional intelligence will help employees deal with the fear of seeking negative feedback that may lead to radical idea generation under the context of high leader-member exchange quality. Employees may not engage in negative-feedback behavior, because sometimes “feedback can hurt the performers’ pride, ego, and vanity” (Ashford, Blatt, & VandeWalle, 2003, p. 779). Prior studies have shown that emotional intelligence has a direct effect on work behaviors including employee commitment and innovation (Zeidner et al., 2004). Du Plessis and colleagues (2020)

found that emotional intelligence can mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and job performance. Sung and colleagues (2020) found that emotional competence will encourage employees to seek more feedback and negative feedback for achieving radical creativity. In the study by Wu and colleagues, (2019), emotional regulation (personal resource) acted as a moderator on the association between work-family conflict and burnout. Nonetheless, insufficient attention has been placed on the moderating effect of emotional intelligence on the relationship between leader-member exchange and feedback-seeking behavior that may lead to different types of idea generation. This study will contribute to filling this research gap.

1.5.2 Practical Contribution

This study has four important practical implications. First, the findings of this study will help the top management of profit-organizations and nonprofit organizations to consider what kind of feedback (positive or negative) supervisors should provide to subordinates if they are expected to generate incremental (small) or radical (big) ideas for improving products, services, or/and operation processes.

Second, this study will help human resources department heads implement what kind of training for leaders, managers, and supervisors to know the ways of giving feedback that can lead to employees' continuous and different levels of idea generation. For example, some companies such as PwC (Pricewaterhouse Coopers), a global multinational providing professional services including auditing and strategy management, conducted a two-day workshop on feedback skills for managers working at the Singapore office. The managers learned to increase their capability and effectiveness in observing others and providing feedback. Through the method of behavioral-based interview questions, the managers understand the power of questioning, and listening to their subordinates might help develop

trusting relationships. When managers improve their ability to give constructive feedback, they may unlock the potential of their subordinates to achieve higher performance in the team.

Third, this study will encourage employees how to deal with the fear of seeking feedback for engaging in different types of feedback-seeking behavior. It will help employees achieve different forms of idea generation when they have established a high-quality exchange relationship with their immediate supervisors in or outside the workplace.

Fourth, this study will help employers reconsider their recruitment strategy to find high-potential candidates (including Millennials) with preferred personality and core competencies such as openness to feedback and willing to accept new ideas. When employees are requested by their managers to engage in incremental/radical idea generation, employees with preferred competencies may be more willing to take challenging tasks and seek feedback from supervisor to achieve goals.

1.6 Thesis Outline

This thesis is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 presents the introduction of the thesis. Chapter 2 elaborates on the background of the research context including the challenges of managing millennials as well as motivating employee idea generation. Chapter 3 demonstrates the literature review and discusses the theory and hypotheses for the study. Chapter 4 describes the research design and methodology. Chapter 5 discusses the results of the empirical study. Chapter 6 presents the discussion. The last chapter, Chapter 7 concludes the contributions, limitations, and conclusion.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction

As a former senior management member of Hong Kong Broadband Network Limited, I have written an article to review how this company motivated employees to engage in innovative work behavior with empowerment leadership for achieving high performance and organizational goals (Li, 2018). In this previous study, the case study approach was used by recollecting his experience in the company from 2007 to 2011 to review the critical success factors (such as building a unique “talent-first” culture). To date, I am interested to extend his study in leadership to innovative behavior relationship with empirical research. This study aims to investigate a moderated mediation model linking leader-member exchange, feedback-seeking behavior, emotional intelligence, and idea generation in a Hong Kong’s telecommunication company.

This chapter will present a general overview of Hong Kong Broadband Network Limited as a background for this study. Moreover, a general overview of the company’s “talent-first” culture is presented. I will provide a brief discussion of this culture affecting contextual characteristics and personal characteristics that may lead to adaptive performance such as idea generation. Furthermore, two challenges of human resource management will be highlighted: (a) managing a new generation of employees, the Millennials, and (b) engaging employees under organizational downsizing. I will discuss how a “talent-first” culture affects leaders and employees to overcome these two challenges.

2.2 Background of Hong Kong Broadband Network Limited

In the 1980s, the Hong Kong telecommunications market was dominated by Hong Kong Telephone Company which was a local incumbent monopoly provider of the telephony network. The Hong Kong government implemented an open market policy to allow more private owned broadband network operators in the 1990s. Hong Kong Broadband Network Limited, the last and the smallest competitor entered the broadband market in 1999 to compete with other five key players (including HKCTV, Hutchison, New World, PCCW-HKT, and Wharf). During the early 2000s, residential broadband services were launched in Hong Kong during the early 2000s.

To increase competitive advantage, Hong Kong Broadband Network Limited invested to build a higher-speed fibre-to-the-home network to differentiate its services. The company used 32 months to install its own Ethernet cabling in over 3,000 residential apartment buildings covering 30% of Hong Kong's households (OFTA, 2003) by the end of 2002. In the same timeframe, Hong Kong ranked second out of some of the world market leaders (such as Japan, the United States of America, and the United Kingdom) with take-up rates at 42% of Hong Kong households (Spectrum Strategy Consultants, 2003). CY Chan, Chief Talent Officer said that the company has a very long-established history of pioneering disruptive innovations, breaking down monopolies in the telecom industry for the benefit of Hong Kong.

Even though the company was the last and the smallest competitor, the broadband connections covered 316,000 households (City Telecom, 2011) being the second largest provider of residential broadband in 2008. In the same year, William Yeung was appointed as the new CEO to lead the organizational transformation with Kotter's eight-step organizational change model (Kotter, 1995). The top management managed to build a "talent-first" culture to create

the climate for engaging high-potential employees and enabling them to be innovative to achieve personal, team, and organizational goals (Li, 2018).

Having experienced over a decade of growth, the company's market share of residential broadband subscription was 33.8% (HKBN, 2022). Despite the challenging economic environment under the COVID-19 pandemic, the company's revenue increased by 21% year-on-year on 31 August 2021. The revenue was driven by significant growth in smartphone sales and growth from enterprise solutions and related product revenue. It showed that the company can continue to grow and survive with the "talent-first" approach to business driving the capabilities of the company, teams, and employees to innovate and stay competitive.

2.3 Impact of Talent-First Culture on Leader-Member Relationship and Innovative Behavior

In Human Resources Innovation Award 2015, Hong Kong Broadband Network Limited won nine awards including HR Grand Winner. Organized by Human Resources Magazine, the awards and the competition was designed to uncover best practices in human resources for Hong Kong, Singapore, and Malaysia. The company claimed that the talent (employee) engagement program is believed as one of the company's "strongest differentiators" in the telecommunication industry. Shalley and colleagues (2004) have stated that contextual characteristics (such as relationships with supervisors, resources, and job autonomy) and personal characteristics (such as personality and cognitive style) can motivate employees to engage in creative performance. I believe that the company's culture has a positive impact on contextual and personal factors leading to employees' innovative behavior (such as idea generation).

For example, the top management conducted a 4-day trip for 104 managers from different departments to visit Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam in 2017. The key purpose of this trip was to inspire all managers to generate disruptive ideas for increasing the revenue of 10 selected stalls at a food market. Before the process of generating ideas, a Chinese Vietnamese entrepreneur shared knowledge of disruptive innovations in Vietnam. Then, 10 teams of managers were grouped to apply design thinking to generate disruptive ideas for boosting the food stalls' sales in an evening. Each team was required to identify its teammates' strengths and collect feedback from other teams as well as potential customers for defining the customer needs. Having analyzed the data, each team pitched its disruptive ideas for the judges (top management) to secure more resources to operate its food stall. During the process of idea generation, each team gathered positive and negative feedback from different sources including the top management.

Some teams generated incremental ideas such as re-designing the menu and offering food combos at a special discount to attract more business. As a result, the total revenue of 10 selected food stalls increased by 44%. This experience inspired the managers to generate not only incremental ideas but also radical ideas to develop proposals on the strategy to lead disruption to the company's daily operations. One team suggested that the company can maximize the use of existing resources for customer retention by introducing quad-play offers to enhance customer experience. Another team suggested that the company can provide a GPS locator for every salesperson to engage customers. When customers need up-to-date information on the latest offers of mobile or broadband services, they can locate the nearest salesperson or shop via a mobile app. Therefore, customers can contact the salesperson and register for the services.

2.3.1 Contextual Characteristics

Relationship with supervisors.

The company encourages leaders and employees to build trust in relationships. For example, when employees take one-day sick leave, they are not required to submit a doctor's certificate. As another example, the supervisors of frontline employees do not keep attendance records. Frontline employees do not need to report for duty and return to the office after client visits. From a social exchange perspective, it is believed that trust in the supervisor-subordinate relationships may help build high-quality leader-member exchange relationships which may lead to innovative work behavior.

Moreover, the company encourages all levels of employees to engage in idea generation and idea implementation in the workplace. For example, the human resources department has given out ideas (some from management, some from employees) and asked the company to vote for the one they preferred most. It showed that employees' innovative work behavior is supported by the top management. Furthermore, employees are encouraged to propose new ways to engage and develop themselves, instead of just awaiting the company's input. The company will implement every single idea that was proposed when the idea comes to benefit employees.

Resources.

The company pays attention to make responsive feedback to its employees by encouraging frank, direct, and transparent communication between leaders and members. The human resources department has opened different channels for encouraging two-way communication. For example, anonymous opinions are accepted through the dedicated intranet forum, with replies made by department heads or management posted as soon as possible. Apart from using this channel to seek feedback from employees, the company conducts talent engagement

surveys regularly to gauge sentiments, with suggestions conveyed for management consideration.

On the other hand, the top management holds town hall meetings bi-annually to share strategic directions and initiatives with all employees. Besides, the top management holds managerial meetings monthly to invite all supervisory-level employees to participate and share their latest updates and development. Supervisors are encouraged to conduct monthly meetings with their subordinates to seek and give feedback regularly. From an instrumental perspective, it is believed that constructive feedback can be valuable information (resources) for employees to manage their behavior to achieve goals and enhance performance (such as creative performance).

Evaluation.

The company tends to give developmental feedback to employees rather than giving judgmental feedback. Senior management is managed to provide constructive feedback to high-potential employees and encourage them to get learning opportunities for advancing their careers. For example, the company has launched a “Next Station University” program to sponsor high-potential employees with 80% of tuition to learn and earn a bachelor’s degree. In 2014, 30 employees graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Business Management from the University of Wales. It showed that the company not only gives development feedback to employees but also “walks the talk” to provide economic support for employees’ career development as well as possible promotion to the management level.

In order to ensure all levels of employees have a thorough understanding of the core purpose and values, senior management has put effort to communicate with employees through the intranet, posters, workshops, and new-join orientation. The company has to overcome obstacles

in communicating the company's core purpose and values to all employees. Senior management not only gives developmental feedback to employees but also seek constructive feedback and evaluation from employees. According to the Talent Engagement Survey in 2014, nearly 80% of employees supported the company's core values, while 80% understood the company's core purpose and core values. In 2015, the score in the "employee engagement" area revealed a slight 2% improvement compared with 2014.

Rewards.

The company has given an unusual reward for empowering employees to take risks without fear of punishment. Hong Kong Broadband Network Limited has issued a corporate credit card with at least a HK\$20,000 limit to employees at the job level of officer or above, irrespective of their functions. They were told to use it as they deemed fit for business needs. It was a unique practice, as most companies normally issued corporate credit cards only to sales employees with a need for corporate entertainment. The message conveyed was that if officers saw a need, then they could act using the money to rectify it. The credit card exposure was not a lot of money, but it gave a strong sense of empowerment. If an officer took a calculated risk within the allowed risk exposure and lost, they would not be penalized; rather, they would be rewarded. From a social exchange and instrumental perspective, the practice of issuing corporate credit cards to officers may motivate them to face the risk of innovative behavior.

Relationship with Coworkers.

To strengthen the relationship between employees and their coworkers (same team and other teams), the company has implemented the cross-team networking for managerial employees by arranging annual experiential trips. These annual experiential trips have been themed journeys such as "HappinUS - In Search of Happiness 2012" and "Better Life South Africa 2013". One of the advantages was to inspire managers and supervisors with unique experiences

(such as Kliptown Youth Program for underprivileged children in South Africa). The company claimed that these annual trips make cross-team building possible, and bring huge benefits to teamwork, efficiency, and morale for the company.

Job autonomy.

Based on a trusting leader-member relationship and transparent communication, the top management believes all employees are clear about their goals and objectives. Therefore, most of the employees enjoy a sense of ownership. For example, employees are granted autonomy by the company to share ideas with their immediate supervisors or management at any time. The accepted ideas can get implemented after a couple of emails. It delivers a message to employees that the company support employees to generate ideas in the workplace. Another example of autonomy is the “shared-job” concept experienced in the human resources department (Lau, 2014). The department head found that many employees cannot complete their nine hours due to their family status but would wish to remain productive in the workforce. Therefore, the department has piloted shared-job concept by recruiting four committed part-time talents who are quite experienced to support the jobs of talent management.

Pressure.

Job demands (such as idea generation) may lead to work-life conflict, stress, and pressure. Under the “talent-first” culture, the top management acts as a role model for all leaders (managers and supervisors) by being considerate, helpful, and supportive to employees. It may attract leaders to follow suit by being considerate to their subordinates as well as reducing their work pressure. To help employees maintain a work-life balance, the company has offered a two-hour early-off Friday once a month. During that day, managers and supervisors are told to follow a “no-meetings rule” after 2 p.m. Besides, the company has set a rule to stop email during weekends. The company has also offered one-day family care leave to all employees

per year to encourage them to put family and health before work. From a social exchange perspective, these human resources practices may help create a work environment to relieve employees' work pressure when they need to take risks to engage in innovative work behavior.

Spatial configuration of work settings.

By following a "talent-first" culture, the company has offered a wide range of flexible working arrangements in response to employees' needs. For example, employees may even choose to work in a "mobile" office and flexible working hours (e.g., begin work from between 8:30 a.m. to 10 a.m.). It means that employees can choose to work from anywhere without the need to be present in our office. Employees just notify their supervisors one day in advance when they must attend to a personal or family matter (such as childcare or the challenges of a daily commute). From a social exchange perspective, the flexible working arrangements may help employees perceive trust in the leader-member relationships and high autonomy for motivating them to engage in innovative behavior.

2.3.2 Personal Characteristics

Personality.

To attract high-potential employees who are able to align with the company's core purpose and core values, all department heads will follow this principle to recruit candidates with the preferred competencies and personalities as follows:

- Be positive and adjust effectively when experiencing changes and risk-taking.
- Exhibit open-mindedness and curiosity to purpose and accept new ideas.
- Take ownership for successfully accomplishing work objectives.
- Build cooperative relationships with customers and stakeholders.

- Demonstrate respect and positive interaction with the team.
- Open to feedback and willing to drive personal development.

It is believed that if new employees with the above-mentioned competencies, they may be willing to appreciate the company culture, build relationships with leaders and coworkers, proactively seek feedback from supervisors or coworkers, take risks to engage in challenging tasks (such as idea generation, and idea implementation), and so on.

For example, the company has launched a “Graduate Technical Trainee Program” to recruit the “right” fresh graduates by adopting creative recruitment activities. From a field of 1,185 program applicants, the company hired seven candidates after several elimination rounds. The graduates were tested on their personality and cultural fit through one day orienteering challenge at a theme park. The company arranged managers or supervisors to be “spies” integrated into each team to closely observe how the applicants worked with each other. After joining the company, the seven trainees were offered a goal development program that focused on goal-driven career planning. On the other hand, the unsuccessful candidates were offered a letter of advice and feedback from senior management. The company hoped the constructive feedback could help inspire them and give them practical career advice. In addition, it also delivered a message to the seven trainees about the core values of talent-engaging and responsive feedback.

Cognitive style.

Apart from recruitment strategy, the company has also paid attention to the retention strategy which may help influence employees’ cognitive style to be creative and innovative at work. For example, the company has created a supervisory program called "Be a People's Leader" for high-potential employees who are currently leading a team and playing a supervisory role.

This supervisory program was expected to encourage a change in selected high-potential employees' mindsets and for skills enhancement. The learning modules and assignments were each derived to impart key competencies required for the relevant leadership grade.

2.4 Business Challenges

Hong Kong Broadband Network Limited has run its business with a unique “talent-first” culture to create a sustainable competitive advantage for over a decade. I believe that the company has been facing two major business challenges since 2019.

The first business challenge is to manage the skills and attitudes of different generations including baby boomers, generation X, Millennials, and generation Z from different company cultures to perform expected innovative behavior in the workplace. From 2016 to 2019, the company made four acquisitions (HKBN, 2019):

- New World Telecom (NWT) in 2016
- I Consulting Group Limited (ICG) in 2018
- Jardine OneSolution Holdings Limited (JOS) in 2019
- WTT Holding Corp and its subsidiaries (WTT) in 2019

The acquisitions have strengthened the company to be a multi-service provider of residential and enterprise solutions. On one hand, it helped the company will transform its business from an internet service provider for the local market to a one-stop telecom and technology solutions provider serving customers in markets across Asia. On the other, the number of full-time staff had a huge growth from 3,000 (HKBN, 2016) to over 5,200 (HKBN, 2021). More than 42% of newly joined employees were going to adapt to the “talent-first” culture to be a strong team in a short period. The age of most newly joined employees was thirty-something. It was

challenging for the human resources department to coach managers and supervisors with better and more effective communication skills to give feedback to the younger generation for improving performance and achieving higher goals. For example, millennials may respond more favorably to negative feedback if they perceive the information is consistent and ongoing (Anderson, Buchko, & Buchko, 2016).

The second business challenge of encouraging employees' innovative work behavior under the circumstance of organizational restructuring and downsizing. In 2021, the company has cut 771 jobs representing 12% of the full-time staff in 2020 (HKBN, 2020). It is believed that the company would like to create a space of empowerment that engages employees to make "smart" attempts under a risk-free business (HKBN, 2019). Nevertheless, organizational downsizing may increase the perception of job insecurity. When employees worry about their job security, the management will face the challenge of maintaining higher engagement among employees and motivating them to perform innovative work behavior. Therefore, the company needs to develop a mechanism for encouraging employees to seek feedback and engage in innovative behavior for achieving organizational goals.

2.4.1 Challenge of Managing Millennials

Pinzaru and colleagues (2017) stated that talents' recruitment and retention is one of the greatest challenges for global companies in the context of increasing economic competitiveness and digitization. The term "Millennials" for the generation born between 1980 and 1999 is proposed by Howe and Strauss (2000). Unlike the earlier generation of the workforce, Millennials are perceived to be collaborative, adaptive to new technology, and multitasking. Recent studies show that Millennials expect a flat hierarchy in an organization by believing in collaboration in the workplace (Murray, 2011). Therefore, it is believed that managers will face very high working pressure.

On one hand, managers have to refine business strategies and generate new ideas to build sustainable competitive advantage with different generations of the workforce. “How do leaders handle the competing demands of routine task management and simultaneously trying to manage innovation process?” (Anderson et al., 2014, p. 42). On the other hand, managers have to find solutions for recruiting and motivating the Millennials to have better job satisfaction and performance. Murray (2011) stated that some Millennials play the role of leader in an organization, and the new generation supervisors also face the challenge of managing the Millennials. Pinzaru and colleagues (2017) suggested that employers must provide several elements, including coaching, evaluation with constant feedback for career assessment and promotion criteria, and engagement that helps personal and professional development. These elements may attract the Millennials to become effective, innovative, and involved in the company.

For example, the company managed to communicate the company’s core values (such as empowerment and purposeful business) with newly joined employees (including Millennials) by using the corporate social investment (CSI) strategy. In 2015, the company set up the HKBN Talent CSI Fund which is an independently operated charity that aims to support youth-related social investment projects through innovative and outside-the-box ideas. Starting in 2021, as part of our commitment to empowering youth creativity, the Fund launched several projects to give youths aged 16 to 29 a chance to turn their creative ideas into something actionable. Employees who participated in these projects could collaborate with the Fund partners from other companies as a team to actualize their projects (like networking, business knowledge, and general advice). Through this innovative journey, the employees will work hand-in-hand with youths and partners to equip the teams with work skills, boosting their resilience and technological capabilities. From a social exchange perspective, when employees (especially the Millennials) receive support from their leader to build a social network and to be innovative

to turn purpose into action, they may reciprocate by engaging in a high-quality leader-member exchange relationship and innovative behavior.

What if managers or supervisors can motivate the Millennials proactively to learn from supervisors' positive or/and negative feedback to engage in different forms of innovative work behavior to build sustainable competitive advantages? It is believed that the result of this study will help leaders to manage the new generation employees' innovative behavior by establishing a high-quality exchange relationship with the Millennials to engage them to feel free to seek different types of feedback for achieving different levels of idea generation. In addition, if employers can recruit Millennials with a high degree of emotional intelligence, it will help managers or supervisors provide more effective coaching to motivate the Millennials to be creative and innovative.

2.4.2 Challenge of Engaging Employees under Organizational Downsizing

Under the COVID-19 circumstance, organizations may implement a downsizing strategy to improve their efficiency and competitiveness (Marques, Galende, Cruz, & Ferreira, 2014). Several researchers stated that organizational restructuring and downsizing may increase employees' thinking of losing their jobs (e.g., Hartley, Jacobson, Klandermans, & Van Vuuren, 1990; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002). When a downsizing strategy is implemented, organizations need to guarantee the "survivors" with job security. It will affect the survivors' perception of job security to maintain a high level of commitment and motivation to engage in innovative behavior (Marques et al., 2014). If organizations or leaders fail to keep the promise of job security, it may lead to a psychological contract breach that will affect employees' behavior (Turnley & Feldman, 1999). Some researchers suggested organizations should maintain job security to stimulate employees' idea generation under the impact of organizational downsizing (Nissen et al., 2018).

On the basis of social exchange, if the “survivors” engaged in high-quality work ties and non-work ties have the support and commitment from supervisors, they can maintain their high commitment to seek valuable information to benefit idea generation. To attract and retain high-potential employees, the company has implemented “Co-Ownership” plans which open to all supervisors-and-above level employees to participate. Eligible employees can invest between 2 and 24 months of salary to acquire the company’s shares at full market price. After a specified period, and only when the predetermined common KPIs are met, Talents will be rewarded for their investments. In November 2021, a total of 471 employees (approximately 40% of total employees) joined as Co-Owners (HKBN, 2022). It demonstrated that a certain number of “survivors” are committed to the company under the circumstance of organizational downsizing. Therefore, when employees are committed to the organization, they may be willing to build a high-quality leader-member exchange relationship to perform innovative behavior.

2.5 Conclusion

In sum, evidence has shown that Hong Kong Broadband Network Limited has built a unique “talent-first” culture as a key critical success factor to engage high-potential talents with preferred personal characteristics to be creative and innovative. Moreover, the company has assigned the human resources department as a driving engine to support all departments to empower all levels of employees to discover their strengths and step out of their comfort zones to generate ideas as well as implement the ideas. The human resources practices of the company demonstrated that there are contextual characteristics positively associated with leader-member relationships and innovative behavior in the workplace. Even though the company has faced business challenges of managing Millennials and engaging employees to be innovative under organizational downsizing, Hong Kong Broadband Network Limited can continue to survive and grow in the market during the tough times of COVID-19. The above-mentioned

background of the company and my self-reflection provide the rationale for selecting this company as the case for this study.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will introduce the social exchange theory as the overarching theoretical foundation of this study. Besides, I will introduce the scopes of leader-member exchange theory, the concept of idea generation, a dimension of innovative work behavior, as a potential mediator (positive and negative feedback-seeking behavior), and proposed boundary conditions (emotional intelligence). Having reviewed the selected literature studying the relationship between leader-member exchange and innovative work behavior from 1994 to 2022, I will discuss the research gap of the missing piece between leader-member exchange and two forms (incremental and radical) of idea generation. Moreover, this chapter will introduce the development of the research model and hypotheses. It will also explain the reasons why this study is paying attention to testing a moderated mediation model to understand the interaction from social exchange leadership to different types of feedback-seeking behavior for generating different forms of ideas.

3.2 Social Exchange Theory as Theoretical Foundation

Social exchange theory is “one of the most prominent conceptual perspectives in management, as well as related fields like sociology and social psychology” (Cropanzano et al., 2017, p. 1). Social exchange is defined as the exchange activity, between at least two persons (Homans, 1958). The exchange can be tangible or intangible, and more or less rewarding or costly. Under the social exchange theory, social life is treated as two or more parties participating in numerical of transactions (e.g., Mitchell, Cropanzano, & Quisenberry, 2012). During the process of reciprocity, when one party (actor) offers resources to another party (target), the receiver will repay the giver with something (Gergen, 1969; Gouldner, 1960). Depending on

the actor-target relationship, the quality of these exchanges is sometimes good or bad (Blau, 1964). There are two kinds of exchange: (a) economic exchange involving less trust, which can be described as a reciprocal exchange of goods or services, and (b) social exchange involving greater trust, which can be open-ended (Organ, 1988, 1990).

Following the above-mentioned ideas, the lens of social exchange theory can be used to analyze many topics and conceptual models in organizational behavior such as commitment (Bishop, Scott, & Burroughs, 2000) as well as both supervisory and organizational support (Ladd & Henry, 2000). Even though there are many variants of social exchange, (Cropanzano et al., 2017) stated that there are some common features identified from organizational behavior through the lens of social exchange theory. The common features are: (a) an actor's initial treatment toward a target individual, (b) a target's reciprocal responses with both attitudinal and behavior to the action, and (c) relationship formation.

Initial Treatment.

When an organizational actor (such as a supervisor or a coworker) treats a target individual in a positive or negative way, the social exchange process starts (Farrell & Rusbult, 1981; Rusbult, Farrell, Rogers, & Mainous, 1988; McLean Parks, 1996; Eisenberger, Lynch, Aselage, & Rohdieck, 2004). Some researchers have described these initial behaviors as initiating actions that can be positive or negative (Cropanzano et al., 2017). For example, when an organizational actor gives organizational support (Riggle, Edmondson, & Hansen, 2009), this activity can be considered as a positive initiating action. On the other hand, when an organizational actor delivers abusive supervision (e.g., Tepper, Carr, Breaux, Geider, Hu, & Hua, 2009), this activity can be considered as a negative initiating action.

Reciprocal Responses.

As the target individual (subordinate or coworker), he or she may choose to reciprocate this initiating action with his or her good or bad behavior (Gouldner, 1960; Gergen, 1969; Eisenberger, Cotterell, & Marvel, 1987). This target's behavior can be described as reciprocating responses. The social exchange theory can predict targets' reactions to positive initiating actions. It is believed that targets will tend to engage in more positive reciprocating responses (relational and behavioral) rather than negative reciprocating responses. When an organizational actor and a target individual have experienced numerical reciprocal exchanges, this economic exchange relationship may turn into a high-quality social exchange relationship.

Social Exchange Relationship.

Under this kind of social exchange relationship, subordinates may become affectively committed to organizations (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002) and more trusting (Konovsky & Pugh, 1994). It is believed that a high-quality social exchange relationship may create a positive hedonic value (Cropanzano et al., 2017). Both actor and target are likely to provide benefit to each other. In contrast, when subordinates receive negative initiating actions, this kind of exchange may lead to low commitment (e.g, Schyns & Schilling, 2013). Therefore, it will harm the development of positive relationship formation to be a low-quality social exchange relationship. Both actor and target will do harm to each other.

Motivational Basis of the development of Leader-Member Exchange.

The social exchange theory consists of three elements: (a) an initiating action, (b) a relationship between parties, and (c) a reciprocating response. Organizational citizenship behavior such as creative performance is a kind of desirable reciprocating response stimulated by a high-quality leader-member exchange relationship. According to the social exchange theory, the leader-

member exchange is treated as a relational or interpersonal construct (Cropanzano et al., 2017). When a leader (actor) provides support (desirable initiating action) to an employee (target), high-quality relationships between employees and their leaders as well as between employees and their organizations are likely to develop (Settoon et al., 1996; Wayne et al., 1997). It is expected that employees (target) engaged in high-quality leader-member exchange relationship may be willing to engage in creative performance (desirable reciprocating response).

Several researchers (e.g., Graen & Cashman, 1975; Maslyn & Uhl-Bien, 2001; Graen, 2003; Uhl-Bien & Maslyn, 2003; Graen & Shieman, 2013) have stated that the motivational basis of the development of leader-member/supervisor-subordinate exchange is associated with the concepts of social exchange and the norm of reciprocity (Blau, 1964). It is believed that supervisors engaged in a high-quality exchange relationship may offer resources or more support to their subordinates for completing different work tasks or/and for career development. Subordinates may respond positively to their supervisors with better job performance as an obligation. Previous research has demonstrated that leader-member exchange is positively associated with performance (e.g., Graen, Novak, & Sommerkamp, 1982; Judge & Ferris, 1993; Gerstner & Day, 1997; Wayne, Shore, Bommer, & Tetrick, 2002; Wakabayashi, Chen, & Graen, 2005). Since leader-member exchange has contained the features of trust, respect, and mutual obligation (Settoon et al., 1996; Uhl-Bien & Maslyn, 2003), Subordinates' positive reciprocating response will help them continue to maintain a high-quality supervisor-subordinate relationship.

3.3 Leader-Member Exchange Theory

The concept of leader-member exchange is defined as the quality of the interpersonal exchange relationship between an employee and his or her supervisor involving interdependencies and mutual influence (Graen, 1976; Uhl-Bien, 2006). Based on the reciprocity of exchanges in

relationships, leader-member exchange focuses on building trust between supervisors and subordinates (Dadhich & Bhal, 2008; McLarty, Muldoon, Quade, & King, 2021). As an exchange of desired results, the supervisor-subordinate relationship can be developed over time (Nahrgang, Morgeson, & Hies, 2009). The basic assumption of the leader-member exchange theory is that supervisors will have differentiated relationships with their subordinates and treat them differently (Martin, Thomas, Legood, & Dello Russo, 2018). Therefore, supervisors will have high-quality exchange relationships with a small number of subordinates.

Under a high-quality relationship, employees will have high levels of responsibility, decision influence, and access to resources (Dulebohn, Bommer, Liden, Brouer, & Ferris, 2012; Hooper & Martin, 2008). In contrast, under a low-quality relationship, leaders will provide low levels of support to employees. As a result, employees will have low levels of responsibility and decision influence, and this kind of employees is not being a part of the group (Hooper & Martin, 2008). It is argued that leader-member exchange relationships tend to contain several features including the quality of the relationship, depending on demanding tasks, decision-making, and emotional support, strengthening perceived safety, and increasing the interest of employees in fulfilling their work demands (Vander Elst, Van Den Broeck, De Cuyper, & De Witte, 2014). Through the evolution of high-quality relationships influenced by exchanges and role-making activities between leaders and members, (Carmeli & Hailevi, 2009), leaders can stimulate subordinates to achieve higher levels of performance, obtain job satisfaction, enhance a culture of interpersonal trust, and transfer positive psychological capital to their members (Byun, Dai, Lee, & Kang, 2017; Cerne, Jaklic, & Skerlavaj, 2013).

The concept of leader-member exchange was first introduced as the vertical dyad linkage approach to leadership in the mid-1970s (Dansereau et al., 1975). It indicates that a leader will treat his or her subordinate with different leadership styles, instead of treating all subordinates

with the same leadership style (Schriesheim, Castro, & Cogliser, 1999). Unlike the average leadership style (Graen, Liden, & Hoel, 1982), the leader-member exchange theory is a kind of relationship-based approach to leadership (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The theory suggests that leaders can influence each employee through a unique interpersonal exchange (Dansereau et al., 1975; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Liden, Erdogan, Wayne, & Sparrowe, 2006).

Regarding the importance of the leader-member exchange theory, Day and Miscenko (2015) stated that it is a highly influential and the only leadership theory that focuses tightly on the leader-follower relationship. Over the past four decades, the leader-member exchange is treated as the most important dyadic theory in the leadership literature, and it is a key to understanding the leader's effects on members, teams, and organizations (Bauer & Erdogan, 2015). As distinct from the concept of traditional leadership, the members of an organization are not defined as a piece of machinery, and they are allowed by the supervisor to negotiate his or her work role and job-related issues.

Previous research stated the root of leader-member exchange is grown from social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). The dyadic relationships developed by leader-member exchange will cause a reciprocal resource exchange between leaders and subordinates. It is believed that leaders may provide resources including information, recognition, and rewards (Dansereau, Cashman, & Graen, 1973; Graen & Scandura, 1987). Subordinates, in return, may offer not only the exchange of goods but also show their loyalty, commitment, greater ownership, and responsibility for challenging tasks (Bernerth, Walker, & Harris, 2016).

Based on the social exchange theory, some scholars studied the dimension of leader-member exchange and proposed that leader-member exchange shall be multi-dimensional (e.g., Dienesch & Liden, 1986). Four currencies of exchange may affect leader-member exchange

including contributions (task-related behavior), loyalty (loyalty to each other), affection (simply liking one another), and professional respect (Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Liden & Maslyn, 1998). Therefore, the leader-member exchange theory can help explain the development of dyadic relationships and the connection between leadership processes and outcomes.

From earlier theoretical works to later research, the leader-member exchange theory has been developed for over four decades. The exchange relationship between leaders and members can be described as a two-way interaction process (Sheer, 2015). It means a leader and a subordinate are willing to exchange tangible or intangible commodities that directly link to work tasks and social intentions. Sheer (2015) stated that the leader-member exchange theory has tended to contain three key elements: (a) role development, (b) leader-member relationship quality, and (c) employee performance outcomes.

3.3.1 Role Development

Apart from the social exchange theory, role theory (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964) is another conceptual foundation for understanding supervisor-subordinate relationships as a workplace phenomenon (Matta, Scott, Koopman, & Conlon, 2015). Some researchers stated that the development of leader-member exchange relationships is a role-making process (Graen, 1976; Graen & Scandura, 1987). During the development of leader-member exchange relationships, a leader will communicate expectations to a given member. Regarding the member's response, the supervisor-subordinate relationship will evolve either into a high-quality socio-emotional relationship or a low-quality transactional relationship (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The former has consisted of mutual trust, respect, and obligation, but the latter has not contained those feelings. It is argued that the "role" of an employee will be relatively

routinized and stable after a certain time of the development of the leader-member exchange relationship (Graen & Scandura, 1987).

Roles can be treated as a set of behaviors. When members of an organization take action to perform their jobs, they will accomplish their work through different roles. If employees are “actors” performing their “parts” in a theatre, their performances will be differentiated and predictable because of which “scripts”. Biddle (1986) stated that social actors’ performances are “patterned and characteristic social behaviors, parts or identities that are assumed by social participants, and scripts or expectations for behavior that are understood by all and adhered to by performers” (p.68). It showed that employees may perform differentiated and predictable behaviors depending on their respective social identities and the situation.

Some researchers stated that when a member of the organization acts as the “role sender”, he or she may hold a set of role expectations, role sender will send those expectations to “role receiver” acted by another member of the organization (Nahrgang & Seo, 2015). In response to those role sender’s expectations, the role receiver will either perform a role or negotiate a different set of role expectations. Role development can be described as three phases: (a) role taking, (b) role making, and (c) role routinization.

Role-Taking Phase.

Role-taking is the first phase as well a trial phase of role development. In this stage, the leader (i.e., role sender) will try to identify the potential member’s talents, motivations, and limits through a series of role activities. The leader will send different roles to the member and evaluate the member’s performance by his or her responses. It is critical to the development of the leader-member relationship because the leader will decide whether or not to initiate another sent role to the member (Dansereau et al., 1975; Graen & Scandura, 1987).

In this early phase of role development, each member of the dyad (the leader and the member) will experience initial interaction with unique characteristics, abilities, and attitudes. The characteristics of leaders and members may have positive or negative impacts on the initial interaction which can be treated as a socialization process. Several researchers stated that the initial interaction act as an important determinant of the future state of the leader-member relationship (Graen & Cashman, 1975; Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Dockery & Steiner, 1990). It is believed that the role-taking phase may take a short period ranging from a few hours to a few months (Graen & Scandura, 1987).

Role-Making Phase.

Role-making phase is the next stage after the completion of role taking phase. In the role-making phase, the leader and member will further develop the nature of their relationship. Each member will monitor how each will behave in different circumstances (Graen & Cashman, 1975) to define the nature of leader-member relationship. Moreover, the leader and member will experience various exchanges such as the exchange of information, support, attitude, and resources (Graen & Scandura, 1987). As a result of interlocking behaviors in the role-making phase over time, the role development goes to the final phase.

Role Routinization Phase.

Role routinization is the last phase of role development. In this phase, the leader-member relationship (dyadic relationship) has evolved to a stabilized status because both the leader and member have mutual expectations of each role's behavior. The relational dimensions of the dyadic relationship such as trust, respect, loyalty, and liking (Graen & Scandura, 1987) contribute to accumulated experiences of the interlocking behaviors that help the leader and member develop a stabilized relationship.

It is suggested that differentiated roles may result in a high-quality socio-emotional relationship or/and a low-quality transactional relationship (Liden et al., 1997). Graen and Uhl-Bien (1991) stated that leader-member exchange may lead to effective leadership under the condition of mature and high-quality relationships between leaders and members. To realize effective leadership, the development of this dyadic relationship needs to activate a series of social exchanges of various tangible and intangible resources (Martin, Epitropaki, Geoff, & Topakas, 2010). On one hand, a leader may offer a member information, influence, desired task assignments, decision latitude, support, and attention. On the other hand, a member may exchange his or her resources including task performance, commitment, loyalty, and citizenship behavior (Martin et al., 2010).

3.3.2 Leader-Member Relationship Quality

One of the major focuses of the leader-member exchange theory is the dyadic interaction quality between supervisors and employees (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). It is assumed that supervisors will have different levels of relationship (leader-member exchange differentiation) between in-group and out-group subordinates (Dienesch & Liden, 1986). When a supervisor treats a subordinate as an in-group member, it means the supervisor-subordinate relationship can be described as a high-quality leader-member exchange with a high level of trust, interaction, support, and reward.

Gerstner and Day (1997) have mentioned that the relationship between subordinates and their leader or superior will be a critical factor to shape subordinates' reactions to their work experience. Martin et al. (2010) pointed out the leader-subordinate relationship requires each person to play an active role in building a reciprocal relationship. From this point of view, leadership is not a top-down or bottom-up process. Based on the social exchange theory, the leader-member exchange can be differentiated into a high-quality or low-quality exchange. A

low-quality leader-member exchange relationship will create economic benefits (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), and a high-quality leader-member exchange relationship will create not only economic benefits but also social resources (Goodwin et al., 2009).

Another point of view to differentiate a high or low-quality leader-member exchange relationship, some scholars named low-quality exchange as an “out-group relationship” (Martin et al., 2010). This relationship is built on the legal job contract linking to transactional leadership behavior. On the other hand, a high-quality exchange is named an “in-group relationship”. It goes beyond the formal employment contract linked to transformational leadership behaviors. From a high-quality leader-member exchange relationship, followers may obtain “rich” resources including support autonomy and decision-making latitude (Dansereau et al., 1975; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991). This kind of relationship may help followers perform better. Results of meta-analyses have shown that there are associations between a higher-quality leader-member exchange relationships and better job performance (Gerstner & Day, 1997), as well as extra-role performance including organizational citizenship behavior (Ilies, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007).

3.3.3 Employee Performance Outcomes

Previous empirical research has demonstrated that leader-member exchange can have an impact on outcomes such as task performance, satisfaction, turnover, and organizational commitment (Gerstner & Day, 1997). In the international context, many studies have focused on the outcomes of leader-member exchange including follower commitment, follower performance, follower turnover intention, follower satisfaction, follower organizational citizenship behavior, and follower justice perception (Pellegrini, 2015). The relationship between leader-member exchange and performance is a critically important research area in the leader-member exchange literature (Matta & Van Dyne, 2015). Job performance is the most

widely studied outcome variable in the leader-member exchange literature (Gerstner & Day, 1997; Dulebohn et al., 2012). Meta-analytic evidence has shown that the quality of leader-member exchange is positively related to objective task performance (Martin, Guillaume, Thomas, Lee, & Epitropaki, 2016). It is expected that if leaders can manage the quality of leader-member exchange with followers, leaders can predict employee work performance (Lee, Thomas, Martin, & Guillaume, 2019).

The traditional view of performance is described as task proficiency (Matta & Van Dyne, 2015). To date, researchers have provided a more comprehensive view to study the performance phenomenon with a range of behaviors (Campbell, McCloy, Oppler, & Sager, 1993). Matta and Dyne (2015) adapted the performance frameworks introduced by several scholars (Van Dyne, Cummings, & Parks, 1995; Johnson, 2003; Griffin, Neal, & Parker, 2007) to provide an organizing framework of differentiating four types of performance linking leader-member exchange: (a) task performance, (b) affiliative extra-role behavior, (c) change-oriented extra-role behavior, and (d) adaptive performance.

Task Performance.

Based on the social exchange mechanism, researchers have suggested that leader-member exchange is a strong predictor of task performance (Matta & Van Dyne, 2015). Evidence showed that task performance and organizational citizenship behavior are predicted by the leader-member exchange in comparison with other constructs of social exchange such as perceived organizational support (Settoon et al., 1996). Some researchers found that organization-related outcomes including affective commitment and intention to quit are predicted by perceived organizational support (Wayne et al., 1997).

Affiliative Extra-Role Behavior.

Extra-role behavior is a kind of employee behavior that is not an obligation bounded by a formal employment contract (Reychav & Sharkie, 2010). When employees are willing to step out of the boundaries to behave in an extra role, task performance can be improved (e.g., Knies & Leisink, 2014). Referring to the concept of organizational citizenship behavior, if employees engage in extra-role behavior, they will go beyond routine tasks in the workplace (Organ, 1997). Researchers have stated that extra-role behavior is related to organizational citizenship behavior (Bateman & Organ, 1983; Ocampo, Acedillo, Bacunador, Balo, Lagdomeo, & Tupa, 2018; Tagliabue, Sigurjonsdottir, & Sandaker, 2020; Tefera, & Hunsaker, 2020). Matta and Van Dyne (2015) suggested affiliative extra-role behavior includes not only organizational citizenship behavior but also prosocial behavior, helping, altruism, and contextual performance. Previous studies have shown that there is a positive relationship between leader-member exchange and affiliative extra-role behavior (Wayne & Green, 1993; Basu & Green, 1995; Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001).

Change-Oriented Extra-Role Behavior.

Organizational citizenship behavior is one of the most desired employee outcomes in the workplace (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000). Some researchers defined change-oriented behavior as a type of organizational citizenship behavior that is the individuals' constructive efforts to identify and implement changes in relation to work methods, procedures, and policies to improve the situation and performance (Bettencourt, 2004; Choi, 2007). Previous studies have demonstrated that leader-member exchange can predict different types of changed-oriented extra-role behavior such as voice behavior (e.g., Elicker, Levy, & Hall, 2006) and employee resistance (e.g., Tepper, Uhl-Bien, Kohut, Rogelberg, Lockhart, & Ensley, 2006).

Adaptive Performance.

In response to or anticipation of changes that are related to jobs or tasks in the workplace, employees are required to adopt new roles, acquire new skills, or learn new methods to perform their jobs (e.g., Pulakos, Arad, Donovan, & Plamondon, 2000). This kind of task-performance-directed behavior (responsiveness to changing job requirements) is labelled as adaptive performance (Campbell et al., 1993; Jundt, Shoss, & Huang, 2014). According to the concept of adaptive performance suggested by Pulakos and colleagues (2000), both creative performance, innovative performance, and expatriate performance are treated as types of adaptive performance (Matta & Van Dyne, 2015). One reason is that adaptive performance requires “the individual to bring complex matters or situations to their desired end or develop creative solutions to novel, difficult problems” (Pulakos et al., 2000, p. 613). Another reason is that adaptive performance “involves successfully integrating into a new culture or environment by fully understanding and willingly behaving in accordance with the accepted customs, values, rules, and structures operating within it” (Pulakos et al., 2000, p. 614).

3.3.4 Negative Performance Outcomes of Leader-Member Exchange

The high-quality leader-member exchange relationships throughout an organization can be treated as a resource that can benefit organizations in the areas of firm performance, innovation, or other organization-level outcomes (Day & Miscenko, 2015). However, some scholars have pointed out that high-quality leader-member exchange may not have a positive impact on employees’ performance (e.g., Matta & Van Dyne, 2015) due to the leadership style. For example, if leaders use a laissez-faire style to manage subordinates without setting clear and challenging goals, the leader-member exchange may harm employees’ performance. Moreover, if leaders do not give corrective performance feedback and allow personal liking to obstruct employees’ performance in their managerial role, the leader-member exchange may negatively influence employees’ performance. The study by Lee and colleagues (2019) argued that

employees may have both positive and negative cognitions regarding the leader-member exchange relationship.

3.4 Research Gap in the relationship between Leader-Member Exchange and Innovative Work Behavior

In the 2010s, the creative and innovative performance received more attention from researchers focusing on how the leader-member exchange relationship influences employees' innovative work behavior (e.g, Agarwal, Datta, Blake-Beard, & Bhargave, 2012; Schermuly, Meyer, & Dammer, 2013; Stoffers, Van der Heijden, & Notelaers, 2014; Tsai et al., 2015; Tastan & Davoudi, 2015; Bos-Nehles, Renkema, & Janssen, 2017; Alsughayir, 2017; Nazir et al., 2018; Saeed, Afsar, Cheema, & Javed, 2018; Atitumpong & Badir, 2018; Bani-Melhem et al., 2020; Mascareno et al., 2020; Miller & Miller, 2020; Choi et al., 2021; Mulligan, Ramos, Martin, & Zornoza, 2021; Desrumaux, Pohl, Dose, & Bobillier Chaunon, 2022).

Baer (2012) has discovered that the association between creativity and implementation is affected by several intervening factors including an individual's motivation to realize the ideas, network ability, and strong social relationships. Tastan and Davoudi (2015) surveyed 327 non-supervisory employees from Turkish organizations. They found that leader-member exchange had no direct effect on innovative work behavior, but indirectly through the factor of trust in leaders. The result may be caused by several reasons: (a) employees' individual factors such as personality, orientation, and self-control, (b) organizational factors such as culture climate and work characteristics, and (c) cultural characteristics (Tastan & Davoudi, 2015). Researchers have called to deepen the understanding of the relationship between leader-member exchange and innovative behavior by exploring the underlying mechanism and boundary conditions (e.g., Matta & Van Dyne, 2015; Premru, Cerne, & Batistic, 2022).

3.4.1 Positive and Negative Feedback-Seeking Behavior as potential Mediator

Among the mediating effects tested in the relationship between leader-member exchange and performance, negative feedback-seeking is one of the key mediators (Matta & Van Dyne, 2015). Drawing on the social exchange theory, Chen and colleagues (2007) argued that high-quality leader-member exchange will predict task performance through the mediating role of negative feedback-seeking. The reason is that employees can clarify their roles with their trusted supervisors due to the high-quality leader-member exchange relationship. The researchers (Chen et al., 2007) proposed that “to determine how to maximize the likelihood of higher in-role performance for such reciprocation, subordinates may seek negative feedback on how to satisfy their supervisors’ requirements, expectations, and desires” (p. 204). Empirical research was conducted with data from Chinese state-owned corporations and the results showed that negative feedback-seeking mediated the relationship between leader-member exchange and performance.

De Spiegelare and colleagues (2014) described the concept of innovative work behavior can refer to in-role behavior, extra-role behavior, and organizational citizenship behavior. They also pointed out that innovative work behavior covers incremental and radical innovation as well as the concept of creativity (De Spiegelare, Van Gyes, & Van Hootehem, 2014). Creativity can be treated as the idea-generation stage of innovative work behavior (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010). According to the literature on innovative work behavior, it is a complex process. Some scholars treat the innovation process as two phases, namely idea generation and idea implementation (e.g., Park & Jo, 2017; Nazir et al., 2018; Bani-Melhem et al., 2020; Choi et al., 2021). The concept of innovative work behavior will be further discussed later.

This idea-generation stage will generate many creative ideas that will increase the probability of high-quality ideas. The combination of originality and feasibility defines the idea quality

(e.g., Diehl & Stroebe, 1987). In all domains of society, creative idea generation may result in the adoption of new procedures or products that will lead to innovation and progress. (Rietzshel, Nijstad, & Stroebe, 2010). Individual employees who find new concepts or optimize existing ones to satisfy their curiosity will help innovation (Hopp, 1998). Organizations can keep up with competitors and adapt to changing customer needs through innovation (Porter, 1990; Hitt, Hoskisson, & Kim, 1997; Amabile & Conti, 1999). In this study, idea generation is treated not only as a positive outcome of a high-quality leader-member exchange relationship but also as a construct in the research framework.

Surprisingly, little attention is paid to the mediating role of negative feedback-seeking behavior in the field of leader-member exchange to idea generation, a dimension of innovative work behavior. There have been few studies focusing on the mediating effect of negative feedback-seeking behavior in the relationship between leader-member exchange and two forms (incremental and radical) of innovative behavior in the workplace. Kwon and Oh (2020) have explored the positive association between negative feedback-seeking behavior and innovative behavior in Korea. Other Korean scholars (Heo, Kwon, & Hyun, 2021) surveyed 245 employees of Korean companies to investigate the mediating effects of positive and negative feedback-seeking behavior in the relationship between organizational culture and innovative work behavior. The results supported negative feedback-seeking behavior had a positive impact on innovative work behavior, but positive feedback-seeking behavior had no influence over innovative work behavior. Ashford and Tsui (1991) surveyed 387 managers in a public service agency and found that feedback-seeking behavior could be a self-regulatory strategy to improve managerial effectiveness and performance.

Matta and Van Dyne (2015) have called to study under-researched aspects of leader-member exchange to adaptive performance linkage. According to the selected literature on the

relationships between leader-member exchange and innovative work behavior, I found that negative-feedback seeking behavior is a less commonly researched topic. Therefore, it is needed to conduct research investigating the process of how leader-member exchange affects employees' incremental and radical idea generation, a dimension of innovative work behavior through the mechanism of feedback-seeking behavior. Inspired by Chen and colleagues' study (2007) on the relationship between leader-member exchange and in-role performance, this current study will expand the understanding of the mediating role of both positive and negative feedback-seeking behavior in the linkage between leader-member exchange and two forms of idea generation.

3.4.2 Emotional Intelligence as a potential Individual Difference Moderator

Apart from exploring other potential mediators, Matta and Van Dyne (2015) also suggested that researchers can examine potential contextual factors and individual differences for a deeper understanding of leader-member exchange and performance relationships. During the interpersonal exchange processes, individuals may cause different emotional effects with their leaders or followers (Ashkanasy, Hartel, & Daus, 2002; Ashkanasy & Tse, 2000; Fisher & Ashkanasy, 2000; Barsade, 2002; Tse, Ashkanasy, & Dasborough, 2005; Tse, Troth, & Ashkanasy, 2016). Van Kleef (2009) pointed out that emotions have important social functions such as conveying information about the feelings toward something between both leaders and followers in supervisor-subordinate relationships. Several studies suggested that individual differences in emotional intelligence have a positive impact on building and maintaining the social relationship (Brackett and Mayer, 2003; Brackett, Mayer, & Warner, 2004). Evidence has shown that higher emotional intelligence is associated with job performance (Van Rooy & Viswesvaran, 2004; O'Boyle, Humphrey, Pollack, Hawver, & Story, 2011), and job satisfaction (Wong & Law, 2002).

Nonetheless, Bauer and Erdogan (2015) stated that emotions are an under-researched topic in the leader-member exchange literature. Emotional intelligence contains the features including awareness of emotions, emotional knowledge, the use of emotions, and emotion management (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005). Some researchers argued that subordinates with higher emotional intelligence may perceive the intentionality of the leaders' behaviors more accurately (Dasborough & Ashkanasy, 2002), as well as recognize the role of both leaders' and followers' emotional intelligence in the leader-member exchange relationships. When people face situations of deliberate violation of social exchange, higher-emotional intelligence individuals may perform better because they can attune to the affective implications of the situations (Reis et al., 2007). Evidence showed that emotional intelligence can act as a moderator of leader-member exchange quality and work-related outcomes (Clarke & Mahadi, 2011). Therefore, it is reasonable to consider emotional intelligence as a potential moderator whether it can strengthen or weaken the impact of leader-member exchange on idea generation through feedback-seeking behavior.

3.5 Innovative Work Behavior Concepts

In a fast-changing business environment, the innovative work behavior of employees is a specific key leading to a company's success (Abstein & Spieth, 2014; Atitumpong et al., 2018). It is because an organization cannot be innovative without its employees (Atitumpong et al., 2018). Following De Jong and Den Hartog (2007), innovative work behavior can be defined as a set of behaviors including the recognition of problems and the intentional introduction of novel and useful ideas relating to products, services, and methods. The new ideas are required to develop, launch, and implement within a work role, group, or organization to benefit role performance or organization (West & Farr, 1990; Cingoz & Akdogan, 2011). De Spiegelaere and colleagues (2014) have concluded that innovative work behavior is the workers' behavior focusing on the generation, introduction, and application of ideas, processes, products, or

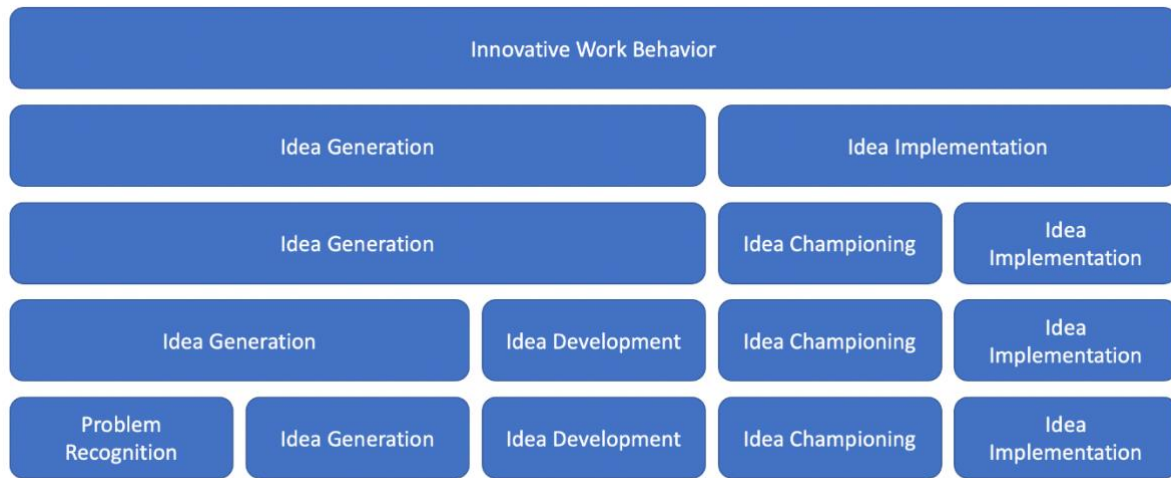
procedures that are new and presumably favorable for the relevant unit of adoption (West & Farr, 1990).

According to the study by Scott and Bruce (1994), innovative work behavior is conceived as a multi-dimensional concept. The study by Amir (2015) supported a three-dimension model of innovative behavior including idea generation, idea promotion, and idea implementation:

- Idea generation is to exploring opportunities with curiosity to develop new ideas from new sources and allocate the information relevant to the opportunities.
- Idea promotion is to gain sociopolitical support for new ideas. It needs an employee to have persuasion skills, efforts, and investment as resources to begin the initiative.
- Idea implementation is to make use of all the skills and processes for succeeding in idea promotion.

Regarding the complexity of the innovation process, De Spiegelaere and colleagues (2014) reviewed 32 articles on innovative work behavior. They found that researchers distinguished the dimensions of innovative work behavior into two, four, or five stages (see Figure.1.1). Two stages are idea generation and idea implementation (Krause, 2004; Yuan & Woodman, 2010). Four dimensions are idea generation, idea development, idea championing, and idea implementation (Dorenbosch, Van Engen, & Verhagen, 2005; Knol & Van Linge, 2009; De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010). Five dimensions are problem recognition, idea generation, idea development, idea championing, and idea implementation (Kleysen & Street, 2001; Tuominen & Toivonen, 2011). In this study, employees' innovative work behavior is treated as a three-dimension model. Idea generation is the first stage of innovative behavior in the workplace.

Figure 1.1: Visual representation of various dimensions of innovative work behavior



(Source: De Spiegelaeere et al., 2014).

3.5.1 Innovative Work Behavior and Creativity

De Jong and Den Hartog (2007) stated that innovative behavior in the workplace is closely related to employee creativity in terms of the implementation of creative ideas, though the boundary between the two concepts is blurred. Creativity is treated as a part of innovative behaviors and the first stage of the innovation process (West, 2002). Many researchers have argued that creativity is an essential condition for organizational innovation, growth, and survival to overcome organizational fixation (Baucus, Norton, Baucus, & Human, 2008; George, 2007; Puccio & Cabra, 2010; Shalley et al., 2004; Stempfle, 2011). Innovative work behavior can be distinguished from creativity, and it is broader than proactive behavior (Alsughayir, 2017) containing different stages of the innovation process.

Previous research pointed out that two reasons help explain this argument (De Spiegelaeere et al., 2014, p. 319). First, creativity focuses exclusively on idea generation, the initial stage of innovative work behavior. Second, creativity is referred to the creation of something absolutely new. While innovative work behavior contains all employee's innovative behaviors focusing

on something new for the relevant unit of adoption (Amabile, Conti, Coon, Lazenby, & Herron, 1996; De Spiegelaere et al., 2014), employees may not need to engage in the workplace creativity. It is because employees sometimes can copy successful work habits from other departments to perform “innovative behavior” (De Spiegelaere et al, 2014). Since the concept of creativity and innovative work behavior demonstrate a considerable overlap, the literature on creativity or creative performance is useful for the development of the hypotheses in this study.

Individuals engaged in creativity are influenced by the organizational affect-creative cycle (Amabile, Barsade, Mueller, & Staw, 2005). These influences include “the activities provoked by the organization, a change in emotional status, change in the social environment, and the effects of the creative outcome itself” (Klijn & Tomic, 2010, p. 324). Prior to the theory of organizational affect-creative cycle, the componential theory of creativity (Amabile, 1983) has been used to explain the four elements that affect the creative process: (a) the domain-relevant skills such as knowledge and technical skills, (b) creativity relevant skills such as cognitive thinking styles, working styles, and personality characteristics, (c) intrinsic task motivation was mentioned as a mediator, (d) external social environment in which an individual operates. Therefore, individuals influenced by various socio-psychological factors will make decisions to be creative. This phenomenon can be described as “a self-influencing process that helps individuals to develop self-direction and self-motivation” (Klijn & Tomic, 2010, p. 327). It indicated that individuals could decide to be creative through self-leadership (Neck & Manz, 1996) in the workplace. The context of personality, social, and organizational psychology will influence employees’ creative performance.

3.5.2 Idea Generation, a dimension of Innovative Work Behavior

According to the concept of innovative work behavior, creativity can be treated as the process of idea generation (Paulus & Yang, 2000). De Jong and Den Hartog (2008) treated idea generation, a dimension of innovative work behavior as “a combination and reorganization of information and existing concepts to solve problems or to improve performance” (p.7). Some scholars view idea generation and creativity as the same concept (Patterson, 2002; West & Farr, 1990). Idea generation is always treated as the creativity stage of innovative work behavior including the generation of completely new and original ideas, but it also involves the generation of adopted ideas that apply existing systems to new situations (Hammond, Neff, Farr, Schwall, & Zhao, 2011). Rietzschel and colleagues (2010) stated that innovation is likely to start with the behavior of idea generation, and the generation of creative ideas is considered an extremely important means of progress to obtain a higher level of innovativeness (Anderson et al., 2014).

Regarding the research interest of idea generation, Niesen and colleagues (2018) have conducted a study to examine the linkage between job security, psychological contract breach, and idea generation (a dimension of innovative work behavior) with a sample of 1,420 supervisors working on postal service. Three key assumptions are highlighted (Niesen et al., 2018). First, it is expected that supervisors may perform a higher level of idea generation. Second, supervisors may be more engaged to perform innovative behavior in the workplace. Third, idea generation will be an important part of the job requirement of a supervisor. Although this current study is not aimed to study the innovative work behavior of supervisors, it inspires me to apply the concept of idea generation as a dimension of innovative work behavior from the perspective of subordinates in this study. De Spiegelaere and Van Gyes (2012) suggested that researchers can develop the measurement with the scale of incremental and radical innovation to better reflect the difference between innovative work behavior.

3.5.3 Incremental and Radical Idea Generation

Some researchers suggested that there is a large difference between small or incremental innovations and big or radical innovations (Gilson & Madjar, 2011; Madjar et al., 2011). Surprisingly, the concept of incremental and radical idea generation has not been widely explored during the past decade. To develop the concept of idea generation, a dimension of innovative work behavior with two forms (incremental and radical) of innovativeness, the literature on incremental and radical creativity as well as incremental and radical innovation will be used in this study.

Chan and Parhankangas (2017) stated that incremental innovativeness refers to “a quality of newness that is less drastic and represents the cumulative improvement of existing knowledge, capabilities, or technologies”, and radical innovativeness reflects “a quality of newness that is more drastic, is unique, and may involve breakthrough or paradigm-shifting knowledge, capabilities, or technologies” (p. 238). To differentiate the two types of innovativeness, it can use the concept of “small” (incremental) or “big” (radical) innovation to differentiate the two types of innovativeness. De Spiegelaere and colleagues (2014) viewed incremental innovativeness as “small” innovation and radical innovativeness as “big” innovation.

This study will follow the study by Madjar and colleagues (2011) to define incremental idea generation as “an individual’s ability to inject minor modifications into existing practices”, and radical idea generation as “an individual’s ability to generate radically creative ideas that differ substantially from existing practices or paradigms” (p. 242). Madjar and colleagues (2011) surveyed 12 advertising agencies in Bulgaria to study the impact of social and personal factors on incremental and radical creativity. The result has shown that employees’ organizational identification is associated with incremental creativity. Organizational identification refers to the psychological merging of self and organization (Tyler & Blader, 2001). It is believed that

people with a higher level of organizational identification will merge with more organizations' values, norms, and interests in his or her self-concept (Van Knippenberg, & Sleebos, 2006). On the other hand, Madjar and colleagues (2011) pointed out that there are three factors influencing employees to perform radical creativity: willingness to take risks, resources for creativity, and career commitment.

Gilson and colleagues (2012) stated that different motivational factors such as intrinsic motivation, extrinsic award, and supportive supervision are related to incremental and radical creativity. While supportive supervision is related to incremental and radical creativity, it is believed that leader-member exchange quality or relational leadership will have an impact on incremental and radical idea generation. When leaders understand how relational leadership such as leader-member exchange can lead to different types (incremental or radical) of idea generation, leaders can apply appropriate supervision strategies to support subordinates to generate the desired forms of ideas in the workplace. It may help organizations to be more competitive, grow, and survive. Previous research provided a foundation for this study to explore (a) the concept of incremental and radical idea generation and (b) the linkage between leader-member exchange quality and the two types of idea generation.

3.6 Foundations of Leader-member Exchange and Innovative Work Behavior

Why leader-member exchange is treated as the most effective leadership style for fostering innovative work behavior? First, unlike other leadership styles such as transformational, transactional, and empowering leadership, the leader-member exchange is based on quality relationships to provide social support and approval of the ideas for employees to implement the ideas effectively (Schermuly et al., 2013). Employees need to obtain support from their leaders to implement creative ideas in the workplace (Singh & Sarkar, 2012; Atitumpong et al., 2017). Basu and Green (1997) stated that the leader has the ability to influence places,

processes, and relationships that can arouse innovative behaviors. Previous research has empirically supported the argument of the positive association between leader-member exchange and individual innovative behavior (e.g., Scott & Bruce, 1994; Karin, Matthijs, Nicole, Sandra, & Claudia, 2010). Hammond and colleagues (2011) used meta-analysis to examine the relationship between leader-member exchange and innovative behavior. They found that leader-member exchange quality is positively associated with followers' creativity and innovative behavior.

Second, the nature of innovative work behavior is risky and uncertain. Employees cannot predict the results of idea generation and idea implementation. When a subordinate engages in innovative behavior, he or she is willing to take up the challenge to generate and implement ideas, and he or she has no fear to take risks even if the ideas are not successful. High quality of leader-member exchange indicates that subordinates may perceive their immediate supervisors as being supportive, caring, trustworthy, and loyal (Atitumpong & Badir, 2018). In line with social exchange theory, employees will reciprocate through higher engagement, effort, in-role performance, and positive work outcomes to return the supervisor's support. (Schermuly et al., 2013). Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) stated that an employee may feel empowered to explore his or her autonomy and decision latitude plus enhance the employee's "creative juices" through the quality of the relationship between a supervisor and a subordinate.

In this study, I argue that leader-member exchange quality may influence subordinates to generate incremental and radical ideas in the workplace. Numerous studies have supported the argument of a positive association between leader-member exchange and innovative work behavior. In the study by Alsughayir (2017), the leader-member exchange is positively associated with the idea generation dimension. Moreover, previous research has supported the argument of distinguishing innovative work behavior (idea generation and idea implementation)

into incremental and radical creativity and innovation. Furthermore, prior research has supported the argument of supervisors' support may lead to subordinates' radical creativity under a high-quality relational exchange relationship.

Surprisingly, in the selected literature studying the relationship between leader-member exchange and innovative work behavior from 1994 to 2022 (see Table. 1), a few studies have differentiated creativity (idea generation) and innovation (idea promotion and idea generation) (Mascareno et al., 2020) as mentioned in Chapter 1. Not surprisingly, in the selected literature, no study has explored the distinction between incremental and radical idea generation under the influence of relational leadership. Therefore, this study will fill this research gap to examine how leader-member exchange quality stimulates two desired forms of idea generation, a dimension of innovative work behavior.

3.6.1 Mediating Factors between Leader-Member Exchange and Innovative Behavior

Although a large number of studies have shown a positive relationship between leader-member exchange quality and innovative behavior in the workplace, some researchers found that a high-quality leader-member exchange relationships sometimes cannot predict innovative work behavior (Lee, 2008; Tastan & Davoudi, 2015). Individual differences, organizational context, and cultural characteristics may cause a negative association between relational leadership and innovative behavior. For example, Tastan and Davoudi (2015) found that the personality factors such as the self-concepts of Turkish employees will not be easily motivated and engaged in innovative behavior.

The job nature of the job position may be another explanation for the negative linkage between leader-member exchange and innovative work behavior. Lee (2008) surveyed 201 research and

development professionals to test the effects of leadership and leader-member exchange on innovativeness in Singapore. The results of the study by Lee (2008) showed that the quality of leader-member exchange did not affect employees to perform innovative behavior in the workplace. Previous research has demonstrated that relational leadership may not help predict innovative work behavior of research and development professionals (Scott & Bruce, 1994). It may be due to employees' job nature. Research and development professionals are more willing to generate new ideas and implement the ideas for making better products and delivering better services.

In addition to the individual or contextual factors, the nature of the innovation process may lead to a negative association between leader-member exchange quality and the two dimensions (idea promotion and idea implementation) of innovative work behavior (Mascareno et al., 2020). However, leader-member exchange quality may have a positive impact on idea implementation under the mediation of employee creativity (Mascareno et al., 2020). Previous research has stated that the association between idea generation and idea implementation is affected by several intervening factors including individual motivation, network ability, and strong social relationships (Baer, 2012). Besides, some researchers argued that leader-member exchange will have impacts on employees' innovative work behavior through cognitive and motivational mechanisms such as job autonomy (Volmer, Spurk, & Niessen, 2012) or work engagement (Shuhaimi & Panatik, 2016).

Since Scott and Bruce (1994) have provided a first attempt at modeling a complex phenomenon of individual innovative behavior with leader-member exchange quality as the independent and psychological climate for innovation as the mediator, this current study has reviewed the literature on the relationship between leader-member exchange (independent) and innovative work behavior (dependent) from 1994 to 2022 to identify what kind of intervening factors

being tested (see Table 1.1). In the study by De Jong and Den Hartog (2007) on the connection between leadership and employees' innovative work behavior, the antecedents of individual work behavior can be categorized into three levels: individual, work group, and organizational level. Having reviewed 25 selected articles, the possible antecedents of innovative behavior can be treated as individual-level factors including (a) psychological connection, (b) cognitive interpretation, (c) job features (d) social context, and (e) others.

Table 1.1: Selected literature from 1994 to 2022

Author(s)	Independent	Moderator	Mediator	Dependent
Scott and Bruce (1994)	Leader-member exchange	Nil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for innovation • Resource supply 	Innovative behavior
Basu and Green (1997)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader-member exchange • Transformational leadership 	Nil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autonomy • Leader support of followers • Followers' commitment to organization 	Innovative behavior
Karin et al. (2009)	Leader-member exchange	Nil	Satisfaction of HR practices	Innovative work behavior
Yuan and Woodman (2010)	Supervisor relationship quality (Leader-member exchange theory)	Nil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expected positive outcome performance • Expected image risks • Expected image gains 	Individual innovative behavior in the workplace
Agarwal et al. (2012)	Leader-member exchange	Nil	Work engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovative work behavior • Intention to quit •

Yeoh & Mahmood (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader-member exchange • Pro-innovation organizational climate • Social capital 	Nil	Nil	Innovative work behavior
Schermuly et al. (2013)	Leader-member exchange	Nil	Psychological empowerment	Innovative behavior
Stoffers et al. (2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader-member exchange • Organizational citizen behavior 	Firm performance	Employability	Innovative work behavior
Tsai et al. (2015)	Leader-member exchange	Intrinsic motivation Extrinsic motivation	Psychological empowerment	Innovative behavior
Tastan and Davoudi (2015)	Leader-member exchange	Perceived trust in leader	Nil	Innovative work behavior
Kim & Koo (2017)	Leader-member exchange quality	Nil	Nil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job engagement • Organization engagement • Innovative behavior • Job performance
Bos-Nehles et al. (2017)	Leader-member exchange	Nil	Nil	Innovative work behavior
Alsughayir (2017)	Leader-member exchange	Nil	Nil	Innovative work behavior
Garg and Dhar (2017)	Leader-member exchange	Job autonomy	Work engagement	Service innovative behavior
Atitumpong et al. (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LMX • Learning orientation 	Nil	Employee creative self-efficacy	Innovative work behavior
Bibi and Afsar (2018)	Leader-member exchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intrinsic motivation • Psychological empowerment 	Creative process engagement	Innovative work behavior

Khalili (2018)	Leader-member exchange	Employee's personal initiative	Nil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee creativity Employee innovation
Nazir et al. (2018)	Leader-member exchange	Nil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affective commitment Perceived organization support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee innovative behavior
Saeed et al. (2018)	Leader-member exchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Core self-evaluation Domain knowledge	Creative process engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovative work behavior
Bani-Melhem et al. (2020)	Leader-member exchange	Service climate	Employee happiness	Innovative work behavior
Mascareno et al. (2020)	Leader-member exchange	Nil	Employee creativity	Employee innovation
Miller and Miller (2020)	Leader-member exchange	Nil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement Job commitment 	Innovative work behavior
Choi et al. (2021)	Leader-member exchange	Perceived organizational support	Self-efficacy	Innovative work behavior
Mulligan et al. (2021)	Leader-member exchange	Nil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mindfulness Work engagement 	Innovative work behavior
Desrumaux et al. (2022)	Leader-member exchange	Nil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extrinsic efforts Work rewards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovative work behavior Psychological well-being

Psychological Connection.

Among the antecedents of innovative work behavior, 6 out of 25 selected articles have examined engagement: work engagement (Agarwal et al., 2012; Garg & Dhar, 2017; Miller & Miller, 2020; Mulligan et al., 2021) and creative process engagement (Bibi & Afsar, 2018;

Saeed et al., 2018). Work engagement can be treated as a psychological connection with task performance (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Employee engagement can be referred to as “the individual’s involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work” (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002, p. 269). Agarwal and colleagues (2012) argued that “when employees find their work meaningful and interesting, they are enthusiastic to immerse themselves in their work, and persevere to complete even the most difficult assignment” (p. 214). It shows that feeling good about work may stimulate a willingness or positive reactions to experiment for generating new ideas and novel solutions (Fredrickson, 2001). Saeed et al. (2018) have investigated the mediating effect of creative process engagement in the linkage between leader-member exchange and innovative work behavior. The results showed that creative process engagement has a positive impact on employee involvement in creativity or cognitive processes to perform problem identification, information searching, and idea generation (Saeed et al., 2018).

The second most tested factor of psychological connection with a positive influence on the association between leader-member exchange and innovative work behavior is commitment: follower commitment to organizations (Basu & Green, 1997; Miller & Miller, 2020) and affective commitment (Nazir et al., 2018). The concept of commitment comes from the employees who believe the goals, objectives, and values of the organization are as same as their thinking (Truckenbrodt, 2000). Under this belief of goals and values or individual identification (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982), employees may be willing to involve in innovative behavior to exhibit their commitment which can be treated as an attitude of company loyalty (Truckenbrodt, 2000). When employees have a higher level of emotional attachment towards the organization, they may have a higher level of individual identification and enjoyment in the relationship between them and their organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991). Nazir and colleagues (2018) stated that “individuals exhibit greater

capabilities to be involved in the activities of an organization and are always ready to put in extra effort beyond their duty towards the achievement of the organization's goals" (p. 4).

When people believe that they are empowered in the workplace, they may have a higher level of intrinsic task motivation and commitment to engage in innovative behavior. Psychological empowerment is another frequently mentioned mediator with a positive influence on the leadership to innovative behavior relationship from selected articles (Schermuly et al., 2013; Tsai et al., 2015). Empowerment can be referred to as a psychological determinant (Knol & Van Linge, 2009). Quinn and Spreitzer (1997) have concluded that empowerment comes from personal convictions of his or her role in the organization. It is argued that when employees feel psychologically empowered to believe they have the ability to do their jobs, they may have stronger self-efficacy or motivation to perform tasks (McClelland, 1975). In some cases, employees feeling empowered may inspire or motivate them to keep trying to perform their tasks even if they meet some bottlenecks in their jobs (Amabile et al., 1996).

Bani-Melhem and colleagues (2020) examined the mediating effect of employee happiness in the linkage between leader-member exchange and innovative behavior in the workplace. Happiness can be referred to as the positive affect/feelings over negative affect/feelings in the overall emotional evaluation of someone's life situation (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998). It is expected happy people will perform better (Bajaj and Krishnan, 2016). The reason is that positive emotions may motivate people to have creative or flexible thinking (Fredrickson, 2004).

Cognitive Interpretation.

From the selected articles, creative self-efficacy (Atitumpong et al., 2018) and the expectations of three outcomes including positive job performance, image risks, and image gains (Yuan &

Woodman, 2010) are the factors of cognitive interpretation of individual ability and environmental context, positively mediating the relationship between leader-member exchange and innovative work behavior. Atitumpong and colleagues (2018) used an interactional perspective to examine the mediating role of creative self-efficacy that reflects “one’s confidence in the ability to perform a specific task in the innovation process” (p. 38). Previous research has demonstrated that when employees have a higher level of confidence to perform creativity, they will tend to display a high level of problem-solving and creative process engagement (Tierney & Farmer, 2011).

Yuan and Woodman (2010) investigated the mediating effect of expected positive performance outcomes with the efficiency-oriented perspective. They suggested that “employees are more likely to engage in innovative behavior when they expect such behavior to benefit their work” (p. 325). It is believed that employees who have a higher level of outcome expectation may have a higher level of motivation to engage in innovative behavior. In the study by Cingoz and Asuman (2011), the results of the empirical examination showed that expectations for potential performance and image consequences have a significant and positive influence on employees’ innovative behavior. On the other hand, Yuan and Woodman (2010) used the social-political perspective to examine the mediating role of expected image risks and expected image gains inside organizations. The mediating effects of the two factors are significant. It is assumed that employees may engage in innovative behavior to pursue image gain for positive impression management rather than negative social evaluations.

In the 2020s, some scholars explored mindfulness as the mediator between leader-member exchange and innovative work behavior (Mullgian et al., 2021) under the COVID-19 circumstances. Mindfulness can be described as the awareness of external surroundings and inventive aspects that may facilitate creativity (Hart, Ivztan, & Hart, 2013). It is believed that

mindfulness is a flexible state of mind, and creative mindfulness helps people engage in seeking novelty as well as novelty producing (Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000; Lebuda, Zabelina, & Karwowski, 2016).

Individual Ability.

From the selected articles, Mascareno and colleagues (2020) have examined employee creativity (idea generation) as a mediator in the association between leader-member exchange and employee innovation (idea promotion and idea implementation). The scholars pointed out that earlier research has not clearly distinguished creativity and innovation, and the findings of the relationship between leader-member exchange and innovative work behavior are sometimes inconsistent (e.g., Lee, 2008; Tastan & Davoudi, 2015). Besides, Mascareno and colleagues (2020) discovered that only professional respect (one of the constructs of leader-member exchange) predicted employee innovation through employee creativity. It showed that leader-member exchange may not be a sufficient condition to cause innovation. For innovation to occur, it may require individual employees' ability (i.e., creativity) to be mediating factors.

Job Features.

According to the concept of job design, autonomy (Basu & Green, 1997, Miller & Miller, 2020) has played a mediating role in the association between leader-member exchange and innovative work behavior from the selected articles. Autonomy can be treated as the degree to which the task provides a certain level of freedom, independence, and discretion to design the method of working, procedures, scheduling, work goals, working hours, and so on (e.g., Hackman, 1980; De Jonge & Kompier, 1997). It is believed that employees who have a higher degree of job autonomy, will have a higher level of engagement in innovative behavior (Garg & Dhar, 2017; Miller & Miller, 2020). On the other hand, extrinsic efforts or workloads may lead to stress

that may affect employees' well-being, and it may cause a negative impact on innovative behavior (Desrumaux et al., 2022).

Social Context.

Based on the concept of social exchange, some researchers from the selected articles stated that employees who have a higher level of motivation or commitment to engage in innovative behavior may be affected by a higher level of leader support (Basu & Green, 1997) or perceived organizational support (Nazir et al., 2018; Choi et al., 2021). From the perspective of an employee's socio-emotional needs, employees may observe whether their organizations value their contributions and consider their overall welfare or not (Eisengerger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). It means when people think that they are supported by their leaders or organizations, they may be willing to take the risk to commit themselves to engage in innovative behavior in the workplace (Nazir et al., 2018).

Other.

With regards to the possible mediators from the selected articles, some intervening factors including satisfaction with HR practices (Karin et al., 2010) and employability (Stoffers et al., 2014) are investigated and shown a positive influence on the linkage between leader-member exchange and innovative behavior. In the study by Karin and colleagues (2010), HR practices indicate a set of human resources policies such as rewards and work content. On one hand, it is argued that satisfaction with salary or compensation may not mediate the relationship between leader-member exchange and innovative behavior. On the other hand, it is argued that HR policies are associated with improved performance in all types of organizations and all types of employees.

Nevertheless, Karin and colleagues (2010) pointed out that the more employees are satisfied with their salary, the less innovative behavior they show. Previous research found that knowledge workers are often intrinsically motivated to perform more (Rousseau, 1995). Job security may affect employees' willingness to engage in innovative behavior. In the study by Stoffers and colleagues (2014), it is argued that employability (career potential) may mediate the relationship between leader-member exchange and innovative work behavior under the moderating effect of firm performance. Employability can be treated as an individual's chance of a job in the labour market (Forrier & Sels, 2003). It is believed that people with a higher level of employment confidence in a successful company with more resources and support, people may be motivated to engage in innovative behavior (Stoffers et al., 2014).

3.6.2 Complex Model to study Leader-Member Exchange and Innovative Work Behavior

In sum, in the selected literature (from 1994 to 2022) on the relationship between leader-member exchange and innovative work behavior, the researchers have explored not only the effects of different mediators but also investigated the combined effects of moderators in the linkage. For example, as the boundary conditions of psychological empowerment, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can play the role of moderator to increase employees' feeling of enjoyment and greater satisfaction for doing their jobs (Tsai et al., 2015). Ryan and Deci (2000) stated that intrinsic motivation will lead to the outcome of high-quality learning and creativity.

Over the past decade, more researchers tried to explore a deeper understanding of the relationship between leader-member exchange and innovative behavior in the workplace with different perspectives and moderated mediation models (Stoffers et al., 2014; Tsai et al., 2015; Garg & Dhar, 2017; Saeed et al., 2018; Bibi & Afsar, 2018; Bani-Melhem et al., 2020). It is argued that leader-member exchange may increase employees' innovative work behavior

through cognitive and motivational mechanisms. This current study will adopt the instrumental perspective to investigate the mechanism of both positive and negative feedback-seeking behavior in the relationship between leader-member exchange and two forms of individual employees' idea generation. Moreover, this study will examine a moderated mediation model with one under-researched moderator (emotional intelligence) through the lens of social exchange theory.

3.7 Research Framework and Hypotheses

In this study, I raise this key research question:

“How do leader-member exchange relationships stimulate employees to perform the desired form of idea generation in the workplace through feedback-seeking from the trusted supervisors?”

To answer this research question, leader-member exchange quality is treated as the independent variable, and incremental and radical idea generation is treated as the dependent variable in the research framework. Scott and Bruce (1994) examined the relationship between leader-member exchange as a leadership style and innovative work behavior. Having reviewed the literature from 1994 to 2022, I found that the literature about the linkage between leader-member exchange and the two types of idea generation is rare. So, I reviewed the literature on incremental and radical creativity to develop the hypotheses and research framework.

In the study by Scott and Bruce (1994), support for innovation and resource supply is treated as the mediating factors in the relationship between leader-member exchange and innovative behavior in the workplace. It showed that innovative work behavior is not only determined by relational exchange leadership but also affected by intervening factors. Tsai and colleagues

(2015) investigated the linkage between leader-member exchange and innovative work behavior under a moderated mediation model with psychological empowerment as a mediator, and intrinsic and extrinsic motivations as two moderators. It demonstrated that innovative work behavior may be influenced by psychological and motivational contexts.

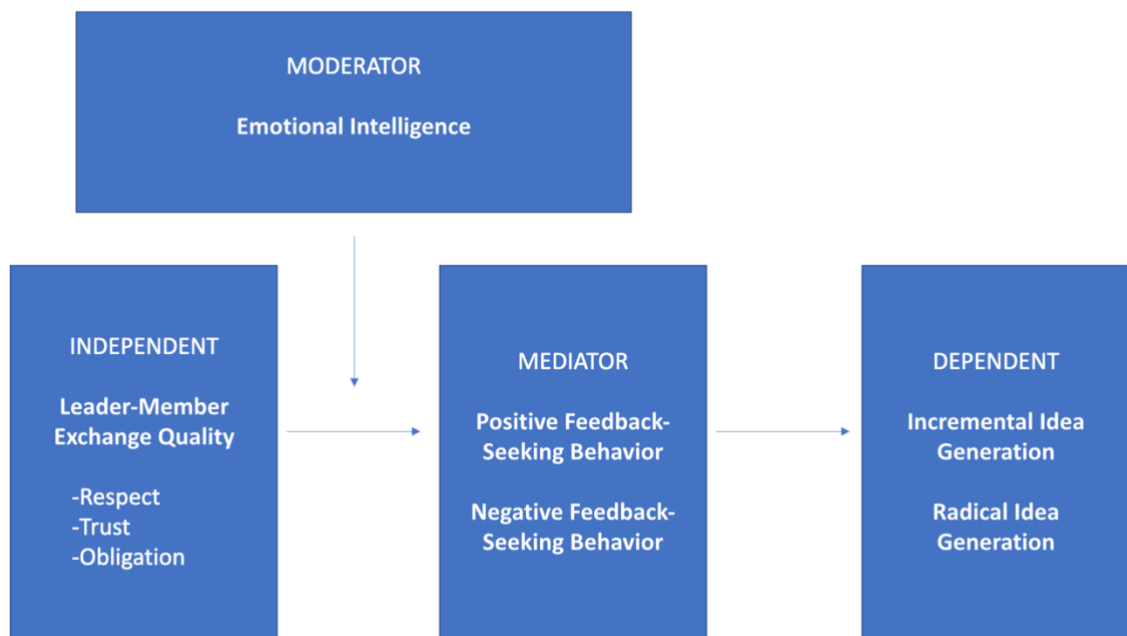
In addition to the literature studying the relationship between leader-member exchange and innovative work behavior, I have reviewed the incremental and radical creativity literature. A recent study of employee creativity found that emotional competence can indirectly influence employees who are team members from different industries including manufacturing, customer service, and telecommunication in South Korea to generate incremental ideas (Sung et al., 2020). This study also showed that emotion competence can directly influence employees to generate radical ideas. Sung and colleagues (2020) suggested a dual pathway of an individual factor (emotion competence) leading to two types (incremental and radical) of creativity or creative performance through feedback-seeking behavior.

While studying the linkage between feedback-seeking behavior and creative performance, I found that Chen and colleagues (2007) examined the mediating effect of negative feedback-seeking behavior in the relationship between leader-member exchange and in-role performance. They stated that negative feedback is a valuable resource for enhancing individual performance in comparison with positive feedback. However, previous research showed that negative feedback is less easily accepted by people since it may hurt the individual image. Chen and colleagues (2007) pointed out that leader-member exchange quality may help individual employees to minimize the barrier to seeking negative feedback from supervisors for improving performance through the moderator of a sense of empowerment (see Figure 5). Since innovative work behavior covers both in-role and extra-role behavior (De Spiegelaere et

al., 2014), it is assumed that negative feedback-seeking behavior may influence idea generation (a dimension of innovative work behavior/extra-role behavior/adaptive performance).

Inspired by the research model of Sung and colleagues (2020), I propose a moderated mediation model to investigate the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and two forms of idea generation through the mediating effect of two types of feedback-seeking behavior (see Figure 2.1). In this research framework, the constructs of leader-member exchange quality will be focused on three “currencies” including respect, trust, and obligation. Emotional intelligence will be served as a boundary condition in the proposed research model. Previous studies provided evidence to support the linkage between emotional intelligence and feedback-seeking behavior (e.g., Zhang & Zhu, 2019).

Figure 2.1: Conceptual research framework.



In the workplace, employees with a higher level of emotional intelligence may find better ways to interact with their leaders for sharing their ideas and goals, and improving interpersonal

relationships (Zhang & Zhu, 2019). It is believed that emotional intelligence may help employees deal with negative feedback and seek negative feedback to engage in radical idea generation without the fear of taking risks.

3.7.1 Positive effects of Leader-Member Exchange on Incremental and Radical Idea Generation

Based on the concepts of social exchange and the norm of reciprocity (Blau, 1964), the development of the exchange relationship between leaders and members is associated with the motivation basis (e.g., Graen & Cashman, 1975; Maslyn & Uhl-Bien, 2001; Uhl-Bien & Maslyn, 2003; Graen, 2003). Under this motivation basis, leaders/supervisors will take positive and beneficial actions to build high-quality exchange relationships with members/subordinates. This relationship will drive subordinates to reciprocate positively (Chen et al., 2007). Previous research showed that subordinates may have better performance when they engage in high-quality leader-member exchange relationships (Graen, Liden, & Hoel, 1982; Judge & Ferris, 1993; Gerstner & Day, 1997; Wayne et al., 2002; Wakabayashi et al., 2005). In these exchange relationships, supervisors will provide more support and resources to subordinates for dealing with different tasks that will benefit their career development (Chen et al., 2007). The positive contributions of supervisors will cause the subordinates to reciprocate positively to perform more effectively for maintaining this high-quality exchange relationship with trust, respect, and mutual obligation (Uhl-Bien & Maslyn, 2003).

Since Scott and Bruce (1994) made the first attempt to investigate the linkage between leader-member exchange and innovative work behavior, supervisors are treated as a source to evaluate subordinate's innovative behavior in the workplace (e.g., Janssen, 2000), and even as a factor that influences employees' innovative work behavior (e.g., Janssen, 2005; De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007). Subordinates may have chances to practice new ideas that are influenced by

their supervisors' powers and abilities including supervision, intellectual stimulation, as well as sharing expert knowledge and information (Krause 2004; Jong Jeroen & Hartog Deanne 2007). Many researchers examined the positive relationship between leader-member exchange and employees' innovative work behavior (e.g., Basu & Green, 1997; Karin et al., 2010, Agarwal et al., 2012; Schermuly et al., 2013; Stoffers et al., 2014; Tsai et al., 2015; Alsughayir, 2017; Nazir et al., 2018; Mascareno et al., 2020). It is assumed that subordinates receive support and resources from supervisors with the tasks to generate and implement ideas, they may be willing to engage in innovative behavior regarding the positive reciprocity norm.

De Spiegelare and colleagues (2014) concluded that innovative work behavior covers both incremental and radical innovations. They stated that radical innovation refers to "innovations that make a radical break with the past", and incremental innovation refers to "less radical ideas that focus on improving existing products and processes (p.12). This study focuses on how leader-member exchange quality affects employees' idea generation, a dimension of innovative work behavior. Besides, this study aims to differentiate the effects of leader-member exchange quality on incremental and radical idea generation. Earlier research showed that there is a connection between leader-member exchange and the idea generation dimension (e.g, Alsughayir, 2017; Mascareno et al., 2020).

In this study, I argue that high-quality leader-member exchange is positively related to employees' idea generation. Proactive employees with strong self-leadership who perceive suitable support from their work environment will be most likely to engage in creative behavior (DeLiello & Houghton, 2006). It is believed that individuals who have strong self-leadership will consider themselves to be more innovative and creative than employees with weak strong self-leadership. When individuals with strong self-leader perceive strong support from their workgroup, supervisor, and organization, they will be more likely to practice innovation and

creativity (Klijn & Tomic, 2010). It is predicted that subordinates engaged in high-quality leader-member exchange relationships may be more willing to involve in incremental and radical idea generation than those engaged in low-quality leader-member exchange relationships. Therefore, I propose:

Hypothesis 1a (H1a): Leader-member exchange quality is positively related to incremental idea generation.

Hypothesis 1b (H1b): Leader-member exchange quality is positively related to radical idea generation.

3.7.2 Leader-Member Exchange and Feedback-Seeking Behavior

The mediating mechanism, referred to as feedback-seeking behavior, is defined as an employee's proactive and self-regulatory effort to search for evaluative information from his or her manager about the adequacy or/and inadequacy of overall work performance, role fulfillment, and customer service (Ashford & Tsui, 1991). Based on the instrumental perspective, subordinates can initiate feedback exchanges to improve their performance (Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Ashford & Tsui, 1991; VandeWalle et al., 2000). Some researchers argued that the instrumental motive is not the only reason for people to determine feedback-seeking behavior (Ashford et al., 2003). Whether people decide to seek feedback or not, the motive of ego defense and enhancement, as well as the motive of image defense and enhancement (e.g., Dahling, O'Mallye, & Chau, 2015) may play a role.

Prior research showed that individuals can adjust and direct their effort to face the challenge through feedback information on successful or/and failed actions (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Locke & Latham, 1990; Bandura, 1991). Feedback can be positive or/and negative. On one

hand, positive feedback-seeking behavior is treated as a feedback behavior that helps employees to ensure the performance achieving the organizational goal as well as obtaining a positive evaluation of an individual's abilities (Tsui & Ashford, 1994). On the other hand, negative feedback-seeking behavior is treated as a feedback behavior that helps employees to find out things for improving an individual's role performance (Ashford & Tsui, 1991; Chen et al., 2007; Lam, Huang, & Snape, 2007). It is believed that supervisors are one of the key sources of feedback-seeking. Some researchers argued that supervisors engaged in high-quality leader-member exchange may be more trustworthy and reachable (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Other researchers argued that subordinates engaged in high-quality leader-member exchange relationships will rely on their supervisors to seek support for career investment (Wakabayashi et al., 2005).

Positive feedback may increase individuals' confidence in their ability to pursue their goals, and negative feedback may damage individuals' confidence (Fishbach, Eyal, & Finkelstein, 2010). However, proactive employees engaged in high-quality leader-member exchange may be more willing to seek negative feedback from their trusted supervisors for work improvement as the goal (Leung, Su, & Morris, 2001). In this circumstance, supervisors' negative feedback may provide subordinates with a better understanding of their inadequate work behavior and performance as well as suggestions for improvement (e.g., Ashford et al., 2003). Chen and colleagues (2007) surveyed 238 supervisor-subordinate dyads from two motor manufacturing corporations in China. The results showed that negative feedback-seeking behavior partially mediates the positive relationship between leader-member exchange and work performance.

When proactive employees decide to seek feedback, they will evaluate the potential gains as well as potential costs such as effort and risk of embarrassment (Ashford, 1986). The high-quality leader-member exchange relationship, which represents a positive and healthy social

exchange between supervisors and subordinates, will help not only reduce the perceived costs and risks but also promote the potential gains while seeking feedback from trusted supervisors (Chen et al., 2007). It means when leader-member exchange quality is high, employees will focus more on the instrumental value of feedback information and worry less about uncertainty and role ambiguity (e.g., Brown, Ganesan, & Challaglla, 2001). In this study, I argue that leader-member exchange quality may have positive effects on employees' positive and negative feedback-seeking behavior. Therefore, I propose:

Hypothesis 2a (H2a): Subordinates engaged in higher-quality leader-member exchange relationships will seek more positive feedback from their supervisors than those engaged in lower-quality leader-member exchange relationships.

Hypothesis 2b (H2b): Subordinates engaged in higher-quality leader-member exchange relationships will seek more negative feedback from their supervisors than those engaged in lower-quality leader-member exchange relationships.

3.7.3 Effects of Feedback-Seeking Behavior on Incremental and Radical Idea Generation

De Stobbeleir and colleagues (2011) stated that there are two reasons to explain why feedback-seeking behavior may be important to the creative process. First, managers can use feedback to encourage and foster employees' creative performance (e.g., Zhou, 2008). Second, it is believed that employees' creative performance may be influenced by social processes because of the stimulation and support from other people in their environment (e.g., Perry-Smith & Shalley, 2003). It is believed that feedback-seeking behavior may increase employees' creative performance by allowing them directly to seek information from distant sources in

organizations for achieving constant modifications and improvement (De Stobbeleir et al., 2011)

Several researchers have pointed out that feedback-seeking behavior may increase people's ability to control their work (Larson, 1989; Ashford et al., 2003; Chen et al., 2007). Employees can make use of more performance-related information and a greater sense of control to enhance their performance (Lam, Peng, Wong, & Lau, 2017). Previous research stated that feedback-seeking behavior can influence job performance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior (Choi, 2014; Anseel et al., 2015). When employees engaged in a high-quality leader-member exchange relationship, it may be easier to seek feedback and inquire about information from trusted supervisors for clarifying their job roles (Chen et al., 2007) as well as achieving the tasks to generate incremental or radical ideas.

As mentioned earlier, innovative work behavior is influenced by commitment (Basu & Green, 1997; Nazir et al., 2018; Miller & Miller, 2020) and satisfaction with HR practices (Karin et al., 2010). Some researchers suggested that feedback-seeking behavior can stimulate employees to explore new perspectives and generate novel solutions (Madjar, 2005; Perry-Smith, 2008; Baer, 2010). Kwon and Oh (2020) have verified the positive correlation between negative feedback-seeking behavior and innovative work behavior through the mediating effect of learning goal orientation. Bak's study (2020) surveyed 1,699 Korean government employees. The results showed that supervisor feedback has a positive direct effect on innovative work behavior.

In this study, I argue that feedback-seeking behavior may influence employees' idea generation, a dimension of innovative work behavior. It is predicted that feedback-seeking behavior may have a positive effect on innovative behavior in the workplace. Moreover, I would predict that

feedback-seeking behavior is associated with idea generation since innovative work behavior contains the stage of idea generation (e.g., De Spiegelaere et al., 2014; Amir, 2015). Furthermore, I argue that the different types of feedback-seeking behavior may stimulate employees' incremental and radical ideas in the workplace.

Although not many articles study the effect of the different types of feedback-seeking behavior on employees' incremental and radical idea generation, Sung and colleagues (2020) have investigated how feedback-seeking frequency and breath affect employees to perform incremental as well as radical creativity. However, the study did not cover the effect of positive and negative feedback-seeking behavior on incremental and radical creativity. This study aims to examine the linkage between the two types of feedback-seeking behavior and the two forms of idea generation. Incremental idea generation can be referred to as an individual's ability to identify the shortcomings of existing practices and procedures by injecting minor modifications into existing routines (Gilson & Madjar, 2011, Madjar et al., 2011). Radical idea generation can be referred to as an individual's ability to generate radically creative ideas and breakthroughs to redefine issues and explore novel approaches that differ substantially from existing practices or paradigms (Madjar, 2005; Perry-Smith, 2008; Zhou, Shin, Brass, Choi, & Zhang, 2009; Madjar et al., 2011).

Therefore, I propose:

Hypothesis 3a (H3a): Positive feedback-seeking behavior is positively related to incremental idea generation.

Hypothesis 3b (H3b): Positive feedback-seeking behavior is positively related to radical idea generation.

Hypothesis 4a (H4a): Negative feedback-seeking behavior is positively related to incremental idea generation.

Hypothesis 4b (H4b): Negative feedback-seeking behavior is positively related to radical idea generation.

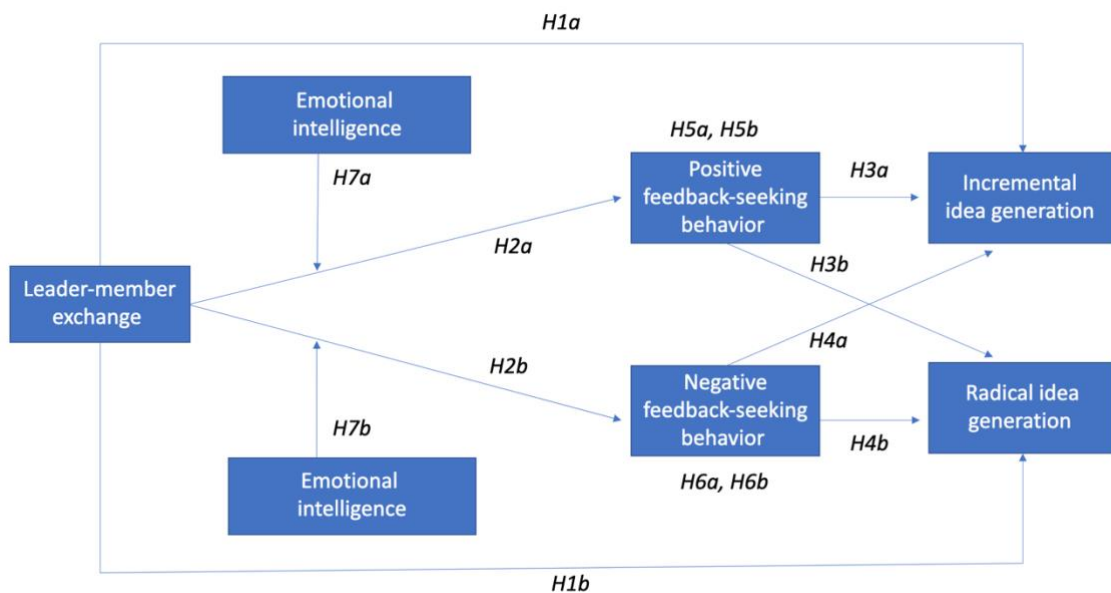
3.7.4 Mediating Role of Feedback-Seeking Behavior

Based on Hypothesis 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, 4a, and 4b, I would predict that subordinates' positive feedback-seeking behavior will mediate the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and employees' incremental and radical idea generation. Figure 3.1 shows the conceptual model. Besides, I would predict that subordinates' negative feedback-seeking behavior will mediate the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and employees' incremental and radical idea generation. Drawing on social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and the leader-member exchange theory (Graen, 1976; Uhl-Bien, 2006; Sheer, 2015), I argue that proactive employees are likely to use feedback-seeking behavior as a proactive strategy to obtain diverse information for generating different forms of creative ideas under high-quality exchange relationship between supervisors and subordinates.

According to social exchange theory, subordinates may consider high-quality leader-member exchange as rewards or benefits from the supervisors (e.g., Qian et al., 2017). The subordinates may have an obligation to reciprocate by performing more effectively to maintain the high-quality leader-member exchange (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1976; Uhl-Bien & Maslyn, 2003; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Chen et al., 2007). Under a high-quality leader-member exchange relationship, proactive employees may feel more motivated to reach the supervisors' demands rather than feel stressed that they may fail to meet those demands (Qian, Song, Jin, Wang, & Chen, 2018). Since the employees engaged in high-quality leader-member exchange

relationships may perceive high leader-member exchange as beneficial treatments, they are more likely to use feedback-seeking as an “exchange currency” to clarify supervisors’ expectations and demands to achieve goals of excellence and distinction (Qian et al., 2017). Proactive employees may actively gather essential information and performance-related resources to meet supervisors’ demands through feedback-seeking behavior (Ashford et al., 2016).

Figure 3.1: Proposed moderated mediation model linking emotional intelligence in the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and idea generation through feedback-seeking behavior.



Feedback-seeking can be treated as a three-stage process including motivation, cognitive processing, and behavior (Krasman, 2011). In the feedback-seeking process, individual employees take an active role to ask for feedback (Anseel, Lievens, & Levy, 2007) to adjust their “goal-directed behavior” (Morrison & Weldon, 1990). It is believed that employees actively manage their creative performance by evaluating the differences between the standards (set by individual employees) of their goal-directed activities and performance and the

standards of their progress (Carver & Scheier, 1981; Vohs & Baumeister, 2004). Subordinates who frequently seek feedback may tend to engage in incremental creativity (Sung et al., 2020). The feedback-seeking breath may stimulate radical creativity because the subordinates may seek feedback from diverse sources to enrich cognitive resources for generating heterogeneous ideas (Ashford et al., 2003; De Stobbeleir et al., 2011).

To achieve higher organizational goals, subordinates may seek not only positive feedback but also negative feedback to escape from conventional thinking to engage in innovative work behavior (Kwon & Oh, 2020). Individuals who develop radically creative ideas may need to obtain diverse information to spark idea generation (Amabile, 1996; Fleming, Mingo, & Chen, 2007). Kim and Han (2018) stated that people may seek negative feedback to bridge the gap between their goals and their current situations, while they need to adjust their behavior to attain the goal. Kwon and Oh (2020) have discussed that people may obtain information through negative feedback-seeking behavior to pursue learning for a higher goal (p. 545).

When individual employees manage to reduce the potential uncertainty of generating radical ideas, they may need an integrative understanding to identify the creative opportunities and limitations in existing team practices as well as the broader strategic needs of the organization (e.g., Tushman, 1977; Kanter, 1988). It is believed that when individuals decide to generate radical ideas, they will source relevant “big-picture” information from their team leaders as an effective way to facilitate radical idea generation (Venkataramani, Richter, & Clarke, 2014). The reality is that team leaders will provide useful information and support to the individual employees who have developed high-quality leader-member exchange relationships with their immediate supervisors.

Even though negative feedback may harm one's image, a high-quality leader-member exchange relationship may encourage proactive employees to seek negative feedback from supervisors to collect valuable information on inadequate performance for improvement (Chen et al., 2007). When trusted supervisors give feedback to clarify the work role of individual employees and provide support to them for engaging in incremental or/and radical idea generation (a dimension of innovative work behavior), proactive employees may exchange their commitment and performance (Martin et al., 2010). I argue that proactive employees may source more valuable information from trusted supervisors during the process of negative feedback-seeking behavior rather than positive feedback-seeking behavior for generating radical ideas in the workplace. Therefore, I propose:

Hypothesis 5a (H5a): Subordinates' positive feedback-seeking behavior mediates the relationship between leader-member exchange and incremental idea generation.

Hypothesis 5b (H5b): Subordinates' positive feedback-seeking behavior mediates the relationship between leader-member exchange and radical idea generation.

Hypothesis 6a (H6a): Subordinates' negative feedback-seeking behavior mediates the relationship between leader-member exchange and incremental idea generation.

Hypothesis 6b (H6b): Subordinates' negative feedback-seeking behavior mediates the relationship between leader-member exchange and radical idea generation.

3.7.5 Emotional Intelligence as a Potential Moderator

The fear of receiving negative evaluations (e.g., losing face and self-esteem) that will stimulate the motivation of self-image protection is the greatest challenge in feedback-seeking behavior

(Ashford et al., 2003). This study considered emotional intelligence as a moderator of the association between leader-member exchange and feedback-seeking behavior. Emotional intelligence is defined as “the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions” (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 189). Matthews and colleagues (2004) stated that individuals can change their thinking and behavior to deal with organizational challenges in a productive and adaptive manner with a certain degree of emotional intelligence.

Sung and colleagues (2020) pointed out that creativity requires both cognitive and social or emotional resources for solving cognitive problems and generating ideas. When proactive employees generate radical ideas, they may face considerably greater uncertainties, risks, and unanticipated challenges than generation incremental ideas (Alexander & Van Knippenberg, 2014). As mentioned earlier, proactive employees may seek negative feedback to obtain valuable information to improve performance, though negative feedback may hurt one’s image (Chen et al. 2007) and lead to negative emotions. Wu and colleagues (2019) stated that negative emotions are directly associated with job demands, while positive emotions are related to job resources. To reduce employees’ job stress, they can be trained to regulate their emotions (Rubino, Wilkin, & Malka, 2013). The research by Wong and Law (2002) found that followers’ emotional intelligence has an impact on job performance and job satisfaction. Naseem (2018) surveyed 350 employees in the telecommunication industry in Pakistan to examine the moderating effect of emotional intelligence on the linkage between job stress and life satisfaction and happiness. The results showed that employees who have a higher level of happiness and life satisfaction, as well as higher emotional intelligence, may perceive less stress in the workplace (Naseem, 2018).

Du Plessis and colleagues (2020) argued that followers may apply higher levels of emotional intelligence to develop high-quality leader-member exchange relationships. Some researchers stated that when employees have a higher level of emotional intelligence and work in a spiritually rich environment, they may have a positive perception of the organization, as well as a higher level of job commitment (Pradhan, Jena & Soto, 2017). Previous research has investigated the moderators of emotional regulation on the relationship between work-family conflicts and burnout among firefighters in Taiwan. It is assumed that employees will consider the perceived costs and value or benefits of negative feedback with higher diagnostic-information value than positive feedback (Lu, Pan, & Cheng, 2011). The supportive feedback environment fostered by supervisors may increase the level of employee well-being and performance (Gabriel, Frantz, Levy, & Hilliard, 2014).

Emotional intelligent people may be more adaptive toward job environments (Landa, Lopez-Zafra, Martos, & del Carmen Aguilar-Luzon, 2008). It is believed that emotional intelligence can be a facilitator connecting leaders and subordinates to build stronger emotional attachments. I argue that employees' emotional intelligence could help subordinates manage their emotions to face the risks, stress, and negative feelings caused by the task of idea generation, which may lead to the willingness to seek negative feedback from their trusted supervisors for achieving radical idea generation. I would predict that proactive employees with a higher level of emotional intelligence and supervisors' support may increase their self-improvement motivation to engage in negative feedback-seeking behavior (Anseel, Strauss, & Lievens, 2017).

During the feedback-seeking process, individual employees may need to ask for negative feedback to obtain the information to assess what is not doing well regarding their standards as well as the standards rating by their supervisors. Employees with a learning orientation will

treat negative feedback as diagnostic information and use it for developmental purposes such as self-improvement (Gong, Wang, Huang, & Cheung, 2017). On the other hand, employees with a performance orientation will tend to seek positive feedback for gaining positive evaluation of the adequacy of their ability (Gong et al., 2017). People with high emotional intelligence will accurately understand their own feelings and use them to manage goal attainment (Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

The reality is that individual employees may face psychological and social challenges including the interpersonal risk of seeking negative feedback, the uncertainty of idea-generation outcome, and tension between the instrumental benefits and psychological costs (Sherf & Morrison, 2020). Negative feedback may hurt an individual's feelings and it may lead to feedback avoidance behavior. It is believed individual employees with high emotional intelligence or mental abilities are able to control their emotions to perceive negative feedback in a positive way. Therefore, feedback-seeking behavior is treated as an antecedent of employees' idea generation (Sung et al., 2020) and a mediator in the relationship between leader-member exchange and idea generation in the research framework. Emotional intelligence is treated as the factor that can (a) moderate positive feedback-seeking behavior and transmit its effect on incremental idea generation, and (b) moderate negative feedback-seeking behavior and transmit its effect on radical idea generation. Therefore, I propose:

Hypothesis 7a (H7a): Emotional intelligence moderates the mediating effect of subordinates' positive feedback-seeking behavior between leader-member exchange and incremental idea generation. The mediating influence is stronger among subordinates with a higher level of emotional intelligence than those with a lower level of emotional intelligence.

Hypothesis 7b (H7b): Emotional intelligence moderates the mediating effect of subordinates' positive feedback-seeking behavior between leader-member exchange and radical idea generation. The mediating influence is stronger among subordinates with a higher level of emotional intelligence than those with a lower level of emotional intelligence.

3.8 Conclusion

Based on the studies reviewed in this chapter, two research gaps can be identified. First, although past research has examined the relationship between leader-member exchange and innovative work behavior, little attention is paid to investigating how relational leadership affects employees to perform different types of idea generation, a dimension of innovative behavior in the workplace. Second, little attention is paid to the mechanism of feedback-seeking behavior on the association between leader-member exchange and the idea generation dimension.

To address these research gaps, I propose to study the following issues. First, on the basis of social exchange, I propose that a high-quality leader-member exchange relationship will motivate subordinates to seek feedback from their supervisors to achieve personal and organizational goals by clarifying their job roles as well as providing support. Employees will make use of positive or/and negative feedback (information/resources) as instruments to generate incremental or/and radical ideas, respectively.

Second, I propose that proactive employees with high emotional intelligence can use mental abilities to deal with negative emotions and turn “bad” feelings into intrinsic motivation for engaging in idea generation. In the next chapter, research methods, measuring instruments, and ethical considerations are presented.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will explain the research design and methodology with the research onion framework proposed by Saunders and colleagues (2019). The research onion is divided into three levels of decisions. The first two other wings are research philosophy and research approach. The second level of decision is the research design which constitutes methodological choices, and research strategy. The third level of the decision or the inner core of the research onion includes data collection and data analysis. Chapter 4 consists of six main sections including (a) research philosophy, (b) research approach; (c) research design; (d) sampling strategy; (e) data collection and procedure; and (f) data analysis.

4.2 Research Philosophy

The research philosophy is a “system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge” (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 130) that is a solid foundation for any study. It is the reflection of the researchers’ values leading to their choice of data collection techniques. Research philosophy can be described from several types of assumptions (Burrell & Morgan, 2017) including three key types of assumptions: ontology, epistemology, and axiology.

Ontology focuses on the nature and structure of things per se, independently of any further considerations, and even independently of their actual existence (Guarino, Orberle, & Staab, 2009). In other words, ontology is the “what” and “how” of what we know and understand. It determines how we see the world of business and management, as well as the choice of what to research for my research project. Epistemology is treated as the assumptions about knowledge, what constitutes acceptable, valid, and legitimate knowledge, and how we can

communicate knowledge to others (Burrell & Morgan, 2017). In other words, it is about “how” we can obtain knowledge and come to understand things. Axiology refers to the role of values and ethics (Saunders et al., 2019). It means a researcher will need to decide how he or she deals with both his or her values and those of the people he or she is researching.

This study focuses on the relationship between leader-member exchange and idea generation, a dimension of innovative work behavior. I decide to use individual employees including subordinates and their immediate supervisors working at the human resources department of a Hong Kong’s telecommunication company with a unique “talent-first” culture as the research subjects. The ontological position is defined as that of the objectivist.

4.2.1 Philosophical Position: Positivism

Positivism and phenomenology (or social constructionism) are two main philosophical positions adopted by most business and management researchers (Karami, Rowley, & Analoui, 2006). Positivism assumes that “the social world exists externally, and that its properties should be measured through objective methods rather than being inferred subjectively through sensation, reflection or intuition” (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Lowe, 2002, p. 57). Positivism can be described as the “philosophical stance of the natural scientist and entails working with an observable social reality to produce law-like generalizations” (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 144).

The research philosophy of this study is positivism. It is expected that the target audience will accept the research results only, as long as they are repeatable and visible facts. As a positivist researcher, I will see organizations and other social entities as real in the same way as physical objects and natural phenomena are real. I take the view that knowledge of leadership and idea generation exists outside of what is being studied. It means what is being studied can only be done objectively. To test hypothetical deductive generalization, positivist researchers use

quantitative and experimental methods (Burrell & Morgan, 2017; Remenyi, William, Money, & Swartz, 1998). Epistemologically a positivist will acquire knowledge through empirical research that is rooted in measurement and observation instead of human interpretation or impressions. In other words, I will undertake this research in a value-free way.

Unlike positivism, the phenomenological view is that the world and reality are socially constructed and given meaning by people rather than objective and external factors. “The phenomenological approach uses qualitative and naturalistic approaches to inductively and holistically understand human experience” (Karami et al., 2006, p. 44). Rather than searching for external causes and fundamental laws to explain behaviors, the phenomenological approach tries to understand and explain why individuals have different kinds of experiences (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002).

4.2.2 Reasons for Adopting a Positivism Approach

There are two main reasons behind the choice of positivism as the most appropriate approach for achieving the objectives of this study. First, this study aims to investigate how employees’ work and non-work ties with their immediate leaders affect their tendency to seek different types of feedback for generating the desired forms of ideas in the workplace. I believe that organizational life is a result of that individual action and individuals are able to reason, learn, invent, produce, and manage (Hosking, Dachler, & Gergen, 1995). It is assumed that individual employees could be stimulated by leadership to take the role and perform idea generation which consists of different levels of creativity and impact (Rietzshel et. al, 2010). Therefore, this research will use a quantitative study to test theories, hypotheses, and a proposed model in a specific research context in Hong Kong. The objective of this current research is not to generate new theories. It explained why a phenomenology approach is not a choice.

The second reason for adopting a positivist approach is due to time constraints and limited resources for data collection in the human resources department of a Hong Kong's telecommunication company. Even though a phenomenology approach is better for investigating changes in human behavior over time, this current research is required to follow a strict timeframe to complete. In this way, a positivist approach is more appropriate for this research because of its strengths (time-effectiveness and cost-effectiveness).

4.2.3 Functionalist Paradigm

The ideological dimension of this study is the functionalist paradigm that is located on the objectivist and regulation dimensions (Burrell & Morgan, 2017). From the regulation perspective, this study concerns the need for the development of high-quality leader-member exchange relationships among different teams in organizations (the regulation of societies) and individual employees' idea generation (human behavior). This study aims to provide rational explanations of the relationship between leader-member exchange and idea generation, as well as to develop sets of recommendations on how to manage individual employees to control emotions, seek feedback, and engage in the idea-generation process. It is believed that the idea-generation process suggested by this study can be generalized, implemented, and monitored in other contexts (Kelemen & Rumens, 2008).

Previous empirical studies on the relationship between leader-member exchange and innovative work behavior (including the idea-generation dimension) provide a strong justification for the research methodology of this study. Scott and Bruce (1994) surveyed 172 supervisor-subordinate dyads from a research and development facility in the United States. The correlation between leader-member exchange and innovative work behavior has shown a positive significant relationship ($r=0.17$, $p<0.01$).

Tsai and colleagues (2015) surveyed 359 supervisor-subordinate dyads from 46 private and public companies in the service industry in Taiwan. The correlation between leader-member exchange and innovative work behavior also demonstrated a positive significant relationship ($r=0.22$, $p<0.01$). Alsughayir (2017) surveyed 263 supervisor-subordinate dyads from 52 hotels in Saudi Arabia. The correlation between leader-member exchange and idea generation, a dimension of innovative work behavior was a positive significant relationship ($r=0.526$, $p<0.01$). The study by Atitumpong and colleagues (2018), and the study by Bibi and Afsar (2018) respectively surveyed 337 supervisor-subordinate dyads to investigate the relationship between leader-member exchange and innovative work behavior. The former study surveyed the employees of the manufacturing industry in Thailand and the correlation between the two variables was a positive significant relationship ($r=0.21$, $p<0.001$). The latter study surveyed the employees of the automotive industry in Pakistan and the correlation between leader-member exchange and innovative work behavior was a positive significant relationship ($r=0.43$, $p<0.05$).

The study by Mascareno and colleagues (2020) surveyed 118 supervisor-subordinate dyads to investigate the linkage between the leader-member exchange, creativity (idea generation, the sub-scale from the Janssen's (2001) innovative work performance scale), and innovation (idea promotion and idea generation, the sub-scales from the Janssen's (2001) scale) in the Netherlands. The correlation between the leader-member exchange and creativity was a positive significant relationship ($r=0.32$, $p<0.01$), while the correlation between leader-member exchange and innovation was a positive significant relationship ($r=0.35$, $p<0.01$).

4.3 Research Approach: Deduction

The research approach can be classified into three aspects including theory testing, theory building, and theory modification. In other words, if research starts with theory and designs a

research strategy to test the theory, the researcher is using a deductive approach. If research starts by collecting data to explore a phenomenon for theory building, the researcher is using an inductive approach. If the researcher is collecting data to explore a phenomenon, identify themes, and explain patterns for theory modification, the researcher is using an abductive approach. This current research starts with the social exchange theory and leader-member exchange theory. The objective of this study is to design a research strategy for theory testing. I choose to use a deductive approach for this research.

The deductive approach or deduction will progress with several steps listed by Blaikie (2007). First, I will put forward a set of hypotheses which are the testable propositions about the relationship between high-quality leader-member exchange quality and idea generation, the relationship between feedback-seeking behavior and idea generation, the mediating effect of feedback-seeking behavior on the linkage between leader-member exchange and idea generation, the moderating role of emotional intelligence on the linkage between leader-member exchange and feedback-seeking behavior. Second, I will deduce the testable propositions by using existing literature on leader-member exchange and innovative work behavior. Third, I will examine the premises and the logic of my arguments, comparing them with existing theories to see if it offers an advance in understanding. Fourth, I will test the premises by collecting appropriate data to measure the variables and analyze them. Fifth, if the results of data analysis are not consistent with the premises, it means that the test fails. Then, the theory is false and must be rejected or modified. The last step is that if the results of data analysis are consistent with the premises, then the theory is corroborated.

4.4 Research Design

The research design is the overall plan of how the researcher is going to answer the research question(s). It involves three different and interrelated parts: methodological choice, research strategy, and time horizon.

Methodological Choice.

The research design can be classified into three types: (a) quantitative research design, (b) qualitative research design, and (c) mixed-method research design. The methodological choice of this study is a quantitative research design. The quantitative method is one of the major methodological research traditions. This method should be utilized “when the phenomenon under study needs to be measured, when hypotheses need to be tested, when generalizations are required to be made of the measures, and when generalizations need to be made that are beyond chance occurrences” (Antonakis, Schriesheim, Donovan, Gopalakrishna-Pillai, Pellegrini, & Rossomme, 2004, p. 54).

This study aims to measure the phenomenon of idea generation, a dimension of innovative work behavior (dependent) under the impact of leader-member exchange (independent variable), feedback-seeking behavior (mediator), and emotional intelligence (moderator). Previous studies in testing moderated mediation model linking leader-member exchange to innovative work behavior, the quantitative mono-method was commonly used (Tsai et al., 2015; Bibi & Afsar, 2018; Bani-Melhem et al., 2020). According to Antonakis and colleagues (2004), quantitative approaches were typically used by leadership researchers. It supported me to choose the quantitative mono-method by collecting data from individual employees. This quantitative analysis will base on the numerous data through steps of mathematical approaches to discover the sense of meaning reflected behind the numbers.

Research Strategy.

This study uses survey research as the strategy to collect data. Survey research is a quantitative approach that draws special attention to the use of self-report measures on selected samples. It is a flexible approach that can be used for studying a wide range of basic and applied research questions (Vizcarguenaga-Aguirre & Lopoez-Roblies, 2020). According to Kerlinger (1986), surveys focus on “the vital facts of people, and their beliefs, opinions, attitudes, motivation, and behavior” (p. 378). As a researcher, I will seek answers from subordinates and their immediate supervisors to understand (a) the perception of leader-member exchange and emotional intelligence, (b) the motivation of seeking positive and negative feedback, and (c) the behavior of employees’ incremental and radical idea generation. If the data are collected from a single source, the survey research may face the issue of common method bias. To avoid missteps in survey research, I managed to collect data from multiple sources (Friedrich, Byrne, & Mumford, 2009).

Time horizon.

Based on time, research can be grouped into two types: longitudinal and cross-sectional. A longitudinal study refers to the study of a phenomenon or a population over a period of time. A cross-sectional study is a “snap-shot” study that means a phenomenon, or a cross-section of a population is studied for one time. This study has employed a cross-sectional survey design due to the practical constraint that appeared in the surveyed company. The initial plan of the survey was going to conduct in August 2021. However, the company experienced organizational restructuring in the same month. The survey has been postponed for two months. The employees of the human resources department were invited to participate in the survey because the department was less affected by the organizational restructuring. Under this circumstance, I chose to use a cross-sectional survey that requires less time to be set up. Besides,

the cross-sectional survey can be considered for preliminary evaluations of the association of multiple variables at a given instance (Caruana, Roman, Hernandez-Sanchez, & Solli, 2015).

4.5 Sampling Strategy

The best sampling strategy for any research study is to investigate the problem in the whole population. However, the researchers cannot study the entire population. Practically, researchers take a representative sample to reduce the cost, time, and manpower needed to conduct the study. Sampling is related to “the selection of a subset of individuals from within a population to estimate the characteristics of whole population” (Singh & Masuku, 2014, p. 3). According to Taherdoost (2016), several steps have to be considered when conducting sampling. First, it needs to clearly define the target population. Then, it needs to select a sampling frame, choose the sampling technique, and determine the sample size.

4.5.1 Target Population

The population for this study was defined as the full-time employees of the human resources department of a telecommunication company listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange. In May 2021, I got consent from the top management of the company to conduct a survey activity with all employees of the human resources department. After that, I met the head of the human resources department to introduce the purpose of the study and request recruiting voluntary full-time employees to participate in the survey. With support from the department head, I got a list of 117 actual cases of subordinates and 39 cases of supervisors in August 2021.

4.5.2 Sampling Method

Sampling methods can be divided into two types: probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability or random sampling means that every case in the population has an equal opportunity of being included in the sample. This method provides an “unbiased and better

estimate of the parameters if the population is homogeneous” (Singh & Masuku, 2014, p. 4). Although the strengths of simple random sampling are easily understood and predictable results, the weaknesses of this method are the difficulty of constructing a sampling frame, expensive, lower precision, and no assurance of representativeness (Malhotra, Naresh, & Birks, 2006). In non-probability or non-random sampling, the selection of sampling units is based on being conveniently available and accessible by the researcher. The strengths of non-random probability sampling (such as purposive sampling) are convenient, low-cost, not time-consuming, and ideal for exploratory research design (Taherdoost, 2016). On the other hand, the weakness of generalizability is associated with all non-probability sampling techniques.

4.5.2.1 Purposive Sampling

This study adopts purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique to collect data from respondents. Purposive sampling is common in academic research which is subject to time and resource constraints (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2017). As mentioned earlier, the surveyed company experienced organizational restructuring issues before conducting data collection. Compared with other departments, the human resources department was less affected by the organizational restructuring. Therefore, it was not feasible to draw a sample on the basis of probability. Purposive sampling is a strategy in which particular settings or persons are selected intentionally to provide important information that cannot be obtained from other choices (Maxwell, 1996). I believe that the employees of the human resources department of the surveyed company warrant inclusion.

Recent studies on the relationship between leader-member exchange and innovative work behavior have used a quantitative approach by using a purposive sampling method (e.g, Purwanto, Purba, Sijabat, & Bernarto, 2021; Sharif, Tongkachok, Akbar, Lqbal, & Lodhi, 2021). Non-random purposive sampling is also used in studying the impact of leader-member

exchange and proactive personality on creativity (Gupta & Chadha, 2017). The study by Setiawan, Eliyana, and Wikarsa (2020) used a purposive sampling method to determine the mediating effect of leader-member exchange between knowledge sharing and creative performance. Since the purpose of this current research is to investigate how leadership and communication affect the innovative behavior of the human resources department's employees, a homogeneous sampling technique is adopted. When the research question is being focused on one particular subgroup in which all members share the same characteristics, such as occupation or level in an organization (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012), homogeneous sampling which is a purposive sampling technique can be chosen to achieve a homogeneous sampling (Rai & Thapa, 2015).

As a former senior-level manager of the surveyed company, I have worked with the human resources department to build company culture, engage employees, and conduct employee training for over five years (Li, 2018). The employees of the human resources department have been empowered as well as expected to think, perform, and collaborate like a united team of aspiring entrepreneurs. It is believed that the employees of the human resources department are required to perform not only in-role behavior but also extra-role behavior such as a higher level of idea generation and idea implementation.

4.5.2.2 Transferability and Dependability of the Data

The weaknesses of generalizability associated with the purposive sampling method compared to probability sampling methods are acknowledged. According to Smith and Dawber (2019), "since a non-probability sample cannot be assumed to be representative of the target population, then the estimates cannot be guaranteed to be unbiased" (p. 3). The risk of bias associated with non-probability sampling can be mitigated by using a model-based approach to provide a framework for inference from non-probability samples under certain model assumptions (Koch,

Gillings, & Strokes, 1980). In this research, the model assumptions are based on certain characteristics of the individuals who must be identified for matching a non-probability sample to a target population. The model assumptions provide me with the justification to make generalizations from the sample that is being studied.

Inclusion Criteria.

To determine which subordinates to include in this study, I have considered specific inclusion and exclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria will include considerations (a) subordinate who is a full-time employee of the human resources department, (b) organizational tenure over 6 months, (c) dyadic tenure with a current supervisor over 6 months, and (d) completion of a diploma course or any educational qualification above diploma in higher education. It is assumed that a subordinate who has worked at the company longer than 6 months as a full-time employee is familiar with the key elements of the company culture such as risk-taking and being innovative in the workplace.

Moreover, when a subordinate has worked with his or her immediate supervisor longer than 6 months, it is expected that this subordinate has experienced an economic and social exchange relationship with his or her supervisor during working hours or outside working hours. Furthermore, when a subordinate has spent 6 months working with his or her current supervisor, this subordinate has experienced seeking positive and negative feedback from his or her immediate supervisor. During the process of feedback-seeking, this subordinate has experienced positive or/and negative emotions related to his or her work role to engage in adaptive performance such as idea generation. Furthermore, when a subordinate has earned a diploma, this subordinate is expected to know how to answer survey questions and use a computer or mobile device to complete an online questionnaire. The above-mentioned

inclusion considerations are also applied to the selection of supervisors who will participate in this survey.

Exclusion Criteria.

The exclusion criteria for selecting participants will include both supervisors' and subordinates' willingness to participate in the survey. When a supervisor or subordinate expresses a willingness or volunteering to participate in this research, he or she is interested in this research and he or she is willing to invest time in completing a self-reported online questionnaire. During the period of sample selection, all 117 subordinates and 39 supervisors of the human resources department were arranged to work from home because of the COVID-19 circumstance. To ensure the willingness of all employees of the department, I have provided the company as well as the employees with a 3-minute video and a cover letter to introduce the survey activity through email. The department head informed me that all employees of the department were willing to be involved in the survey without any compensation.

Specifying the nature of the inclusion and exclusion criteria of purposive sampling helps enhance both the transferability and dependability of the data (Campbell, Greenwood, Prior, Shearer, Walkem, Young, Bywaters, & Walker, 2020). It will also increase the trustworthiness and rigour of the data which support the likelihood of the participants selected with the purposive sampling method (Guba, 1981). In other words, the detailed inclusion and exclusion criteria will increase the credibility of the findings. Besides, this research gathers dyadic data to minimize the potential risk of common method bias. It is suggested that the leader-member exchange theory should be studied as a dyad. The reason is that leader-member exchange is based on the unique quality of each leader-follower relationship inside a workgroup (Anand, Hu, Liden, & Vidyarathi, 2011).

Sample Size.

It is expected that 50% of 117 subordinates (58 or 59 subordinates) of the human resources department would respond to the survey. By using Krejcie and Morgan Table (1970), if the determining sample size (s) is 59, the determining population size (N) will be 70. Under the considerations of inclusion and exclusion criteria, 70 out of 117 subordinates and 30 out of 39 supervisors are identified as the sample of this study. 70 supervisor-subordinate dyads were matched. 68 subordinate participants completed and returned the online questionnaire. The response rate was 97%. However, 2 supervisors did not respond to the online survey and the response rate was 93%. Data collected from 63 supervisor-subordinate dyads can be used.

Supervisor Participants.

Among the supervisor participants, 16 of them were female (57.1%) and 12 were male (42.9%). The age of the supervisor participants ranged between 29 to 61 and the majority of the supervisor participants were in the age range of 29 to 39 (64.3%). Table 2 displays the demographic characteristics of the sample. Between the age of 40 to 50, there were 9 cases (32.1%) and there was 1 case (3.6%) between the age of 51 to 61. Of the supervisor participants, 16 had bachelor's degrees (57.1%), 7 cases had diplomas (25.0%), 4 cases had master's degrees (14.3%), and only 1 case (1.6%) had a doctorate degree. Most of the supervisor participants were working at the organization for less than one year (50.0%), 8 cases were working for 1 to 2 years (28.6%), 3 cases were working for 3 to 4 years (10.7%), and 3 cases were working for 5 to 10 years (10.7%).

Subordinate Participants.

Among the subordinate participants, 44 cases were female (69.8%) and 19 cases were male (30.2%). The age of the subordinate participants ranged between the age of 18 to 50 and most of the subordinate participants was in the age range of 29 to 39 (46%). Between the age of 18

to 28, there were 28 cases (44.4%) and there were 6 cases (9.5%) between the age of 40 to 50 (9.5%). Of the subordinate participants, 43 cases had bachelor's degrees (68.3%), 12 cases had diplomas (28.6%), and 2 cases had master's degrees (4.8%). Most of the subordinate participants were working at the organization for less than one year (87.3%), 6 cases were working for 1 to 2 years (9.5%), 1 case was working for 3 to 4 years (1.6%), and 1 case was working for 5 to 10 years (1.6%). Regarding the dyadic tenure, 31 subordinate participants (33.3%) had been working with their immediate supervisors for less than one year, 20 cases' dyadic tenure had existed for 1 to 2 years (31.3%), 10 cases' dyadic tenure had existed for 3 to 4 years (15.9%), and 12 cases' dyadic tenure had existed for 5 to 10 years (19%).

Table 2.1: Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Variables	Items	Frequency (N=63 dyads)	Percent
Supervisor's gender	Female	16	57.1
	Male	12	42.9
	Total	28	100
Subordinate's gender	Female	44	69.8
	Male	19	30.2
	Total	63	100
Supervisors' age	29 to 39	18	64.3
	40 to 50	9	32.1
	51 to 61	1	3.6
	Total	28	100
Subordinates' age	18 to 28	28	44.4
	29 to 39	29	46.0
	40 to 50	6	9.5
	Total	63	100
Supervisors' educational level	Diploma	7	25.0
	Bachelor's Degree	16	57.1
	Master's Degree	4	14.3
	Doctorate Degree	1	3.6
	Total	28	100

Subordinates' educational level	Diploma	18	28.6
	Bachelor's Degree	43	68.3
	Master's Degree	2	3.2
	Total	63	100
Supervisors' organizational tenure	Less than a year	14	50.0
	1 to 2 years	8	28.6
	3 to 4 years	3	10.7
	5 to 10 years	3	10.7
	Total	28	100
Subordinates' organizational tenure	Less than a year	55	87.3
	1 to 2 years	6	9.5
	3 to 4 years	1	1.6
	5 to 10 years	1	1.6
	Total	63	100

4.6 Data Collection and Procedure

To collect the data from the participants, an online survey is conducted. It can be described as a mode of data collection with a self-administrated questionnaire completed by respondents through the Internet (Tuten, 2010). One of the advantages of the Internet questionnaire is that the data are easily classified and input automatically due to the support of software applications (e.g., Google Forms) on computers. Besides, the Internet questionnaire may help minimize the mistakes of manual operation because of the accuracy of mathematical calculation with software such as Microsoft Excel. Some researchers found that the strengths of online data collection include lower financial resources required, shorter response times, researcher control of the sample, reduced survey involvement by the researcher, and efficiency in data entry (Ilieva, Baron, & Healy, 2002).

The survey was conducted in October 2021 using an online survey. Data were collected from 63 matched dyads of subordinates and their immediate supervisors working at the human

resources department of Hong Kong Broadband Network Limited. Two sets of online questionnaires were prepared for the subordinates and their immediate supervisors to complete separately.

Translating the Questionnaire.

The original questions of measurement were written in English and translated into traditional Chinese by two bilingual translators with master's degrees in English. Following the Brislin model for instrument translation (Brislin, 1970), a back-translation was conducted with all questionnaire items to ensure the consistency of meaning. The goal of this kind of cross-cultural translation is to achieve equivalence between two different languages (Lee, Li, Arai, & Puntillo, 2009). It is suggested that at least two independent bilingual translators are used in this translation process (McDermott & Palchanes, 1994). The first translator translated two sets of questionnaires from the original English version to Chinese version 1. The second translator back-translated Chinese version 1 to English version 2. Then, English version 2 and the original English version were reviewed by both translators to discuss the discrepancies. After that, the first Chinese version of the questionnaire was revised to produce Chinese version 2.

Pilot Test of the Questionnaire.

A pilot test of the questionnaire (version 1) was conducted in June 2021. I asked three subordinates and their three immediate supervisors of the surveyed company to complete the questionnaires and comment on any perceived difficulties or necessary clarification of the items. Based on their comments, two sets of online questionnaires (version 1) were modified. For further checking, I asked the head of the human resources department and one manager to test the online questionnaires (version 2).

Even though the use of a hyperlink with an Internet-based survey tool is treated as an effective way for survey participation (Wright & Schwager, 2008), it is suggested that researchers evaluate the response rate of survey participation (e.g., McConkey, Stevens, & Loudon, 2003). Some scholars found that the issue of low-response rate is associated with online data collection methods. (Roster, Rogers, Hozier, Baker, & Albaum, 2007). Therefore, the pilot test of the questionnaire helped evaluate the level of response time (Weible & Wallace, 1998) and response speed (Cobanoglu, Moreo, & Warde, 2001) that may affect response quality as well as response rate. Regarding the pilot test of the questionnaire (versions 1 and 2), the respondents (supervisors and subordinates) took 15 to 20 minutes to complete the online survey. The respondents returned the completed survey response to me through email in one day.

Survey Introductory Elements.

Compared to a generic invitation to participate in a survey, an invitation from a known leader or survey introductory elements may enhance the level or response quality (Weible & Wallace, 1998). At the beginning introduction of this survey, I provided survey introductory elements including a cover letter and a short video to communicate with all participants. Weible and Wallace (1998) suggested that the use of a known leader with his or her name and position title to request survey participation may help increase the level of response quality. To achieve a higher response rate, I asked the head of the human resources department (a known leader) to endorse the survey activity and request survey participation through email.

Distribution of the Questionnaire.

Before the distribution of the subordinate-rated questionnaire, the head of the human resources department sent emails to the participant to remind them that the online survey would be conducted on October 29, 2021. After that, I sent emails to each selected subordinate with a hyperlink to the questionnaire, a dedicated participant code, a cover letter, and a short video

for introducing the background of the research. Both the short video and cover letter notified the participants that the survey activity was approved by the company. The subordinate participants were allowed to complete the questionnaire in a week.

Having collected the completed questionnaires from the subordinates, I sent emails with the hyperlink of the supervisors-rated questionnaire to the immediate supervisors of the subordinates during working hours. The supervisor participants were allowed to complete the questionnaire in one day. For the assurance of anonymity and confidentiality, each participant was assigned a dedicated participant code. When each participant answered the online questionnaire, he or she was required to input the participant code.

4.6.1 Ethical Considerations

This research was approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David in June 2020. The ethics approval number is EC589 (see Appendix - D). In order to access the data of the supervisors and subordinates who will participate in the survey, I got authorization from the company. As the researcher of this study, I followed the protocol of the company with the consideration of research ethics. Besides, I worked closely with the talent engagement department to invite the employees to participate in the survey on a voluntary basis. The research activity was conducted in Hong Kong, and it complied with the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance. The purpose of this ordinance is to ensure that personal data is collected on a fully informed basis and in a fair manner. It requires the use of data should be related to the original purpose and the data user has to take practical steps to protect the data.

Before conducting the survey activity, I anticipated two types of risks that might adversely affect any of the participants. First, if the response of the subordinate was disclosed and seen by his or her immediate supervisor, the relationship between them may be affected. To avoid a

negative impact on the supervisor-subordinate relationship, each participant was assigned a participant code for the assurance of anonymity and confidentiality. Second, the research activity might affect the routine work or business operations of the participants. To avoid a negative impact on business operations and customer services, I communicated with the talent engagement department to support the research activity and allow the supervisors and subordinates to participate in the survey without pressure.

When each participant received the survey invitation email sent by me, a cover letter, and a 3-minute video was attached. In the letter and video, I introduced himself and the purpose of the survey activity. Moreover, both the letter and video mentioned how I assured anonymity and confidentiality during the processes of data collection and data analysis. Furthermore, both the letter and video mentioned the survey activity was approved by the company to reduce the stress of the participants.

4.7 Research Instruments

Regarding the data collection method, this current study used four self-report instruments to measure study variables including (a) leader-member exchange quality, (b) incremental and radical idea generation, (c) positive and negative feedback-seeking behavior, and (d) emotional intelligence. Two sets of questionnaires were provided for supervisors and subordinates to rate separately. Both supervisor and subordinate were asked to rate the variable of leader-member exchange quality. Apart from the variable of leader-member exchange, each supervisor would rate the variables of subordinates' positive and negative feedback-seeking behavior plus incremental and radical idea generation. Each subordinate would rate his or her emotional intelligence.

4.7.1 Leader-Member Exchange Quality

The instrument selected to measure the quality of leader-member exchange as the independent variable was the leader-member-exchange 7-item scale on a 5-point Likert scale provided by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995). The 7-item scale has been widely used in the leader-member exchange literature from 1995 to 2020 (Tsai et al., 2015; Alsughayir, 2017; Nazir et al., 2018; Atitumpong et al., 2018; Bibi & Afsar, 2018; Mascareno et al., 2020). The construct of the 7-item scale contains three dimensions including (a) respect, (b) trust, and (c) obligation. To make the 7-item scale easier for the participants to understand, the questions were modified.

A sample item from the 7-item scale was, “I would use my power to help this subordinate out of a difficult situation in the workplace”. For question 1 to 6, responses were on a 5-point Likert scale anchored from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Question 7 was, “How would you describe your working relationship with your supervisor”. Responses were on a 5-point Likert scale anchored from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). The measure of supervisor-rated leader-member exchange quality and subordinate-rated leader-member exchange quality used the same 7-item scale, and the questions were modified regarding the perspective of the supervisor and subordinate respectively. Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) suggested that the measure of leader-rated LMX and follower-rated LMX can use the same 7-item scale. The Cronbach alphas for the 7-item scale are consistently in the range from 80 to 90% and it is one of the main reasons that the 7-item scale is used in this study.

4.7.2 Positive/Negative Feedback-Seeking Behavior

The 5-item positive feedback-seeking scale provided by VandeWalle and colleagues (2000) as well as the 5-item negative feedback-seeking scale provided by Chen and colleagues (2007) were used in this study. Chen and colleagues (2007) investigated the relationship between leader-member exchange and in-role performance under the mediating effect of negative

feedback-seeking behavior. The Cronbach alpha of negative feedback-seeking behavior measured by the team of Chen (2007) was .84, and the coefficient alpha of positive feedback-seeking behavior measured by the team of VandeWalle was as high as 0.88.

A sample question from the 5-item of positive feedback-seeking behavior scale was, “how frequently does this subordinate ask for positive feedback or good news from you in his/her overall work performance”. Responses from supervisors were on a 5-point Likert scale anchored from 1 (never) to 5 (always). One of the five questions from the 5-item of negative feedback-seeking behavior scale was, “how frequently does this subordinate ask for feedback regarding inadequacies in his/her social behavior or the interaction between team/group members?”. Responses from supervisors were on a 5-point Likert scale anchored from 1 (never) to 5 (always).

4.7.3 Incremental/Radical Idea Generation

In the study by Niesen et al. (2018), the researchers examined the association between quantitative and qualitative job insecurity and idea generation, a dimension of innovative work behavior. To measure idea generation, a dimension of innovative work behavior as the dependent variable, the instrument of the 4-item idea generation scale adapted from De Jong and Den Hartog’s (2010) measurement of innovative work behavior was used. The Cronbach alpha was 0.9. The goal of this current study is to test the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and the two different forms of idea generation (incremental and radical idea generation). Therefore, the I decided to use the 6-item scale of incremental and radical creativity provided by Gilson and Madjar (2011) to measure the two types of idea generation in this study. The 6-item scale was modified with the instrument of the four-item idea generation scale (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010). It is expected the Cronbach alpha of the three

incremental idea-generation items will be 0.92, and the Cronbach alpha of the three radical idea-generation items will be 0.87.

A sample item from the incremental idea generation scale was, “how often does this subordinate generate the solutions for difficult issues, whereas the ideas are the extensions building on what is currently done or what is currently offered”. Responses from supervisors are on a 5-point Likert scale anchored with 1 (never) to 5 (every time). With regards to one of the three questions from the radical idea generation scale was, “how often does this subordinate search out new working methods, techniques, or instruments that have made fundamental changes to operational processes”. Responses from supervisors were on a 5-point Likert scale anchored from 1 (never) to 5 (every time).

4.7.4 Emotional Intelligence

The Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale developed by Wong and Law (2002) was selected as the instrument to test the emotional intelligence of subordinates. This emotional intelligence scale contains 16 items representing four dimensions including self-emotion appraisal, others’ emotion appraisal, use of emotion, and regulation of emotion. The Cronbach alphas of the four dimensions were 0.86, 0.85, 0.79, and 0.82, respectively. One of the sixteen questions from the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale was, “I am able to control my temper, so that I can handle difficulties rationally”. Respondents (subordinates) were asked to rate the likelihood of such kinds of behaviors or activities in the workplace on a 5-point Likert scale anchored from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

4.7.5 Control Variables

This study controlled a set of demographic variables, namely, supervisors' and subordinates' gender, supervisor's and subordinates' age, supervisors' and subordinates' educational level, supervisors' and subordinates' organizational tenure, and dyadic tenure. Measures of these variables were obtained from both the supervisors and the subordinates. It is believed that the control variables may affect subordinates' positive/negative feedback-seeking behavior and subordinates' incremental/radical idea generation.

4.8 Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted with a series of statistical techniques. First, data collected from supervisors' perception of leader-member exchange and subordinates' perception of leader-member exchange was analyzed by computing the mean scores of leader-member exchange quality. The highest mean score demonstrates a high-quality leader-member exchange relationship. Second, the zero-order coefficient was used to measure the correlation between leader-member exchange and two forms of idea-generation dimension, and two types of feedback-seeking behavior. It was also used to understand the influence of leader-member exchange quality on incremental idea generation as well as radical idea generation. Third, the logistic regression path analysis was utilized to estimate the direct and indirect effects of leader-member exchange quality on two forms of idea generation through positive/negative feedback-seeking behavior as moderators. Finally, the conditional indirect effect of leader-member exchange in the hypothesized moderated mediation model was used to understand the moderating role of emotional intelligence on two forms of idea generation.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the research philosophy behind this study. Based on the research questions, assumptions, and practical constraints, I chose to use a deductive approach to test

the hypotheses of the proposed moderated mediation model with existing theories (social exchange theory and leader-member exchange theory). I decided to use the mono method with structured questionnaires to collect quantitative data through an online survey by using purposive sampling. This study is a cross-sectional study to collect the data in a given snapshot. In order to minimize the potential risk of common method bias, I collected data from matched supervisor-subordinate dyads. Moreover, the issue of generalization by using non-probability sampling is addressed. The selection of the sample followed the specified inclusion and exclusion criteria to increase the transferability and dependability of the data. Online data collection and procedure were implemented with the considerations of response quality and ethical issues.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will explain the analytic plan of this study. Before testing the hypotheses, data screening and preliminary analysis have been employed to confirm the data was good for further analysis. Mediation analysis is conducted to test (a) whether positive feedback-seeking behavior mediates the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and incremental idea generation, and (b) whether negative feedback-seeking behavior mediates the relationship between leader-member exchange and radical idea generation. The analysis of moderated mediation effect of emotional intelligence in the relationship between (a) leader-member exchange and incremental idea generation through positive feedback-seeking behavior, and (b) leader-member exchange and radical idea generation through negative feedback-seeking behavior were presented in this section.

5.2 Analytic Plan

The relationship between leader-member exchange quality, positive and negative feedback-seeking behavior, as well as incremental and radical idea generation (Hypothesis 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, 4a, and 4b), were tested with Regression in SPSS. Following the study by Tsai and colleagues (2015), the proposed mediation and moderated mediation models in this study were tested in two steps. First, I examined the mediation models (Hypotheses 5a, 5b, 6a, and 6b). Next, I tested the moderator variable in the model (Hypotheses 7a and 7b).

The mediation hypotheses were tested in a four-step procedure argued by Baron and Kenny (1986). First, I tested whether the independent variable (leader-member exchange quality) was correlated with the dependent variable (incremental and radical idea generation). Second, I

tested whether the independent variable (leader-member exchange quality) was significantly related to the mediator (positive and negative feedback-seeking behavior). Third, I tested whether the mediator (positive and negative feedback-seeking behavior) affects the dependent variable (incremental and radical idea generation) and whether the mediator (positive and negative feedback-seeking behavior) completely mediates the relationship between the independent variable (leader-member exchange quality) and dependent variable (incremental and radical idea generation). Finally, I tested whether the effect of the independent variable (leader-member exchange) on the dependent variable (incremental and radical idea generation) controlling for the mediator (positive and negative feedback-seeking behavior) should be zero or smaller, which provides evidence for a complete or partial mediation.

I predicted that emotional intelligence would moderate the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and positive/negative feedback-seeking behavior. Besides, I assumed that this moderation hypothesis receives support, it is believed that the strength of the hypothesized indirect (mediation) effect is conditional on the value of the moderator (Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007).

5.3 Data Screening

Before hypothesis testing, I conducted data screening and preliminary analysis to evaluate the missing data, identify outliers, and test for the assumptions underlying multivariate techniques (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). The purpose of the data examination tasks is “to reveal what is not apparent as it is to portray the actual data, because the hidden effects are easily overlooked” (Hair et al., 2010, p. 32). Researchers are encouraged to apply appropriate data screening techniques to address the concern with the possibility that low-quality data may be influencing study results (DeSimone, Harms, & DeSimone, 2015). It shows that the best

practice of data screening can “increase the confidence that both researchers and readers have in the results of a study (DeSimone et al., 2015).

5.3.1 Missing Data

To address whether the missing data issue occurs or not, researchers can employ descriptive analysis in SPSS to examine individual variables. According to Hair and colleagues (2010), if any case of missing data is greater than 50%, researchers should delete it. If missing data is under 10% for an individual case can generally be ignored, except when the missing data does not occur randomly (Hair et al., 2010). In order to diagnose the randomness of the missing data processes, MCAR (missing completely at random) test can be used. If the result shows a large p-value (> 0.05), it indicates weak evidence against the null hypothesis that the data are missing completely at random. When the missing data process can be treated as missing completely at random, researchers can employ imputation to replace the missing data.

Preventive measures were taken to avoid errors in data entry in this study. First, the data was inputted twice, and a comparison was made between two separate data entries (Barchard & Christensen, 2007). Then, SPSS software was used to run descriptive statistics to recognize whether there were missing data or not. The result demonstrated that there were no missing data values for demographic variables and study variables. Therefore, the data was good for further analysis.

5.3.2 Assessment of Outliers

The assessment and treatment of the outliers is another important step of data screening. Outliers can be described as excessive case scores which might cause a notable negative impact on the results (Maiyaki & Moktar, 2011). Researchers can judge whether outliers exist or not through the high or low value of a variable that causes the observation to stand out from the

others (Hair et al., 2010). When the potential outliers are detected, researchers have to generate profiles of each outlier observation and identify the variable(s) responsible for its being an outlier. Multivariate techniques can be applied to identify the differences between outliers and other observations. To deal with outliers, it is suggested the values should be “retained unless demonstrable proof indicates that they are truly aberrant and not representative of any representative of any observation in the population” (Hair et al., 2010, p. 66).

In this study, data were examined for univariate and multivariate outliers. Univariate outliers were checked for all variables with box plots. Two cases for radical idea generation and one case for emotional intelligence were identified as uncommon low values. Since preventive measures have been employed to avoid procedural error, these cases were further examined with higher z-score values. If any case with the value of a standardized z-score that is greater than 3.29 is treated as a potential outlier (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). There was no single case that has a high z-score value. Additionally, the multivariate outliers were checked with Mahalanobis Distance in SPSS. If any case of the value that is smaller than 0.001 will be considered as an outlier. The result showed that no single case was an outlier.

5.3.3 Normality Assumption

Screening for normality is treated as a vital step in multivariate analysis performing the final objective of a study to make inferences (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007; Hair et al., 2010). The purpose of the normality test is to ensure the data follows a normal distribution. A normal distribution indicates a symmetric bell-shaped curve defined by the mean (average) and variance (variability). Normality assumption can be tested through the values of skewness and kurtosis. The range of acceptable skewness value is below 2 and the range of acceptable kurtosis value is below 7 (Gorondutse & Hilman, 2014). According to Hair and colleagues (2010), “normality can have serious effects in small samples (fewer than 50 cases), but the

impact effectively diminishes when sample sizes reach 200 cases or more” (p. 76). Table 3.1 displays the skewness and kurtosis values of the study variables in this study with the sample size of 63 dyads being in acceptable ranges.

Table 3.1: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	No. of Items
Supervisor-rated Leader-Member Exchange	3.00	5.00	4.043	0.439	0.085	-0.127	7
Subordinate-rated Leader-Member Exchange	2.71	5	3.934	0.457	-0.136	0.209	7
Positive Feedback-Seeking Behavior	1.75	5	3.234	0.750	-0.063	-0.339	4
Negative Feedback-Seeking Behavior	1.00	5	2.778	0.762	0.336	-0.022	4
Incremental Idea Generation	2.00	5	3.397	0.682	-0.394	-0.271	3
Radical Idea Generation	1.33	5	3.238	0.784	-0.406	-0.252	3
Emotional Intelligence	2.75	4.56	3.817	0.412	-0.504	-0.033	16

5.4 Construct Validity and Reliability

Factor analysis is a statistical data reduction and analysis technique that aims to explain correlations among multiple outcomes as the result of one or more underlying explanations, or factors. The underlying factors may influence subject responses because multiple questions

often are related. The studied variables are better moderate correlated to a certain extent. The factor analysis was performed by using SPSS based on the principal components factoring method with varimax rotation on the correlations of the observed variables.

Two different tests including the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's test of Sphericity were conducted to decide whether the data were appropriate for data analysis or not. While KMO values less than 0.5 are unacceptable, it suggests that the strength of the partial correlation is weak to process factor analysis. Bartlett's test of Sphericity is used to examine the null hypothesis that the correlation matrix is an identity matrix. A significant statistical test (usually less than 0.05) shows that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix. In this case, the null hypothesis is rejected. Then, factor analysis is appropriate.

In deciding whether include or exclude items in scales and subscales, items with a loading less than 0.40 were weak and would be excluded from further analysis (Hair et al., 2010). If an item is cross loaded on two different factors and the loading on the second factor is less than 0.40, this item will be excluded.

Convergent validity was assessed by using Average Variance Extracted (AVE) to indicate how much of the indicators' variance could be explained by the latent unobserved variable. An Average Variance Extracted greater than 0.5 is satisfactory for convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Construct reliability is assessed by using composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha. Both values are suggested to reach the level of 0.60 (Fronell & Larcker, 1981) or 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

5.4.1 Supervisors-Rated Leader-Member Exchange Questionnaire

The KMO value is 0.697 (greater than 0.5) and Bartlett's test result is significant ($p < 0.01$). Therefore, I was confident to conduct factor analysis. Principal Component analysis revealed that supervisor-rated leader-member exchange contained two components with eigenvalues exceeding 1 explaining 58% of the variance as shown in Table 4.1. The factor loadings of all items are greater than 0.40. Cronbach's alpha of component 1 is 0.700 and that of component 2 is 0.678. The composite reliability of component 1 is 0.800 and that of component 2 is 0.740. The square root of the Average Variance Extracted for component 1 is 0.506 and that of component 2 is 0.604.

Table 4.1: Component Matrix for the Supervisor-Rated Leader-Member Exchange (LLMX) Questionnaire

Item	Component 1	Component 2
LLMX-6	0.730	
LLMX-7	0.721	
LLMX-4	0.713	
LLMX-5	0.680	
LLMX-2		0.876
LLMX-3		0.886
LLMX-1		0.509
Eigenvalue	2.558	1.521
Cumulative variance explained	36.536	58.226
Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	0.506	0.604
Composite Reliability (CR)	0.800	0.740
Cronbach's alpha	0.700	0.678

5.4.2 Subordinate-Rated Leader-Member Exchange Questionnaire

The KMO value is 0.726 (greater than 0.5) and Bartlett's test result is significant ($p < 0.01$). Therefore, I was confident to conduct factor analysis. Principal Component analysis revealed that subordinate-rated leader-member exchange contained two components with eigenvalues

exceeding 1 explaining 66% of the variance as shown in Table 4.2. The factor loadings of all items are greater than 0.40. Cronbach's alpha of component 1 is 0.826 and component 2 is 0.721. The composite reliability of component 1 is 0.833 and that of component 2 is 0.666. The square root of the Average Variance Extracted for component 1 is 0.578 and that of component 2 is 0.763.

Table 4.2: Component Matrix for the Subordinate-Rated Leader-Member Exchange (MLMX) Questionnaire

Item	Component 1	Component 2
MLMX-7	0.834	
MLMX-6	0.784	
MLMX-1	0.763	
MLMX-4	0.718	
MLMX-5	0.693	
MLMX-3		0.908
MLMX-2		0.838
Eigenvalue	3.290	1.330
Cumulative variance explained	47.006	66.012
Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	0.578	0.763
Composite Reliability (CR)	0.833	0.666
Cronbach's alpha	0.826	0.721

5.4.3 Positive Feedback-Seeking Behavior Questionnaire

The KMO value is 0.806 (greater than 0.5) and Bartlett's test result is significant ($p < 0.01$). Therefore, I was confident to conduct factor analysis. Principal Component analysis revealed that subordinates' positive feedback-seeking behavior contained only one component with eigenvalues exceeding 1 explaining 76% of the variance as shown in Table 4.3. The factor loadings of all items are greater than 0.40. Cronbach's alpha is 0.897. The composite reliability is 0.800. The square root of the Average Variance Extracted for component 1 is 0.578 and that of component 2 is 0.763.

Table 4.3: Component Matrix for the Subordinates' Positive Feedback-Seeking Behavior (PFSB) Questionnaire

Item	Positive Feedback-Seeking Behavior
PFSB-1	0.913
PFSB-4	0.885
PFSB-3	0.856
PFSB-2	0.853
Eigenvalue	3.076
Cumulative variance explained	76.911
Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	0.769
Composite Reliability (CR)	0.800
Cronbach's alpha	0.897

5.4.4 Negative Feedback-Seeking Behavior Questionnaire

The KMO value is 0.621 (greater than 0.5) and Bartlett's test result is significant ($p < 0.01$). Therefore, I was confident to conduct factor analysis. Principal Component analysis revealed that subordinates' negative feedback-seeking behavior contained only one component with eigenvalues exceeding 1 explaining 78% of the variance as shown in Table 4.4. The factor loadings of all items are greater than 0.40. Cronbach's alpha is 0.909. The composite reliability is 0.800. The square root of the Average Variance Extracted is 0.787.

Table 4.4: Component Matrix for the Subordinates' Negative Feedback-Seeking Behavior (NFSB) Questionnaire

Item	Positive Feedback-Seeking Behavior
NFSB-2	0.905
NFSB-1	0.902
NFSB-3	0.885
NFSB-4	0.855
Eigenvalue	3.146
Cumulative variance explained	78.646
Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	0.787
Composite Reliability (CR)	0.800
Cronbach's alpha	0.909

5.4.5 Incremental Idea Generation Questionnaire

The KMO value is 0.702 (greater than 0.5) and Bartlett's test result is significant ($p < 0.01$). Therefore, I was confident to conduct factor analysis. Principal Component analysis revealed that subordinates' incremental idea generation contained only one component with eigenvalues exceeding 1 explaining 78% of the variance as shown in Table 4.5. The factor loadings of all items are greater than 0.40. Cronbach's alpha is 0.860. The composite reliability is 0.750. The square root of the Average Variance Extracted is 0.786.

Table 4.5: Component Matrix for the Subordinates' Incremental Idea Generation (IIG) Questionnaire

Item	Incremental Idea Generation
IIG-1	0.918
IIG-2	0.908
IIG-3	0.831
Eigenvalue	2.358
Cumulative variance explained	78.599
Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	0.786
Composite Reliability (CR)	0.750
Cronbach's alpha	0.860

5.4.6 Radical Idea Generation Questionnaire

The KMO value is 0.736 (greater than 0.5) and Bartlett's test result is significant ($p < 0.01$). Therefore, I was confident to conduct factor analysis. Principal Component analysis revealed that subordinates' radical idea generation contained only one component with eigenvalues exceeding 1 explaining 84% of the variance as shown in Table 4.6. The factor loadings of all items are greater than 0.40. Cronbach's alpha is 0.909. The composite reliability is 0.750. The square root of the Average Variance Extracted is 0.508.

Table 4.6: Component Matrix for the Subordinates' Radical Idea Generation (RIG) Questionnaire

Item	Radical Idea Generation
RIG-2	0.943
RIG-1	0.918
RIG-3	0.899
Eigenvalue	2.540
Cumulative variance explained	84.666
Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	0.508
Composite Reliability (CR)	0.750
Cronbach's alpha	0.860

5.4.7 Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire

The KMO value is 0.714 (greater than 0.5) and Bartlett's test result is significant ($p < 0.01$). Therefore, I was confident to conduct factor analysis. Principal Component analysis revealed that subordinates' incremental idea generation contained only five components with eigenvalues exceeding 1 explaining 76% of the variance as shown in Table 4.7. The factor loadings of all items are greater than 0.40. Cronbach's alpha ranges from 0.636 to 0.929. The composite reliability ranges from 0.667 to 0.800. The square root of the Average Variance Extracted ranges from 0.546 to 0.801.

Table 4.7: Component Matrix for the Emotional Intelligence (EI) Questionnaire

Item	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	Component 4	Component 5
EI-16	0.933				
EI-14	0.932				
EI-13	0.863				
EI-15	0.849				
EI-7		0.862			
EI-6		0.841			
EI-5		0.830			
EI-11			0.813		
EI-12			0.801		
EI-8			0.578		
EI-9			0.501		
EI-2				0.888	
EI-3				0.886	
EI-10					0.815
EI-1					0.706
EI-4					0.452
Eigenvalue	5.244	2.646	1.699	1.402	1.237
Cumulative variance explained	32.775	49.314	59.936	68.701	76.431
Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	0.801	0.713	0.546	0.787	0.724
Composite Reliability (CR)	0.800	0.750	0.746	0.667	0.781
Cronbach's alpha	0.929	0.870	0.764	0.800	0.636

Reliability analysis discloses the degree to which a measure is error-free, and unveils the consistency, stability, and goodness of the measure. The Cronbach alpha is the most generally used technique for reliability analysis (Cavana, Delahaye, & Sekeren, 2001). The goal of

measuring the Cronbach coefficient alpha is to ascertain the internal consistency of a scale (Sandhu, Jain, & Ahmad, 2011). Cronbach alpha also indicates how the study items are positively correlated to each other (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The closer Cronbach's alpha is to 1, the greater the internal consistency (Sandhu et al., 2011). In this study, all values of the Cronbach alpha are greater than 0.70. All values of the composite reliability are greater than 0.6 or 0.7. The results indicate that the instruments are internally consistent. Moreover, all values of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) are greater than 0.5 which provides evidence of discriminant validity.

5.5 Preliminary Analysis

Following the study by Truckenbrodt (2000), both supervisor-rated and subordinate-rated leader-member member exchange scales were scored by summing up the responses to all questions respectively. The range of the total score for the supervisor is 7 to 35. A high score represents that the supervisor perceived a more positive relationship with the subordinate. The total mean score for supervisor-rated leader-member exchange is 28.3 as shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Total Score for Supervisor-Rated Leader-Member Exchange (LLMX)

Item	Mean (63 Dyads)	Minimum	Maximum
LMX-1	4.22	1	5
LMX-2	4.33	1	5
LMX-3	4.08	1	5
LMX-4	4.05	1	5
LMX-5	4.17	1	5
LMX-6	3.84	1	5
LMX-7	3.57	1	5
Total	28.3	7	35

Similarly, the range of the total score for the subordinate is 7 to 35. A high score represents that the subordinate participants perceived a more positive relationship with the supervisor. The total mean score for subordinate-rated leader-member exchange is 27.53 as shown in Table 5.2. In this study, a new variable of leader-member exchange quality was computed with the mean of supervisor-rated leader-member exchange and subordinate-rated leader-member exchange.

Table 5.2: Total Score for Subordinate-Rated Leader-Member Exchange (MLMX)

Item	Mean (63 Dyads)	Minimum	Maximum
MLMX-1	4.03	1	5
MLMX-2	4.14	1	5
MLMX-3	3.79	1	5
MLMX-4	3.92	1	5
MLMX-5	3.95	1	5
MLMX-6	3.94	1	5
MLMX-7	3.76	1	5
Total	27.53	7	35

Other study variables were scored by summing up the responses to all questions. The possible range of subordinates' positive and negative feedback-seeking behavior is 4 to 20. The total mean score for positive feedback-seeking behavior is 12.93 as shown in Table 5.3. A high score represented those subordinates display a high degree of positive feedback-seeking behavior. The total mean score for negative feedback-seeking behavior is 11.12 as shown in Table 5.4. A high score represents those subordinates displayed a high degree of negative feedback-seeking behavior.

Table 5.3: Total Score for Positive Feedback-Seeking Behavior (PFSB)

Item	Mean (63 Dyads)	Minimum	Maximum
PFSB-1	3.25	1	5
PFSB-2	3.24	1	5
PFSB-3	3.29	1	5
PFSB-4	3.15	1	5
Total	12.93	4	20

Table 5.4: Total Score of Negative Feedback-Seeking Behavior (NFSB)

Item	Mean (63 Dyads)	Minimum	Maximum
NFSB-1	2.89	1	5
NFSB-2	2.83	1	5
NFSB-3	2.65	1	5
NFSB-4	2.75	1	5
Total	11.12	4	20

The possible range of incremental and radical idea generation is 3 to 15. The total mean score for subordinates' incremental idea generation is 10.18 as shown in Table 5.5. A high score represents the subordinate participants performing a high degree of incremental idea generation rated by the supervisor. The total mean score for subordinates' radical idea generation is 9.72 as shown in Table 5.6. A high score represents that the subordinate participants performed a high degree of radical idea generation rated by the supervisor.

Table 5.5: Total Score for Incremental Idea Generation (IIG)

Item	Mean (63 Dyads)	Minimum	Maximum
IIG-1	3.41	1	5
IIG-2	3.33	1	5
IIG-3	3.44	1	5
Total	10.18	3	15

Table 5.6: Total Score for Radical Idea Generation (RIG)

Item	Mean (63 Dyads)	Minimum	Maximum
RIG-1	3.32	1	5
RIG-2	3.27	1	5
RIG-3	3.13	1	5
Total	9.72	3	15

The possible range of emotional intelligence is 16 to 90. A high score represents that the subordinate participants have displayed a high degree of emotional intelligence. The total mean score for subordinates' emotional intelligence is 61.06 as shown in Table 5.8.

Table 5.7: Total Score for Emotional Intelligence

Item	Mean (63 Dyads)	Minimum	Maximum
EI-1	3.92	1	5
EI-2	3.98	1	5
EI-3	4.00	1	5
EI-4	4.00	1	5
EI-5	3.92	1	5
EI-6	3.92	1	5
EI-7	3.97	1	5
EI-8	3.83	1	5
EI-9	3.81	1	5
EI-10	3.57	1	5
EI-11	3.78	1	5
EI-12	3.90	1	5
EI-13	3.70	1	5
EI-14	3.63	1	5
EI-15	3.51	1	5
EI-16	3.62	1	5
Total	61.06	16	90

5.5.1 Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Table 6.1 displays descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations among study variables. Leader-member exchange quality is significantly and positively related to subordinates' incremental idea generation ($r = 0.248$, $p = 0.050$) and to subordinates' radical idea generation ($r = 0.256$, $p = 0.043$). Additionally, the leader-member exchange is significantly and positively related to subordinates' positive feedback-seeking behavior ($r = 0.313$, $p = 0.013$) and subordinates' negative feedback-seeking behavior ($r = 0.308$, $p = 0.014$). Moreover, positive feedback-seeking behavior is significantly and positively correlated with incremental idea generation ($r = 0.383$, $p = 0.002$) and with radical idea generation ($r = 0.466$, $p = <0.001$). Furthermore, negative feedback-seeking behavior is significantly and positively correlated with incremental idea generation ($r = 0.364$, $p = 0.003$) and with radical idea generation ($r = 0.553$, $p < 0.001$). Pearson's correlational tests indicated that participants' gender, age, educational level, years of tenure, and dyadic tenure are not significantly associated with the dependent variable (incremental and radical idea generation).

Table 6.1: Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations

Variable (n=63 dyads)	Mean	Standard Deviation	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Leader-member exchange quality	3.989	2.423	1					
2. Emotional intelligence	3.817	6.584	0.069	1				
3. Positive feedback-seeking behavior	3.234	2.999	0.313*	-0.362**	1			
4. Negative feedback-seeking behavior	2.778	3.049	0.308*	-0.320*	0.756**	1		
5. Incremental idea generation	3.397	2.047	0.248*	-0.098	0.383**	0.364**	1	
6. Radical idea generation	3.238	2.352	0.256*	-0.188	0.466**	0.553**	0.712**	1

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

***Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed).

5.6 Hypotheses Testing

Regression in SPSS was performed to test the hypotheses in this study. Before testing mediation and moderated mediation models, I investigated (a) the relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable, (b) the relationship between the independent variable and mediator, as well as (c) the relationship between the mediator and dependent variable.

5.6.1 The Relationships between Leader-Member Exchange quality, Positive/Negative Feedback-Seeking Behavior, and Incremental/Radical Idea Generation

Leader-Member Exchange -> Incremental Idea Generation

Hypothesis 1a suggests that the leader-member exchange quality has a significant impact on subordinates' incremental idea generation. The dependent variable (incremental idea generation) was regressed on predicting variable (leader-member exchange quality) to test the hypothesis. Leader-member exchange quality significantly predicts incremental idea generation, $F(1, 61) = 4.007$, $p < 0.05$, which indicates that leader-member exchange quality can play a significant role to shape incremental idea generation ($b = 0.248$, $p < 0.05$). With a one-unit increase in leader-member exchange quality, incremental idea generation increased by 0.248, which is found to be a significant change. Hypothesis 1a is supported (see Table 7.1).

Table 7.1: Regression Result of the relationship between Leader-Member Exchange Quality and Incremental Idea Generation

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta Coefficient	R Square	F	t-value	p-value	Result
H1a	Leader-member exchange quality -> Incremental idea generation	0.248*	0.062	4.007	2.002	0.050	Supported

Note. * $p < 0.05$.

Leader-Member Exchange -> Radical Idea Generation

Hypothesis 1b suggests that the leader-member exchange quality has a significant impact on subordinates' radical idea generation. The dependent variable (radical idea generation) was regressed on predicting variable (leader-member exchange quality) to test the hypothesis. Leader-member exchange quality significantly predicts radical idea generation, $F(1, 61) = 4.278$, $p < 0.05$, which indicates that leader-member exchange quality can play a significant role to shape radical idea generation ($b = 0.256$, $p < 0.05$). With a one-unit increase in leader-member exchange quality, radical idea generation increased by 0.256, which is found to be a significant change. Hypothesis 1b is supported (see Table 7.2).

Table 7.2: Regression Result of the relationship between Leader-Member Exchange quality and Radical Idea Generation

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta Coefficient	R Square	F	t-value	p-value	Result
H1b	Leader-member exchange quality -> Radical idea generation	0.256*	0.066	4.278	2.068	0.043	Supported

Note. * $p < 0.05$.

Leader-Member Exchange -> Positive Feedback-Seeking Behavior

Hypothesis 2a suggests that the leader-member exchange quality has a significant impact on subordinates' positive feedback-seeking behavior. The dependent variable (positive feedback-seeking behavior) was regressed on predicting variable (leader-member exchange quality) to test the hypothesis. Leader-member exchange quality significantly predicts positive feedback-seeking behavior, $F(1, 61) = 6.619$, $p < 0.05$, which indicates that leader-member exchange quality can play a significant role to shape positive feedback-seeking behavior ($b = 0.313$, $p < 0.05$). With a one-unit increase in leader-member exchange quality, positive feedback-seeking

behavior increased by 0.313, which is found to be a significant change. Hypothesis 2a is supported (see Table 7.3). The results indicate that subordinates engaged in higher-quality leader-member exchange relationships will seek more positive feedback from their supervisors than those engaged in lower-quality leader-member exchange relationships.

Table 7.3: Regression Result of the relationship between Leader-Member Exchange Quality and Positive Feedback-Seeking Behavior

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta Coefficient	R Square	F	t-value	p-value	Result
H2a	Leader-member exchange quality -> Positive feedback-seeking behavior	0.313*	0.098	6.619	2.573	0.013	Supported

Note. *p < 0.05.

Leader-Member Exchange -> Negative Feedback-Seeking Behavior

Hypothesis 2b suggests that the leader-member exchange quality has a significant impact on subordinates' negative feedback-seeking behavior. The dependent variable (negative feedback-seeking behavior) was regressed on predicting variable (leader-member exchange quality) to test the hypothesis. Leader-member exchange quality significantly predicts negative feedback-seeking behavior, $F(1, 61) = 6.372$, $p < 0.05$, which indicates that leader-member exchange quality can play a significant role to shape negative feedback-seeking behavior ($b = 0.308$, $p < 0.05$). With a one-unit increase in leader-member exchange quality, negative feedback-seeking behavior increased by 0.308, which is found to be a significant change. Hypothesis 2b is supported (see Table 7.4). The results indicate that subordinates engaged in higher-quality leader-member exchange relationships will seek more negative feedback from their supervisors than those engaged in lower-quality leader-member exchange relationships.

Table 7.4: Regression Result of the relationship between Leader-Member Exchange quality and Negative Feedback-Seeking Behavior

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta Coefficient	R Square	F	t-value	p-value	Result
H2b	Leader-member exchange quality -> Negative feedback-seeking behavior	0.308*	0.095	6.372	2.524	0.014	Supported

Note. * $p < 0.05$.

Positive Feedback-Seeking Behavior -> Incremental Idea Generation

Hypothesis 3a suggests that the subordinates' positive feedback-seeking behavior has a significant impact on incremental idea generation. The dependent variable (incremental idea generation) was regressed on predicting variable (positive feedback-seeking behavior) to test the hypothesis. Positive feedback-seeking behavior significantly predicts incremental idea generation, $F(1, 61) = 10.485$, $p < 0.01$, which indicates that leader-member exchange quality can play a significant role to shape incremental idea generation ($b = 0.383$, $p < 0.01$). With a one-unit increase in positive feedback-seeking behavior, incremental idea generation increased by 0.383, which is found to be a significant change. Hypothesis 3a is supported (see Table 7.5).

Table 7.5: Regression Result of the relationship between Positive Feedback-Seeking Behavior and Incremental Idea Generation

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta Coefficient	R Square	F	t-value	p-value	Result
H3a	Positive feedback-seeking behavior -> Incremental idea generation	0.383**	0.147	10.485	3.238	0.002	Supported

Note. * $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$

Positive Feedback-Seeking Behavior -> Radical Idea Generation

Hypothesis 3b suggests that the subordinates’ positive feedback-seeking behavior has a significant impact on radical idea generation. The dependent variable (radical idea generation) was regressed on predicting variable (positive feedback-seeking behavior) to test the hypothesis. Positive feedback-seeking behavior significantly predicts radical idea generation, $F(1, 61) = 16.937, p < 0.001$, which indicates that positive feedback-seeking behavior can play a significant role to shape radical idea generation ($b = 0.466, p < 0.001$). With a one-unit increase in positive feedback-seeking behavior, incremental idea generation increased by 0.466, which is found to be a significant change. Hypothesis 3a is supported (see Table 7.6).

Table 7.6: Regression Result of the relationship between Positive Feedback-Seeking Behavior and Radical Idea Generation

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta Coefficient	R Square	F	t-value	p-value	Result
H3b	Positive feedback-seeking behavior -> Radical idea generation	0.466***	0.217	16.937	4.116	<0.001	Supported

Note. * $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$.

Negative Feedback-Seeking Behavior -> Incremental Idea Generation

Hypothesis 4a suggests that the subordinates’ negative feedback-seeking behavior has a significant impact on incremental idea generation. The dependent variable (incremental idea generation) was regressed on predicting variable (negative feedback-seeking behavior) to test the hypothesis. Negative feedback-seeking behavior significantly predicts incremental idea generation, $F(1, 61) = 9.294, p < 0.01$, which indicates that negative feedback-seeking behavior can play a significant role to shape incremental idea generation ($b = 0.364, p < 0.01$). With a

one-unit increase in positive feedback-seeking behavior, incremental idea generation increased by 0.364, which is found to be a significant change. Hypothesis 4a is supported (see Table 7.7).

Table 7.7: Regression Result of the relationship between Positive Feedback-Seeking Behavior and Radical Idea Generation

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta Coefficient	R Square	F	t-value	p-value	Result
H4a	Negative feedback-seeking behavior -> Radical idea generation	0.364**	0.132	9.294	3.049	0.003	Supported

Note. *p < 0.05. **p < 0.01.

Negative Feedback-Seeking Behavior -> Radical Idea Generation

Hypothesis 4b suggests that the subordinates' negative feedback-seeking behavior has a significant impact on radical idea generation. The dependent variable (radical idea generation) was regressed on predicting variable (negative feedback-seeking behavior) to test the hypothesis. Negative feedback-seeking behavior significantly predicts radical idea generation, $F(1, 61) = 26.936$, $p < 0.001$, which indicates that negative feedback-seeking behavior can play a significant role to shape radical idea generation ($b = 0.553$, $p < 0.001$). With a one-unit increase in negative feedback-seeking behavior, radical idea generation increased by 0.553, which is found to be a significant change. Hypothesis 4b is supported (see Table 7.8).

Table 7.8: Regression Result of the relationship between Negative Feedback-Seeking Behavior and Radical Idea Generation

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta Coefficient	R Square	F	t-value	p-value	Result
H4b	Negative feedback-seeking behavior -> Radical idea generation	0.553***	0.306	26.936	5.190	<0.001	Supported

Note. *p < 0.05. **p < 0.01. ***p < 0.001.

5.6.2 Mediating Effect of Positive Feedback-Seeking Behavior between Leader-Member Exchange quality and Incremental Idea Generation

According to Hair and colleagues (2010), a mediator can be treated as a third variable that will intervene in the influence between two constructs and it may take an indirect path. To test whether the mediating effect exists in a model or not, some of the terminologies used such as direct effect, indirect effect, and total effect. A direct effect is a direct relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable in presence of the mediator. An indirect effect is a relationship that flows from an independent variable to a mediator and then to a dependent variable. The term total effect is the combined influence of the direct effect between two constructs and the indirect effect flowing through the mediator.

Leader-Member Exchange -> Positive Feedback-Seeking Behavior -> Incremental Idea Generation

Hypothesis 5a suggests that subordinates' positive feedback-seeking behavior mediates the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and subordinates' incremental idea generation. This mediation model was examined by identifying if the construct of leader-member exchange quality (independent variable) has an indirect effect through positive feedback-seeking behavior (mediating variable) on the construct of incremental idea generation (dependent variable). To test the hypothesis, PROCESS Model 4 established by Hayes (2013) was applied. Outputs along with 95 percent bias-corrected bootstrap confidence interval based on 5000 bootstrap samples.

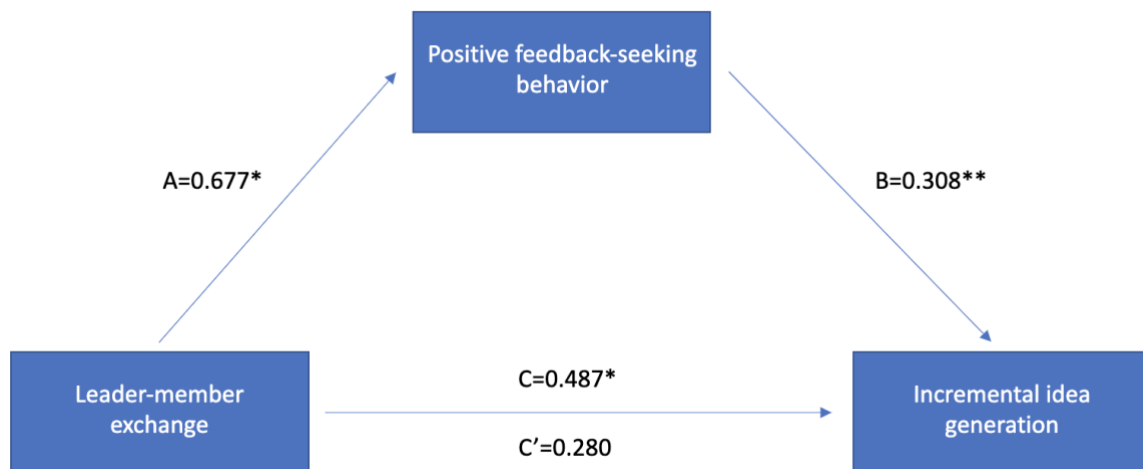
Table 8.1: Mediation Analysis Summary I

Relationship:							
<i>Leader-Member Exchange -> Positive Feedback-Seeking Behavior -> Incremental Idea Generation</i>							
Total Effect (link C)	Effect of IV on MV (link A)	Effect of MV on DV (link B)	Direct Effect (link C')	Indirect Effect	Lower Bound Confidence Interval	Upper Bound Confidence Interval	Result
0.487*	0.677*	0.308**	0.280	0.208	-0.016	0.525	No Mediation

Note. *p < 0.05. **p < 0.01.

Table 8.1 displays the results. It indicates that the effect of leader-member exchange on positive feedback-seeking behavior is significant (b = 0.677; t = 2.573, 95% CI = [0.151, 1.203], p = 0.013), as is the effect of positive feedback-seeking on incremental idea generation (b = 0.308, t = 2.724, 95% CI = [0.082, 0.534], p = 0.008). After including positive feedback-seeking behavior as a mediator of the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and incremental idea generation, the indirect effect of leader-member exchange quality on incremental idea generation through positive feedback-seeking behavior is not significant (b = 0.208, 95% CI = [-0.016, 0.525]). Besides, the direct effect is not significant (b = 0.280, t = 1.146, 95% CI = [-0.209, 0.769], p = 0.256). Therefore, positive feedback-seeking behavior does not act as a mediator in this relationship (see Figure 4.1). Hypothesis 5a is not supported.

Figure 4.1: Mediation Model of Positive Feedback-Seeking Behavior between Leader-Member Exchange quality and Incremental Idea Generation.



Note. * $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$.

5.6.3 Mediating effect of Positive Feedback-Seeking Behavior on Leader-Member Exchange quality and Radical Idea Generation

Leader-Member Exchange -> Positive Feedback-Seeking Behavior -> Radical Idea Generation

Hypothesis 5b suggests that subordinates' positive feedback-seeking behavior mediates the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and subordinates' radical idea generation. Table 8.2 displays the results. It indicates that the effect of leader-member exchange has a positive and significant impact on positive feedback-seeking behavior ($b = 0.677$; $t = 2.572$, 95% CI = [0.151, 1.203], $p = 0.013$), as is the effect of positive feedback-seeking on radical idea generation ($b = 0.447$, $t = 3.590$, 95% CI = [0.198, 0.697], $p < 0.001$).

Table 8.2: Mediation Analysis Summary II

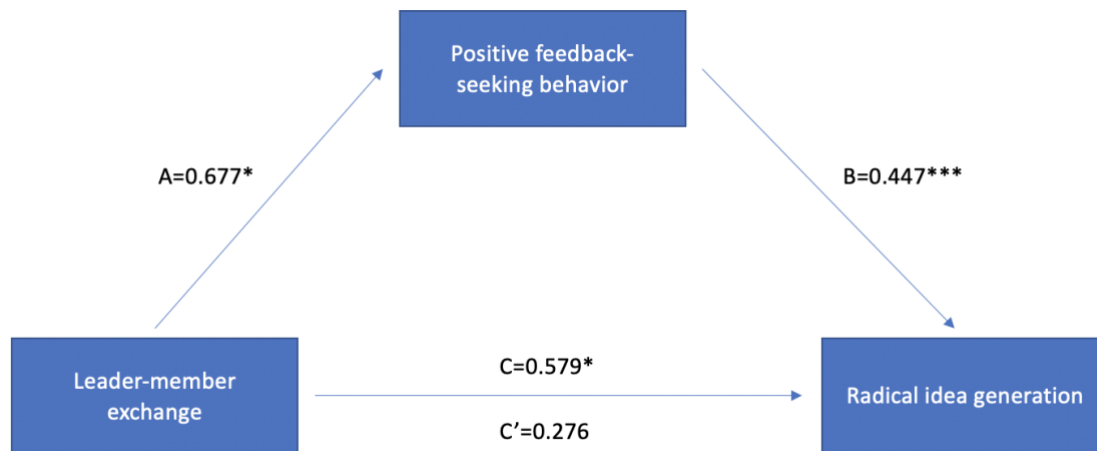
Relationship:							
<i>Leader-Member Exchange -> Positive Feedback-Seeking Behavior -> Radical Idea Generation</i>							
Total Effect (link C)	Effect of IV on MV (link A)	Effect of MV on DV (link B)	Direct Effect (link C')	Indirect Effect	Lower Bound Confidence Interval	Upper Bound Confidence Interval	Result
0.579*	0.677*	0.447***	0.276	0.303**	0.007	0.698	Full Mediation

Note. *p < 0.05. **p < 0.01. ***p < 0.001.

After including positive feedback-seeking behavior as a mediator of the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and incremental idea generation, there was a positive and significant indirect effect of leader-member exchange quality on radical idea generation through positive feedback-seeking behavior ($b = 0.303$, 95% CI [0.007, 0.698]). Therefore, the mediating effect of negative feedback-seeking behavior is significant in the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and radical idea generation (see Figure 4.2). Hypothesis 5b is supported.

Moreover, the direct effect of leader-member exchange quality on radical idea generation in presence of the mediator is not significant ($b = 0.280$, $t = 1.146$, 95% CI = [-0.209, 0.769], $p = 0.256$). Hence, positive feedback-seeking behavior fully mediates the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and radical idea generation. Mediation can be either full or partial. The results provide evidence for full mediation. With full mediation, the total effect of leader-member exchange quality (independent variable) on radical idea generation (dependent variable) is transmitted through positive feedback-seeking behavior (single mediator).

Figure 4.2: Mediation Model of Positive Feedback-Seeking Behavior between Leader-Member Exchange quality and Radical Idea Generation.



Note. * $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$.

5.6.4 Mediating effect of Negative Feedback-Seeking Behavior on Leader-Member Exchange quality and Incremental Idea Generation

Leader-Member Exchange -> Negative-Feedback Seeking Behavior -> Incremental Idea Generation

Hypothesis 6a suggests that subordinates' negative feedback-seeking behavior mediates the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and subordinates' incremental idea generation. Table 8.3 displays the results. It indicates that the effect of leader-member exchange on negative feedback-seeking behavior is significant ($b = 0.676$, $t = 2.523$, 95% CI = [0.141, 1.212], $p = 0.0142$), as is the effect of negative feedback-seeking on incremental idea generation ($b = 0.284$, $t = 2.541$, 95% CI = [0.060, 0.508], $p < 0.014$).

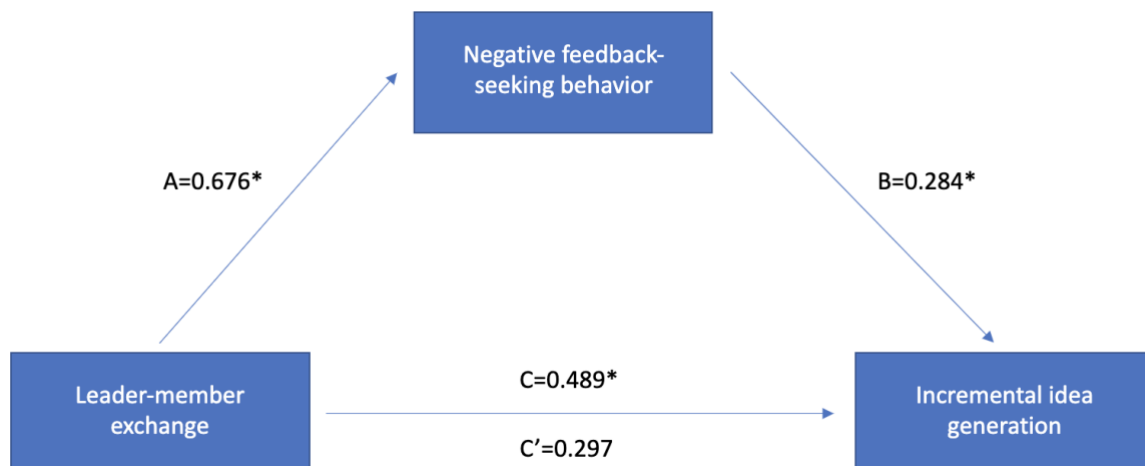
Table 8.3: Mediation Analysis Summary III

Relationship: <i>Leader-Member Exchange -> Negative Feedback-Seeking Behavior -> Incremental Idea Generation</i>							
Total Effect (link C)	Effect of IV on MV (link A)	Effect of MV on DV (link B)	Direct Effect (link C')	Indirect Effect	Lower Bound Confidence Interval	Upper Bound Confidence Interval	Result
0.489*	0.676*	0.284*	0.297	0.192	-0.007	0.463	No Mediation

Note. *p < 0.05. **p < 0.01.

After including negative feedback-seeking behavior as a mediator of the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and incremental idea generation, the indirect effect of leader-member exchange quality on incremental idea generation through negative feedback-seeking behavior is not significant (b = 0.192, 95% CI = [-0.007, 0.463]). Besides, the direct effect is not significant (b = 0.297, t = 1.207, 95% CI = [-0.195, 0.788], p = 0.232). Therefore, negative feedback-seeking behavior does not act as a mediator in this relationship (see Figure 4.3). Hypothesis 6a is not supported.

Figure 4.3: Mediation Model of Negative Feedback-Seeking Behavior between Leader-Member Exchange quality and Incremental Idea Generation.



Note. *p < 0.05.

5.6.5 Mediating effect of Negative Feedback-Seeking Behavior on Leader-Member Exchange quality and Radical Idea Generation

Leader-Member Exchange -> Negative Feedback-Seeking Behavior -> Radical Idea Generation

Hypothesis 6b suggests that subordinates' negative feedback-seeking behavior mediates the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and radical idea generation. Table 8.4 displays the results. It indicates that the effect of leader-member exchange has a positive and significant impact on positive feedback-seeking behavior ($b = 0.676$; $t = 2.524$, 95% CI = [0.141, 1.212], $p = 0.0142$), as is the effect of negative feedback-seeking on radical idea generation ($b = 0.539$, $t = 4.667$, 95% CI = [0.308, 0.770], $p < 0.001$).

Table 8.4: Mediation Analysis Summary IV

Relationship: <i>Leader-Member Exchange -> Negative Feedback-Seeking Behavior -> Radical Idea Generation</i>							
Total Effect (link C)	Effect of IV on MV (link A)	Effect of MV on DV (link B)	Direct Effect (link C')	Indirect Effect	Lower Bound Confidence Interval	Upper Bound Confidence Interval	Result
0.579*	0.676*	0.539***	0.214	0.365***	0.042	0.765	Full Mediation

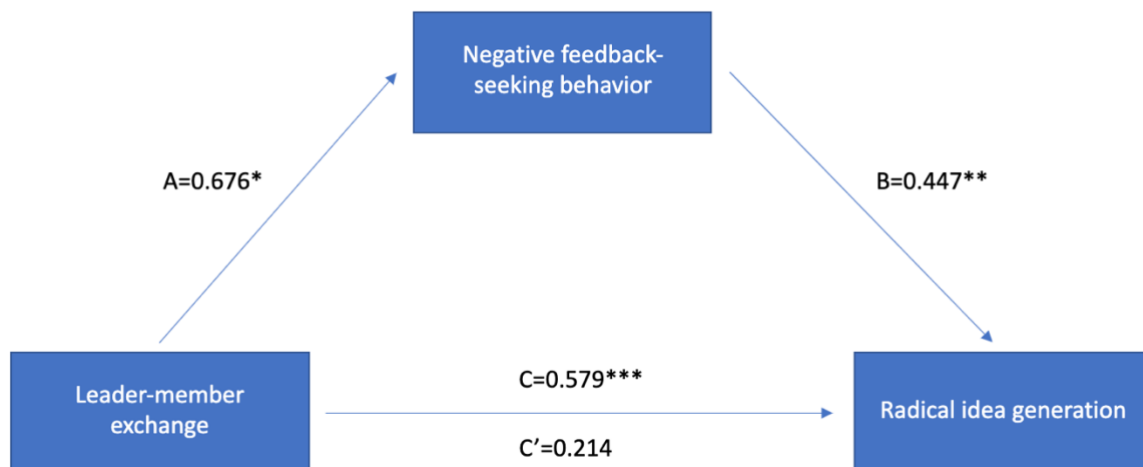
Note. * $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$.

After including negative feedback-seeking behavior as a mediator of the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and radical idea generation, the indirect effect of leader-member exchange quality on radical idea generation through negative feedback-seeking behavior is significant ($b = 0.365$, 95% CI = [0.042, 0.765]). Therefore, the mediating role of

negative feedback-seeking behavior can be considered significant in the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and radical idea generation (see Figure 4.4). Hypothesis 6b is supported.

Nonetheless, the direct effect of leader-member exchange quality on radical idea generation in presence of the mediator is not found significant ($b = 0.214$, $t = 1.207$, 95% CI = [-0.195, 0.788], $p = 0.232$). Hence, negative feedback-seeking behavior fully mediates the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and radical idea generation. The results provide evidence for full mediation. With full mediation, the total effect of leader-member exchange quality (independent variable) on radical idea generation (dependent variable) was transmitted through negative feedback-seeking behavior (single mediator).

Figure 4.4: Mediation Model of Negative Feedback-Seeking Behavior between Leader-Member Exchange quality and Radical Idea Generation.



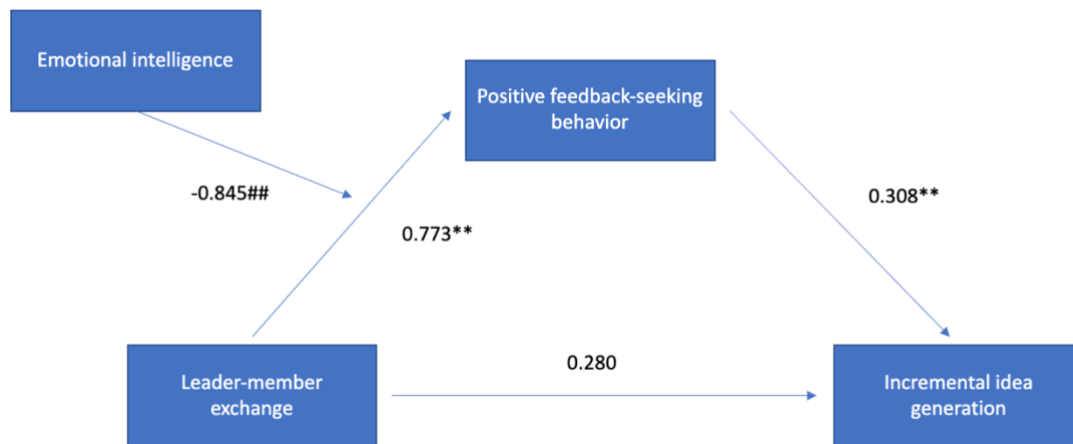
Note. * $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$.

5.6.6 Moderated Mediating Effect of Emotional Intelligence

*Leader-Member Exchange x Emotional Intelligence -> Positive Feedback-Seeking Behavior -
> Incremental Idea Generation*

Hypothesis 7a suggests that emotional intelligence moderates the mediating effect of subordinates' positive feedback-seeking behavior between leader-member exchange and incremental idea generation. The mediating influence is stronger among subordinates with a higher level of emotional intelligence than those with a lower level of emotional intelligence. PROCESS Model 7 (Hayes, 2013) was applied to test the proposed moderated mediation model. Leader-member exchange quality was the predictor, with positive feedback-seeking behavior as the mediator. Moderated mediation analyses tested the conditional indirect effect of a moderating variable (emotional intelligence) and an outcome variable (incremental idea generation) via potential mediator (positive feedback-seeking behavior). Outputs along with 95 percent bias-corrected bootstrap confidence interval based on 5000 bootstrap samples. Figure 5.1 illustrates the proposed moderated mediation model.

Figure 5.1: Moderated Mediation Model (Mediator: Positive Feedback-Seeking Behavior)



Note: * $p < 0.005$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$. ## $p = 0.113$, n.s.

Table 9.1 demonstrates the conditional indirect effect of emotional intelligence in the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and incremental idea generation via positive feedback-seeking behavior. According to Hayes (2013), the conditional indirect effect was demonstrated if the interactions between the independent variable and moderator were significant, and the bootstrapping confidence intervals did not contain zero. The results indicate that leader-member exchange quality has a positive and significant impact on positive feedback-seeking behavior ($b = 0.773$, $t = 3.206$, 95% CI = [0.291, 1.256], $p = 0.002$). Besides, emotional intelligence has a negative and significant impact on positive feedback-seeking behavior ($b = -0.654$, $t = -3.199$, 95% CI = [-1.063, -0.245], $p = 0.002$). However, the interactional effect is not significant ($b = -0.845$, $t = -1.608$, 95% CI = [-1.896, 0.206], $p = 0.113$). Emotional intelligence does not act as a moderator in the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and positive feedback-seeking behavior.

Table 9.1: Moderation Analysis of Emotional Intelligence (Dependent Variable: Positive Feedback-Seeking Behavior)

	Beta Coefficient	Standard Error	t-value	Lower Bound Confidence Interval	Upper Bound Confidence Interval
Constant	3.242	0.083	39.303	3.077	3.407
Leader-member exchange quality	0.773**	0.241	3.206	0.291	1.256
Emotional intelligence	-0.654**	0.204	-3.199	-1.063	-0.245
Leader-member exchange quality x Emotional intelligence	-0.845	0.525	-1.608	-1.896	0.206
R Square = 0.277 (p < 0.001)			F(3,59) = 7.539		

Note. *p < 0.05. **p < 0.01.

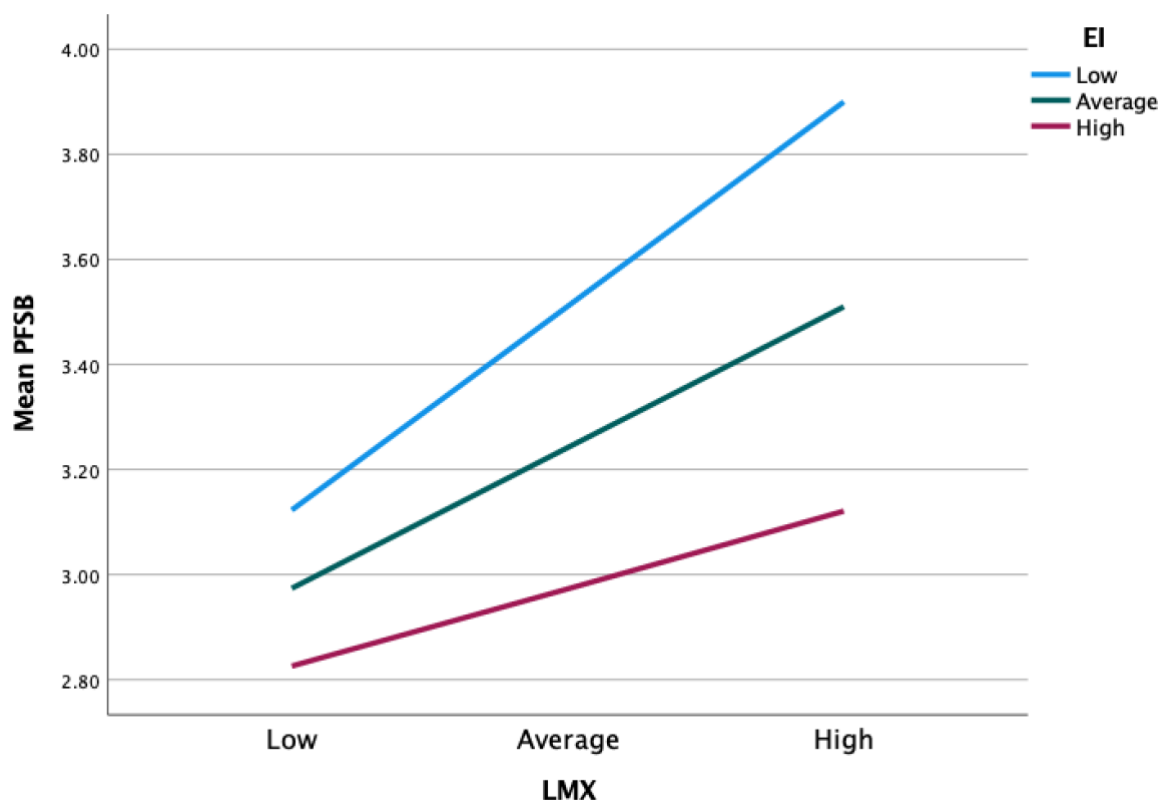
Table 9.2 demonstrates that the conditional indirect effect of leader-member exchange quality on incremental idea generation through positive feedback-seeking behavior is significant when emotional intelligence at a low level (b = 0.345, SE = 0.221, CI = [0.013, 0.850]) and average level (b = 0.238, SE = 0.140, 95% CI = [0.017, 0.545]). Nonetheless, the index of moderated mediation is not significant (b = -0.260, SE = 0.272, 95% CI = [-0.906, 0.158]). Hypothesis 7a is not supported.

Table 9.2: Moderated Mediation Analysis (Mediator: Positive Feedback-Seeking Behavior)

Moderator	Level	Conditional Indirect Effect	Boot SE	Lower Bound Confidence Interval	Upper Bound Confidence Interval
Emotional intelligence	Low	0.345	0.221	0.013	0.850
	Average	0.238	0.140	0.017	0.545
	High	0.131	0.124	-0.070	0.418
Index of Moderated Mediation		Effect	Boot SE	Lower Bound Confidence Interval	Upper Bound Confidence Interval
Emotional intelligence - (Leader-member exchange -> Positive feedback-seeking behavior -> Incremental idea generation		-0.260	0.272	-0.906	0.158

To further investigate the interaction between leader-member exchange and emotional intelligence influencing positive feedback-seeking behavior, a simple slope is graphed (see Figure 5.2). The simple slope demonstrates that at higher emotional intelligence, the increase in leader-member exchange quality does not lead to a similar change in positive feedback-seeking behavior. It shows that higher emotional intelligence weakens the impact of leader-member exchange quality on positive feedback-seeking behavior. This type of interaction can be treated as buffering interaction (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003). Under this typical pattern of interaction, the moderator variable will weaken the effect of the predictor variable on the outcome.

Figure 5.2: The Indirect Effect of Emotional Intelligence on the relationship between Leader-Member Exchange and Positive Feedback-Seeking Behavior.

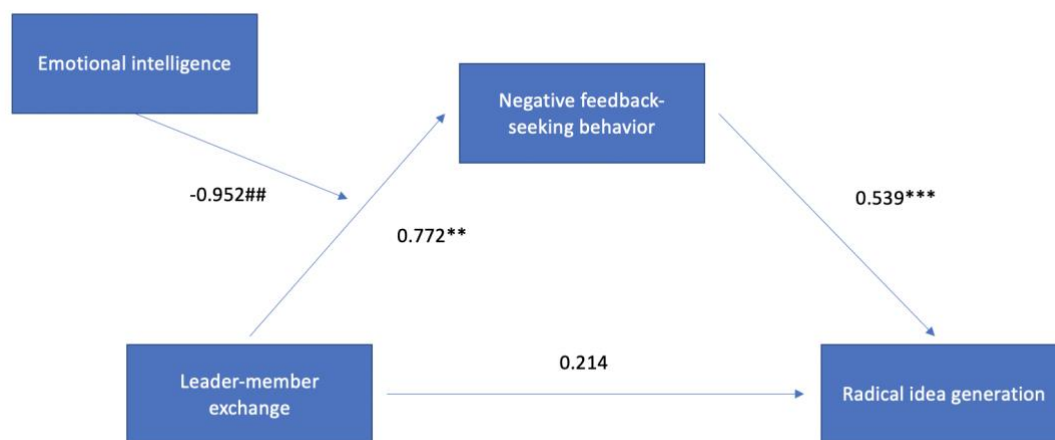


Note. LMX = Leader-member exchange quality. PFSB = Positive feedback-seeking behavior. EI = Emotional intelligence.

*Leader-Member Exchange x Emotional Intelligence -> Negative Feedback-Seeking Behavior
-> Radical Idea Generation*

Hypothesis 7b suggests emotional intelligence moderates the mediating effect of subordinates' negative feedback-seeking behavior between leader-member exchange and radical idea generation. The mediating influence is stronger among subordinates with a higher level of emotional intelligence than those with a lower level of emotional intelligence. The proposed moderated mediation model was tested with the moderating effect of emotional intelligence in the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and radical idea generation via negative feedback-seeking behavior (see Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3: Moderated Mediation Model (Mediator: Negative Feedback-Seeking Behavior)



Note: *p < 0.005. **p < 0.01. ***p < 0.001. ##p = 0.085, n.s.

Table 9.3 demonstrates the conditional indirect effect of emotional intelligence in the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and radical idea generation via negative feedback-seeking behavior. If the interactions between the independent variable and moderator were significant, and the bootstrapping confidence intervals did not contain zero, the conditional indirect effect was demonstrated (Hayes, 2013). The results indicate that leader-

member exchange quality has a positive and significant impact on negative feedback-seeking behavior ($b = 0.772$, $t = 3.093$, 95% CI = [0.273, 1.271], $p = 0.003$). Besides, emotional intelligence has a negative and significant impact on negative feedback-seeking behavior ($b = -0.581$, $t = -2.749$, 95% CI = [-1.004, -0.158], $p = 0.008$). However, the interactional effect is not significant ($b = -0.952$, $t = -1.751$, 95% CI = [-2.040, 0.136], $p = 0.085$). Emotional intelligence does not act as a moderator in the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and negative feedback-seeking behavior.

Table 9.3: Moderation Analysis of Emotional Intelligence (Dependent Variable: Negative Feedback-Seeking Behavior)

	Beta Coefficient	Standard Error	t-value	Lower Bound Confidence Interval	Upper Bound Confidence Interval
Constant	2.787	0.854	32.645	2.616	2.958
Leader-member exchange quality	0.772**	0.250	3.093	0.273	1.272
Emotional intelligence	-0.581**	0.212	-2.749	-1.004	-0.158
Leader-member exchange quality x Emotional intelligence	-0.952	0.544	-1.751	-2.040	0.136
R Square = 0.251 ($p < 0.001$)			F(3,59) = 6.577		

Note. * $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$.

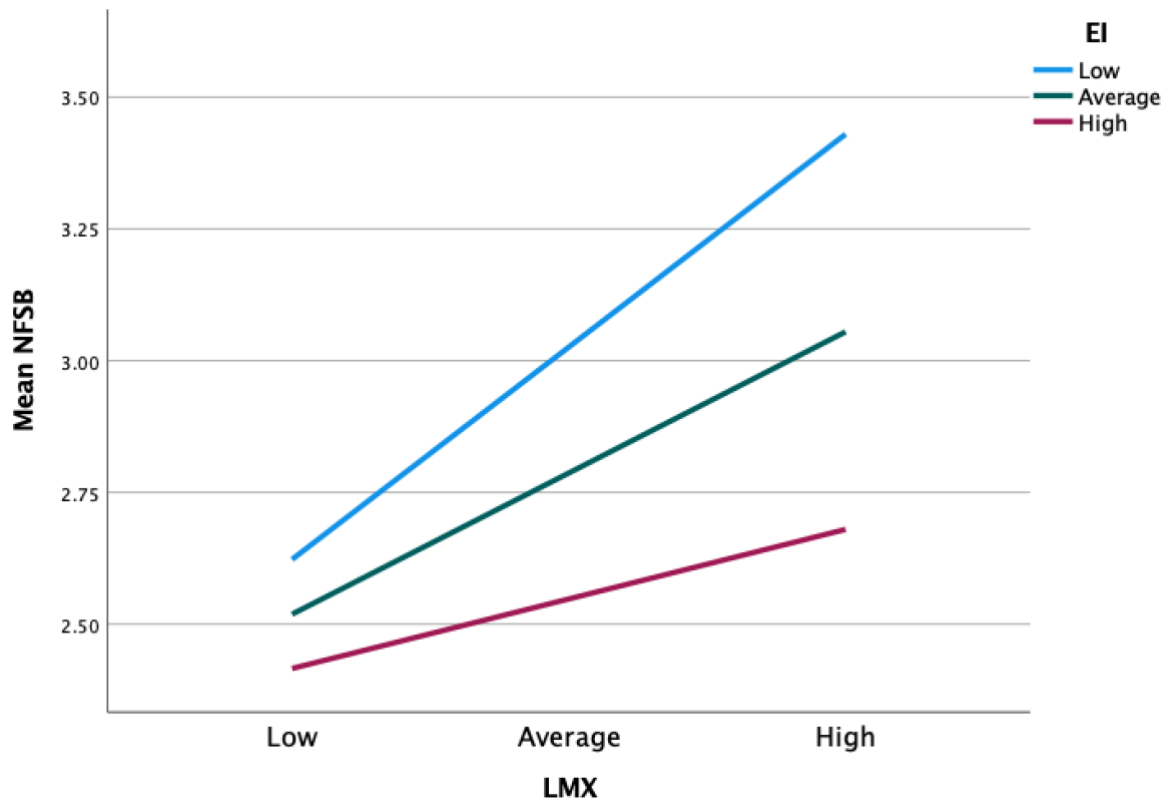
Table 9.4 demonstrates that the conditional indirect effect of leader-member exchange quality on radical idea generation through negative feedback-seeking behavior is significant when emotional intelligence is at a low level ($b = 0.628$, $SE = 0.276$, CI = [0.154, 1.237]) and average level ($b = 0.416$, $SE = 0.178$, 95% CI = [0.017, 0.806]). Nonetheless, the index of moderated mediation is not significant ($b = -0.513$, $SE = 0.339$, 95% CI = [-1.246, 0.099]). Hypothesis 7b is not supported.

Table 9.4: Moderated Mediation Analysis (Mediator: Negative Feedback-Seeking Behavior)

Moderator	Level	Conditional Indirect Effect	Boot SE	Lower Bound Confidence Interval	Upper Bound Confidence Interval
Emotional intelligence	Low	0.628	0.276	0.154	1.237
	Average	0.416	0.178	0.017	0.806
	High	0.205	0.159	-0.190	0.582
Index of Moderated Mediation		Effect	Boot SE	Lower Bound Confidence Interval	Upper Bound Confidence Interval
Emotional intelligence - (Leader-member exchange -> Negative feedback-seeking behavior -> Radical idea generation		-0.513	0.335	-1.212	0.114

To further investigate the interaction between leader-member exchange and emotional intelligence influencing negative feedback-seeking behavior, a simple slope is graphed (see Figure 5.4). The simple slope demonstrates that at higher emotional intelligence, the increase in leader-member exchange quality does not lead to a similar change in negative feedback-seeking behavior. It shows that higher emotional intelligence weakens the impact of leader-member exchange quality on negative feedback-seeking behavior. This type of interaction can be treated as buffering interaction (Cohen et al., 2003). Under this typical pattern of interaction, the moderator variable will weaken the effect of the predictor variable on the outcome.

Figure 5.4: The Indirect Effect of Emotional Intelligence on the relationship between Leader-Member Exchange Quality and Negative Feedback-Seeking Behavior.



Note. LMX = Leader-member exchange quality. NFSB = Negative feedback-seeking behavior. EI = Emotional intelligence.

5.7 Conclusion

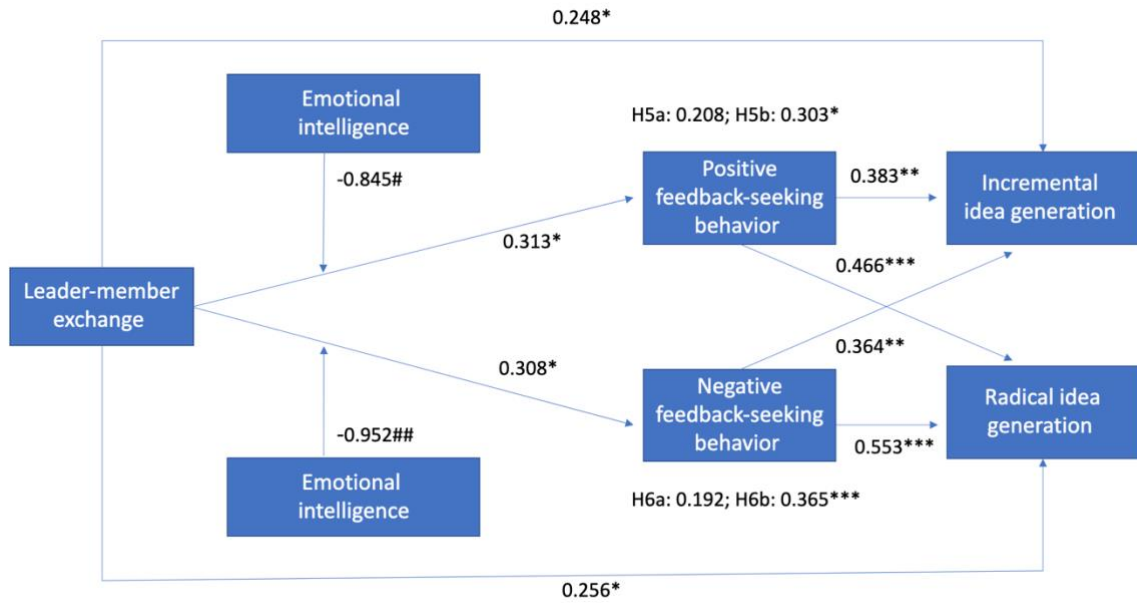
This chapter provided an overview of the statistical techniques used to test the hypotheses. SPSS was performed to examine the relationship between the leader-member exchange quality, positive and negative feedback-seeking behavior, as well as incremental and radical idea generation. Hypotheses 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, 4a, and 4b are found to be significant (see Table 10.1).

Table 10.1: Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	Results
H1a	<i>Leader-member exchange quality -> Incremental idea generation</i>	Supported
H1b	<i>Leader-member exchange quality -> Radical idea generation</i>	Supported
H2a	<i>Leader-member exchange quality -> Positive feedback-seeking behavior</i>	Supported
H2b	<i>Leader-member exchange quality -> Negative feedback-seeking behavior</i>	Supported
H3a	<i>Positive feedback-seeking behavior -> Incremental idea generation</i>	Supported
H3b	<i>Positive feedback-seeking behavior -> Radical idea generation</i>	Supported
H4a	<i>Negative feedback-seeking behavior -> Incremental idea generation</i>	Supported
H4b	<i>Negative feedback-seeking behavior -> Radical idea generation</i>	Supported
H5a	<i>Leader-member exchange quality -> Positive feedback-seeking behavior -> Incremental idea generation</i>	Not Supported
H5b	<i>Leader-member exchange quality -> Positive feedback-seeking behavior -> Radical idea generation</i>	Supported
H6a	<i>Leader-member exchange quality -> Negative feedback-seeking behavior -> Incremental idea generation</i>	Not Supported
H6b	<i>Leader-member exchange quality -> Negative feedback-seeking behavior -> Radical idea generation</i>	Supported
H7a	<i>Leader-member exchange quality x Emotional intelligence -> Positive feedback-seeking behavior -> Incremental idea generation</i>	Not Supported
H7b	<i>Leader-member exchange quality x Emotional intelligence -> Negative feedback-seeking behavior -> Radical idea generation</i>	Not Supported

Moreover, the mediation models and moderated mediation models were tested with SPSS PROCESS. Hypothesis 5a and 6a about the mediating models of positive and negative feedback-seeking behavior between leader-member exchange and incremental idea generation are not significant (see Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1: Results of Proposed Moderated Mediation Model



Note. *p < 0.05. **p < 0.01. ***p < 0.001. #p = 0.113, n.s.; ##p = 0.085, n.s.

Nevertheless, Hypothesis 5b and 6b about the mediating models of positive and negative feedback-seeking behavior between leader-member exchange and radical idea generation are found to be significant. Moreover, Hypotheses 7a and 7b about the effects of two moderated mediation models are not significant.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to advance the understanding of the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and two forms of employees' idea generation (incremental and radical idea generation) in the workplace. Moreover, this study investigates how leader-member exchange affects employees' incremental and radical idea generation through the mechanism of seeking positive feedback or negative feedback from the trusted supervisor. Furthermore, this study explores the moderating effects of employees' emotional intelligence in the relationships between leader-member exchange quality and employees' radical idea generation through the mechanism of positive and negative feedback behavior under a moderated mediation framework.

In this chapter, I will summarize the main findings including (a) the relationships between leader-member exchange quality, feedback-seeking behavior, and employee idea generation, (b) the mediating effect of subordinates' feedback-seeking behavior in the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and employees' idea generation, as well as (c) the moderating effect of employee emotional intelligence in the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and employees' idea generation through feedback-seeking behavior. Then, the theoretical and managerial implications of the findings were presented. After that, I will discuss the possible limitations of this research. Finally, I will suggest possible directions for future research.

6.2 The Relationships between Leader-Member Exchange quality, Positive/Negative Feedback-Seeking Behavior, and Incremental/Radical Idea Generation

Leader-Member Exchange -> Incremental/Radical Idea Generation

The findings of this research confirm that Hypotheses 1a and 1b, high-quality leader-member exchange is correlated with (a) employees' incremental idea generation ($b = 0.248, p < 0.05$), and (b) employee radical idea generation ($b = 0.256, p < 0.05$). The results indicate that there are positive relationships between high-quality leader-member exchange and two forms of idea generation. The results are consistent with previous studies (Scott & Bruce, 1994; Basu & Green, 1997; Karin et al., 2010, Agarwal et al., 2012; Schermuly et al., 2013; Stoffers et al., 2014; Tsai et al., 2015; Alsughayir, 2017; Nazir et al., 2018; Mascareno et al., 2020), supporting the positive association between leader-member exchange quality and individual innovative behavior in the workplace. It can be explained that the mutual support, trust, and respect associated with high-quality exchange provide a satisfactory social and cognitive environment leading to innovative work behavior. Under this context, individual employees may be aware of their role and external surroundings that need them to generate incremental or radical ideas. Leader-member exchange is based on quality relationships to provide social support and approval of the ideas for employees to implement the ideas effectively (Schermuly et al., 2013). Employees need to obtain support from their leaders to implement creative ideas in the workplace (Singh & Sarkar, 2012; Atitumpong et al., 2017).

Leader-Member Exchange -> Positive/Negative Feedback-Seeking Behavior

In line with Hypotheses 2a and 2b, the results confirm the positive relationships between leader-member exchange quality and (a) subordinates' positive feedback-seeking behavior (b

= 0.313, $p < 0.05$), and (b) subordinates' negative feedback-seeking behavior ($b = 0.308$, $p < 0.05$). The results align with prior studies (Graen & Bien, 1995; Wakabayashi et al., 2005; Chen et al., 2007). Subordinates engaged in high-quality leader-member exchange relationships will rely on their supervisors to seek support for career investment (Wakabayashi et al., 2005). On the other hand, supervisors engaged in high-quality leader-member exchange may be more trustworthy and reachable to provide subordinates with more valuable information to clarify their work roles (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

The process of seeking feedback and information involves several conditions. Supervisors set the requirements and expectations of the tasks for their subordinates (Ilgen, Fisher, & Taylor, 1979; Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001; Chen et al., 2007; Lam et al., 2007; De Stobbeleir et al., 2011). When the subordinates perceive a higher leader-member exchange as beneficial acts from their immediate supervisors, those subordinates in high-quality leader-member exchange relationships may be more likely to treat feedback-seeking as a way to clarify their supervisors' expectations for achieving excellent and distinctive performance. In other words, feedback-seeking can be treated as "exchange currency" to help members reciprocate leaders (Qian et al., 2017). A high-quality leader-member exchange that represents a positive and healthy social exchange between supervisors and subordinates will help not only reduce the perceived costs and risks but also promote potential gains while seeking feedback from trusted supervisors (Chen et al., 2007).

Positive/Negative Feedback-Seeking Behavior -> Incremental/Radical Idea Generation

Hypotheses 3a and 3b are supported. Subordinates' positive feedback-seeking behavior has a positive impact on employees' incremental idea generation ($b = 0.383$, $p < 0.01$) and radical idea generation ($b = 0.466$, $p < 0.001$). The effect of positive feedback-seeking behavior on

incremental idea generation is stronger than that of negative feedback-seeking behavior. Besides, hypotheses 4a and 4b are also supported. Subordinates' negative feedback-seeking behavior has a positive impact on employees' incremental idea generation ($b = 0.364, p < 0.01$) as well as radical idea generation ($b = 0.553, p < 0.001$). The effect of negative feedback-seeking behavior on radical idea generation is stronger than that of positive-feedback-seeking behavior.

The results are consistent with the positive relationship between feedback-seeking behavior and innovative work behavior (Madjar, 2005; Perry-Smith, 2008; Baer, 2010; De Spiegelaere et al., 2014; Amir, 2015). When employees are requested by their supervisors to perform creative tasks, they can seek feedback to achieve constant modifications and improvement through feedback-seeking behavior (De Stobbeleir et al., 2011). Proactive employees who are self-motivated may tend to seek positive or/and negative evaluative information as feedback from their manager about the adequacy or/inadequacy of overall work performance, role fulfillment, and customer service (Ashford & Tsui, 1991).

Although not many studies focused on the effect of the different types of feedback-seeking behavior on employees' incremental and radical idea generation, a dimension of innovative work behavior, some researchers explored the relationship between feedback-seeking behavior and two desired forms (incremental and radical) of creativity (Sung et al., 2020). On one hand, when individual employees are assigned to identify the shortcomings of existing practices and procedures by injecting minor modifications into existing routines, proactive employees will perform incremental creativity (Gilson & Madjar, 2011, Madjar et al., 2011). Proactive employees may seek positive feedback to widen the gap between their goals and their current situation (Kim & Han, 2018).

On the other hand, when individual employees are assigned a goal to generate radically creative ideas and breakthroughs to redefine issues and explore novel approaches that differ substantially from existing practices or paradigms, proactive employees will perform radical creativity (Madjar, 2005; Perry-Smith, 2008; Zhou et al., 2009; Madjar et al., 2011). Proactive employees may seek negative feedback to bridge the gap between the goal and their current situation (Kim & Han, 2018). During the process of radical idea generation, proactive employees may obtain information through negative feedback-seeking behavior to pursue learning for higher goals (Kwon & Oh, 2020).

6.3 Hypothesized Mediation Model

Leader-Member Exchange -> Positive Feedback-Seeking Behavior -> Incremental Idea Generation

The mediation analysis indicated that subordinates' positive feedback-seeking behavior does not play a mediating role between leader-member exchange quality and employees' incremental idea generation. The indirect effect of this relationship is not significant ($b = 0.208$, 95% CI = [-0.016, 0.525]). Hypothesis 5a is not supported. The results can be explained by self-motives in social psychology. According to the previous studies on feedback-seeking behavior, some researchers used the self-motive perspective to deal with "how and why people seek, select, process, and react to self-relevant information across a variety of contexts" (Anseel et al., 2007, p. 2).

Employees' feedback-seeking behavior may be influenced by instrumental, ego-based, and image-based motives (Ashford et al., 2003). When individual employees are requested by their immediate supervisors to engage in small (incremental) idea generation, he or she may process

a cost-value analysis to decide whether seek feedback or not (Anseel et al., 2007). To complete the task of incremental idea generation, a proactive employee may be motivated to seek feedback for reducing uncertainty, but he or she does not want to convey a negative image to supervisors. The employee will evaluate the values associated with feedback-seeking behavior (uncertainty reduction) and whether the costs of feedback-seeking behavior (negative image) are outweighed or not. If the result of the cost-value analysis evaluated by the employee shows that the costs outweigh the values, the employee may not seek feedback from the supervisor. The employee may seek feedback from other trusted sources such as teammates or friends outside of his or her organization to perform incremental idea generation.

Leader-Member Exchange -> Positive Feedback-Seeking Behavior -> Radical Idea Generation

On the other hand, mediation analysis indicates that subordinates' positive feedback-seeking behavior plays a mediating role in the relationship between leader-member exchange and employees' radical idea generation. The indirect effect of this relationship is significant ($b = 0.303$, 95% CI [0.007, 0.698]), providing support to Hypothesis 5b. Although previous research showed that positive feedback-seeking behavior had no influence over innovative work behavior in the Korean context (Heo et al., 2021), it is believed that individuals who develop radically creative ideas may need to obtain diverse information to spark idea generation (Amabile, 1996; Fleming et al., 2007). Some researchers found that feedback-seeking behavior is positively related to radical creativity (Sung et al., 2020).

Under a high-quality leader-member exchange relationship, when a proactive employee takes the work role assigned by the trusted supervisor to generate radical idea(s), he or she may seek not only negative feedback but also positive feedback to achieve the goal. Positive feedback

may increase individuals' confidence in their ability to pursue their goals (Fishbach et al., 2010). Therefore, proactive employees will seek positive feedback for sourcing relevant "big-picture" information from their team leaders as an effective way to facilitate radical idea generation (Venkataramani et al., 2014).

Moreover, this research also found that the direct effect of this mediation model is not significant ($b = 0.276$, $p = 0.310$). It means that a high-quality leader-member exchange quality does not directly increase employees' incremental idea generation. In other words, high-quality leader-member exchange stimulates employees to generate incremental ideas through the mechanism of positive feedback-seeking behavior. This result is consistent with the study by Mascareno et al. (2020). Leader-member exchange quality may not always be sufficient to stimulate employees' innovative behavior. A high-quality leader-member exchange relationship sometimes cannot predict innovative work behavior (Lee, 2008; Tastan & Davoudi, 2015). The leader-member exchange quality may indirectly influence innovative work behavior through intervening factor(s) including individual factors, organizational factors, or/and cultural characteristics ((Tastan & Davoudi, 2015). Different motivational factors such as intrinsic motivation, extrinsic award, and supportive supervision are related to incremental and radical creativity (Gilson et al., 2012).

Leader-Member Exchange -> Negative Feedback-Seeking Behavior -> Incremental Idea Generation

In this study, the mediating analysis indicates that negative feedback-seeking does not play a mediating role in the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and employees' incremental idea generation. The indirect effect of this relationship is not significant ($b = 0.192$, 95% CI = [-0.007, 0.463]). Hypothesis 6a is not supported. Even though previous research

showed that negative feedback-seeking behavior was positively related to innovative work behavior (Heo et al., 2021), employees who are involved in incremental idea generation may not need to seek negative feedback from supervisors. The possible explanation is that the nature of incremental idea generation may not require employees to involve in negative feedback-seeking behavior. It is believed that a proactive employee can obtain sufficient information by seeking positive feedback to identify the shortcomings of existing practices and procedures by injecting minor modifications into existing routines (Gilson & Madjar, 2011, Madjar et al., 2011).

Leader-Member Exchange -> Negative Feedback-Seeking Behavior -> Radical Idea Generation

On the other hand, subordinates' negative feedback-seeking behavior plays a mediating role in the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and employees' radical idea generation. The indirect effect of this relationship is significant ($b = 0.365$, 95% CI = [0.042, 0.765]), which is stronger than that of the mediation model of positive feedback-seeking behavior. Hypothesis 6b is supported. This result is consistent with the norm of reciprocity in the relationship between supervisors and subordinates as mentioned in the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and the leader-member exchange theory (Graen, 1976; Uhl-Bien, 2006; Sheer, 2015). Negative feedback sometimes hurts employees' feelings, and it may discourage employees to seek negative feedback from supervisors to engage a higher level of performance (Anseel et al., 2015). A high-quality leader-member exchange relationship may encourage proactive employees to seek negative feedback from supervisors to collect valuable information on inadequate performance for improvement (Chen et al., 2007).

According to the leader-member exchange theory, subordinates may have an obligation to perform more effectively to reciprocate the positive contributions from trusted supervisors (Uhl-Bien & Maslyn, 2003). When trusted supervisors give feedback to clarify the work role of individual employees and provide socio-economic support to them for engaging in radical idea generation (a dimension of innovative work behavior), proactive employees may exchange their commitment and performance (Martin et al., 2010) to achieve the goal.

In addition, the direct effect of this mediation model is not significant ($b = 0.214$, $p = 0.402$). It means that a high-quality leader-member exchange quality does not directly increase employees' radical idea generation. In other words, high-quality leader-member exchange stimulates employees to generate radical ideas through the mechanism of negative feedback-seeking behavior. As mentioned above, this result is consistent with the study by Mascareno and colleagues (2020). The leader-member exchange quality may indirectly influence innovative work behavior through intervening factors such as intrinsic motivation, extrinsic award, and supportive supervision are related to radical creativity (Gilson et al., 2012).

6.4 Hypothesized Moderated Mediation Model

Leader-Member Exchange x Emotional Intelligence -> Positive Feedback-Seeking Behavior -> Incremental Idea Generation

Moderated mediation analysis indicates that emotional intelligence does not play a moderating role in the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and employees' incremental idea generation through subordinates' positive feedback-seeking behavior. The conditional indirect effect of leader-member exchange quality on incremental idea generation through positive feedback-seeking behavior is significant when emotional intelligence at a low level

($b = 0.345$, $SE = 0.221$, 95% $CI = [0.013, 0.850]$) and average level ($b = 0.238$, $SE = 0.224$, 95% $CI = [0.017, 0.545]$). The index of this moderated mediation model is not significant ($b = -0.260$, $SE = 0.272$, 95% $CI = [-0.906, 0.158]$). Hypothesis 7a is not supported.

*Leader-Member Exchange x Emotional Intelligence -> Negative Feedback-Seeking Behavior
-> Radical Idea Generation*

Moderated mediation analysis indicates that emotional intelligence does not play a moderating role in the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and employees' radical idea generation through subordinates' negative feedback-seeking behavior. The conditional indirect effect of leader-member exchange quality on radical idea generation through negative feedback-seeking behavior is significant when emotional intelligence at a low level ($b = 0.628$, $SE = 0.276$, $CI = [0.154, 1.237]$) and average level ($b = 0.416$, $SE = 0.178$, 95% $CI = [0.117, 0.806]$). The index of this moderated mediation model is not significant ($b = -0.513$, $SE = 0.335$, 95% $CI = [-1.212, 0.114]$). Hypothesis 7b is not supported.

In this study, I assumed emotional intelligence has a positive and significant impact on two moderated mediation models. However, the result shows that emotional intelligence is negatively related to positive feedback-seeking behavior ($b = -0.654$, $p = 0.002$) and negative feedback-seeking behavior ($b = -0.581$, $p < 0.01$). I am interested to discuss why high emotional intelligence as a moderator will weaken the effect of leader-member exchange quality on subordinates' positive and negative feedback-seeking behavior.

This result can be explained by the demographic variables. Regarding the dyadic tenure of the respondents, most of the supervisor and subordinate participants have worked as a team for 1 to 2 years. 21 cases (33.3%) have worked for less than a year, and 17 cases (27%) have worked

for 1 to 2 years. Besides, 55 cases (87.3%) of the subordinate participants were newcomers who have been working in the organization for less than a year. As mentioned, employees will do a cost-value analysis to decide whether to engage in feedback-seeking behavior or not. A newcomer to the organization may pay more attention to conveying a positive image to his or her immediate supervisors for developing a high-quality supervisor-subordinate relationship. In this case, the perceived values of feedback-seeking (negative image) will not outweigh the perceived costs of feedback-seeking (uncertainty reduction). Therefore, the individual employees, who want to build a higher quality of leader-member exchange relationship to have job security, may not seek negative feedback from supervisors for achieving radical idea generation.

Another explanation may be that high emotional intelligent employees are aware of the organizational restructuring situation. It is argued that emotionally intelligent people may be high in self-monitoring and may be good at reading situations and molding their appearances and behavior to fit each situation (Jain, 2012, p. 20). Based on the view of conservation of resource theory (Hobfoll, 1989), if members of the organization feel that they are losing resources, they will produce organizational political behavior to reduce the loss of emotional resources by controlling their environment (Qin & Yang, 2010). In this case, employees with high emotional intelligence may avoid seeking feedback from superiors to preserve their resources (Lin & Sun, 2018).

In the study by Jain (2012), evidence showed that the reality awareness dimension of emotional intelligence “makes an employee aware about the fact that without the supervisor’s positive evaluation, they would not be able to achieve promotion, receive a reward, and other similar work benefits” (p. 19). Employees with the ability of reality awareness may try to manage a positive impression on their supervisors. Therefore, when employees face the situation of

losing resources and perceive that the values of positive or/and negative feedback-seeking (uncertainty reduction) will not outweigh the perceived cost of positive or/and negative feedback-seeking (negative image), the employees may avoid seeking positive or/and negative feedback from supervisors.

To cope with the stress of feedback-seeking behavior especially seeking negative feedback from immediate supervisor, individuals may be motivated to create, maintain, and increase their stock of valued resources such as job autonomy, social support, and social networking (Hobfoll, 2011). As mentioned, if newcomers with high emotional intelligence feel that they are losing resources in a situation of organizational restructuring, they may tend to avoid seeking negative feedback from immediate supervisors to protect their current resources (positive image) and invest in their current resources (high-quality leader-member exchange) to obtain new resources.

6.5 Conclusion

In short, the findings of this study provide evidence to support two mediation models. Positive and negative feedback-seeking behavior mediates the relationship between leader-member exchange and radical idea generation. The indirect effect of negative feedback-seeking behavior is greater than that of positive feedback-seeking behavior. These findings contribute new insights into how leadership construct and potential mediators interact to perform innovative behavior in the workplace.

CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

This study has several theoretical contributions. By proposing and testing a moderated mediation model of incremental and radical idea generation that integrates social context (leader-member exchange quality), proactive strategy (feedback-seeking behavior), and individual difference (emotional intelligence) variables, this study addressed several gaps identified in the recent literature. In the last chapter of this thesis, I will summarize the key findings (see Table 11.1). This chapter will also conclude the theoretical implications, managerial implications, and research limitations as well as suggestions for future studies. This thesis ends with a discussion about the generalizability of the results.

Table 11.1: Research Questions and Answers

Research Questions	Hypotheses	Summary of Findings
How do leader-member exchange relationships stimulate employees to perform the desired form of idea generation in the workplace through feedback-seeking from trusted supervisors?	H5a, H5b, H6a, and H6b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher-quality leader-member exchange relationships stimulate employees' radical idea generation via positive and negative feedback-seeking behavior. • Negative feedback is more powerful than positive feedback for proactive employees to perform the task of generating radical ideas.
What is the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and two forms of employees' idea generation (incremental and radical)?	H1a, H1b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-quality leader-member exchange quality is positively related to a positive impact on employees' incremental and radical idea generation in the workplace.

<p>What is the relationship between feedback-seeking behavior and two forms of employees' idea generation (incremental and radical)?</p>	<p>H2a, H2b</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive feedback-seeking behavior is positively related to incremental and radical idea generation in the workplace.
<p>How does subordinates' positive feedback-seeking from their trusted leaders motivate employees to generate incremental/radical ideas?</p>	<p>H3a, H3b</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive feedback-seeking behavior mediates the positive relationship between a high-quality leader-member exchange and radical idea generation. • However, the mediating effect of positive feedback-seeking in this relationship is not significant.
<p>How does subordinates' negative feedback-seeking from their trusted leaders motivate employees to generate incremental/radical ideas?</p>	<p>H4a, H4b</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both Positive and negative feedback-seeking behavior mediate the positive relationship between a high-quality leader-member exchange and radical idea generation. • The mediating effect of negative feedback-seeking behavior is greater than that of positive feedback-seeking behavior.
<p>How does subordinates' emotional intelligence affect employees' motivation to seek positive/negative feedback from their trusted leaders to generate incremental/radical ideas?</p>	<p>H7a, H7b,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional intelligence does not play a moderating role to strengthen the relationship between a high-quality leader-member exchange and radical idea generation via positive/negative feedback-seeking behavior. • The proposed two moderated mediation models are not significant. • Emotional intelligence is negatively related to positive/negative feedback-seeking behavior.

7.2 Theoretical Implications

Deepen Understanding of the Social Exchange Theory and Leader-Member Exchange Theory.

The first contribution is related to the social exchange theory and leader-member exchange theory by exploring the influence of leader-member exchange quality (a construct of social exchange) on two forms of idea generation (incremental and radical), a dimension of innovative work behavior. This study responds to the call for identifying the issue of unclear distinctions among social exchange related constructs and theoretically imprecise behavioral predictions (Cropanzano et al., 2017). The proposed mechanism provides a new insight for understanding social exchange processes (Chen et al., 2007) and social influences (Anderson et al., 2014) on individual innovative behavior.

Moreover, this study responds to the calls for considering deeper issues of the leader-member exchange and adaptive performance (Matta & Van Dyne, 2015), plus the leader-member exchange and creativity relationship (Tierney, 2015). The concept of incremental and radical creativity (Gilson & Madjar, 2011; Gilson et al., 2012) is used to modify the construct of idea generation, a dimension of innovative work behavior (Niesen et al., 2018) for measuring employee incremental and radical idea generation. Furthermore, this study provides empirical evidence for a significant and positive relationship between leader-member exchange quality and two forms of idea generation performed by individual employees in the workplace. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first research to test the association between leader-member exchange quality and two forms of idea generation based on the social exchange theory.

Mediating Effect of Positive/Negative Feedback-Seeking Behavior.

Second, this study contributes to extending the study by Chen and colleagues (2007), who found that the indirect effect of leader-member exchange has a significant and positive impact on employee in-role performance via subordinates' negative feedback-seeking behavior. This study also contributes to filling the gap of previous studies by investigating two mediations: (a) the indirect effect of leader-member exchange quality on employee incremental idea generation via subordinates' positive/negative feedback-seeking behavior, and (b) the indirect effect of leader-member exchange quality on radical idea generation via subordinates' positive/negative feedback-seeking behavior. The results indicate that the mediating effects of positive and negative feedback-seeking behavior between leader-member exchange quality and incremental idea generation are not significant. Nonetheless, the mediating effects of positive and negative feedback-seeking behavior between leader-member exchange quality and radical idea generation are significant.

This study responds to the call for separating the positive feedback-seeking behavior and the negative feedback-seeking behavior as the mechanism leading to innovative behavior (Kwon & Oh, 2020). It suggests that when employees engaged in high-quality leader-member exchange relationships, they may seek positive feedback for generating radical ideas. In comparison with positive feedback-seeking behavior, the strength of negative feedback-seeking behavior is greater to achieve radical idea generation. Proactive employees may be willing to take the risk of seeking negative feedback from their immediate supervisor more frequently to obtain valuable information for performing radical idea generation in the workplace. I believe that these findings provide a new perspective and fill the gap in the literature that explained how and when the leader-member exchange relationship can influence individual employees to perform radical idea generation through the mechanism of positive/negative feedback-seeking behavior. Besides, these findings contribute to the

literature on the social exchange theory and extend the understanding of social exchange processes and the norms of reciprocity between leader and follower in the link between a high-quality leader-member exchange and radical idea generation.

Moderated Mediation Model: Emotional Intelligence as Moderator.

Finally, this study contributes to exploring another under-research area: emotional intelligence as a potential moderator in the proposed moderated mediation model. Little attention was paid to the moderating effects of emotional intelligence in the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and idea generation through the mechanism of feedback-seeking behavior. This study contributes to exploring an under-researched area. Earlier studies have shown that emotional intelligence has a positive effect on work behaviors including employee commitment and innovation (Zeidner et al., 2004). Sung and colleagues (2020) found that emotional competence will encourage employees to seek negative feedback for achieving radical creativity. In the study by Wu and colleagues, (2019), emotional regulation (personal resource) acted as moderator on the association between work-family conflict and burnout.

This study posits the argument that employee emotional intelligence may reduce the risks and negative feelings of seeking negative feedback from supervisors to perform radical idea generation when subordinates engaged in high-quality leader-member exchange relationships. Even though the proposed moderated mediating model is not supported by the hypothesis testing, this study provides a new angle to integrate individual difference (employee emotional intelligence) variables as moderator in the link between leader-member exchange quality and two forms of idea generation through the mechanism of positive/negative-feedback seeking behavior.

7.3 Implications for Managerial Practice

This study has four important practical implications including a relationship-building strategy, employee training and development, feedback-seeking strategy, and recruitment strategy.

Relationship-Building Strategy.

First, the findings of this study are relevant for organizations that required their employees to generate small and big ideas to integrate into organizational innovation as well as a business strategy to build sustainable competitive advantage. To facilitate idea generation for innovation and establish a competitive edge in the long run, organizations are advised to make use of high-quality leader-member exchange relationships (Mulligan et al., 2021). The top management of a profit organization or nonprofit organization is advised to consider how high-quality leader-member exchange relationships and negative feedback-seeking strategies may influence employees to perform the desired form of idea generation. The findings show that a high-quality leader-member exchange could influence employees to perform incremental idea generation or/and radical idea generation.

Leaders are advised to build a strong work tie with their followers (subordinates) to provide not only performance rewards but also social support and benefits. When subordinates are required to generate small ideas for improving products, services, or/and operation processes, leaders can provide positive feedback to subordinates. The subordinates engaged in higher-quality leader-member exchange relationships may be willing to take the work roles to perform incremental idea generation for reciprocating the support and trust given by their immediate supervisors. On the other hand, subordinates engaged in lower-quality leader-member exchange relationships can proactively seek positive feedback from other trusted sources to perform incremental idea generation.

When subordinates are required to generate big ideas for building a stronger competitive advantage, leaders can provide negative feedback to subordinates with the consideration of employees' feelings. The subordinates with higher-quality leader-member exchange relationships may be willing to seek negative feedback from their immediate supervisors to clarify the work roles in the idea-generation process and obtain useful information or resources for achieving radical idea generation. On the other hand, subordinates engaged in lower-quality leader-member exchange relationships can proactively seek negative feedback from other trusted sources to perform radical idea generation.

Employee Training and Development.

Second, this study helps the human resources department of an organization consider implementing what kind of training for leaders to know the critical factors of stimulating member incremental and radical idea generation in the workplace. Managers and supervisors are advised to learn soft skills for better and more effective communication with their subordinates. When a supervisor knows how to communicate with his or her subordinates effectively to build a reasonable exchange relationship during routine and non-routine tasks, his or her subordinates may perceive the quality of exchange relationships with their immediate supervisor are high. This kind of perception may help subordinates perform the tasks that require them to generate incremental ideas. In addition, supervisors can create a climate that motivates the subordinates who are engaged in high-quality leader-member exchange relationships to seek negative feedback and take higher risks to perform the tasks of radical idea generation.

Feedback-Seeking Strategy.

Third, individual employees can learn the importance of a positive and negative feedback-seeking strategy in the radical idea-generation process. Individual employees are encouraged

to seek diverse information including positive and negative feedback from their immediate supervisors to clarify the work roles of radical idea generation. Besides, they can obtain tangible and intangible job-related resources from their immediate supervisors for achieving the tasks of radical idea generation under the context of high-quality leader-member exchange relationships in the workplace.

Recruitment Strategy.

Fourth, this study helps employers reconsider their recruitment strategy to find high-potential candidates (including Millennials) with preferred personalities and core competencies such as openness to feedback and willingness to accept new ideas. When employees are requested by their managers to engage in incremental/radical idea generation, employees with preferred competencies (such as high emotional intelligence) may be more willing to take on challenging tasks and seek diverse information (positive and negative) feedback from the supervisors to achieve goals.

7.4 Research Limitations and Future Research Directions

In this section, I will point out the potential limitations and weaknesses of this study. The possible directions for future research are also highlighted.

Methodological Limitations.

First, this study took a cross-sectional design to examine the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and two forms of individual employees' idea generation through negative feedback-seeking behavior. The findings show that (a) high-quality leader-member exchange has a positive and significant impact on employee incremental/radical idea generation, and (b) the indirect effect of leader-member exchange quality has a positive and significant impact on employees' radical idea generation through positive/negative feedback-

seeking behavior. Nevertheless, the shortcoming of a cross-sectional study is the issue of causality. Therefore, it is suggested that future studies could take a longitudinal design. It will allow researchers to discover the development pattern in the same group of subjects and to investigate several aspects such as patterns of change, causal direction, and reciprocal relationships (Williams & Podsakoff, 1989).

Apart from extending the study with a longitudinal method, it is suggested researchers can deepen the study by using qualitative research to collect information from millennial employees and their immediate supervisors. The qualitative data may help researchers have a deeper understanding of whether and how leader-member exchange relationships influence millennial employees' incremental and radical idea generation. Compared with generation X and baby boomers, millennials would like to accept a distinct leadership style such as participative leadership (Kodatt, 2009). Several reasons explain why the new millennial generation may not prefer leader-member exchange leadership due to increased individualism, decreased work centrality, increased work-life balance, increased extrinsic motivation, and increased entitlement (Anderson, Baur, Griffith, & Buckley, 2017). It means that millennial employees may not want to invest the extra time required to build and maintain high-quality leader-member exchange relationships. Under this assumption, it is suggested that longitudinal and qualitative research may help develop a deeper understanding of the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and idea generation among the millennial workforces.

A second limitation of this study is the 5-item positive and negative feedback-seeking behavior scales provided by the team of VandeWalle (2000) and the team of Chen (2007), respectively. The instrument measured only the frequency of a subordinate seeking positive and negative feedback from his or her immediate supervisor. This study assumes that individual employees treat feedback-seeking behavior as a proactive self-regulation strategy. The data of this study

do not show when and how subordinates seek positive or/and negative feedback from team members or from external sources to stimulate their incremental or radical idea generation. Besides, the data do not show the frequency of feedback inquiry and monitoring, as well as the breadth of feedback-seeking inquiry and monitoring from team members or/and members of other teams (De Stobbeleir et al., 2011) that may lead to incremental and radical idea generation. In the study by Sung and colleagues (2020), the feedback-seeking frequency was used to test its effect on incremental creativity, and feedback-seeking breadth was used to test its effect on radical creativity.

On one hand, a committed employee in the work environment may be willing to seek feedback frequently for generating incremental ideas. On the other hand, a committed employee may not focus on a single target such as his or her immediate supervisor for feedback but he or she may seek feedback from diverse sources. The cognitive resources of the employee can be enriched by providing heterogeneous ideas (Ashford et al., 2003; De Stobbeleir et al., 2011). In this way, feedback-seeking breadth of feedback source variety may increase employee radical creativity. It is suggested that future studies could cover the frequency and breadth of feedback inquiry and monitoring from different sources for a deeper understanding of the mechanism of positive and negative feedback-seeking behavior, as well as the quality of feedback that may influence incremental and radical idea generation.

Contextual Limitations.

The data of this research was collected from multiple sources (supervisors and subordinates) to avoid common method bias. Since the supervisors and subordinates responded to all the study measures at a single time point (Podsakoff et al., 2003), the common method bias of this study cannot be ignored. Future studies can measure employee incremental and radical idea generation not only from supervisors but also from team members. Then, researchers can

compare the differences between supervisor-rating idea generation and team member-rating idea generation under the context of high-quality leader-member exchange relationships.

7.5 Generalizability of the Results

The generalizability of our findings is limited because this research collected data from a sample of supervisors and subordinates from a department of a large-sized telecommunication company in Hong Kong, China's special administrative region. It is suggested that future studies can replicate this study in other Chinese societies such as Mainland China, Taiwan, and Singapore.

Moreover, this study used purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique to collect data from respondents. Since the surveyed company experienced organizational restructuring issues during the COVID-19 circumstance, the human resources department was less affected by the organizational restructuring. Therefore, it was not feasible to use probability sampling. The weaknesses of generalizability associated with the purposive sampling method compared to probability sampling methods are noticed. I have considered specific inclusion and exclusion criteria to select the supervisor and subordinate participants to reduce the risks of bias. It is suggested that future studies can use probability sampling such as systematic sampling to increase representativeness, or stratified sampling to include all important sub-population.

Furthermore, the data of this study are collected from 63 dyads from the employees of one department in one telecommunication company in one city in China. This study's small size may limit the generalizability of the results and it may weaken the statistical power. If it is required to conduct a more definite analysis and utilize more complex statistical approaches, it is better to provide a larger sample size (Seltmann & Wright, 2013). Although the study by Truckenbrodt (2000) surveyed 63 supervisor-subordinate dyads to support a positive

relationship between leader-member exchange and subordinates' commitment as well as altruistic organizational citizenship behavior, it is suggested that future research can increase the sample size to compare the difference between the mediating effects of different sample sizes.

Finally, the surveyed company has built a unique "talent-first" culture for over 14 years. The employees are empowered to take ownership of accomplishing work objectives, risk-taking, and being open-minded to accept new ideas. Both the supervisors' and subordinates' participation are voluntary without compensation. Future studies should pay attention to the context of organizational culture and the matching of supervisor-subordinate dyads to avoid voluntary bias.

7.6 Conclusion

In sum, this study provides evidence of the positive and significant relationships between the leader-member exchange, emotional intelligence, positive/negative feedback-seeking behavior, and incremental/radical idea generation. Employees engaged in high-quality leader-member exchange may lead to employees' incremental/radical idea generation. Mediation analysis indicates a positive and significant indirect effect of high-quality leader-member exchange relationships on radical idea generation via positive/negative feedback-seeking behavior. By improving leader-member exchange relationships, employees may be willing to increase their positive/negative feedback-seeking behavior as a proactive strategy to achieve a higher level of idea generation for bigger and better innovation in the workplace. To my knowledge, these findings provide a new approach from the lens of the social exchange theory to investigating the relationship between leader-member exchange and adaptive performance with potential mediator (positive and negative feedback-seeking behavior) and moderator (emotional intelligence).

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APPENDIX A – List of Key Concepts and Definition

Key Concept	Definition	Reference
Leader-member exchange	The quality of exchange relationship between an employee and his or her supervisor involving interdependencies and influence.	Graen, 1976; Uhl-Bien, 2006
Innovative work behavior	The intentional introduction and application, within a role, group or organization of ideas, processes, products, or procedures, new to the relevant unit of adoption, designed to significantly benefit the individual, the group, organization or wider society.	West & Farr (1990)
Incremental idea generation	The generation of new ideas that is focused on finding new applications for existing methods, processes, or products, and adapting what is currently done.	Gilson et al. (2012)
Radical idea generation	The generation of news ideas that are revolutionary to a field, are risk taking in nature, and focus on experimentation and paradigm shifts.	Gilson et al, (2012)
Feedback-seeking behavior	Employee's proactive and self-regulatory effort to search for evaluative information from his or her manager about the adequacy or/and inadequacy of overall work performance, role fulfilment, and customer service.	Ashford & Tsui (1991)
Emotional intelligence	The subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions.	Salovey & Mayer (1990)

APPENDIX B - Supervisors' Questionnaire



SUPERVISOR-RATED QUESTIONNAIRE

Participant code:

Instruction: Please circle one number for each question (part 1 to 5) with regards to the relationship between you and the subordinate, his/her feedback-seeking behavior as well as the task performance of idea generation at work during the past six months.

Part 1: Relationship with your subordinate

	To what extent do you agree or disagree to the following statements:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	I usually let this subordinate know under what circumstances in the workplace you side by him/her.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Regardless of how much power I have built into my position, I would use my power to help this subordinate solve problems in his/her work.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Again, regardless of how much power I have built into my position, I would use my power to help this subordinate out of a difficult situation in the workplace.	1	2	3	4	5
4	I think that I understand this subordinate's problems and needs.	1	2	3	4	5
5	I think that I recognize this subordinate's potential.	1	2	3	4	5
6	I have enough confidence in this subordinate that I would defend and justify his or her idea generation even without his/her presence.	1	2	3	4	5

		Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
7	How would you describe your working relationship with this subordinate?	1	2	3	4	5

Part 2: Positive feedback seeking

	How frequently does this subordinate ask for positive feedback or good news from you in his/her...	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
8	...overall work performance?	1	2	3	4	5
9	...technical or skill-based performance?	1	2	3	4	5
10	...role performance fulfilling your expectation?	1	2	3	4	5
11	...social behavior or the interaction between team/ground members?	1	2	3	4	5

Part 3: Negative feedback seeking

	How frequently does this subordinate ask for feedback regarding inadequacies in his/her...	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
12	...overall work performance?	1	2	3	4	5
13	...technical or skill-based performance?	1	2	3	4	5
14	...role performance fulfilling your expectation?	1	2	3	4	5
15	...social behavior or the interaction between team/ground members?	1	2	3	4	5

Part 4: Incremental idea generation

	When you think of the ideas generated by this subordinate in the workplace, how often does this subordinate...	Never	Almost never	About half the time	Almost every time	Every time
16	...search out existing working methods, techniques or instruments to improve operation processes?	1	2	3	4	5
17	...generate the solutions for difficult issues, whereas the ideas are the extensions building on what is currently done or what is currently offered?	1	2	3	4	5
18	...find the approaches of adaptation of existing products or services to execute the tasks of developing products or services?	1	2	3	4	5

Part 5: Radical idea generation

	When you think of the ideas generated by this subordinate in the workplace, how often does this subordinate...	Never	Almost never	About half the time	Almost every time	Every time
19	...search out new working methods, techniques or instruments that have made fundamental changes to operation processes?	1	2	3	4	5
20	...generate the solutions for difficult issues, whereas the ideas are departures from what is currently done or what is currently offered?	1	2	3	4	5
21	...find the approaches of beyond the existing products or services to execute the tasks of developing products or services?	1	2	3	4	5

Part 6: Demographic information

Instruction: Please tick one answer in the given box for each question.

1. Gender

Female Male

2. Age: What is your age?

18-28 29-39 40-50 51-61 62 and older

3. Educational level: What is the highest level of academic qualification you have earned?

Certificate Diploma Associate degree Bachelor's degree
 Master's degree Doctorate degree or PhD

4. How long have you been working in this company?

Less than 5 year 5-10 years 11-15 years
 16-20 years More than 20 years

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

APPENDIX - C: Subordinates' Questionnaire



SUBORDINATE-RATED QUESTIONNAIRE

Participant code:

Instruction: Please circle one number for each question (part 1 & 2) with regards to the relationship between you and your immediate supervisor as well as your use of emotion when you ask for feedback on your performance at work during the past six months.

Part 1: Relationship with your supervisor

	To what extent do you agree or disagree to the following statements:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	I usually know under what circumstances in the workplace my supervisor sides by me?	1	2	3	4	5
2	Regardless of how much power he/she has built into his/her position, my supervisor would use his/her power to help me solve problems in my work.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Again, regardless of how much power he/she has built into his/her position, my supervisor would use his/her power to help me out of a difficult situation in the workplace.	1	2	3	4	5
4	My supervisor understands my problems and needs at work.	1	2	3	4	5
5	My supervisor recognizes my potential in the workplace.	1	2	3	4	5
6	My supervisor has enough confidence in me that he/she would defend and justify my idea generation if I were not available to do it?	1	2	3	4	5

		Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
7	How would you describe your working relationship with your supervisor?	1	2	3	4	5

Part 2: Emotional intelligence

	To what extent do you agree or disagree...	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
8	...I have a good sense of why I feel certain feelings most of the time.	1	2	3	4	5
9	...I have a good understanding of my own emotions.	1	2	3	4	5
10	...I really understand what I feel.	1	2	3	4	5
11	...I always know whether I am happy or not.	1	2	3	4	5
12	...I always know my friends' emotions from their behavior.	1	2	3	4	5
13	...I am a good observer of others' emotions.	1	2	3	4	5
14	...I am sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others.	1	2	3	4	5
15	...I have a good understanding of the emotions of people around me.	1	2	3	4	5
16	...I always set goals for myself and then tries my best to achieve them?	1	2	3	4	5
17	...I always tell myself I am a competent person?	1	2	3	4	5
18	...I am a self-motivated person?	1	2	3	4	5
19	...I would always encourage myself to try my best.	1	2	3	4	5
20	...I am able to control my temper so that I can handle difficulties rationally.	1	2	3	4	5
21	...I am quite capable of controlling my own emotions.	1	2	3	4	5
22	...I can always calm down quickly when I am very angry.	1	2	3	4	5
23	...I have good control of my emotions.	1	2	3	4	5

Part 3: Demographic information

Instruction: Please tick one answer in the given box for each question.

1. Gender

Female Male

2. Age: What is your age?

18-28 29-39 40-50 51-61 62 and older

3. Educational level: What is the highest level of academic qualification you have earned?

Certificate Diploma Associate degree Bachelor's degree
 Master's degree Doctorate degree or PhD.

4. How long have you been working in this company?

Less than a year 1-2 years 3-4 years
 5-10 years More than 10 years

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.