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AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE CONCERNING IMPACT OF SUPERVISOR - SUBORDINATE RELATIONSHIP ON ENVY, KNOWLEDGE SHARING, AND RELATIONAL CONFLICT AMONG EMPLOYEES

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Envy has been relatively ignored in organizational behavior research. In this study, we focus on the impact of supervisor subordinate relationship (LMX) on envy. In addition, we also investigate the consequences of envy in terms of employee knowledge sharing and relational conflict. Building on Affective events theory, we argue that employees who do not have a good relationship with their supervisors (low quality LMX) will exhibit higher levels of envy. As a result, they will restrict their knowledge sharing, and engage in relational conflict in the workplace. Partial least squares based structural equation modeling was applied to the data derived from a sample of one hundred sixty one software engineers working across various information technology firms in India. Results of the study provide support to three of the proposed hypotheses. This study contributes to the field by demonstrating the negative consequences of envy in the workplace. Practical implications of the study and some interesting avenues for future research are also discussed.

Keywords: Leader-member exchange, envy, knowledge sharing, relational conflict

INTRODUCTION

It is commonly accepted that social comparison process is an inherent aspect of human nature. One emotion that arises as a result of social comparison process is envy (Foster, 1972). Envy is usually perceived to be a socially undesirable emotion and common experience for most of the people regardless of their culture. As suggested by Salovey and Rodin (1988), envy arises when an individual discovers that he is deficient in a quality, achievement or possession that is being possessed by another person, and the individual has a strong desire to obtain those qualities or a feeling to take away those coveted possessions from others. It is defined as “an unpleasant and often painful blend of feelings characterized by inferiority, hostility, and resentment caused by a comparison with a person or group of people who possess something we desire” (Smith & Kim, 2007, p. 49).

Envy is important to understand because it is generally perceived to be a hostile emotion that stimulates aggressive behaviors. Its combative nature is demonstrated by inter-group conflicts (Beck, 1999; Glick, 2002) as well as numerous literary tales of assassination, murder and sabotage evoked by envy (De la Mora, 1987; Schoeck, 1969). A crucial aspect of envy is that it is not a basic emotion (Ekman, 1992) which constitutes feeling of happiness, disappointment or anger etc. On the contrary, it is distinguished by its connection with a mixture of destructive tendencies like readiness to forfeit one's own good merely so that advantage of envied is curtailed (Berke, 1988; Parks, Rumble & Posey, 2002); an urge for destroying good things owned by others (Klein, 1957; Scheler, 1961; Scheimmel, 1993), or a feeling of malevolent pleasure at the pain of envied (Smith, Turner, Leach, Garonzik, Urch-Druskat, & Weston, 1996).

In spite of its universal nature and its impact on social interactions, envy has been relatively ignored from the mainstream organizational research. Only few studies have provided insights into the emotion of envy in an organizational context. Moreover, the research that exists on envy in the workplace (Vecchio, 1995; Exline & Lobel, 2000; Smith & Kim, 2007) is based on the sample derived from the United States. For instance, Vecchio (1995) demonstrated that self-reported envy was positively related to turnover intentions and supervisor dissatisfaction in a study of supervisory trainees. Also, Vecchio (2000) found that envy was positively related to an existence of competitive reward systems and negatively related to organization based self-esteem. In addition, Duffy and Shaw (2000) explored the impact of envy in groups. Their results found that envy was negatively related to the group satisfaction, group performance and positively related to absenteeism.

Previous research has also demonstrated that outstanding performers in an organization have often deliberately lowered their performance levels because they were vulnerable to the envious feelings of their peers (Exline & Lobel, 1999). In summary, preliminary research shows that emotion of envy can be instrumental in predicting important attitudes and behaviors. However, more research is needed in order to better understand how envy arises and the way people respond to the envious feelings in organizations.

The present study is an attempt to investigate the envy in the workplace which arises out of difference in the quality of relationship of subordinates with their leader. Leader-member exchange (LMX) is an extensively studied topic within the field of organizational behavior and focuses on the quality of relationship between leaders and subordinates. Most of the studies focusing on LMX have emphasized that it is related to increased job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs), employee performance, and lower turnover intentions (Gerstner & Day, 1997; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). However, very few studies have considered LMX in the context of employee emotion (Kim, O' Neill & Cho, 2010; Vecchio, 1995). A dearth of research exists that investigates impact of LMX on employee emotions and subsequent employee behaviors. To this end, we attempt to bridge the gap in the literature by investigating the relationship between LMX and employee envy, and the impact of envy on employee knowledge sharing and relational conflict.

This study has two main objectives. First, it examines the impact of leader-member exchange (LMX) on employee envy and its subsequent outcomes in terms of knowledge sharing and relational conflict. Second, it also investigates role of task interdependence in the relationship between employee envy and knowledge sharing behavior. It is important to examine the task interdependence in reference to employee envy and knowledge sharing because task interdependence can have strong implications towards this relationship. Envious employees might behave differently when working on independent tasks as opposed to interdependent tasks. One theoretical framework which can help to understand the dynamics of envy in the context of leader and subordinate relationships and its resulting consequences is Affective events theory (AET). This communication based theory was proposed by Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) which focuses at the structures, causes, and consequences of emotional experiences in the work place. There might be other theories which focus on emotions, AET is more relevant to our research as it not only stresses on the antecedents but also the consequences that emotions can produce in the workplace. Building on the AET framework, four research questions will be examined in this study.

RQ1: *How does perceived relationship with the leader affects envy?*

RQ2: *What is the impact of employee envy on their knowledge sharing behavior?*

RQ3: *How does the relationship between envy and knowledge sharing behavior vary in the context of task interdependence?*

RQ4: *What is the impact of envy on relational conflict?*

By using AET, we argue that employee perceptions of lower exchange relationships with their leaders will give rise to envious feelings, which eventually affect their knowledge sharing behaviors and enhance the relational conflict in the workplace. To the best of our knowledge, there is no published study that explores the relationship among leader member exchange, employee envy, knowledge sharing, and relational conflict. This study can be helpful to managers as it will provide them a platform to understand how their differing relationships with various employees can arouse invidious emotions within some employees, which can result in negative outcomes.

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

A. Affective Events Theory

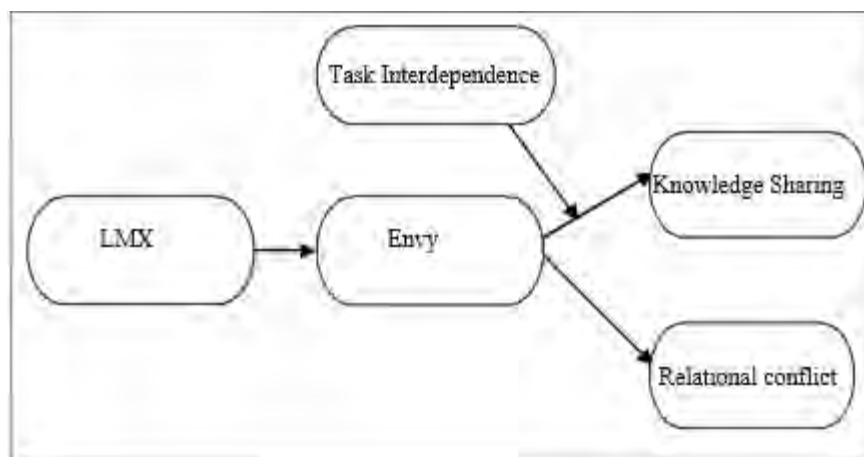
The role of employees perceptions and emotions in workplace have been discussed by various theories such as Equity theory (Adams, 1965), Social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954), Status congruence theory (Susman, 1970) in social psychology and organizational behavior literature. These theories have implications towards understanding workplace envy as organizational life is characterized by ambiguity and rivalry, both of which provide underpinnings for social comparisons (Brown, Ferris, Heller & Keeping, 2007). Deriving their roots from either social comparison or social exchange base (Blau & Boal, 1989), these theories offer insights for understanding the complexities of workplace envy. However, none of them have

proved to be instrumental in explaining the events that give rise to affective or emotional experiences and their resulting consequences in the workplace context.

The specific theory which helps to explain framework used in this study is Affective Events Theory. The discussion of AET in the context of emotions is justified by the description of ‘affect’ as feelings or emotions (Isen, 2002). This theory was particularly chosen because it directly focuses on the affective experiences in the workplace. AET emphasizes those environmental conditions in the workplace results in ‘hassles and uplifts’ (Ashkanashay, 2002). These ‘hassles and uplifts’ are described as affective events by Weiss and Cropanzano (1996). According to AET, the collection of consecutive positive or negative affective events eventually leads to attitudinal and behavioral consequences. Ashkanashay (2002) describes an appropriate example of an affective event in the workplace within the context of supervisor and subordinate interactions- “An employee who is troubled by a pressing boss (affective event) becomes furious and unhappy (affective or emotional state); therefore suffers job dissatisfaction (an attitudinal state) and begins to look for alternative sources of employment (a behavioral consequence)” (p.14). The main premise is that emotions (affective state) mediate effect of affective events on attitudes and behavior (Ashkanashay, 2002). In the context of this study, we argue that when a demanding boss puts an employee into out-group (affective event) by not treating him favorably (low LMX), it gives rise to envy (affective state) which eventually has an influence on knowledge sharing and relational conflict (behavioral consequence) in the workplace.

Recently, AET has captured the attention of various organizational scholars which is evident from the fact that a number of published studies in organizational psychology have successfully utilized AET. For instance, Li, Ahlstrom, and Ashkanasy (2010) investigated the antecedents of organizational commitments among a sample of 230 Chinese working professionals and demonstrated that feelings of ‘guilt’ and ‘determination’ were positively related to organizational commitment. Domagalski and Steelman (2005) extended AET to develop a model of workplace anger. They argued that two discrete workplace events, interpersonal incivility and unjust treatment have an impact on employee anger. The results of the study demonstrated that interpersonal incivility and unjust treatment were positively related to experience of anger by employees, which in turn, was positively related to expression of anger. In addition, Rupp and Spencer (2006) used AET framework in a laboratory setting to examine the effects of customer interactional justice on the emotional labor of employees. In a simulated workplace scenario, subjects in the study played the role of customer service representatives and were exposed to either fair or unfair customers. Results indicated that unfairly treated participants displayed higher levels of emotional labor as compared to fairly treated participants. Clearly, many researchers have used AET framework in the context of emotions in the workplace. However, none of these studies have considered the role of envy in the workplace. In this study, we build on AET framework, and extend it by examining the impact of LMX on employee envy and subsequent outcomes of envy in terms of knowledge sharing and relational conflict in the workplace.

Figure 1



B. LMX and Envy

Leader member exchange is defined as the quality of exchange relationship between a subordinate and his or her immediate supervisor. LMX emphasizes that leadership effectiveness cannot be understood without examining how

supervisors and employees influence each other over time (Dansereau, Graen & Haga, 1975). It is based on the premise that a supervisor has different type of working relationship with each subordinate within the same workgroup (Gerstner & Day, 1997). With some of the subordinates, leaders develop high quality LMX relationships in which reciprocal exchanges go beyond what is formally required in the organization, whereas with the other subordinates, they share low quality LMX relationships which are limited to carry out the tasks required by the formal contracts (Liden & Graen, 1980). High quality LMX is characterized by higher levels of trust, liking, commitment and respect (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

Empirical research has demonstrated that high quality LMX relationship foster employee attitudes and behaviors, which are beneficial to leaders and organizations such as OCBs (Settoon, Bennett & Liden, 1996; Wayne, Shore & Liden, 1997). Organ (1988) defined OCB as "individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization" (p.8). In addition, subordinates having high LMX relationships are more likely than those in lower LMX relationships to receive challenging task assignments, training opportunities, resources, information and support (Liden, Wayne & Sparrowe, 2000; Scandura, Graen & Novak, 1986). Subordinates with high quality LMX relationships may actually perform better because of the added support, feedback, resources and opportunities provided to them (Feldman, 1986). Also, leniency bias appears to inflate performance ratings for employees with higher quality LMX relationships. However, in low quality LMX relationships, leaders rate members strictly according to established performance standards (Duarte, Goodson & Klich, 1994; Heneman, Greenberger, & Anonyuo, 1989). Given that in most of the organizations, promotions and rewards are performance based, each employee within the same workgroup can realize which employees are receiving advantages because of supervisor's affinity towards them (high LMX). By comparing what they receive and what others receive, feelings of envy may arise. In addition, as a primary source of critical aspects regarding work, LMX can become a basis for comparison among each employee within the workgroup (Kim et al., 2010). When employees perceive that their relationship with the leader is worse (low LMX) as compared to their peers (high LMX), it will disturb their sense of balance (Heider, 1958), which ultimately will give rise to envious feelings. Cohen-Charash (2000) described following as an important condition of envy in a job promotion situation: 'When a person X notices that a similar other, person Y, gets a promotion, which is important for a person X in such a way that X wants it but does not have, X is likely to experience envy' (Cohen-Charash, 2000, p. 2). Thus, we suggest

H1: *Quality of LMX will be negatively related to envy.*

C. Knowledge Sharing and Envy

Knowledge is a vital asset for organizations operating in the complex environment characterized by fierce competition. One of the requirements for the organizations to be successful is the transfer of knowledge among employees who work on a collaborative basis, which is commonly known as knowledge sharing (Bergman, Jantunen & Saksa, 2004; Van den Hooff & De Ridder, 2004; Wasko & Faraj, 2005). Practitioners have described knowledge sharing to be personal (Caldwell, 2004) and encouraging people to share knowledge productively is a difficult task (Fisher & Fisher, 1998). Therefore, it is a general acknowledgement that employees might not always be willing and motivated to share their knowledge with coworkers (Kelloway & Barling, 2000; Husted & Michailova, 2002; Currie & Kerrin, 2003; Mac-Neil, 2003). We suggest that feeling of envy will play a major role in knowledge sharing of employees. Once the feeling of envy arises, envious employees tend to balance what they do not have with what the envied employees do have (Heider, 1958). When the envious employees undergo this process of balance, they might try different tactics to influence the other employee's work outcome negatively. The stronger one feels envy; more negative are the reactions towards the envied (Duffy, Shaw & Schaubroeck, 2008). These negative reactions are likely to restrict them from helping the envied employees.

Furthermore, knowledge sharing is viewed as a social exchange (Blau, 1964). In the process of knowledge sharing, individuals help each other by providing work related critical information (Wu, Lin & Ching-Lin, 2006). Yu and Chu (2007) have conceptualized knowledge sharing as an OCB. They argued that sharing knowledge with others without the expectation of something in return is an altruistic behavior which is one of the five basic dimensions of OCB (Organ, 1988). However, in the study of front line hotel employees Kim, O'Neill and Chow (2010) have demonstrated that employee envy leads employees to restrict their OCBs directed at envied individuals. Thus, we believe that envious feelings among employees may restrict their knowledge sharing behavior in the form of withholding important information from the envied. This can affect envied individual's work performance. Therefore, we suggest

H2(a): *Envy will be negatively related to knowledge sharing.*

D. Moderating Role of Task Interdependence

Task interdependence is commonly perceived as a contingency variable, exacerbating or attenuating the effects of one variable on another (Duffy, Shaw & Stark, 2000; Staples & Webster, 2008). It refers to the degree to which interaction and coordination of team members are required to complete the tasks (Guzzo & Shea, 1992). Due to the vitality of task interdependence, a number of researchers have formulated ways to categorize it. For instance, Thompson (1967) categorized it as pooled, reciprocal and sequential interdependence; Wageman (1995) outlined task and outcome interdependence, and Kiggundu (1983) made a distinction between 'initiated' and 'received task interdependence' having sub dimensions of scope, resource and criticality. For this study, we limit our discussion to the generalized notion of task interdependence (Liden, Wayne, & Bradway, 1997) which is coherent with 'pooled' (Thompson, 1967) and 'critical' task interdependence (Kiggundu, 1983).

We suggest that task interdependence has the potential to change course of relationship between envy and knowledge sharing behavior. Under high task interdependence, individuals are engaged into tasks where they are dependent on each other and may have presumed roles, expectations and deliverables. The bond of reciprocal actions will be relatively strong, as individuals working together will be responsible for each other's work performance and there is an impetus to fulfill each other's obligations (Staples & Webster, 2008). In such circumstances, envious employees will be willing to share knowledge with the envied employees because withholding important information eventually might affect their own performance. Consequently, we expect that relationship between envy and knowledge sharing will be weak. However, under low task interdependence, individuals are relatively less dependent on each other and expectations of the reciprocal actions are not driven by task demands (Staples & Webster, 2008). This weak bond of reciprocal actions will lead to envy playing a stronger role in determining the knowledge sharing behavior of employees because they are not obliged to share knowledge as in the previous scenario. In such conditions, envious employees can withhold the important information from the envied employees as it would not affect their own performance. In this case, a strong negative relationship between envy and knowledge sharing will exist. Thus, task interdependence will have an impact on the relationship between envy and knowledge sharing. This leads to

H2(b): *Task interdependence moderates the relationship between envy and knowledge sharing such that negative impact of envy on knowledge sharing is stronger under low levels of task interdependence.*

E. Envy and Relational Conflict

Relational conflict is defined as the team member's experience of negative emotions due to their differences in belief and values (Jehn, 1994). High relational conflict is characterized by feelings of antagonism as well as feelings of anger among employees (Jehn, Northcraft & Neale, 1999). It reflects employee perceptions of lack of cooperation and stressful working environment. We believe that envious feelings will lead to relational conflict among team members. As envy is described as a negative emotion which contains the feelings of hostility, resentment, and ill-will (Salovey & Rodin, 1988; Smith & Kim, 2007); envious employees will always look to settle the score with envied to reduce the envy provoking advantage. Envious employees will find it difficult to get along with envied. This will reduce the harmony in the workplace and enhance the relational conflict. As such, we suggest

H3: *Envy will be positively related to relational conflict.*

METHODOLOGY

The sample utilized for this study comprised of software engineers working in the information technology (IT) industry in India. We decided to select IT industry as the research setting for this study because of the following important reason - IT industry mostly makes use of work teams characterized by high technology and a strong knowledge sharing requirement. Past research has shown that when employees work in teams with a similar objective, it might lead to frequent work or non-work related comparisons (Smith & Kim, 2007). Such comparisons can prove to be detrimental to one's self-esteem, if the individuals find themselves on the lower end in the comparison with others; it gives rise to unpleasant envious emotion (Wood, Michaela & Giordano, 2000). Thus, we believe that IT organizations serve as a natural workplace structure to study the impact leader member exchange on envy and its subsequent outcomes.

A web based questionnaire was utilized to collect data for this study. An email invitation was sent to two hundred and twenty six software engineers working across eight information technology firms in India to invite them to participate in the study. The cases which had response to more than half of the items missing were excluded from the analysis. We used mean substitution method to handle the missing data. A total of one hundred sixty one usable responses were collected indicating a response rate of 71.8%. Non response bias was not a problem due to the high response rate of more than 70 % (Singleton & Straits, 2005). The mean age of the respondents was approximately twenty nine years, ranging between 23 and 35 years.

Our sample had a fair mix of gender with males and females. The survey questionnaire was hosted online on a third party website where no personally identifiable data was collected from any of the respondents. As suggested by Dillman (1978), we explained the focus of the study to the respondents emphasizing the importance of their participation and confidentiality of their responses on the welcome page. This was done to improve the quality of data and the response rate. The participation in the study was voluntary and the participants were allowed to withdraw participation at any time during the process of filling out surveys.

A. Envy Stimulus

To elicit envy, we presented the participants with the following instructions: Choose a person (X) in your organization with whom you work frequently and to whom you constantly compare yourself. This person should be perceived by you as more successful than yourself in securing a good quality relationship with your supervisor which is very important to your self-worth

These instructions were consistent to the literature on the elicitation of envy (Heider, 1958; Salovey, 1991)

B. Measures

Most of scales used in this study were based on the existing literature and some were modified to suit the context of this study. The description of the measures used is as follows: Except the items for LMX, all the other items were measured using five point Likert type scale ranging from 1: Strongly Disagree to 5: Strongly Agree. Scale items are listed in Appendix 1.

1. *Leader-Member Exchange (LMX)*

Quality of leader-member exchange was assessed using seven items which were adapted from Scandura and Graen (1984). The instrument asks subjects to indicate the extent to which they agree with each item on the scale ranging from “to a very little extent” (1) to “to a very great extent” (5). An example item is: ‘How effective would you characterize your working relationship with your supervisor?’

2. *Envy (E)*

In order to measure envy, the current study adapted items developed by Cohen and Charash (2005). The instrument for envy consists of nine items. One of the items of the scale is: ‘I lack some of the things X has.’

3. *Knowledge Sharing (KS)*

Knowledge sharing behavior was assessed using a three item scale which was developed by Faraj and Sproll (2000). We modified some of the wordings of the scale to suit the context of our study. For instance, one of the scale items is: ‘There is a substantial exchange of knowledge between the business subgroup and the IT consultant subgroup’. We changed this item to be: ‘There is a substantial exchange of knowledge among our team members.’

4. *Task Interdependence (TI)*

Task interdependence was measured using a six item scale developed by Bishop and Scott

(2000). A sample item is: ‘To achieve high performance, it is important to rely on each other.’

5. *Relational conflict (RC)*

The scale for relational conflict was adopted from Jehn (1994). The scale has four items and one of the scale items is: ‘How much friction is there among the members of your team?’ Respondents rated their responses on 5 point likert-type scale ranging from “None” (1) to “A lot” (5).

C. Data Analysis

The research model, shown in Figure 2, was analyzed using SmartPLS which is a partial least squares (PLS) structural equation modeling (SEM) tool. PLS is a robust second generation multivariate technique for analyzing causal models involving multiple constructs with multiple observed items (Fornell, 1982). PLS uses a combination of principal components analysis, path analysis and regression to simultaneously evaluate theory and data (Pedhazur, 1982; Wold, 1985). The path coefficients are standardized regression coefficients, whereas the loadings can be interpreted as factor loadings. Significance of the path coefficients is calculated using bootstrapping (generating t-statistics and significance levels). The objective of a PLS analysis is to explain variance in the endogenous constructs, rather than to replicate the observed covariance matrix, which is the case with covariance structure techniques (i.e. LISREL or AMOS). Because of this fact, PLS does not create overall fit statistics for its models (Barclay, Higgins, & Thompson, 1995; Hulland, 1999; Gefen, Straub, & Boudreau, 2000). Some of the advantages that PLS have over covariance based SEM techniques that justify the use of PLS for current study are as follows: 1) PLS does not require an assumption of multivariate normality in the data. 2) It is appropriate for small sample size (< 200 cases). 3) It is suitable for studies which are exploratory in nature (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2004).

RESULTS

A. Measurement Model

Table 1 lists the means, standard deviations, and correlation coefficients of the research variables. Analysis of measurement model within PLS involves examining the item reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Results from the reliability analysis of the measurement model are described in Table 2. The data demonstrates that measures are robust in terms of their internal consistency as indexed by their composite reliabilities. The Cronbach’s alpha of different measures in the model range from 0.80 to 0.96 which exceed the established threshold value of 0.7 (Nunally, 1970). Additionally, consistent with the recommendation of Fornell and Larcker (1981), the average variance extracted (AVE) for each measure exceeds 0.50.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. LMX	2.72	0.98	1				
2. KS	2.74	1.25	0.62**	1			
3. RC	2.99	1.23	-0.46**	-.59**	1		
4. E	3.15	1.15	-0.52**	-.53**	0.51**	1	
5. TI	2.88	1.22	0.13	0.17*	-0.09	0.11	1
** $p < 0.01$ (2 tailed) * $p < 0.05$ (2 tailed)							

Table 2: Reliability with Average Variance Extracted

Variable	Average Variance Extracted	Cronbach's Alpha
Leader-member exchange (LMX)	0.54	0.83
Envy (E)	0.65	0.93
Knowledge Sharing (KS)	0.83	0.89
Relational Conflict (RC)	0.65	0.82
Task Interdependence (TI)	0.59	0.90

Discriminant validity is the degree to which items differentiate between constructs or measure different constructs (Campbell & Fiske, 1959). We applied Fornell and Larker (1981) criteria to assess discriminant validity of the constructs. Table 3 reports the result. The bolded elements in the matrix diagonals, representing square root of AVEs, are greater in all cases than the off diagonal elements (correlations) in their corresponding row and columns which supports the discriminant validity of the measures used.

Table 3: Discriminant Validity with AVE Measures

Latent					
	1	2	3	4	5
Variables					
LMX	0.73				
E	0.52	0.80			
KS	0.62	0.53	0.91		
TI	0.13	0.11	0.17	0.76	
RC	0.46	0.51	0.59	0.09	0.80

Convergent validity is the degree to which items of the same construct correlate to the construct (Campbell & Fiske, 1959). It was tested with SmartPLS by extracting the factor loadings and cross loading of all indicator items to their respective latent constructs. These results in Table 4 demonstrate that all items loaded on their respective construct from a lower limit of 0.51 to an upper limit of 0.96. In addition, items loaded more highly on their construct as compared to any other construct. A common thumb rule to verify the convergent validity is that all items should load more highly on their respective construct than on the other constructs. Also, each item's factor loading on their own construct was highly significant with all factor loading greater than 0.51 (t values > 3.31). The factor loading shown in Table 4 confirms the convergent validity measures for these latent constructs.

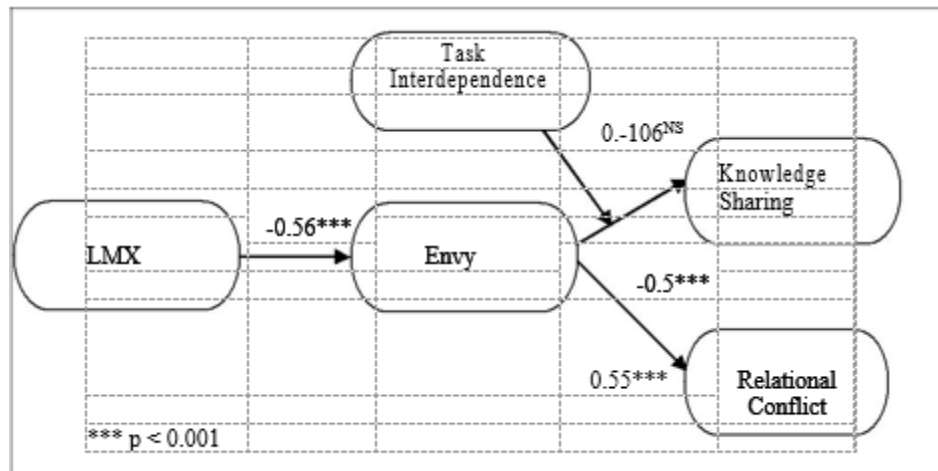
Table 4: Factor Leading

Variables	Leader Member Exchange	Envy	Knowledge Sharing	Relational Conflict	Task Interdependence
LMX 1	0.58	-0.39	0.48	-0.33	0.25
LMX 2	0.62	-0.39	0.36	-0.37	0.21
LMX 3	0.66	-0.4	0.28	-0.28	0.28
LMX 4	0.74	-0.46	0.3	-0.36	0.09
LMX 5	0.70	-0.35	0.36	-0.41	0.07
LMX 6	0.76	-0.41	0.23	-0.39	0.16
LMX 7	0.85	-0.31	0.13	-0.19	0.17
E 1	-0.37	0.72	-0.23	0.41	0.27
E 2	-0.34	0.76	-0.47	0.55	0.04
E 3	-0.42	0.82	-0.42	0.48	0.18
E 4	-0.29	0.84	-0.36	0.44	-0.08
E 5	-0.46	0.72	-0.28	0.39	0.06
E 6	-0.41	0.84	-0.38	0.47	0.04
E 7	-0.35	0.88	-0.41	0.36	-0.03
E 8	-0.32	0.86	-0.26	0.51	0.01
E 9	-0.39	0.81	-0.33	0.52	-0.09
KS1	0.39	-0.38	0.90	-0.32	0.13
KS2	0.36	-0.49	0.92	-0.37	0.06
KS3	0.32	-0.45	0.91	-0.49	0.19
RC1	-0.28	0.31	-0.43	0.81	-0.08
RC2	-0.33	0.18	-0.45	0.91	-0.05
RC3	-0.49	0.42	-0.45	0.77	0.01
RC4	-0.3	0.33	0.42	0.71	-0.01
TI 1	0.22	0.007	0.14	-0.07	0.93
TI 2	0.22	0.009	0.15	-0.04	0.96
TI 3	0.2	0.02	0.07	-0.01	0.94
TI 4	0.16	0.03	-0.02	-0.08	0.64
TI 5	0.2	0.03	0.11	-0.002	0.55
TI 6	0.13	0.01	0.06	0.02	0.51

B. Structural Model

After confirming the validity and reliability of our measurement model, we examined the structural model. We evaluated the structural model by assessing the path coefficients and their t-values. The explained variance in envy, knowledge sharing and relational conflict was found to be 31.1%, 36.7%, and 30.5% respectively.

Figure 2: Structural Model



The effect of LMX on envy was found to be significant ($\beta = -0.56$, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, H1 was supported. A significant negative relationship was found between envy and knowledge sharing ($\beta = -0.5$, $p < 0.001$) which provided support to H2 (a). However, the moderating effect of task interdependence on the relationship between envy and knowledge sharing was not significant ($\beta = -0.106$). Thus, H2(b) was not supported. Finally, the effect of envy on relational conflict was significant and positive ($\beta = 0.55$, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, H3 was supported.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study highlighted that difference in the quality of relationship with a supervisor stimulates envious feelings in employees with low LMX, which eventually reduces employees' knowledge sharing and enhances the relational conflict in the workplace. Research in the past has highlighted that high LMX has been related with increased job satisfaction and organizational commitment, enhanced organizational citizenship behaviors, and lower turnover intentions (Gerstner & Day, 1997; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Our paper extends the stream of research which links LMX with employee emotions (Vecchio, 1995; Kim et al., 2010). Our contribution lies in an attempt to explore the impact of LMX quality on envy, and subsequent outcomes of envy in the form of knowledge sharing and relational conflict. However, this study did not find support for the moderating role of task interdependence in the relationship between envy and knowledge sharing. The absence of moderating effect between envy and knowledge sharing might be due to the fact that employees would have been sharing the same resources regardless of the actual task involved.

Our study also has some crucial implications particularly towards the organizations which make extensive use of work teams. Work scenarios within industries that make use of teams serve as an ideal platform to give rise to such feelings (Duffy & Shaw, 2000). For instance, when employees work in teams lead by a supervisor for the achievement of mutual goal, they are more likely to interact with each other frequently while comparing themselves against their peers. If they find themselves on the downward end of the comparison, envious feelings are likely to arise (Vecchio, 1995). Therefore, supervisors should strive to keep a regular watch on employee emotions by giving them personal guidance and counseling. Second, supervisors should design impartial and objective systems when assigning jobs, duties and responsibilities. The reasons behind why one gets some resources while others do not should be clearly underscored so that differences are understood by every employee, which in turn, will obviate the arousal of invidious emotions. Third, mandatory training for each employee should be arranged to convey the message that each employee is unique and valued. This will also inhibit the envious feelings resulting from comparisons with others (Bedeian, 1995). Finally, informal meeting and social activities between supervisors and subordinates should be promoted within the organizations (Kim et al., 2010). It will help improve the quality of their relationship which eventually would inhibit the likelihood of envious feelings.

The study also has some limitations. First, by no means our model can be considered comprehensive. There can be other variables such as a competitive reward system (Dunn & Schewitzer, 2004), personality traits (Smith, Parrott, Diener,

Hoyle & Kim, 1999), organizational perks, which could act as antecedents of envy. Second, the model shown in Fig. 1 is a part of cross sectional research design, which does not necessarily reflect the causal relationship among the variables. A longitudinal research design is needed to determine the casual relationship. Third, since we collected data using a single method, our results might have been inflated by common method variance (Podsakoff, Mckenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003).

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study highlights the role of envy in the workplace. Research on envy is still in the embryonic stage (Vecchio, 2000). Building on the Affective events theory, we found that quality of relationship among supervisors and their subordinates is related to envy, which further has behavioral consequences. Precisely, we demonstrated that lower quality LMX can lead to envious feelings among employees, which in turn, will inhibit their knowledge sharing behaviors and enhance the relational conflict. This study contributes to two different streams of research. First, we extended the literature on envy in organizational behavior, as most of the research on envy exists in anthropological and sociological literature. Second, the study has advanced knowledge sharing literature by demonstrating a negative relationship between envy and knowledge sharing. Some of major antecedents of knowledge sharing discussed in the literature are trust (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998), technology (Bechina & Bowman, 2006), monetary rewards (Bartol & Srivastava, 2002), co-worker congruence and organizational commitment (Lin, 2007). Our study demonstrates that envious feelings play a vital role in employee's willingness to share knowledge. In addition, our study also augments the literature on conflict (Pelled, 1996; Duffy, Shaw & Stark, 2000). We have established a relationship between envy and relational conflict in the workplace. Also, the study extends the literature by providing an international perspective on envy in the workplace.

This paper provides the foundation for some interesting avenues for future research. First, we found that lower quality leader-member exchange can give rise to envious feelings among employees. However, previous research has shown that some people are predisposed for feeling envy (Smith et al., 1999). Therefore, it would be interesting to examine the dispositional envy as a moderator between the LMX and employee envy. Second, envious feelings can also lead to various types of counterproductive work behaviors (Cohen-Charash & Muller, 2007). A study can be conducted examining the mediating role of envy in the relationship between LMX and counterproductive work behaviors. Third, research has shown that individuals often compare themselves with people whom they find similar (Festinger, 1954; Schaubroeck & Lam, 2004). If the result of this comparison is unfavorable for an individual, they might experience envy. Future studies should also consider examining the impact of perceived similarity on envy. We hope that our piece of work would motivate scholars to carry on interesting research concerning envy in the workplace. This will continue to advance the knowledge beyond our initial efforts in the current research.

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