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Abstract

This study seeks to establish and test the integrative theory of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) that extends our understanding of self-other agreement in perspective taking and affective commitment. We predicted that differences in employee perceptions of the quality of their LMX relationship and their affective commitment might be related to the degree of agreement between leader and employees' perceptions of leader perspective taking. We aim to represent the managerial and psychological outcomes in the leader-employee dyad. The study relies on data from 116 leader-employee dyads working within various business areas in companies located in Norway. The results revealed that the in agreement good group and under-estimators received the highest employee reported LMX and affective commitment. Additionally, relative to the constant group, mediation occurred for the in agreement poor group and over-estimator group. As well as providing valuable insights for understanding self-other agreement, perspective taking, LMX and affective commitment and their relation to each other, our theoretical perspective and empirical findings provide important contributions.

1.0 Introduction

Demographic diversity among the workforce has grown exponentially over the past decade (Goldberg & McKay, 2015). Thereafter, navigating the social world has become something of an obstacle course (Galinsky et al., 2005). For managers and leaders this navigation involves motivating customers and employees to manage diversity to prevent conflicts. Hence, it is essential that actors in complex organizational systems can recognize and understand one another's diverse perspectives for them to remain cooperative and independent (Calvard et al., 2021). A social strategy that can help to successfully navigate an organizational world filled with diversity and mixed-motive interactions is perspective taking (Ku et al., 2015). Perspective taking can be understood as “the mental act of perceiving a situation from another individual’s point of view” (Gregory et al., 2011). Numerous studies (e.g. Calvard et al., 2021; Gehlbach et al., 2015; Ku et al., 2015) have proposed that perspective taking plays an important role for organization’s success. In the current review, we consider how perspective taking might be a promising psychological process that influences another major area of inquiry, namely leader-member exchange (LMX). LMX is a leadership model that focuses on the relationship between leaders and their employees, and how this relationship may differ as a result of individual and organizational factors (Dansereau et al., 1975; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991, 1995). Gregory et al., (2011) state how person-specific perspective taking may differ across multiple relationships, thus perspective taking might be applied across a person’s various relationships and result in differences in organizational and individual outcomes. In our study, we are interested in two employee consequences of leader perspective taking: LMX and affective commitment, which further can impact organizational outcomes. We selected these constructs for several reasons.

In organizational sciences, the LMX theory of leadership has become a major area of scientific inquiry and has received considerable attention (Gooty & Yammarino, 2016). Dulebohn et al., (2012) did a meta-analysis on the antecedents and consequences of LMX and found that leader variables explained the greatest amount of variance in the quality of LMX. However, in their analysis they only found five leadership characteristics to demonstrate the strongest relationship with LMX quality and suggested how more research should be done in this area. A leadership characteristic that has received limited attention within LMX research is

perspective taking. Incorporating perspective taking into LMX theory seems logical, given the dyadic nature of both constructs. However, the potential outcome of this relationship is yet to be discovered.

Extensive research has been conducted on LMX and its wide range of outcomes. Previous research has identified a positive association between LMX and affective commitment (AC), and researchers have been exploring this relationship for more than two decades. Affective organizational commitment refers to an emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). The continuous change in working life today emphasizes the importance of continuing to investigate the relationship between LMX and affective commitment in relation to other antecedents and outcomes. The number of employees considering changing jobs has reached a record high, and many companies have experienced, and are expecting, a large turnover of employees (Nielsen, 2022). As a result, organizations will benefit from having employees who are committed to their organizations, as they are more likely to be satisfied with their work and are less likely to leave their jobs voluntarily.

In order to better understand how organizations can both keep their employees, in addition to developing and maintaining effective LMX relationships, we wanted to investigate what potential antecedents, mediated by LMX, could impact employees' affective commitment. The concept perspective taking seemed logical to integrate into the already existing relationship between LMX and affective commitment, as perspective taking is connected to both successful navigation in diverse organizations, in addition to playing an important role for organization's success (Calvard et al., 2021; Gehlbach et al., 2015; Ku et al., 2015). Nevertheless, there are several factors that may theoretically influence such relationships. One factor could potentially be self-other agreement (SOA), which is defined as the degree of agreement between self- and other observations (Atwater & Yammarino, 1992). We stand behind the reasoning of Amundsen & Martinsen (2014), who suggest how a more nuanced and accurate picture potentially can be obtained when considering self and others' ratings simultaneously. This is supported by Yammarino & Atwater (1997), who state how self-ratings and other ratings is the core issue for determining the implications for Human Resources Management.

Theory presented in this study suggests that differences in employee perceptions of the quality of their LMX relationship and their affective commitment might be related to the degree of agreement between leader and employees' perceptions of leader perspective taking.

2.0 Literature review

2.1 Perspective taking and Leader-Member Exchange

Perspective taking is defined as the cognitive process of adopting others' viewpoints to better understand their preferences, values, and needs (Davis et al., 1996; Grant & Berry, 2011; Parker & Axtell, 2001). With perspective taking means imagining the world from another person's point of view (Calvard et al., 2021). Perspective taking has long been studied, however mainly within fields other than organizational behavior, such as child development (Parker & Axtell, 2001). Since then, it has remained fundamental to studies of human development, and more recent work on the topic has been conducted within the management literature (Ku et al., 2015). The purpose of this dissertation is to extend research on perspective taking to a less explored area of inquiry, namely Leader-Member Exchange (LMX). Due to perspective taking's dyadic nature, it seems well-suited to incorporation into LMX theory.

LMX theory has become one of the most useful approaches to study the connection between leadership and outcomes (Gerstner & Day, 1997). In contrast to other traditional leadership approaches, which focus on one single domain (e.g., the leader and its behaviors and traits), LMX emphasizes a dyadic relationship between a leader and a follower. Hence, LMX could be understood as a relationship-based approach to leadership (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

The LMX theory is based on the assumption that effective leadership relationships occur if dyadic “partners” (e.g. leaders and followers) are able to establish a mature leadership relationship that involves incremental influence, which creates admittance to the many advantages of such relationship (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991). Mature leadership relationship is found in high LMX dyads, and the relationship is characterized by reciprocal influence, mutual trust, respect and internalization of common goals. Followers experiencing mature leadership relationships are engaging in activities that are not necessarily formally defined by

their employment contract, and they are willing to give extra effort taking personal initiative and career risks to accomplish assignments (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991). Even though a mature leadership relationship is often desired due to its beneficial outcomes, it is not always present between a leader and a follower.

It is common for people to categorize themselves and others based on similar characteristics, such as race, gender, or nationality, grouping similar people in the “in-groups” and dissimilar people in the “out-groups” (Madera, 2018). Dyadic interactions between individuals tend to be more comfortable when both participants share similar interests, values, and attitudes (Dulebohn et al., 2012). People are inherently drawn to forming favorable relationships with people they like, and LMX relationships are no different. It is therefore understandable why similarity is one of the best predictors of the quality of relationships between leaders and followers (Dulebohn et al., 2012). However, increased diversity in organizations today will require more social exchanges between members of various social and demographic groups (Goldberg & McKay, 2015). According to Goldberg & McKay (2015), when dyadic dissimilarity is in line with culture or organizational norms, it may produce more favorable outcomes than dyadic similarity. Therefore, we can benefit from exploring areas of leadership where high quality LMX relationships are maintained despite differences between leader and employee.

One important aspect of perspective taking is that it is an active, cognitive process in which perspective takers mentally simulate what it would be like to see the world through another person's eyes (Ku et al., 2015). According to Parker et al., (2008) perspective taking can improve almost every aspect of organizational functioning. When leaders and employees participate in this process it can result in a variety of positive outcomes. According to Galinsky et al., (2005) perspective taking reduces stereotyping and prejudice, promotes helping behaviors and social coordination. Parker et al., (2008) suggest how perspective taking will influence positive attributions in processes like performance appraisal, negotiation, and effective leadership. Davis et al., (1996) state how perspective taking abilities can help us overcome egocentrism, customize our behavior to fit others' expectations, and thus establish fulfilling interpersonal relationships. It is reasonable to assume that several of these outcomes can have a positive impact on the LMX relationships

for leaders and employees with social and demographic differences, as well as those with more similarities.

Taking a different perspective increases approach behavior. Cognitive and psychological closeness implies a stronger connection with others when we take other people's perspectives (Ku et al., 2015). By doing so, they engage in nonverbal behaviors that establish positive connections. On the other hand, individuals lacking the ability to take perspective may not be able to relate to others or develop social connections in the same way. Kim et al., (2019) suggests how top management should strive to develop employees' perspective-taking ability. However, Duelbohn et al. (2012) investigated the antecedents and consequences of Leader-Member Exchange and found that leader variables explained the greatest variance in LMX quality. This lays the foundation for why we want to investigate perspective taking from a leader's viewpoint in relation to LMX.

According to Peterson et al., (2015) when taking a partner's perspective (e.g., best friend or romantic partner), self-reported and observed closeness is increased. Ku et al. (2015), suggest how more research should be conducted on perspective taking as an organizational capability. By transferring the mindset of Peterson et al., (2015) to an organizational setting, we assume that leader perspective taking can increase the employee self-reported and observed closeness, which further could impact the quality of their LMX relationship.

2.2 Self-other agreement

Self-other agreement in the workplace usually refers to the agreement between self-ratings and the ratings of others (Atwater & Yammarino, 1992; Barbuto et al., 2011; Fleenor et al., 1996; Roth & Altmann, 2021). The self-other agreement in leadership research has been defined as the agreement between the leader's self-rating and the rating given by others (Barbuto et al., 2011). It is common to use this type of feedback comparison to help leaders become aware of their strengths and weaknesses (Velsor et al., 1993). Studies have predominantly used self-other agreement to study the influence of leadership effectiveness on outcomes. Using multi-source feedback about leader abilities, can also provide us with more reliable data and additional information that we not necessarily would receive from looking at one perspective (Aarons et al., 2017). According to Parker et al., (2008), effective leadership is likely to depend on good leader perspective

taking. Additionally, Graen & Uhl-Bien (1991) explains how effective leadership relationships could occur if a high LMX relationship is present. This lays the foundation for why self-other agreement seems well suited to incorporate into the potential relationship between perspective taking and LMX.

By comparing self-and-others' ratings, the four-category model derived from Yammarino & Atwater (1997) can be devised, which is derived from the assumption that each category has different implications for both individual and organizational outcomes. These four types of agreement groups include: over-estimators (who rate themselves higher than others do), in agreement raters good or poor (who rate themselves similarly to others), and under-estimators (who rate themselves lower than others do) (Fleenor et al., 1996). An individual's future behavior can be influenced by the degree of agreement between self- and other ratings, particularly if a person overestimated their behavior compared to others (Atwater & Yammarino, 1992), which result in over-estimators, in agreement raters good or poor, and under-estimators having different outcomes.

According to Atwater et al., (1998), the relatively different and unique perspectives of the focal individual and various relevant others may result in a lack of correlation between the ratings. They further suggest how people who overestimate, often think their behavior does not need to change (Atwater et al., 1998). Yammarino & Atwater (1997) suggest how individuals who overestimate may ignore how they are seen by others, which may result in employees withholding negative feedback. Fleenor et al., (1996) suggest how those with discrepant ratings might misdiagnose their strengths and weaknesses, which could adversely affect their leadership effectiveness. This is supported by Van Velsor et al., (1993) who found how over-estimators were seen as less effective. Even though some researchers refer to discrepant ratings in general, Atwater & Yammarino (1992) and Van Velsor et al., (1993) found how leaders who underestimate themselves were seen as more effective. This emphasizes the differences between the discrepant rating groups of over-estimators and under-estimators. Being an under-estimator can be perceived as both positive and negative. Not being able to recognize their strengths is not necessarily positive, however this lack of self-awareness may result in under-estimators being more open to feedback and improvement. Based on the differences in the discrepancy groups, we would expect

that under-estimators and over-estimators will receive different employee rated LMX and affective commitment.

When looking at in agreement raters, Atwater & Yammarino (1992), suggest that those who rate themselves more accurately, or those who agree with others in a positive way, are more likely to adjust their behavior based on their knowledge and experiences. According to Yammarino & Atwater (1997), individual and organizational HRM outcomes will be more positive when leaders and managers are in the in agreement good group. Fleenor et al., (1996) proposed that in agreement good raters will have the highest effectiveness, whereas in agreement poor raters will have the lowest effectiveness. In agreement poor raters may be accurate in their self-perception, however their behaviors are often seen as less desirable. Yammarino & Atwater (1997) suggest how the HRM outcomes for in agreement poor raters will be more negative, however not necessarily as negative as the over-estimators.

Based on the above presented theory we expect the agreement groups to differ in career paths and promotions, leadership skills, performance evaluations, and training and development requirements (Atwater & Yammarino, 1992). Fleenor et al., (1996) also found how there were no differences in the ratings between the in agreement good group and under-estimators, or between over-estimators and in agreement poor groups. Thus, we expect that in agreement good raters and under-estimators will receive different employee ratings from over-estimators and in agreement poor raters, and we predict the following:

Hypothesis 1a. *Self-other agreement in perspective taking is related to employees' perception of Leader-Member Exchange, such that in-agreement good raters and under-estimators will receive higher employee ratings on LMX relationships, than over-estimators and in agreement poor*

Hypothesis 1b. *Self-other agreement in perspective taking is related to employees' perception of Leader-Member Exchange, such that over-estimators and in agreement/poor raters will receive lower employee ratings on LMX relationships than in-agreement good and under estimators.*

2.3 LMX and Affective organizational commitment

Allen and Meyer (1991) developed a three-component framework of organizational commitment which incorporates; *affective*, *continuance* and *normative*. Affective organizational commitment (AC) refers to an emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organization; continuance commitment represents a need to stay in the organization; and normative commitment constitutes an obligation to remain with the organization (Gillet & Vandenberghe, 2014). These different dimensions of commitment can be present for employees at the same time, but to a varying degree (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Earlier research findings have shown how these commitment components hold different antecedents and consequences for organizational behavior and outcomes (Meyer et al., 2002; Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Affective commitment is thought to play a significant role in predicting organizational outcomes, such as job involvement, overall job satisfaction, absenteeism and employee turnover (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Gerstner & Day, 1997; Iverson & Buttigieg, 1999; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). In other words, employees who are organizationally committed are more likely to be satisfied with their work and are less likely to be absent or to voluntarily leave their organizations. Moreover, evidence from empirical research has demonstrated that only affective commitment is positively correlated with performance (Meyer et al., 1989) and positively associated with organizational citizenship behavior (Shore & Wayne, 1993). Additionally, Iverson and Buttigieg (1999) found that affective commitment showed the largest explained variance of the commitment dimensions in predicting several organizational outcomes; correlating positively with acceptance of change and negatively with employees' intention to leave. As such, a focus on affective commitment is deemed most adequate for our research as it is considered an effective measure, having a greater ability to predict key organizational outcomes more accurately than continuance and normative commitment (Meyer et al., 2002; Meyer & Allen, 1991).

There are numerous elements that can facilitate the development of an affective attachment with the organization. Factors that could influence employees' affective commitment are shown to be leadership style, as well as organizational and relationship factors (Su & Sun, 2020). Antecedents that have been positively related with affective commitment are, among others, autonomy (Currivan, 1999),

job enrichment (Luna-Arocas & Camps, 2007) organizational dependability and job challenge (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Such components coincide with characteristics of a LMX relationship.

Within each LMX relationship, the leader's interactions with followers vary significantly. Leaders develop unique dyadic relationships by psychologically dividing followers, treating some members within the group more favorably than others (Dansereau et al., 1975). In-group followers experience higher levels of contact, resources, support and responsibility, and their LMX relationship consists of respect, trust, and mutual obligation. High quality relationships concern long-term generalized reciprocity as the norm (Sparrowe & Liden, 1997). Whereas followers in low quality relationships (out-group) experience the opposite; short-term economic exchange of behaviors, less contact and support from supervisor and they are less involved in taking on new and different roles (Shaikh et al., 2019).

Researchers have given attention to how LMX differentiation affects individual, group and organizational outcomes (Chen et al., 2018). Employees that experience fulfillment with socio-emotional needs and goals, recognize their identity value, experience a sense of belonging, and are truly involved and connected with the company could form an emotional commitment with the organization and improve their performance (Aghashahi et al., 2013; Meyer et al., 2002; Su & Sun, 2020). Thus, the quality of LMX can determine employees' satisfaction levels and subsequently their affective commitment.

Extensive literature and research exists on the positive linkage between LMX and affective commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Ansari et al., 2007; Casimir et al., 2014; Dulebohn et al., 2012; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer et al., 2002; Vandenberghe et al., 2004). A study by Gerstner & Day (1997) found significant and positive associations between LMX and organizational commitment, as well as a negative relation between LMX and turnover intention. Thus, according to social exchange theory, employees will reciprocate favorable treatment through greater commitment and lower turnover intention (Kuvaas et al., 2014; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2001). Additionally, Lee (2005) demonstrated how LMX quality has a significant association with affective commitment. Hence, we expect to find a positive relationship between LMX and affective commitment. Accordingly, our second hypothesis stipulates that:

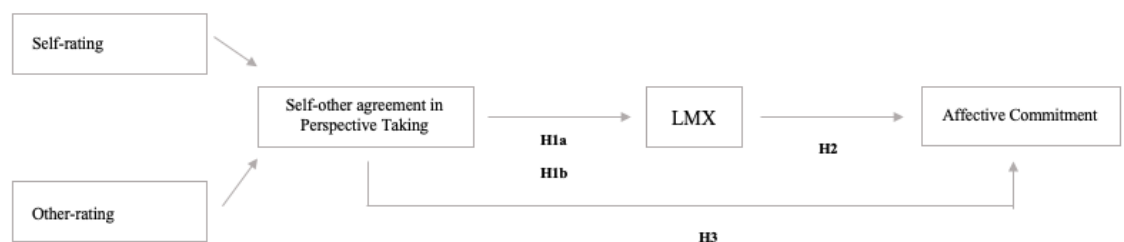
Hypothesis 2. *Employee's perception of Leader-Member Exchange is positively related to Employee affective commitment*

The research findings presented demonstrate the importance of affective commitment as a positive outcome itself, as well as a mediator and precursor to other positive organizational outcomes. Due to the already established relationship, showing a significant variance of LMX in affective commitment (Lee, 2005), it would be interesting to explore relationships with antecedents that potentially could explain variances in LMX. Mercurio (2015) emphasizes how commitment research remains confounding and fragmented, where further clarification of how organizational commitment develops is warrant and important for future research and evidence-based practice. Utilizing affective commitment as an outcome variable enables us to connect perspective taking and LMX to a well-established construct associated with positive work-related outcomes, as well as draw a connection between these constructs' corresponding association with affective commitment. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 3. *Employee's perception of Leader-Member Exchange mediates the relationship between self-other agreement in perspective taking and employee affective commitment, such that in agreement good and under-estimator raters will receive higher employee rated affective commitment than in agreement poor and over-estimator raters*

3.0 Conceptual model

Figure 1. *Conceptual model with summary of hypotheses*



4.0 Method

4.1 Procedure

The three digital surveys were separated and distributed in two waves (T1 and T2) with a three-week interval to reduce respondents' ability to infer missing details and use previous responses to answer subsequent questions. As such, temporal separation could allow previously recalled information to leave short-term memory, avoiding common method biases (Podsakoff et al., 2012). In T1 leaders reported their perspective taking abilities, and employees reported perceptions of their leader's perspective taking abilities. Neither was able to see the other's responses. Additionally, employees answered questions about their LMX relationship. In T2 employees reported their affective commitment level.

The digital self-completion questionnaires were distributed by e-mail to participants. All participation was voluntary and confidential. Participation was, however, not anonymous as the names of the employees were used to match the data from leader and employee surveys.

Participants were recruited through leaders and HR managers in various organizations, which nominated participants from different departments. As such, the methods used were a combination of snowball sampling and quota sampling (Bryman & Bell, 2011). As our research did not hold company-specific requirements, our reference point for our sample were employees and their respective leaders from all kinds of organizations. Consequently, it resulted in a broad and diverse sample including organizations operating in Norway within varying business areas, such as finance and accounting, marketing, research and development, sales, and health care.

4.2 Sample

Survey questionnaires were distributed to 357 leaders and employees working in companies operating in Norway. The first wave consisted of 42 leaders and 159 employees, which resulted in 201 completed responses, giving a response rate of 56.3%. After the two employee surveys were matched with the leader survey, 116 leaders-employee dyads were found in the final sample of 158 (116 employees, 42 leaders), resulting in a response rate of 44,3%.

In the employee sample, 62.9% were female, 35.3% were male, and 1.7% preferred not to answer. Most participants reported their age to fall between 26 to 35 years (28.4%) and 18 to 25 (23.3%). The majority of participants reported their organization tenure to be between 0 and 5 years (61.2%), whereas a smaller group of 7 participants reported to have worked in their organization for 21 years or more (6%).

In the leader sample, 69.4% were female, 30.6% were male. Most participants reported their age to fall between 46 to 55 years (44.4%), 26 to 35 (19.4%) and 36 to 45 (19.4%). The majority of participants reported their organization tenure to be between 0 and 5 years (72.2%), whereas a smaller group reported to have worked in their organization for 6 to 10 years (11%).

4.3 Measures

The constructs were measured by means of well-validated measures from previous research and had acceptable reliability (i.e. above .70, see Table 1). As reference points and sources of information, leaders and employees were used to collect the data. The questionnaire was distributed in English, therefore translations or changes to the original items were not needed. Some of our measures contained both positive and negative worded items. The advantage of balancing scales in this way is that it could give greater control for acquiescence and dis-acquiescence biases, decreasing the motivation to respond to surveys stylistically (Podsakoff et al., 2012). All negatively keyed items were reverse-scored before conducting our analysis, resulting in consistent variables in all surveys.

4.3.1 Perspective taking

Leaders indicated the extent to which they took others' perspective at work using a four-item scale adapted from the perspective taking measure developed by Davis et al. (1996) (see Appendix 1). Sample items are “At work, I often imagine how other people are feeling” and “On the job, I frequently try to take other people’s perspectives”, and Cronbach was .841. We constructed a parallel measure in order to measure employees' perception of leaders' perspective taking. In these measures employees were asked questions about their leader's perspective taking abilities, based on the same standardized well-validated measures developed by Davis et al. (1996). A sample item in the follower survey is “At work, your leader seeks to understand other’s viewpoints”, and Cronbach was .897. Responses to all four items

in both surveys were made on a 7-point Likert scale (“Strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”) (Grant & Berry, 2011).

4.3.2 LMX

LMX7 developed by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) was used to measure employees' perception of the LMX relationship (See Appendix 2). Sample items are “How well does your leader understand your job problems and needs?” and “How would you characterize your working relationship with your leader?” and Cronbach was .852. Responses to all seven items were made on a continuous scale of sum of 5-point Likert scale (1 left to 5 right).

4.3.3 Affective commitment

When measuring affective commitment eight items were selected based on the Affective Commitment Scale (ACS) used in research by Meyer and Allen (1990) (See Appendix 3). Sample items are “I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization” and “I think that I could easily become as attached to another organization as I am to this one” and Cronbach was .802. Responses to all eight items were made on a 7-point Likert scale (“Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree”).

4.3.4 Control variables

Control variables may have an influence on the nature of the relationship between our main variables, and inclusion could result in gaining statistical control, greater confidence in the conclusions and limiting misleading results (Becker, 2005). We considered several potentially relevant control variables such as the demographic differences in age and gender, as well as organizational tenure. They are identified as some of the most frequently used statistical controls having a significant effect, and being associated with research on LMX and organizational commitment (Bernerth & Aguinis, 2016).

Firstly, previous empirical research suggests a relationship between gender and LMX relationships (Bernerth et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2017). Dienesch & Liden (1986) discuss how individual characteristics such as gender, could be related to LMX development and quality. Gender has shown to be a characteristic that may influence the way some categorize others, and categorizations influence interactions between individuals; leaders and employees (Feldman, 1981; Taylor et

al., 1978). Therefore, a categorization process is likely to occur in the development of LMX relationships and thus, there is a possibility that gender will have an impact on the resulting LMX relationship (Wayne et al., 1994) which further potentially could affect employees' affective commitment. This research exemplifies the importance of controlling for gender (dis)similarities between the employees and their respective leaders in our study. Additionally, gender role theory (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Kite, 1987) proposes that gendered systems generate gender differences in attitudes, behaviors and values across social settings, such as the workplace. Based on this, Shin et al. (2020) explained how the feminine gender role tends to pull women away from employment, leading them to experience less pressure to stay in an unrewarding job, showing reduced affective commitment (Fiske et al., 2002).

Secondly, Meyer et al. (2002) found that organizational tenure is related to affective commitment in some instances and research on human capital theory by Becker (1964) proposes how for example tenure positively affects attitudes such as commitment and turnover. Allen & Meyer (1993) explain that this positive relationship might be present due to more experienced employees having more attractive positions in the organization, or suggested by Salancik (1977) explaining that organizational tenure effects exist due to self-justification processes. Hence, inclusion of this control variable could represent an incremental step or an elimination of alternative explanations of our study results (Bernierth & Aguinis, 2016).

Lastly, given that relational demography could account for variance, an important aspect in our study could be age differences or similarities between employees and their respective leader. By explaining how generational cohorts are shown to have similar values, beliefs, and political outlook, Schaffer & Riordan (2013) emphasize the importance of examining age differences in LMX relationships. However, with generational differences, relational age becomes a critical factor in understanding the quality of LMX in a dyad. Furthermore, Gupta et al. (2020) hypothesize that age differences in leader-member dyads do not provide enough opportunity for trust to develop, leading to poor LMX quality. Furthermore, research done by Rana & Singh (2022) found that age plays a significant role in affective commitment; the older the employee, the higher the commitment towards the organization.

Given these relationships, there is a possibility that perspective taking relates to affective commitment not because a LMX relationship is present, as our theorizing suggests, but rather because of relational gender and age (dis)similarities between employees and their leaders, as well as the amount of time employees have been working in their respective companies. Thus, to eliminate alternative explanations and to demonstrate the unique relationship between perspective taking, LMX and affective commitment, it is important to parse out the variance between these control variables and our independent variables (Bernerth & Aguinis, 2016).

Gender was coded in a dichotomous way such that 1 was “Female”, 2 was “Male”, 3 was “Prefer not to answer” and 4 was “Other”. Organizational tenure was coded into groups (0-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, 21 years and more), which also were applicable for age groups (18-25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56-65, 66 and over).

4.4 Categorization of agreement groups

Using a similar categorization methodology to Cogliser et al., (2009) enables us to test our hypotheses. Theoretically defined variables of perspective taking agreement were created by performing a median split on the data from the leader and employee reports of perspective taking. Based on the magnitude of difference scores in both cases, categories were assigned. Since several self-other comparisons were conducted, we determined the distribution of difference scores among the comparisons. Relationships where both the leader and employee perspective taking scores were above the median, were defined as “in agreement good”. Relationships where leader and employee perspective taking scores were at or below the median were defined as “in agreement poor”. In relationships where leader perspective taking scores were above the median and employee perspective taking scores were at or below, the leaders were defined as an “over-estimator”. Lastly, relationships with leader perspective taking scores at or below the median, and employee perspective taking scores above, the leader were defined as an “under-estimator” (Cogliser et al., 2009). Using the methodology of Cogliser et al., (2009), ratings from leader and employees were equivalent. However, subordinate ratings were chosen as the criterion for determining whether a leader were in agreement, over-estimators or under-estimators because follower perceptions may be the most meaningful measure of leader behavior (Fleenor et al., 1996).

4.5 Research ethics

When conducting research there are several ethical and legal aspects that need to comply with developed regulations and guidelines. One way to ensure quality research is through the facilitation of ethical guidelines and privacy, which in this study is handled by the Norwegian Center for Research Data (NSD) (Næss & Pettersen, 2017). Diener and Crandall (1978) presents four main areas of ethical principles in business research: (1) harm to participants, (2) lack of informed consent, (3) deception and (4) invasion of privacy.

Researchers must strive to minimize the potential harm to participants involved in business research (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Therefore, we clarified for the participants that through our reported findings, the possibility of identification will under no circumstances be possible. Participants were informed of anonymity and confidentiality when we requested participation in our research.

A central element of ethical research is obtaining informed consent from participants (Crow et al., 2006). Prior to conducting the survey, the participants received an information sheet and a declaration of informed consent sheet. This provided information about what a participant's involvement is likely to entail; the research process, the basis of carrying out the research, what findings will be used for and where the research may, and if so, will be published (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Further, informants receiving a clear and truthful description of the nature of the research could result in avoiding deception (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In advance of completing the survey they were also informed about the opportunity to withdraw at any time throughout the research, in order to avoid invasion of privacy (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

To ensure that all data processing is done properly and that ethical rules are followed, we obtained permission from NSD before conducting our survey. We have taken the ethical principles into account throughout all phases of our research and wish to present our research findings as transparent and concise as possible.

5.0 Results

5.1 Statistical analysis

IBM SPSS was used in the statistical analysis. In order to assess the reliability of our measures, Cronbach's alpha values were calculated. In most social

science research situations, a reliability coefficient of .70 or higher is considered to be “acceptable”, indicating an internally consistent measure (Cronbach, 1951). Thereafter, descriptive analysis was performed to estimate means, standard deviations and bivariate correlations between all of our variables.

Next, as our independent variable is multicategorical consisting of four different groups, a one-way ANOVA was performed in order to calculate descriptive statistics for the different agreement groups and to discover any possible differences between the groups’ association with the mediator and dependent variable.

Our dataset met all the six assumptions required to appropriately conduct a one-way ANOVA that would give valid results. There were no significant outliers of importance within each group (see Appendix 4, 5 and 6). Hoaglin & Iglewicz’s (1987) theory explains how SPSS’s rules (1.5 and 3 IQR’s) of determining observations as outliers in datasets is seen as an invalid indicator being inaccurate approximately 50% of the time. This, as well as frequencies for the groups, emphasize how the outlier found within in agreement good for LMX and over - estimator for affective commitment is not a problem for our analysis. The assumption of no significant outliers is not violated.

Furthermore, our data were approximately normally distributed for each category of our independent variable (SOA), as assessed by boxplot and Shapiro-Wilk test of normality ($p > .05$), respectively (See Appendix 5). The assumption of homogeneity of variances is met, as verified by Levene’s Test of Homogeneity of Variances ($p < .05$) (See Appendix 6).

Descriptive statistics from the one-way ANOVA provided us with indications of relationships between the variables in our dataset. The coding strategy used is indicator coding (dummy coding), which indicates the association different groups have with the mediator and dependent variable relative to our reference group. Due to the neutral position of the in agreement good group, we chose this as our reference group (Hayes & Preacher, 2014).

In order to test our hypotheses, a statistical mediation analysis was needed, using Hayes PROCESS macro analysis in SPSS. This analysis was performed in order to examine the indirect association of the mediator variable on the relationship between the independent and dependent variable (Hayes & Preacher, 2014). PROCESS allows an analysis of testing the whole mediation model as well as

creating confidence intervals by using bootstrapping techniques to estimate any indirect effects (Baron & Kenny, 1986). All our analyses were conducted with a 95% confidence interval and 5000 bootstrap samples.

We controlled for three different control variables in our mediation analysis; employee age, employee tenure and gender (dis)similarity between employee and leader, and only employee age was statistically significant. Accordingly, employee age is included in our analysis and non-significant control variables are excluded.

5.2 Descriptive statistics

The means, standard deviations, reliability estimates, and intercorrelations among leader and employees reports of perspective taking and employee outcomes are presented in Table 1. As mentioned above, the main rule is that the alpha coefficient needs to be higher than .70. All scales demonstrated acceptable reliability scales, with Cronbach Alpha values ranging from .802 to .897. This tells us that there is internal consistency within the measures, meaning that the items in a scale measure the same construct (Cronbach, 1951).

Furthermore, correlations are presented in Table 1. Correlations is a normalized measure of covariation. Employee PT shows a positive correlation with leader PT ($r = .300, p < .01$). Employee LMX shows a positive correlation with leader PT ($r = .251, p < .01$) and employee PT ($r = .629, p < .01$). We also found how employee AC positively correlates with employee PT ($r = .381, p < .01$) and employee LMX ($r = .371, p < .01$). Further, examination of the bivariate correlations found in Table 1 indicates that gender and tenure for both employees and leaders, as well as leader age, is not significantly correlated with LMX or AC. However, employee age is significantly correlated with LMX ($r = .261, p < .01$). Thus, to maximize statistical power and offer the most interpretable results, we will report further analysis only controlling for employee age.

The correlations presented in Table 1 only provide indications of the relationship in the dataset. Therefore, we need to carry out a one-way ANOVA and a mediation analysis using Hayes' PROCESS in order to test our hypotheses.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics, Correlations and Reliability Estimates^a

Variable ^b	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
(1) Employee Age	2.69	1.360									
(2) Employee Gender	1.41	.589	.267**								
(3) Employee Tenure	1.69	1.268	.574**	.112							
(4) Leader Age	3.36	.828	.317**	.000	.191*						
(5) Leader Gender	1.20	.400	.018	.025	.037	.359**					
(6) Leader PT	6.0603	.67132	.359**	.053	.372**	-.098	.109	(.841)			
(7) Employee PT	5.6552	.97894	.120	-.148	.009	-.040	-.018	.300**	(.897)		
(8) Employee LMX	4.0345	.60686	.261**	-.026	.130	-.037	.033	.251**	.629**	(.852)	
(9) Employee AC	4.7231	.97744	.079	.057	-.047	-.021	.000	.152	.381**	.371**	(.802)

^a N= 116 leader-member dyads. Diagonal entries in italics and parentheses indicate coefficient alphas.

^b Leader PT, Employee PT and Employee AC reflect responses on a 7-point likert scale ranging from (“Strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”). Employee LMX reflect responses on a continuous scale of sum of 5-point items (1 left to 5 right). Age, 1= “18-25,” 2= “26-35,” 3= “36-45,” 4= “46-55,” 5= “56-65,” 6= “66 and over”; Gender, 1= “female,” 2= “male,” 4= “prefer not to answer”; Tenure, 1= “0-5 years,” 2= “6-10 years,” 3= “11-15 years,” 4= “16-20 years,” 5= “21 years and more”.

**p* < .05

***p* < .01

5.3 One-Way ANOVA

A methodology similar to Hayes & Preacher (2014) was used to calculate descriptive statistics for agreement groups, see Table 2. The resulting distribution of relationship across the 116 matched dyads of leader-employee responses is as followed: in agreement good = 23 matched responses (19.8%), in agreement poor = 49 matched responses (42.2%), over-estimator = 29 matched responses (25.0%) and under-estimator = 15 matched responses (12.9%). Statistically significant differences between groups were determined by one-way ANOVA ($F(11.817) = 5.239, p < .001$). Pairwise comparisons between means reveal that under-estimator ($Y = 5.3250$) and in agreement good ($Y = 5.1087$) reported significantly higher affective commitment on average than in agreement poor ($Y = 4.4286$), as well as over-estimators ($Y = 4.6034$). Accordingly, it seems that affective commitment was affected by self-other agreement in perspective taking. Whether perceived LMX quality is one of the mechanisms driving this relationship will be addressed throughout this analysis.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for agreement groups

	N	Leader-Member Exchange (<i>M</i>)		Affective Commitment (<i>Y</i>)	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>SD</i>
In agreement good (constant)	23	4.4472	.41606	5.1087	.90084
In agreement poor	49	3.7784	.56699	4.4286	.95504
Over estimator	29	3.9212	.59097	4.6034	1.04586
Under estimator	15	4.4571	.47442	5.3250	.54034
All groups combined	116	4.0345	.60686	4.7231	.97744
F		11.817***		5.239*	

Note. N=116

*** $p < 0.001$, * $p < 0.05$

5.4 Analysis with PROCESS

A simple mediation model was used to assess hypothesis 1-3, as we wanted to examine if the construct of self-other agreement in perspective taking had an indirect association through LMX on the constructs of affective commitment. The in agreement good group worked as a reference variable (constant), meaning that all the other categories were compared to the association of the results from the constant condition.

Hayes PROCESS analysis gave us results for relative total effect, relative direct effect and relative indirect effect. Since our independent variable is multicategorical (self-other agreement in perspective taking), we first look at the associations from the different agreement groups with LMX, which is reported in Table 3.

There is a difference in employee reported LMX quality between in agreement good and in agreement poor. A negative coefficient indicates that in agreement poor will receive lower employee ratings on LMX relationships, compared to in agreement good ($b = -.6688$, $SE = .1118$, $p < .001$). There is a difference in employee reported LMX quality between in agreement good and over-estimators, ($b = -.5260$, $SE = .1496$, $p < .01$). The negative coefficient for over-estimators indicates lower received employee ratings on LMX relationships, compared to in agreement good. Relative to the constant, statistical findings explain how the over-estimators and in agreement poor group will have less association with high LMX quality. Hence, hypothesis 1b is supported.

There is no statistical difference between the influence under-estimators have on LMX, compared to in agreement good ($p > .05$). The positive coefficient ($b = .0099$, $SE = .1779$) indicates that under-estimators and in agreement good raters will receive similar employee ratings on LMX relationships. Statistical findings show how the in agreement good group and under-estimator group is related to employees' perception of LMX quality. Thereby, hypothesis 1a is supported.

Hypothesis 2, predicting that employees' perception of LMX relationship is positively related to employee affective commitment, is statistically significant, ($b = .4265$, $SE = .1592$, $p < .01$). Accordingly, Hypothesis 2 is supported.

The PROCESS mediation model indicates partially significant relative indirect effects for the different groups, compared to the constant. Relative to the constant, in agreement poor groups had employee rated affective commitment that were $b = -.2853$ units less favorable as a result of the relationship between self-other agreement in perspective taking and LMX, which in turn decreased the affective commitment. A 95% bias-corrected bootstrap CI for this relative indirect effect is from $-.5625$, $-.0637$ (Hayes & Preacher, 2014). Since the bootstrap CI does not straddle zero, we can say that mediation has occurred, as this relative indirect effect is negative and statistically different from zero. Put otherwise, if we compare in

agreement good to in agreement poor, LMX mediates the relationship between self-other agreement in perspective taking and affective commitment.

Similarly, relative to the constant, the over-estimator group had employee rated affective commitment that were $b = -.2244$ units less favorable as a result of the relationship between self-other agreement in perspective taking and LMX, which in turn decreased the affective commitment. A 95% bias-corrected bootstrap CI for this relative indirect effect is from $-.4662, -.0478$. Again, a mediation has occurred, as the relative indirect effect is negative and statistically different from zero. If we compare in agreement good to over-estimators, LMX mediates the relationship between self-other agreement in perspective taking and affective commitment.

Relative to the constant, the under-estimator group had employee rated affective commitment that were $b = .0042$ units more favorable as a result of the relationship between self-other agreement and LMX, which in turn increased the affective commitment. However, the minor difference in effect from the constant is not statistically significant, indicating similar employee affective commitment ratings for under-estimators and in agreement good. 95% bias-corrected bootstrap CI for this relative indirect effect straddles zero $-.1373, .1566$. Thus, evidence is not sufficiently strong to claim an indirect effect of in agreement good to under estimator, indicating that no mediation has occurred. If we compare in agreement good to under-estimator, LMX does not mediate the relationship between self-other agreement in perspective taking and affective commitment. Over-estimators and in agreement poor were significantly different from in agreement good ($p < .05$), and under-estimators were not. Thus, we support hypothesis 3.

Based on the R^2 , the model fits the data ($p < .01$), however the numbers are relatively small, indicating that some variability in the data cannot be accounted for by the model.

With the aid of SPSS and indicator coding with the in agreement good group as the reference group, the online supplement shows 95% bootstrap CIs that are not straddling zero (based on 5,000 bootstrap samples) for the relative indirect effect (Hayes & Preacher, 2014), indicating that both in agreement poor group and over-estimator group (relative to the constant) indirectly influence affective commitment through LMX.

Table 3. *Estimated coefficients, estimated in PROCESS using indicator coding*

	LMX (M)		Affective Commitment (Y)	
	Coefficient (SE)		Coefficient (SE)	Coefficient (SE)
In agreement good (constant)	4.4472*** (.1118)		5.1087*** (.1934)	3.2118*** (.7326)
In agreement poor	-.6688*** (.1355)		-.6801** (.2344)	-.3949 (.2518)
Over estimator	-.5260*** (.1496)		-.5052 (.2590)	-.2809 (.2657)
Under estimator	.0099 (.1779)		.2163 (.3078)	.2121 (.2997)
Employee Age	.1157* (.0397)		.0348 (.0712)	-.0156 (.0720)
LMX				.4265*** (.1592)
R ²	.2404***		.1231**	.1763***
Relative indirect effect				
SOA → LMX → AC	B	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
In agreement poor	-.2853*	.1281	-.5625	-.0637
Over estimator	-.2244*	.1092	-.4662	-.0478
Under estimator	.0042	.0709	-.1373	.1566

Note: N=116.
 SOA = Self-other Agreement, LMX = Leader-Member Exchange, AC = Affective Commitment
 ****p* < 0.001, ***p* < 0.01, **p* < 0.05

6.0 Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore whether LMX mediated the relationship between self-other agreement in perspective taking and affective commitment. Key findings from this study are that categorizing individuals into groups on the basis of the agreement between self-ratings and observer ratings, affects the relationship between self-other agreement in perspective taking, LMX and affective commitment. A number of previous self-other agreement studies have concentrated on transformational leadership and leader effectiveness, however the effect of perspective taking between different agreement groups have yet to be explored in relation to LMX and affective commitment.

First, we hypothesized that self-other agreement in perspective taking is related to employees' perception of LMX, such that in agreement good raters and under-estimators will receive higher employee ratings on LMX relationships, than over-estimators and in agreement poor raters. Based on the statistical findings, hypothesis 1a was supported. This is in line with the research by Atwater & Yammarino (1992) and Van Velsor and colleagues (1993) who found how in agreement good raters and under-estimators often receive the highest ratings from employees, in addition to being perceived as more effective. Research suggests how effective leadership is likely to depend on good leader perspective taking, and that effective leadership relationship could occur if a high LMX relationship is present (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Parker et al., 2008). According to Yammarino and Atwater (1997) leaders who agree with their employees in a positive way will be perceived as "good managers", which accordingly may result in positive HRM outcomes. Additionally, we believe that under-estimators may receive high LMX ratings if the leader is perceived as modest by his or her employees. As a result, employees may not have the consciousness to give a bad rating to their leader. Or they may give their leader a high rating to compensate, as they may expect their leader to rate themselves inaccurately; reporting a lower score not reflecting their true abilities.

Hypothesis 1b predicted that over-estimators and in agreement poor raters will receive lower employee ratings on LMX relationships than in-agreement good raters and under-estimators. Based on the statistical findings, hypothesis 1b was supported. This is also reflected in the correlations indicating a similar relationship between the different agreement groups and LMX. Regarding the self-other

agreement in perspective taking in relation to employee perceived LMX relationship, in agreement poor and over-estimators received the lowest employee ratings. Both groups received below average ratings on LMX. Equal to hypothesis 1a, this was not unexpected. Researchers in the field have demonstrated how over-estimators and in agreement poor raters often are seen as less effective leaders, in addition to receiving below average ratings from others (Atwater et al., 1998; Fleenor et al., 1996; Velsor et al., 1993). Most of the leaders in this study were within the in agreement poor group (N = 49). This sample seems to recognize their weaknesses, as they rate themselves relatively low. However, despite their apparent degree of self-awareness, it seems like they take few actions to improve their performance (Yammarino & Atwater, 1997). Accordingly, this can be reflected in their employees perceiving the quality of LMX relationships to be less favorable.

Over-estimators also show to receive lower employee rated LMX relationships, compared to in agreement good. As people are often reluctant to give negative feedback, workplace surveys can be a safer arena for employees to rate their leader more accurately. Lack of negative feedback from employees may result in leaders having a less realistic perception of themselves, which accordingly may affect how their employees perceive their LMX relationship.

Both the in agreement poor group and the over-estimator group received relatively low scores on perspective taking from their employees. Taking the perspective of others may result in cognitive and psychological closeness (Ku et al., 2015). When leaders take the perspective of others, they engage in nonverbal behaviors that establish positive connections. In contrast, individuals lacking the ability to take the perspective of others may not be able to relate to others or develop social connections in the same way. Therefore, it is not unexpected how the leaders in this group received lower employee ratings on LMX quality.

Hypothesis 2 predicts that employees' perception of Leader-Member Exchange is positively related to employee affective commitment. Based on our statistical findings, hypothesis 2 is supported. This was not unexpected as extensive literature and research exist on the positive linkage between LMX and affective commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Ansari et al., 2007; Casimir et al., 2014; Dulebohn et al., 2012; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer et al., 2002; Vandenberghe et al., 2004). This is also in line with what our correlations indicated; employee affective commitment positively correlates with employee LMX.

Of greater interest are our statistical findings that provide support for hypothesis 3, that employees' perception of LMX mediates the relationship between self-other agreement in perspective taking and affective commitment. In the well-established relationship between LMX and affective commitment, researchers suggested how more research should explore the relationships with antecedents that potentially could explain variances in LMX.

An intriguing finding of this research was that both employee LMX and affective commitment ratings were highest when leaders underestimated their perspective taking abilities. Based on the article by Yammarino & Atwater (1997) one could expect both in agreement good group and under-estimator group to receive higher employee rated outcomes. However, despite the under-estimators' relatively negative view on their own perspective taking abilities, employees appreciated their dyadic relationship and felt highly emotionally attached to the organization. According to Parker et al., (2008) perspective taking will influence positive attributions like effective leadership. Theory suggests how leaders who underestimate themselves are seen as more effective (Atwater & Yammarino, 1992; Velsor et al., 1993). Therefore, as expected the employees of underestimating leaders may feel more respected, supported, receiving greater contact and responsibility from their leader (Sparrowe & Liden, 1997). Hence, it is not unexpected why under-estimators received higher employee ratings of LMX quality and affective commitment.

Under-estimators often self-evaluate when receiving feedback from others (Yammarino & Atwater, 1997). These leaders also received a high score on perspective taking from their employees, which is associated with overcoming egocentrism, and customizing behavior to fit others' expectations (Davis et al., 1996). In this way their leadership style might be adapted to their respective employees, which further could result in them perceiving the quality of their LMX relationship as high and feel more affectively committed to the organization.

Employee LMX and affective commitment ratings were also high for leaders in the in agreement good group. However, our statistical findings indicate how in agreement good raters received lower LMX and affective commitment ratings, compared to under estimators. These findings were somewhat surprising, as theory suggest how the highest employee ratings often appear more frequently for the in agreement good group (e.g. Yammarino & Atwater, 1997). However,

there was a statistically low difference between the reported employee outcomes between the two groups. Hence, we expect their employees to perceive the LMX relationship similarly. Theory suggests how in agreement good leaders often have positive job attitudes and develop favorable efficacy expectations. In our study, these leaders also received a high perspective taking score from the employees. According to Galinsky et al., (2005) this might be due to leaders reducing stereotyping and prejudice, promoting helping behaviors and social coordination. Hence, when leaders are in the in agreement good group, employees will experience more favorable LMX relationships and be more affective committed.

This study has provided valuable insight on a potential antecedent of LMX, namely self-other agreement in perspective taking. Additionally, as mentioned earlier, we also found a positive association between LMX and affective commitment, which is well documented in literature. Accordingly, it seems understandable why our statistical findings support our hypothesis 3. As a result, this study can be of substantial interest to individuals and their organizations.

7.0 Practical implications

As we discuss a few practical implications, we acknowledge that no individual study can provide robust practice recommendations. Dispersion in the agreement groups imply that leaders should be creating a shared perception of their behaviors such as perspective taking, in order to secure high quality LMX relationships with their employees, which further can prevent turnover intention as a result of higher employee affective commitment.

Our findings suggest how leaders in the over-estimator group received lower perspective taking ratings from their employees. High perspective taking score is associated with overcoming egocentrism and customizing behavior to fit others expectations (Davis et al., 1996). In contrast, we expect low perspective taking to result in the opposite. Therefore, in order to receive more favorable outcomes from leaders in the over-estimator group, one implication could be to provide these leaders with continuous feedback.

Including different perspectives in the workplace is seen as useful for organizations in various situations (e.g. Calvard et al., 2021; Gehlbach et al., 2015; Ku et al., 2015). Proposed by Galinsky & Moskowitz (2000), facilitating perspective taking enables organizations, leaders and employees to better navigate

in a complex work life system, being able to motivate customers and employees to manage diversity and to prevent conflicts. Organizations will benefit from enhancing multiple viewpoints (Parker & Axtell, 2001), and we suggest how cultivating self-other agreement in perspective taking can facilitate higher LMX relationships and reduce turnover as a result of higher affective committed employees. This substantiates the importance of focusing more on perspective taking abilities in the workplace.

Goldberg and Mckay (2015) suggested how dyadic dissimilarity in line with cultural and organizational norms may produce more favorable outcomes than dyadic similarity. Amundsen and Martinsen (2014), questioned whether there can be cultural implications to the study of self-other agreement, as previous research have found self-other agreement to be of different statistical significance, based on the country of investigation. In example, a study by Atwater and his colleagues (2005) found how self-other agreement were insignificant in five countries in Europe. However, research by Kopperud and his colleagues (2014) found support for the effect of self-other agreement in Norway. As our findings are built upon responses from employees working in Norway, we believe that our study may be of value for organizations that operate within Norwegian borders.

8.0 Limitations and Further Research

Our study has provided valuable practical and theoretical insights and contributions. However, the results of this study should be interpreted in the context of several limitations.

Recent research on LMX theory has divided the concept into two dimensions; SLMX and ELMX. Our study does contain a focus on the characteristics of SLMX, resulting in a limitation due to missing a two-dimensional approach. Research by Goodwin et al. (2009) explained how a high quality-relationship can emerge, and still contain behaviors that are associated with economic exchanges (Kuvaas et al., 2012). Even though our research, as well as many others, relies on social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Walumbwa et al., 2011), addressing and including the different qualities that lie within both social and economic exchanges could be of importance, despite a common incorporation of them. This emphasizes the importance of taking a two-dimensional approach, not

differentiating between social and economic LMX, to capture the whole concept (Andersen et al., 2020).

Our exclusive focus on individual outcomes of the follower could be considered a limitation. Even though such focus within LMX research is common (Liden et al., 1997), considering leader outcomes as well could be comprehensive for understanding valuable and appropriate leadership practices. Dyadic analysis allows for collecting responses obtained from both dyad members, not ignoring one of the parties involved in the relationship. Our study takes this approach when conducting research upon self-other agreement in perspective taking but is missing a multifaceted perspective when researching on LMX. Taking both parties' perspective into account would be ideal, as this could give us a greater insight into the relationship between employees and leaders in our sample (Gupta et al., 2020). Inclusion of both parties not only decreases the chance of construct validity issues that plague research involving dyadic constructs, but also reduces the possibility of model misspecification by including the frequently omitted variable (the second member of a dyad) into the analytical model (Krasikova & LeBreton, 2012).

The relatively small sample size could also be seen as a limitation in our study. When agreement categories are created, the number of responses diminish considerably. Our data was collected from organizations operating in Norway, and for further research it could be advantageous including data from organizations operating in other countries as well. Receiving a cultural insight combined with research upon perspective taking will be of great importance as perspective taking reduces stereotyping and prejudice (Galinsky et al., 2005), both important factors for operating in a diverse society. Our small, but diverse sample including various business areas, could be positive for the generalizability of the results. Participants were employed in companies from different business areas and our sample could be viewed as a rather heterogeneous sample in terms of occupational background, which may be beneficial in regards to external validity, making the findings easier to generalize to other business sectors and companies as well (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Future studies may benefit from a larger sample size to provide a comprehensive representation and potentially more accurate results on the relationship between perspective taking, LMX and affective commitment.

Our study results indicated that employee age explained some of the variance within LMX. Investigating such findings even further, in combination with

other variables that could affect a dyadic relationship, could be interesting. Variables of interest in relation to age and LMX could be, amongst others, personality and creativity. Gupta et al. (2020) hypothesize that age differences in leader-member dyads do not provide enough opportunity for trust to develop, leading to poor LMX quality. Therefore, it could be interesting including aspects such as trust when conducting research on perspective taking in combination with LMX. Even though the majority of our control variables did not have any significant effect, including them in further research by making adjustments would be advantageous. Instead of controlling for employee organizational tenure, it would have been better to get insight into how long their dyadic exchange relationship had existed.

In this study employee ratings were used for categorizing self-raters into agreement groups, but self-ratings could also be used as the reference to categorize. Future research could consider including a six group model for categorization instead of a four group model, as Fleenor et al., (1996) explain this is necessary to fairly compare the various agreement groups.

Self-completion questionnaires can cause common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003), which can influence the validity of our findings. Examples of such are the "social desirability bias," which lead respondents to give answers that will appear to be desirable to others rather than the ones that represent their true feelings (Grimm, 2010). When conducting research on dyadic relationships, one understands how there is a high possibility for such biases to occur. Therefore, being aware of such biases is important in future research on LMX.

Further, temporal separation was used to reduce respondent's ability to use previous answers to fill in gaps and to prevent answering subsequent questions. Using a three-week delay often results in less correlations between the predictor construct and criterion construct, giving more valid answers and controlling for method biases (Podsakoff et al., 2003). However, such methods hold some limitations, such as the assumption that the true relationship between the construct is relatively stable over time, as well as respondent attrition. Such limitations should be kept in mind for future researchers before including temporal separation.

Another potential limitation to our survey could be language barriers. The original items used were in English, and thus, translation was not performed. This

could have increased the likelihood of misunderstandings and confusion, which in turn could have caused lowered reliability of the results.

Scales used to measure LMX have received criticism by leadership scholars (e.g., (Liden & Maslyn, 1998; Schriesheim et al., 1992). Some scholars believe that scales used today include a lack of construct validity, not measuring the exchange nor reciprocity within a LMX relationship. Dulebohn and colleagues' (2012) argue that "theoretical underpinning of LMX-7 is not based on the conceptualization of social exchange defined by Blau (1964)". Therefore, using LMX-7 could cause potential limitations for our study. Future researchers could consider if there are new and modern measures of LMX that to a greater extent measure the construct fully. Future research on LMX could look to Bernerth and his colleagues' (2007) updated measure that contains a greater focus on the social exchange within LMX relationships.

Future research on self-other agreement in perspective taking can look at what influences' ratings, in order to determine their accuracy better. Such aspects could be investigating individual differences and personality traits that influence self-ratings. Our research raises important unanswered questions about to what extent perspective taking could be associated with other organizational outcomes. Therefore, future research could investigate the concept of self-other agreement in perspective taking in relation to other organizational outcomes, such as creativity, motivation and performance.

Lastly, the relationship between self-awareness and self-other agreement is a perspective that would be interesting for future research. The utility of self-other agreement as a measure of self-awareness requires further investigation; If self-other agreement potentially could be an indicator of self-awareness, one could question why under-estimators are seen as effective in our study receiving high ratings of LMX and affective commitment.

9.0 Conclusion

Early authors have noted the importance of the self-other agreement and its outcomes (e.g. Yammarino & Atwater, 1997)., however this is the first contribution to the field that looks at self-other agreement in perspective taking as a potential antecedent of LMX. Our study results indicate how different ratings of perspective taking by leader and employee are related to employee's perception of LMX and

affective commitment. Throughout our analysis, we consider the complexities resulting from various perceptions of perspective taking between the different agreement groups. In addition to providing support for the positive relationship between LMX and affective commitment, our analysis also extended prior research by indicating a new meaningful relationship; self-other agreement in perspective taking can work as a potential antecedent of LMX. However, self-other agreement in perspective taking and its outcomes for individuals and organizations remain complex and to some degree unanswered. Despite being a small study, we hope a few of the findings can be used in maintaining and developing effective leader-member relationships that will further aid organizations in retaining employees.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Perspective taking measures

Questions to the leaders:

“On the job, I frequently try to take other people’s perspectives,”

“At work, I often imagine how other people are feeling,”

“On the job, I make an effort to see the world through others’ eyes,”

“At work, I regularly seek to understand others viewpoints”

Questions to the employees:

“On the job, your leader frequently tries to take other people’s perspectives”

“At work, your leader often imagine how other people are feeling”

“On the job, your leader tries to see the work through others eyes”

“At work, your leader seeks to understand other’s viewpoint”

Responses to all four items were made on 7-point scales (“Strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”)

Appendix 2: Leader-Member Exchange measures (LMX7)

“Do you know where you stand with your leader . . . do you usually know how satisfied your leader is with what you do?”

“How well does your leader understand your job problems and needs?”

“How well does your leader recognize your potential?”

“Regardless of how much formal authority he/she has built into his/her position, what are the chances that your leader would use his/her power to help you solve problems in your work?”

“Again, regardless of the amount of formal authority your leader has, what are the chances that he/she would “bail you out,” at his/her expense?”

“I have enough confidence in my leader that I would defend and justify his/her decision if he/she were not present to do so?”

“How would you characterize your working relationship with your leader?”

Continuous scale of sum of 5-point items (1 left to 5 right).

Appendix 3: Affective commitment measures

“I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization”

“I enjoy discussing my organization with people outside it”

“I really feel as if this organization’s problems are my own”

“I think that I could easily become as attached to another organization as I am to this one”

“I do not feel like “part of the family” at my organization”

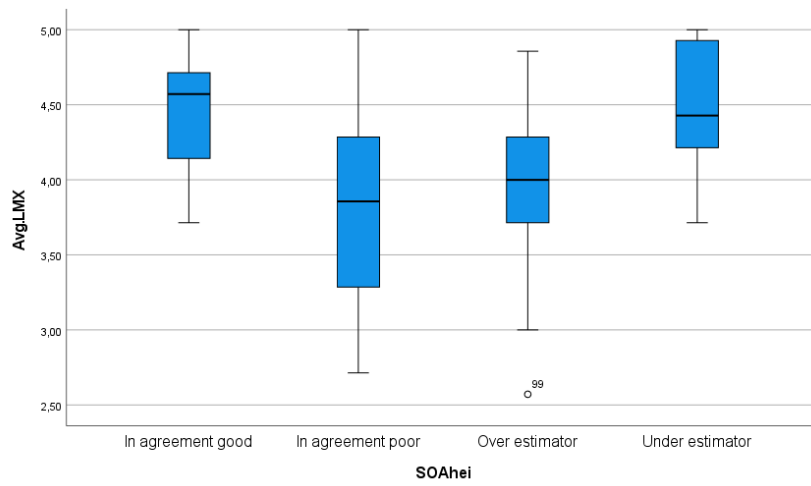
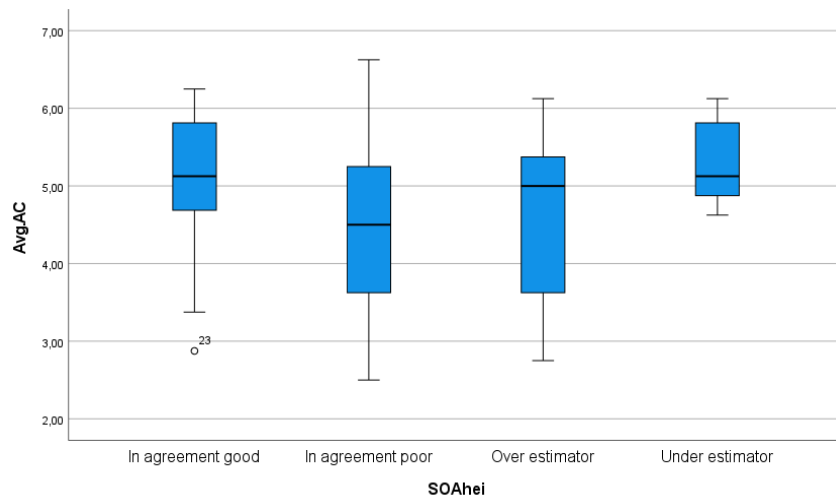
“I do not feel “emotionally attached” to this organization”

“This organization has a great deal of personal meaning to me”

“I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization”

Responses to all eight items were made on a 7-point Likert scale (“Strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”).

Appendix 4: Explore test of Outliers in data set



Appendix 5: Shapiro-Wilk test of Normality

		Tests of Normality					
		Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
SOAhei		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Avg.AC	In agreement good	,152	23	,185	,928	23	,099
	In agreement poor	,106	49	,200*	,978	49	,479
	Over estimator	,165	29	,042	,929	29	,053
	Under estimator	,178	15	,200*	,905	15	,112
Avg.LMX	In agreement good	,174	23	,068	,921	23	,070
	In agreement poor	,128	49	,045	,969	49	,222
	Over estimator	,181	29	,016	,938	29	,088
	Under estimator	,200	15	,107	,882	15	,051

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Appendix 6: Levene's Homogeneity of Variance

Tests of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Avg.AC	Based on Mean	2,851	3	112	,041
	Based on Median	2,035	3	112	,113
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	2,035	3	99,227	,114
	Based on trimmed mean	2,815	3	112	,043
Avg.LMX	Based on Mean	1,289	3	112	,282
	Based on Median	1,153	3	112	,331
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	1,153	3	97,027	,332
	Based on trimmed mean	1,263	3	112	,291

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Avg.AC	Between Groups	13,520	3	4,507	5,239	,002
	Within Groups	96,349	112	,860		
	Total	109,869	115			
Avg.LMX	Between Groups	10,182	3	3,394	11,817	<,001
	Within Groups	32,169	112	,287		
	Total	42,352	115			