A Quantitative Study of Relations-oriented Leader Behaviors Related to Voluntary Turnover Intention as Mediated by Leader-member Exchange

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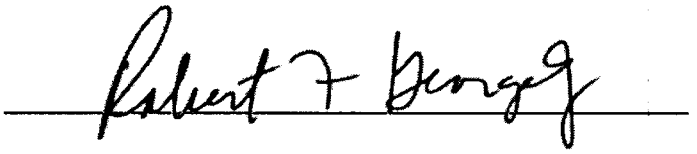

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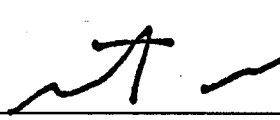

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Abstract

Voluntary turnover of valuable employees is costly in many ways to organizations. Organizational leaders should consider human resource development (HRD) practices to mitigate these expenses. Even the intention to quit without actual departure can be costly. The problem considered here was that there lacked research regarding the use of a specific set of leader behaviors to lower voluntary turnover intention (VTI) which in turn could reduce costs both pre-departure and post-departure. Leaders can learn effective use of appropriate behaviors, empowering the leader to actively participate in producing the desired goal of lower VTI. The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the direct relationships between five transformational leadership theory based relations-oriented behaviors and VTI and whether leader-member exchange quality (LMX) mediated this correlation. Leader relations-oriented behaviors are individually positively related to LMX, LMX is negatively related to VTI, but no study had examined the direct relationship between this set of behaviors and VTI, nor the mediation of those correlations by LMX. Results of such a study would inform HRD leadership development programs in the use of these behaviors and of how LMX is central to the program results increasing the likelihood of positive outcomes of lower VTI in the workforce. Zero-order correlations of (a) the five behaviors and VTI and (b) LMX and VTI were performed. First-order regression was performed for each behavior's correlated relationship to VTI as mediated by LMX. The 192 participants were salespeople drawn from both purchased email lists and attendees at sales training events; email and written invitations to participate led participants to a SurveyMonkey® web page containing the survey instrument. The primary results were finding correlation between VTI and six

variables as follows: supporting (β = -.46, $p < .01$), recognizing (β = -0.27, $p < .01$), developing (β = -0.41, $p < .01$), consulting (β = -0.44, $p < .01$), delegating (β = -0.39, $p < .01$), and LMX (β = -0.47, $p < .01$). LMX as a mediator explained percentages of the relationship between the five relations-oriented behaviors and VTI as follows: supporting (42%, $p < .001$), recognizing (100%, $p < .001$), developing (58%, $p < .001$), consulting (46%, $p < .001$), delegating (63%, $p < .001$). It was recommended that HRD professionals focus on helping leaders learn how to use the five studied behaviors so leaders interacting with each team member achieve the positive outcomes of (a) lower VTI, and (b) enhanced LMX quality. Use of the five leader behaviors would correlate with higher LMX which is shown to be a strong mediator of the relationship between the five behaviors and VTI. Researchers should replicate these results in occupations other than sales and also in geographies other than the United States. Further, LMX should be included as a possible mediator in studies of leadership behaviors and outcomes to test the strength of LMX theory as central to organizational leadership success rather than reliance on only the behavior to correlate with positive organizational outcomes.

This is dedicated to my wife, Anna, without whom I would have gone completely crazy during this dissertation process. By observing Anna as she earned a doctorate (Doctor of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine), I was able to keep on keeping on. Thank you.

Acknowledgements

I would first like to acknowledge the source of my inspiration throughout the coursework and dissertation process, my wife - Dr. Anna. We have all heard that behind every great man is a great woman, but in my case she led the way.

Second, the entire faculty of Northcentral University through these years has been very supportive and instructional. Mentor is an apropos title.

Third, my committee did what they should do: they let me go far enough out on a limb to get a bit scared of the whole process, and then they helped me find my way back. Dr. George was generous with his commentary throughout this journey. Dr. Terri Lituchy and Dr. Thomas Schaefer prodded me to find better questions, methods, and answers.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Dysfunctional employee turnover costs organizations direct hard-dollar outlays and presents multiple indirect negative outcomes (Wallace & Gaylor, 2012). Employee turnover compels leaders to expend valuable resources to select, recruit, induct, and train new employees. Voluntary employee turnover (VET) of highly paid management or skilled employees is especially costly to organizations (Park & Shaw, 2012). Nurses, for example, cost $49,000 per position to replace (Roche, Duffield, Homer, Buchan, & Dimtrelis, 2014). The leader must also contend with associated non-monetary costs negatively affecting organizational performance (Hur, 2013; Wallace & Gaylor, 2012). Deviant behaviors are associated with employees considering quitting including disengagement, leaving early, and vandalism. These deviant behaviors are negatively related to organizational citizenship, job performance, and organizational commitment resulting in loss of productivity and lower morale (Berry, Lelchook, & Clark, 2012; Christian & Ellis, 2014; Harris, Li, & Kirkman, 2013; Shim, Jo, & Hoover, 2015).

Leaders who understand the VET content and process anticipate the organizational challenges posed by VET (Maertz, Boyar, & Pearson, 2012). For example, leaders attend to HRD practices to improve leader-member exchange relationships (LMX) as LMX is negatively correlated with VET (DeConinck, 2011; Harris et al., 2013; Shuck, Twyford, Reio, & Shuck, 2014). Organizational behavior researchers study the content, process, and pathway of VET to describe relationships among organizational behavior constructs important to VET to inform HRD practices to lower dysfunctional VET (Chen, Wang & Tang, 2016; Dulebohn, Bommer, Liden, Brouer, & Ferris, 2011; Shim et al., 2015; Waldman et al., 2012; Watty-Benjamin & Udechukwu, 2014).

Two constructs important in describing VET are LMX and voluntary turnover intention (VTI). VTI describes an employee's behavioral intentions to quit (DeConinck, 2011), a form of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991). High VTI may be the indicator of the imminent departure of a valuable employee. Leaders interested in avoiding dysfunctional VET should act to lower VTI. Attention to LMX quality is one HRD area to consider for lowering VTI as VTI is positively correlated with VET and negatively with LMX (Ahmed, Ismail, Amin, & Ramzan, 2013; DeConinck, 2011; Hom, Mitchell, Lee, & Griffeth, 2012; Tse, Huang, & Lam, 2013; Wells & Peachey, 2011). Leader behaviors that positively correlate with LMX include five relations-oriented behaviors contained in transformational leadership theory (O'Donnell et al., 2012). However, whether using one, some, or all of these behaviors could result in lower VTI and the role of LMX in this pathway has not been shown in extant literature (Ahmed et al., 2013; O'Donnell et al., 2012; Wells & Peachey, 2011). If the VET pathway includes these five leader behaviors affecting LMX, in turn affecting VTI, then understanding the direct and indirect relationships between the five relations-oriented leader behaviors, LMX, and VTI is important. This supposition was the basis for this study. The study results can inform HRD practices to increase leader use of these five teachable behaviors potentially reducing the dysfunctional direct and indirect organizational costs associated with high-VTI disengaged employees (Hancock, Allen, Bosco, McDaniel, & Pierce, 2013; Shim et al., 2015).

Background

There is a significant body of recent research regarding voluntary employee turnover (VET) (Russell & Sell, 2012) and associated constructs. The constructs studied

included voluntary turnover intention (VTI) (Wells, Peachey, & Walker, 2014), leader-member exchange quality (LMX) (Martin, Guillaume, Thomas, Lee, & Epitropaki, 2015), and multiple antecedents to LMX quality (O'Donnell, Yukl, & Taber, 2012). This study regarded the relationships among these three constructs, a study not yet reported in the literature. VET is an action taken by an employee; it is an outcome motivated by multiple concerns, perceptions, and decisions (Wells et al., 2014). Understanding variables that are important to the employee in their decision-process to stay or leave current employment was at the heart of the research questions. This understanding could inform HRD practices in leadership development such as teaching leader-behavior concepts to improve organizational performance (Schmitt, Den Hartog & Belschak, 2016).

Leadership behaviors are highly correlated with individual follower outcomes (Mills, Boardley, Vella & Voight, 2016; O'Donnell et al., 2012). Research provides the basis for leadership training specific to improving organizational effectiveness by increasing follower attention to positive goals and reducing the incidence of negative behaviors especially regarding task goals (Mills et al., 2016; Sadideen, Weldon, Saadeddin, Loon & Kneebone, 2016). Proactivity, work engagement, employee voice, and personal initiative were all found to be positively related to teachable leadership behaviors contained in transformational leadership theory (Schmitt, Den Hartog & Belschak, 2016). It has been found that an outcome of positively viewed school superintend behaviors is better academic performance by educators (Schmitt et al., 2016). Findings that teachable leadership behaviors can improve organizational performance inform HRD practices in leadership development.

This research examined (a) five transformational leadership based relations-oriented behaviors as correlated with the outcome of VTI and (b) the degree of mediation of these correlations by LMX quality. This was important as high VTI may be the final indicator that a valued employee intends to depart so a leader would be interested in lowering VTI (DeConinck, 2011; Shim et al., 2015; Russell & Sell, 2012).While recent studies have found LMX and VTI negatively correlated (DeConinck, 2011) and relations-oriented behaviors and LMX quality positively correlated (O'Donnell et al., 2012) the correlations between relations-oriented leader behaviors and VTI, and the mediating role of LMX quality these correlations was not clearly understood (Ahmed et al., 2013; Wells & Peachey, 2011). New research was needed regarding these relationships to inform HRD practices in leadership development in leader behaviors leading to desired outcomes.

Statement of the Problem

High voluntary turnover intention (VTI) may be the final indicator that a valued employee intends to depart costing the organization valuable resources (DeConinck, 2011; Russell & Sell, 2012; Shim et al., 2015). Also, high VTI is associated with costly negative behaviors and attitudes related to employee disengagement (Dulebohn et al., 2011; Shim et al., 2015). While previous studies have found LMX and VTI negatively correlated (DeConinck, 2011) and five relations-oriented leader behaviors positively correlated with LMX quality (O'Donnell et al., 2012) the correlation between each relations-oriented leader behavior and VTI, and mediation by LMX quality on these correlations was not clearly described (Ahmed et al., 2013; Wells & Peachey, 2011). Effective HRD practices designed for reducing VTI would be informed by greater

knowledge of how leader behaviors relate to VTI directly and indirectly (Shuck et al., 2014), but only recently has there been research and suggestions for further research regarding antecedents to VTI (DeConinck, 2011; Tse et al., 2013; Wells & Peachey, 2011). For example, a 2011 study of professional sports coaches found a negative relationship between leader behaviors and VTI and suggested additional research into mediating variables such as LMX (Wells & Peachey, 2011). A multi-employer correlational study of sales professionals found LMX quality negatively related to VTI and suggested a single organization sample for future research (DeConinck, 2011). A single employer sample in Asia found employees' organizational citizenship behavior reduced VTI and suggested applying this work to a Western culture (Tse et al., 2013). Combining DeConinck (2011), Tse et al. (2013), and Wells and Peachey (2011) discussions on limitations and proposed future research provides the basis for this study of the direct relationship between relations-oriented behaviors and VTI and whether LMX quality mediates that relationship.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the correlation between five relations-oriented behaviors and VTI and whether LMX mediated these correlations. The five independent variables in this study were the five relations-oriented leader behaviors contained in transformational leadership theory namely supporting, recognizing, developing, consulting, and delegating (O'Donnell et al., 2012). These five behaviors are subscales of the broader composite leader-behavior construct of transformational leadership behavior previously studied (Wells & Peachey, 2011). The hypothesized mediating variable was LMX quality (DeConinck, 2011; O'Donnell et al.,

2012). The dependent variable was member VTI (DeConinck, 2011). LMX was also an independent variable as required by mediation analysis. The dependent variable was member VTI (DeConinck, 2011). Regression analysis was used to determine zero-order correlations and first-order mediation. LMX quality, defined as the scale variable describing the social exchange relationship between a supervisor and subordinate (O'Donnell et al., 2012), was hypothesized to mediate the correlation between each of the five relations-oriented leader behavior situational variables studied and the outcome of VTI as the dependent variable (DeConinck, 2011; O'Donnell et al., 2012). This research utilized three survey instruments in part or whole as used in previous studies to determine whether relationships exist between these sets of variables. A statistical analysis using IBM® SPSS® Amos™ v. 24 including the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2016) for multiple regressions provided descriptions of the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable in pairs and in also in trios to include LMX quality as a mediating variable. This research surveyed sales professionals regarding (a) their leader's relations-oriented behaviors from their perspective, (b) their self-reported exchange relationship with their leader, and (c) their self-reported behavioral intentions regarding change of employment. Sales professionals were chosen as the population to sample to extend previous research regarding LMX quality and VTI and sales professionals (DeConinck, 2011). Based on G*Power 3.1.9.2 (Faul, 2014), a sample size calculation tool, the minimum number of participants for a correlation analysis with this study's multiple variables was 138 (Liu, Loudermilk, & Simpson, 2014; Tomczak, Tomczak, Kleka, & Lew, 2014). The study had 192 valid responses. The online survey consisted of three parts: (a) a twenty question portion of the Management Practices Survey to measure

five transformational leadership based relations-oriented behaviors (O'Donnell et al., 2012; Yukl, 2015); (b) the full twelve question LMX-MDM questionnaire to measure LMX quality of vertical dyads (Liden, 2015; O'Donnell et al., 2012); and (c) the full four question Voluntary Turnover Intention Survey questionnaire (DeConinck, 2011, 2015; DeConinck & Stillwell, 2004) to measure the behavioral intentions of a member regarding terminating current employment voluntarily (DeConinck, 2011). The results of the study contributed to the body of knowledge on leader behaviors and their relationships to VTI by expanding the theoretical framework of the voluntary turnover model as contained in LMX theory (DeConinck, 2011). The results described the correlations of the five relations-oriented behaviors to VTI and the full or partial mediation by LMX quality of each correlation.

Theoretical Framework

The primary theoretical framework for this study was based on leader-member exchange theory as it applied to the voluntary employee turnover model. Leader-member exchange theory is a relationship-based description of how supervisors and subordinates accomplish organizational tasks together (O'Donnell et al., 2012; Walumbwa et al., 2011). LMX exists in each dyad of leader and member ranging from high to low quality (O'Donnell et al., 2012). Recent research has shown LMX is positively related to each of the five transformational leadership based relations-oriented leader behaviors (Mahsud, Yukl, & Prussia, 2010; O'Donnell et al., 2012) and LMX is negatively related to the outcome of voluntary turnover intention (DeConinck, 2011; Tse et al., 2013; Wells & Peachey, 2011).

Relations-oriented leader behaviors are constructs contained in transformational

leadership theory describing leader behaviors associated with improving the relationship between leader and member. These behaviors are described as encouraging, recognizing, skill development, consulting on decisions, and empowerment (O'Donnell et al., 2012; Zhu et al., 2011). Transformational leadership theory first described transformational leadership as appealing to followers' intrinsic values to motivate followers rather than the extrinsic rewards described in transactional leadership theory (Bass, 1985). Recent research studied relations-oriented behaviors as a subscale of the composite construct consisting of leader behaviors described by transformational leadership theory. These behaviors affect the leader-member exchange relationship between the leader and the follower; these behaviors are namely supporting, recognizing, developing, consulting, and delegating (Littrell, 2013; Mahsud et al., 2010; O'Donnell et al., 2012; Yukl, 2012). These behaviors create cooperation between leaders and members and also within work-groups described as high LMX quality.

Voluntary turnover models vary in their description of both content and process of turnover (Russell & Sell, 2012). VTI is a content construct derived from behavioral intention theory and describes the state of mind of an employee who is on the pathway to voluntary termination; the employee has the intention in some measure to quit (DeConinck, 2011; Hur, 2013; Vanderpool & Way, 2013). VTI is an antecedent of actual turnover as well as other negative organizational outcomes (DeConinck, 2011). VTI is an outcome of LMX quality with VTI and LMX negatively correlated (DeConinck, 2011). More fully describing the relationship between the constructs of relations-oriented leader behaviors, VTI, and LMX quality as they apply to LMX theory could reduce costly turnover and negative behaviors related to high VTI (DeConinck, 2011). Data gathered

could inform HRD practices to improve leader use of relations-oriented leader behaviors that could result in reducing voluntary employee turnover as well as employee disengagement.

What has now been described through this study within this theoretical framework is the mediating role of LMX quality on the negative correlation between relations-oriented leader behaviors and VTI. The purpose of this research fit within the theoretical framework of LMX theory as this research was a study to extend understanding of LMX theory primarily through describing the mediating role of LMX quality. The finding of this mediation explained in part the correlation between relations-oriented behaviors and VTI. The hypotheses are diagrammed in Figure 1.

Research Questions

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the correlation between five relations-oriented behaviors and VTI and whether these correlations were mediated by LMX quality. Research had found a positive correlation between each of these five relations-oriented leader behaviors and LMX (O'Donnell et al., 2012; Yukl, O'Donnell, & Taber, 2009); LMX quality had been found negatively correlated with VTI (DeConinck, 2011). However, the literature was lacking in descriptions of correlations between these five relations-oriented leader behaviors and VTI and also lacking in descriptions of mediation by LMX quality of correlations between these five relations-oriented leader behavior and VTI. The theoretical implication of this study was to add to LMX theory and VET theory by combining work done specifically on relations-oriented behaviors as antecedents to LMX with work done specifically on VTI as an outcome of LMX quality, thus broadening the knowledge of relationships between constructs in the

voluntary turnover model and LMX theory. This broadening would increase predictive accuracy of the model (Bryman, 2012; Cozby, 2009). Improved theory better informs leader-behavior based interventions to decrease inefficient VET and associated negative disengaged employee behaviors by providing a basis for interventions at multiple points in time and during multiple phases of relationship building for reducing VTI. The research questions answered in this study were worded to ask about multiple correlations and mediation among constructs as follows:

RQ1. What is the relationship between supporting behavior and VTI?

RQ2. What is the relationship between recognizing behavior and VTI?

RQ3. What is the relationship between developing behavior and VTI?

RQ4. What is the relationship between consulting behavior and VTI?

RQ5. What is the relationship between delegating behavior and VTI?

RQ6. What is the relationship between LMX quality and VTI?

RQ7. Does LMX quality mediate the relationship, if any, between supporting behavior and VTI?

RQ8. Does LMX quality mediate the relationship, if any, between recognizing behavior and VTI?

RQ9. Does LMX quality mediate the relationship, if any, between developing behavior and VTI?

RQ10. Does LMX quality mediate the relationship, if any, between consulting behavior and VTI?

RQ11. Does LMX quality mediate the relationship, if any, between delegating behavior and VTI?

Hypotheses

$H1_0$: There is no negative relationship between supporting behavior and VTI.

$H1_a$: There is a negative relationship between supporting behavior and VTI.

$H2_0$: There is no negative relationship between recognizing behavior and VTI.

$H2_a$: There is a negative relationship between recognizing behavior and VTI.

$H3_0$: There is no negative relationship between developing behavior and VTI.

$H3_a$: There is a negative relationship between developing behavior and VTI.

$H4_0$: There is no negative relationship between consulting behavior and VTI.

$H4_a$: There is a negative relationship between consulting behavior and VTI.

$H5_0$: There is no negative relationship between delegating behavior and VTI.

$H5_a$: There is a negative relationship between delegating behavior and VTI.

$H6_0$: There is no negative relationship between LMX quality and VTI.

$H6_a$: There is a negative relationship between LMX quality and VTI.

$H7_0$: LMX quality does not mediate the relationship between supporting behavior and VTI.

$H7_a$: LMX quality does mediate the relationship between supporting behavior and VTI.

$H8_0$: LMX quality does not mediate the relationship between recognizing behavior and VTI.

$H8_a$: LMX quality does mediate the relationship between recognizing behavior and VTI.

$H9_0$: LMX quality does not mediate the relationship between developing behavior and VTI.

$H9_a$: LMX quality does mediate the relationship between developing behavior and VTI.

$H10_0$: LMX quality does not mediate the relationship between consulting behavior and VTI.

$H10_a$: LMX quality does mediate the relationship between consulting behavior and VTI.

$H11_0$: LMX quality does not mediate the relationship between delegating behavior and VTI.

$H11_a$: LMX quality does mediate the relationship between delegating behavior and VTI.

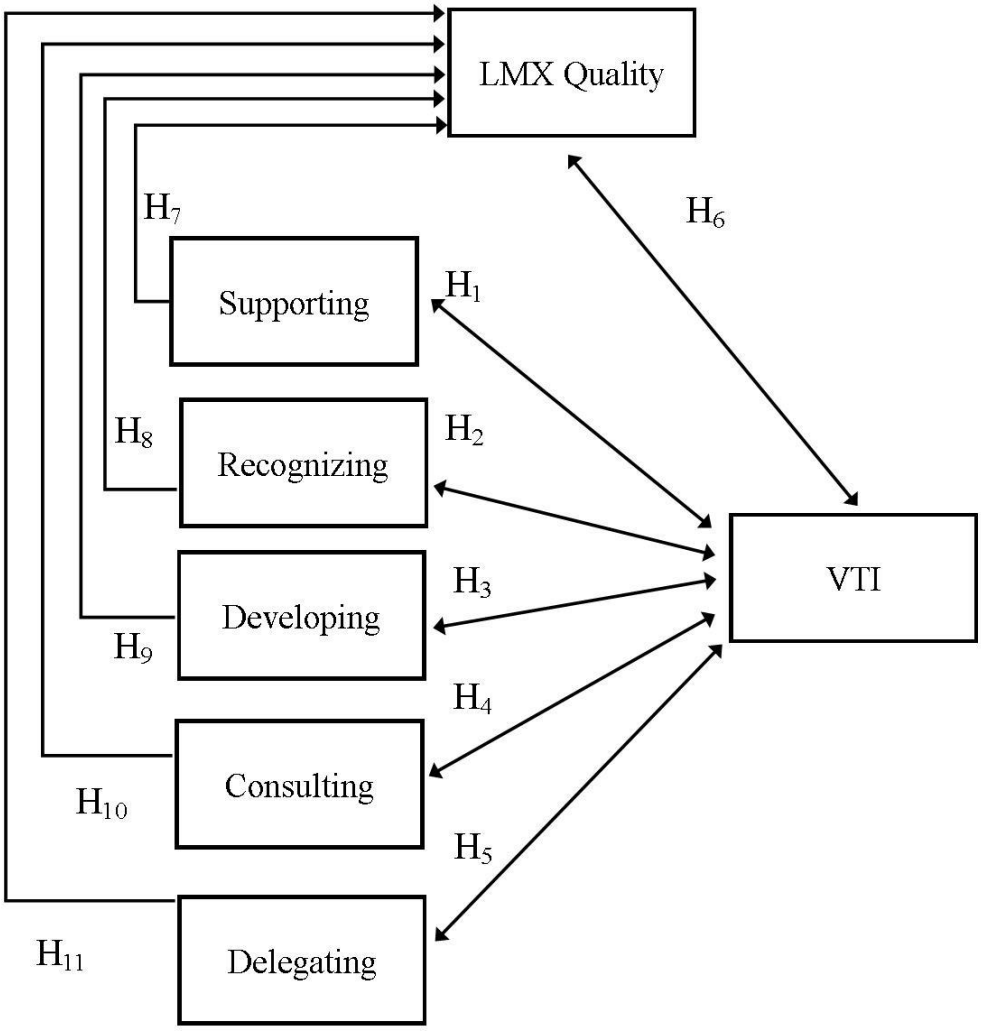

Figure 1. Hypothesized correlations between relations-oriented behaviors and VTI and mediations by LMX quality of these correlations

Nature of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the correlation between five relations-oriented behaviors and VTI and whether LMX mediated these correlations. The five independent variables in this study were the five relations-oriented leader behaviors contained in transformational leadership theory namely supporting, recognizing, developing, consulting, and delegating (O'Donnell et al., 2012). These five behaviors are subscales of the broader composite leader-behavior construct of transformational leadership behavior previously studied (Wells & Peachey, 2011). The hypothesized mediating variable was LMX quality (DeConinck, 2011; O'Donnell et al., 2012). LMX was also an independent variable as required by mediation analysis. The dependent variable was member VTI (DeConinck, 2011).

This quantitative correlational and mediational research collected and examined data from a nonprobability cross-sectional sampling via and ex post facto questionnaire. The data was used to find (a) correlations between relations-oriented leader behaviors and VTI (b) correlation between LMX and VTI, and (c) mediating effects of LMX quality on the correlations between relations-oriented behaviors and VTI. A quantitative research design was appropriate because the variables considered in this study were quantitative, wherein each variable can take on a value that represents the measure of the constructs and was numerical and ordinal in nature (Bryman, 2012). A nonprobability sampling does not provide data for valid analysis of the possible variance in the population variables. While this deficiency was noted, the convenience and low cost of the voluntary nonprobability sampling were beneficial to this study (Levine, Stehpah, Szabat, 2014; Wilson, 2014).

The research questions posed asked about characteristics existing in the population, a descriptor of ex post facto methods. Previous research regarding relations-oriented leader behaviors, LMX, and VTI that were used for comparisons to findings of this study followed this method (DeConinck, 2011; O'Donnell et al., 2012). Statistical analysis provided descriptions of relationships between variables in the same manner as previous research. These descriptions were discussed regarding strength and direction and compared to previous studies.

Leadership studies utilize quantitative cross-sectional research ex post facto methods to a significant extent (Bryman, 2011; Gardner, Lowe, Moss, & Cogliser, 2010). Cross-sectional studies are more prevalent than longitudinal designs (Gardner et al., 2010). Recent work in leadership has increasingly utilized qualitative and experimental methods (Bryman, 2011; Gardner et al., 2010), and researchers have suggested that extending their quantitative work utilizing qualitative methods would provide valuable data (O'Donnell et al., 2012). However, experimental quantitative methods, qualitative, and mixed methods were not considered appropriate for this study as the research questions for this study are derived primarily from work done previously using cross-sectional data from questionnaires obtained from a nonprobability sample regarding characteristics previously existing in the sample members. This was a limiting factor of this study.

Significance of the Study

Models of VET agree that VET theory describes a process with identifiable steps (Allen et al., 2013; Hom et al., 2013; Russell, 2013). The models also agree that there are content variables to be considered in understanding why an employee takes those steps

(Allen et al., 2013; Hom et al., 2013; Russell, 2013). They do not agree completely on what these steps are, the order steps are taken, whether steps can be skipped or returned to, and what content variables to consider (Allen et al., 2013; Hom et al., 2013; Russell, 2013). This agreement and non-agreement in the literature, while interesting, were not important to this study. Rather what was important was the agreement in the models that before quitting, a rational employee exhibits the intention to terminate such as described by the construct VTI (Allen et al., 2013; Hom et al., 2013; Russell, 2013).

The literature regarding VET theory supported the need to understand better the relationships among constructs in voluntary employee turnover theory (DeConinck, 2011; Hom et al., 2012). While the constructs included in this study were individually well defined, as were the relationships among pairs and in some cases the mediating and moderating effects of some variable between construct correlations, there was no conclusive study specific to the interest of this study. Relations-oriented behaviors from transformational leadership theory have been related to LMX quality, as has LMX quality to VTI. The literature suggested extending theory by relating relations-oriented behaviors directly to VTI and examining whether LMX quality mediated this correlation, if any. The importance of understanding VET through modeling is to inform leadership and HRD to mitigate costly behavior, both turnover costs and costs associated with high VTI including lateness, stealing, and drug use on the job. If relations-oriented behaviors correlate with VTI negatively, and LMX quality mediates these correlations, then leaders can behave in ways to improve LMX quality to decrease VTI and thus decrease the negative organizational outcomes of high employee VTI. There is no recent research

reported regarding the research questions as a group; this study remedied that to some extent.

Definition of Key Terms

Exchange relationship. An exchange relationship is a concept describing the process whereby an understanding between a leader and member is reached as to the expectations and roles of each other (O'Donnell et al., 2012).

Sales Professional. A sales professional for the purposes here was a person engaged for compensation in selling products and services as a primary function; managerial functions, if any, were secondary (DeConinck, 2011).

Leader. Leader is used interchangeably in the literature with superior and supervisor in describing one participant in the leader-member dyad; leader is used together with member as the participants in the dyad (O'Donnell et al., 2012). A leader has duties including "providing vision, direction, and inspiration" (Warrick, 2011, p. 14). While leader can be defined broadly to include informal and formal roles (Haber, 2012), the term was used here in the context of the formal reporting relationship of a sales professional to their supervisor.

Leader-member exchange. Leader-member exchange (LMX) is a relationship-based approach to understanding how supervisors and subordinates accomplish organizational tasks together (O'Donnell et al., 2012; Walumbwa, Cropanzano, & Goldman, 2011). LMX exists in each dyad of leader and member with quality differing from high-quality relationship to low-quality (O'Donnell et al., 2012). LMX is affected by variables such as relations-oriented leader behaviors and perceived organizational justice (Mahsud et al., 2010) and has outcomes such as voluntary turnover intention

(DeConinck, 2011).

Member. Member is used interchangeably in the literature with subordinate and follower in describing half of a leader-member dyad (O'Donnell et al., 2012).

Relations-oriented behaviors. Relations-oriented behaviors are constructs in transformational leadership theory describing leader behaviors associated with improving the relationship between leader and member described as encouraging, recognizing, skill development, consulting on decisions, and empowerment (O'Donnell et al., 2012; Zhu, Avolio, Riggio, & Sosik, 2011).

Superior. Superior is used interchangeably in the literature with leader and supervisor in describing a dyad (O'Donnell et al., 2012).

Supervisor. Supervisor is a term used interchangeably in the literature with superior and leader in describing a dyad (O'Donnell et al., 2012).

Subordinate. Subordinate is used interchangeably in the literature with member in describing a dyad (O'Donnell et al., 2012).

Vertical dyad. A vertical dyad is a pair of persons consisting of a superior and an immediate subordinate (O'Donnell et al., 2012) predominantly studied in business unit relationships (Mahsud et al., 2010). In LMX theory this forms the basic unit of organizational leadership study and analysis (O'Donnell et al., 2012).

Voluntary turnover intention. Voluntary turnover intention (VTI) is a construct derived from behavioral intention theory contained in the theory of planned behavior. VTI describes the state of mind of an employee on the pathway to voluntary termination; the employee has the intention in some measure to quit (DeConinck, 2011; Hur, 2013; Vanderpool & Way, 2013). In addition to this construct being measured as an element of

the VET process, VTI has also been used as a proxy for measuring actual turnover but was not so used in this research (DeConinck, 2011; James & Mathew, 2012; Vanderpool & Way, 2013).

Summary

LMX theory provided the framework for this research. LMX quality is central to whether members work well with leaders to accomplish the leader's goals (O'Donnell et al., 2012). Assuming the leader's goals are consistent with organizational goals, high-quality LMX helps accomplish the organizational goals as well. Antecedents to LMX quality are studied to understand how better quality (or worse) LMX relationships develop (Mahsud et al., 2010); what are the inputs to LMX quality? TL as a multi-dimensional construct is positively related to LMX quality (Wells & Peachey, 2011). However, TL theory contains many leader behaviors and characteristics, so researchers studied subsets of these TL behaviors and characteristics to more specifically identify constructs of transformational leadership theory correlated with LMX quality. The five elations-oriented leader behaviors studied here are a subset of these transformational leadership behaviors a leader might employ to affect LMX quality to better meet organizational goals (Yukl, 2012). It has been shown that these five relations-oriented leader behaviors are correlated with LMX quality positively as antecedents to high-quality LMX relationships (O'Donnell et al., 2012).

One organizational goal researchers studied was the goal of lowering VTI. VTI is a construct in VET theory describing the behavioral intentions of an employee considering terminating their current employment (DeConinck, 2011). Organizational leaders desire lower VTI to (a) reduce negative behaviors employees with high VTI while

still employed (Hancock et al., 2013; Shim et al., 2015) and (b) to mitigate the high direct and indirect resource costs associated with actual terminations and replacements of valuable employees (Hester, 2013; Wallace & Gaylor, 2012). VET theory currently integrates both the process and content of voluntary turnover including leadership behaviors and characteristics affecting turnover (Allen et al., 2014; Waldman et al., 2012). What has been found is TL as a multi-dimensional construct is negatively related to VTI in followers (Wells & Peachey, 2011) and LMX quality is negatively related to VTI in followers (DeConinck, 2011). What had not been shown in the extant literature was how the five studied relations-oriented leader behaviors as a subset of transformational leadership behaviors correlated with VTI, and whether LMX quality as affected by relations-oriented leader behaviors mediated the correlation between these five behaviors and VTI. This study reported on these relationships. Understanding the correlations and the mediation found could inform HRD practices that might enhance a leader's direct ability through their behavior to positively affect organizational behavior to better meet organizational goals such as lowering VTI.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

While there is a significant body of research regarding voluntary employee turnover (VET) including voluntary turnover intention (VTI), leader-member exchange quality (LMX), and antecedents to LMX quality, newest research focused on combinations of these previously studied constructs to explain more fully their inter-relationships. VET is an outcome, an action taken by an employee. That action is motivated by multiple concerns, perceptions, and decisions taken. Understanding factors that are important to the employee in their decision to stay or leave current employment is at the heart of the research questions. Turnover has been described as the combination of decision-making and the set of behaviors indicating possible turnover (Hom et al., 2012). Of interest to this study were the relationships among seven constructs namely LMX quality, VTI, and the five relations-oriented leader behaviors of supporting, recognizing, developing, consulting, and delegating. The study examined five transformational leadership based relations-oriented behaviors correlated with VTI and the degree of mediation of these correlations by LMX quality. High VTI may be the final indicator that a valued employee intends to depart (DeConinck, 2011; Shim et al., 2015; Russell & Sell, 2012). While previous studies have found LMX and VTI negatively correlated (DeConinck, 2011) and relations-oriented behaviors positively correlated with LMX quality (O'Donnell et al., 2012) the correlation of relations-oriented leader behaviors and VTI, and mediation by LMX quality on these correlations was not clearly understood (Ahmed et al., 2013; Wells & Peachey, 2011).

The literature review is organized into four parts. First is a discussion of the importance of studying turnover as a set of organizational behaviors critical to

organizational success. Second is a review of theory development consisting of (a) LMX theory as the theoretical framework for this study, (b) transformational leadership theory as the basis for the relations-oriented leader behaviors studied, (c) VET theory development in the current era that includes the beginnings of content theory evolving to the current integrated models, and (d) planned behavior theory containing the constructs describing behavioral intentions including VTI. Thirdly, this literature review discusses the constructs of interest namely transformational leadership theory based relations-oriented leader behaviors, LMX quality, and VTI. The fourth section argued the importance of this study as theory development in organizational leadership theory as required of doctoral level work.

Documentation

The majority of articles for this literature review were found using search engines on databases subscribed to by Northcentral University. Some articles were contained in edited books; other references are to researcher authored books. The majority of research articles referenced were published in the past five years; however, foundational works reach back as far as 1958 to provide the background necessary to understand theory development and the current state of theory in comparison.

Significance of the Research

The negative effects of VET include both the well-documented direct costs of replacement (Hester, 2013; Wallace & Gaylor, 2012) and less well understood indirect costs such as loss of competitiveness and effect on organizational culture (Shuck et al., 2014). Disengaged employees' withdrawal behaviors and attitudes prior to VET are also costly; these costs have been studied less than the costs of actual turnover (Christian &

Ellis, 2014). Roche et al.'s (2014) longitudinal study of turnover in medical wards in Australia reported the large capital cost to organizations due to turnover averaging over $49,000 per full-time position filled. Recruiting, training, and temporary replacement personnel are direct costs of employee turnover. The study identified and collected data on seventeen pre-hire activities, an indication of the intense resource requirements of filling a vacated position. A majority (60% on average) of the direct pre-hire replacement costs were found to be temporary replacement labor. Employers who are filling positions that are not day-to-day critical may not have as high a cost associated with temporary replacement personnel. Termination costs were found to be 25% of the cost of turnover on average while indirect costs including loss of productivity and training needs accounted for another 22% on average. In total, the calculated costs of turnover were approximately 100% of annual compensation which when applied to the 15% annual turnover rate in the study equates to a 15% additional staffing for the job to be done. Lowering turnover rates would positively affect a profitability or other measures of organizational success.

How turnover affects an organization depends on moderating factors such as the type of turnover (e.g. seasonal, voluntary, involuntary), how resulting costs are measured (e.g. customer satisfaction, safety, financial results), and organizational context (e.g. size, geography, industry) (Park & Shaw, 2012). Of interest to this study is the effect of turnover as discussed via social capital theory (Park & Shaw, 2012). LMX quality is the social exchange based social capital relationship that develops between a leader and member (O'Donnell et al., 2012). Turnover by definition breaks the dyadic link that was built up over time between leader and member. The new dyad must spend time and effort

developing a new social exchange resulting in potentially lower performance until a high-quality LMX relationship develops, if ever. On the other hand, if the employment termination also terminates a low-quality LMX relationship, this could provide an opportunity for organizational improvement if the new relationship develops into a high LMX quality relationship.

This study was interested in voluntary employee terminations rather than all terminations, specifically the behavioral intentions of an employee regarding termination as described by the construct VTI (DeConinck, 2011; Wells & Peachey, 2011). Studying VTI was important because the best employees are desirable candidates by industry competitors so understanding these employees' frames of mind provides a basis for leader intervention prior to actual VET (Hom et al., 2012). HRD practices can be enhanced by an awareness of how VTI affects attitudes, behaviors, and outcomes (Shuck et al., 2014) and how leader behaviors and other constructs related to LMX relate to VTI. Higher VTI increases VET and also increases costly organizational deviance behaviors such as drug use on the job and stealing employer property (Christian & Ellis, 2014). VTI as a cognitive state for an individual may contribute to that employee's willingness to break rules as this rule breaking may no longer have perceived strong consequences. Along with lowered personally perceived standards of behavior, employee engagement also decreases with increased VTI resulting in an employee's inattention to positive organizational outcomes (Shuck et al., 2014). Studies have shown VTI positively related to negative withdrawal behaviors including lateness, lowered organizational citizenship, and absence (Shapira-Lishchinsky & Tsemach, 2014). Leaders benefit from studies of VET that provide models from which conclusions can be drawn to inform leadership and

HRD practices to reduce direct and indirect costs of the turnover process and associated dysfunctional withdrawal behaviors and related outcomes (Watty-Benjamin & Udechukwu, 2014).

The interrelationship of constructs in VET theory describes pathways to termination. For example, relations-oriented leader behaviors contained in transformational leadership theory are positively related to LMX quality (O'Donnell et al., 2012) and LMX quality is negatively related to VTI (DeConinck, 2011). While the composite construct transformational leadership has been shown to be negatively related to voluntary turnover (Tse et al., 2013), previous studies have not separated the behaviors contained in transformational leadership to apply to either VET or VTI. Separating the relations-oriented behaviors from the change-oriented behaviors contained in transformational leadership is critical in understanding how categories of behaviors as well as constructs contained in those categories affect outcomes to inform leaders to further organizational goals (O'Donnell et al., 2012). These constructs are currently studied by researchers and have developed along with VET theory.

Leader-Member Exchange Theory

Theory development. Leader-member exchange (LMX) is a social relationship-based approach to understanding how supervisors and subordinates accomplish organizational tasks together; this concept replaced average leadership style in organizational leadership thinking (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). An individualized relationship is built between the leader and member to work together towards organizational goals rather than the leader having one style for everyone, even if in appearance the leader does treat everyone in the same manner. Studies in this area did not

find support for the Ohio State and Michigan studies on supervisory behavior that states supervisory relationships are uniform; rather there was differentiation within work-units on how supervisors related to subordinates (Henderson, Liden, Glibkowski, & Chaudhry, 2009)**.** LMX theory is a relationship-based approach to understanding how vertical dyads consisting of a leader (supervisor) and a member (subordinate) accomplish organizational tasks together (O'Donnell et al., 2012).

Social relationships on which LMX theory is based develop over time and pass through phases named stranger, acquaintance, and maturity in LMX literature (Notgrass, 2014). The relationship develops depending on inputs from the supervisor and receptivity of the subordinate as well as subordinate actions to affect leader perception. The phases moved from transactional to transformational; movement was from self-interest motivations to reciprocity and team-building based on intrinsic values (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Liden & Maslyn, 1998; Martin et al., 2015).

Empirical evidence showed a positive relationship between high LMX and high leadership effectiveness. Leaders who wanted appropriate results would develop high LMX relationships with each subordinate one dyad at a time. Subordinates would respond and produce outcomes; desirable outcomes improved LMX quality while undesired outcomes would act to maintain or lower current LMX quality (Gerstner & Day, 1997; Henderson et al., 2009; Sun et al., 2013). Researchers focused on antecedents to LMX quality to understand the independent variables affecting the dependent variable of LMX quality resulting in greater or lesser leader behaviors such as delegation or consulting (Yukl & Fu, 1999). LMX is viewed from the three levels of leader, relationship, and follower. Particular attention is paid to leader perceptions of the

relationship as related to utilization of effective management techniques including leader behaviors associated with high LMX quality.

Graen and Scandura (1987) approached the dyadic relationship as a psychological question to model how a leader and a member (manager and subordinate) create a relationship to organize work to accomplish unstructured tasks. They described the relationship of having three phases, namely role taking, role making, and role routinization; failure at a later phase causes a return to the next earlier phase. In role taking, the leader provides structure to the unstructured task and the member reacts. How the member acts upon the role offered by the leader is important to the dyadic relationship development as the leader is observing the member's actions judging if these actions build the trust required to move to role making.

Role making develops from sufficient interactions working together on unstructured tasks in the role taking phase to evolve how the two will interact on future tasks. The role development is not necessarily explicit or discussed by the leader or member. A trust relationship develops that facilitates (a) the leader and member anticipating the manner each will act towards the tasks, and (b) exchanging valuable resources (e.g. time, money, training, internal support) to accomplish the tasks set before the dyad. Graen and Scandura (1987) based much of their theory on the findings that rewards from the leader are part of the role development, formal rewards are not necessarily the most important rewards a leader can bestow for relationship development (Graen & Scandura, 1987). Informal rewards such as better work environment or assignments, mentoring from their leader, exhibitions of loyalty by the leader affect LMX

role development (Martin et al., 2015), showing that both transformational and transactional behaviors affect LMX quality (O'Donnell et al., 2012).

Role routinization develops as time has presented sufficient role development opportunities. There is an implicit agreement between the leader and member of how their dyad will approach and accomplish unstructured tasks. This is an agreement built on trust developed from leader and member observation that models behaviors for both the leader and member. The leader and member can anticipate what needs to be done, what resources are needed, and which participant in the dyad will do which parts of the total task. They trust that the other half of the dyad will act as expected (Martin et al., 2015).

LMX quality was first considered as a unidimensional construct measuring the level of quality in the social exchange relationship. LMX-7 is an instrument developed by Graen and Uhl-Bien in 1995 as a seven-item questionnaire scored on a five-point Likert scale resulting in a single score of LMX quality. LMX-7 was designed to score the relationship between the leader and member from both points of view rather than a single focus on the leader and leadership style. LMX-7 has Cronbach's alpha consistently in the 80%-90% range for internal consistency indicating a high degree of reliability that the seven items are testing for the same quality (O'Donnell et al., 2012).

Leader-member Exchange – Multidimensional (LMX-MDM) (Liden & Maslyn, 1998) is another measure of leader-member exchange. LMX-MDM was developed to capture a greater range of follower psychological perceptions of leader behaviors and attributes than LMX-7 due to a developing body of work indicating LMX quality as multi-dimensional rather than unidimensional (Liden & Maslyn, 1998). The construct consists of four dimensions namely affect, loyalty, contribution, and professional respect

(Liden & Maslyn. 1998). The multi-dimensional view of LMX quality reflects the research suggesting LMX quality can be developed not only through the tasks worked by the dyad (comprising the contribution dimension), but may also develop based on mutual liking (affect), whether the leader and member are loyal to each other (loyalty), or having member respect regarding their leader's professional expertise, competence, actions, and standing (professional respect) (Liden & Maslyn, 1998). Thorough item development, testing, and analysis showed that LMX is multi-dimensional in that the four dimensions described do contribute to the total LMX quality and can be separated for deeper analysis of the dyadic relationship (Liden & Masly, 1998). This validity has been confirmed in studies that were interested in the multi-dimensional qualities such as which dimension of LMX quality is related to organizational citizenship to understand better of how LMX quality develops (Martin et al., 2015).

The dyadic social exchange relationship basis of LMX theory requires researcher as a multi-level examination of both participants and also the relationship they have together developed. Approaching leadership studies from a multi-level approach was motivated by the inability to easily classify emerging leadership theories based on concepts such as exchange relationships and empowerment (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Leader behaviors are constructs examined at the leader level of LMX quality. Some behaviors have direct effects on LMX quality while others do not (O'Donnell et al., 2012).

Recent work by Buch (2015) regarding LMX described two subscales of LMX quality, those of social and economic exchange, SLMX and ELMX respectively. This conceptualization of two distinct measures contributing to LMX measurement proceeded

from the discussion that these two aspects represent two different qualities in a leader-member relationship. SLMX refers to the affective dimensions of a relationship where the leader and member find a mutually agreed upon level of commitment through loyalty and respect. ELMX refers to the transactional aspects of this relationship, the quid pro quo where the leader and member agree on what is to be done and what the reward is. ELMX describes a developing exchange relationship, but ELMX differs from the long-term nature of SLMX-based relationships. An ELMX-based relationship develops potentially much faster and lasts a shorter duration (Buch, 2015). This duality does echo the multi-dimensionality of LMX-MDM, but is being utilized not to describe LMX quality, but utilized to examine relationships along these two dimensions separately (Kuvaas, Buch, Dysvik & Haerem, 2012).

Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) discussed multi-dimensionality, but rejected the call to follow this path because their findings were that the four dimensions are so highly correlated allowing for an overall single-factor measurement of the manifestation of LMX quality (Erdogan & Enders, 2007; Holliday, Martin, & Martin, 2010; Liden, Erdogan, Wayne, & Sparrowe, 2006; O'Donnell et al., 2012). LMX-7 and LMX-MDM have been shown to be interchangeable when used as a composite score of LMX quality (Martin et al., 2015; O'Donnell et al., 2012). This study utilizes LMX quality as unidimensional. LMX is also applicable in non-business settings. For example, the LMX-7 scale was modified to test the social-relationship between coaches and players; the modification was validated as reliable (Caliskan, 2015).

LMX quality studied here was dyad-based meaning that the relationship of interest was the relationship between a single leader and only one of their followers.

Recent research extended LMX quality analysis to include a multilevel view of LMX called LMX differentiation (LMXD) such that research has been interested in (a) how levels of LMX quality can be compared between co-workers and the effect of any difference, and (b) how a member's LMX relationship with a team supervisor differed from the average LMX score of team members and how that difference affected outcomes (Paik, 2016). Leadership behaviors can also be seen at team level rather than individual level such that LMX was discussed as team-member exchange (TMX) (Chun, Cho, & Sosik, 2016). While studies of LMX as a multilevel construct were valuable pursuits, LMX viewed as multilevel was not of interest in this study.

Antecedents. Since LMX theory suggests appropriate leadership style, follower receptivity, and organizational structures would improve LMX quality, the natural question is "What are the antecedents to LMX?" Since organizational behavior theory studies how all elements including individuals, workgroups, and organizational structures work together to accomplish the organization's goals, how to affect LMX quality is important to this area of study (Robbins & Judge, 2015). The antecedents to LMX quality are numerous and act alone or in concert; not all have been identified, nor have the interactions all been described. However, there have been significant findings regarding antecedents to LMX. A meta-analysis found twenty-one antecedents studied in the previous forty years (Dulebohn et al., 2012). The following discussion will be limited primarily to antecedents studied recently as variables affecting LMX quality.

Personal wisdom is a leader trait combining the three traits of leader's affective capacity for followers, cognitive ability, and reflection. Personal wisdom was shown to have a direct positive effect on LMX quality and also as mediated through individualized

consideration, a construct from transformational leadership theory describing the degree of attention a leader gives to an individual's needs such as mentoring (Zacher, Pearce, Rooney, & McKenna, 2014). This finding added to LMX theory by relating a leader characteristic directly to improving LMX quality and also explaining the result via a transformational leadership theory component. A wise leader acts in ways to build the trusted relationship. Follower personality traits play an antecedent role in LMX development including agreeableness, conscientiousness, and extraversion. These three member-personality traits have been shown to have a positive relationship to LMX quality and are mediated by the member behavior of impression management, a set of member behaviors employed with the goal of influencing their leader for rewards (Weng & Chang, 2015). The positive relationship and the mediation illustrate how LMX quality can be managed by the follower if they exhibit these personality traits and implement impression management. Improving LMX quality can be a conscious member effort beyond doing a good job to build the trust relationship underlying LMX quality. Another follower attribute shown to be positively related to LMX quality is goal orientation. Goals are shared responsibilities of the leader and the follower so that they must work together to accomplish these tasks. Goal orientation studied regarding LMX focused on three aspects: learning goal orientation, performance goal orientation, and avoidance goal orientation (Van Dam, 2015). High goal orientation leading to high LMX quality makes sense given the description of both areas: if a follower is paying attention to those areas that matter to the leader and accomplishing them, the LMX relationship will develop through the stages to high-quality.

Not all studies hypothesize positive relationships with LMX quality as is shown

by a study in demographics and how certain demographic characteristics affect LMX quality. It was found that as the difference in age increased between the leader and member LMX quality decreased. As gender difference increased (albeit from no difference to complete difference) LMX quality decreased. Tenure as a variable was measured regarding whether the member had more tenure than the leader, and as the difference in tenure increased, LMX quality decreased (Malangwasira, 2013). An interesting question here would be to change the question to reflect the leader having more tenure: one of the components of LMX quality is professional respect; greater tenure difference might improve LMX quality in this case. Education level followed the other variables in that the greater the difference in education level, with the member having the higher education level, the lower the LMX quality (Malangwasira, 2013).

Personality traits of leaders and how these traits exhibit in management style play a role in developing LMX relationships (Tzinerr & Barsheshet-Picke, 2014). For example, gender role identity as a personality trait is exhibited as androgynous or non-androgynous on a continuum. Gender management is described as communal or agentic also on a continuum. Gender is a demographic characteristic of both leader and follower. LMX quality differs depending on the combinations and the congruence of gender role and gender management style. Among other findings, LMX quality was found to be higher in the combination of female leader, androgynous role identity, and a combined management style than managers not perceived as having that combination whether reported from the leader or follower level (Tzinerr & Barsheshet-Picke, 2014).

It has been only recently that specific identifiable leader behaviors and traits have been extracted from composite constructs such as emotional intelligence, servant

leadership, and transformational leadership to identify relationships between these simpler unidimensional antecedent behavior and trait constructs and LMX quality (Little, Gooty, & Williams, 2016; Mahsud et al., 2010; O'Donnell et al., 2012). By separating out constructs from the composite, direct and mediating relationships were found. For example, leader empathy acting together with ethical leadership as mediated by relations-oriented leader behaviors, explained the majority of the variance in LMX quality in a study done with fully employed individuals who were also night-school business students (Yukl, Mahsud, Hassan & Prussia, 2013). Ethical leadership behaviors also affected innovation positively, but this correlation was explained to a great extent by the level of LMX quality further emphasizing the value of understanding not only independent constructs as antecedents correlated to outcomes, but how the intermediate variable of LMX acts on that correlation (Dhar, 2016). Organizational citizenship behaviors are also affected by ethical leadership behaviors, but mediated to a great extent by LMX quality (Yang, Ding, & Lo, 2016). The importance of studying LMX as an intervening variable was that the results could inform specific HRD practices including leader development strategies to specifically affect LMX quality to better affect desired outcomes.

It is one thing to say a leader should have high emotional intelligence, but that is not an actionable statement by the leader. It is useful for a leader to learn to act ethically, show empathy, and act in trustful ways by delegating, consulting, and so forth developing leadership. Delegation and consultation are forms of empowerment, and while LMX research was not based on transformational leadership, empowerment is a critical element of leader behavior in the transformational leadership model (Ismael, Mohammed, Sulaiman, Mohamad, & Yusif, 2011). It comes as no surprise, then, that transformational

leadership was the preferred leadership style for followers with high LMX quality relationships (Notgrass, 2014). Recent research suggested the effect of antecedents would be moderated by relational energy, a construct describing the capacity of an organization's employees to accomplish goals (Owens, Baker, Sumpter, & Cameron, 2016). This type of finding emphasized the complexity of LMX theory and the need to examine many relationships to understand better this central complex construct.

Outcomes. LMX is at the heart of getting work done. The relationship between a supervisor and subordinate is a large factor in determining success, not only of the work-task, but also team and organizational performance (Dulebohn et al., 2012; Li, Kim & Zhao, 2017). While LMX quality in and of itself is an interesting concept to study, of more importance is how it relates to outcomes. This field is actively studied and important to organizational leadership theory and organizational behavior theory. The meta-analysis completed in 2012 (Dulebohn et al.) found sixteen outcomes (called consequences in the study) of LMX quality. As LMX quality as the independent variable changed, so did the studied dependent variable constructs including personal, team, and organization level constructs.

The practical importance of studying LMX quality has in part the purpose of understanding how to affect outcomes beyond the task orientation. For example, innovative behavior at work is an outcome of multiple antecedents including LMX quality (Stoffers, Heijden, & Notelaers, 2014). Taking into account a fuller view of the context in which LMX develops, the study of innovative behavior found an interplay of high LMX quality relationships: high-quality LMX developed through resources provided to the follower with the positive outcome of high organizational citizenship

(Stoffers et al., 2014). LMX relationships continue to develop even if the relationship is high-quality through the social exchange contract mechanism underlying LMX akin to a positive feedback system.

Outcomes may result from complex relationships among several constructs including LMX. In a study of academic, professional researchers, LMX quality was found to be positively related to the outcome of creativity, but not always and not always at the same strength (Olsson, Hemlin, & Pousette, 2012). Olsson et al. (2012) found that the tenure of the dyadic relationship was important with longer tenure affording greater creativity in an academic research environment, but less so in a commercial research environment indicating the work environment moderates the outcome. This complex relationship also includes job autonomy as affecting creativity as a moderator variable; more job autonomy resulted in more creativity if LMX quality was high, but low job autonomy changed the relationship of LMX to creativity such that there was no effect on creativity by LMX if job autonomy was low (Volmer, Spurk, & Niessen, 2012).

Successful attainment of larger organizational goals is related to higher LMX quality. For example, job safety is an important goal with workplace accidents costing millions of dollars per year and terrible effects on lives (Jallon, Imbeau, & De Marcellis-Warin, 2011). Workplace safety has been shown degrade as job insecurity by both individuals and as a group increase; lowering job insecurity could result in cost savings due to fewer workplace accidents. LMX quality attenuates job insecurity so that better quality LMX relationships should support workplace safety as an organizational goal (Probst, Jiang, & Graso, 2015). Another goal affected by LMX quality is team performance. When employees are highly engaged in their work team performance is

enhanced (Afacan-Findikli, 2015). LMX quality is additive to team performance, meaning highly engaged employees who also have developed high-quality LMX relationships are members of teams of even higher performance. Regarding valuable employees quitting their jobs, LMX quality is negatively related to VET (DeConinck, 2011).

LMX as a moderating or mediating variable. Moderating variables affect relationships between two or more other variables including the strength and direction of the relationship (Dawson, 2013). Regarding LMX quality as a moderator, for example, LMX quality modifies the effect of despotic leadership style on job performance such that low LMX quality is related to better job performance in the presence of despotic leadership, while the reverse is true, performance degrades if LMX quality is high in the presence of despotic leadership (Naseer, Raja, Syed, Donia, & Darr, 2015). A possible explanation would be that followers who have a trusted relationship with a dysfunctional leader are less insulated from the leader behaviors that degrade job performance, while those followers with a low-quality relationship are still in the transactional task orientation phase of the relationship and thus the despotic leader behaviors have less of an effect on member job performance. Quality management practices were informed by finding the moderating effect of LMX on the strength of the relationship between the readiness of a member to improve quality and the outcome of quality improvement. Understanding this moderating effect showed the need for attention to LMX quality in addition to particular strategies to improve quality (Choi, Kim, & Yoo, 2016).

Mediating variables are found in between an independent and dependent variable such that the mediating variable explains all or in part how the independent variable acts

to affect the dependent variable (Fiedler, Schott, & Meiser, 2011). For example, LMX is found to mediate relationships between constructs of interest and outcomes (DeConinck, 2011; Els, Viljoen, de Beer, & Brand-Labuschagne, 2016; Flickinger, Allscher, & Fiedler, 2016; Jutras & Mathieu, 2016; O'Donnell et al., 2012). The importance of understanding how LMX mediates these relationships is to understand the fuller complexity of how independent variables in organizational leadership theory are related to outcomes, both desirable and undesirable. For example, the psychological driver of power motivation has been shown to positively affect creativity (Zhang, Fan, & Zhang, 2015), but understanding how this result manifests is important for theory building; as the complex relationships are described other relationships are revealed. Zhang et al. (2015) exemplified this by describing how power motivation relates to creativity, how power motivation relates to LMX, how LMX relates to creativity, and then how LMX mediates the relationship between power motivation and creativity. This effort of going beyond the simple positive relationship between power motivation and creativity provided multiple opportunities to discuss why these relationships exist rather than just that they do. Power motivation in an individual follower drives them to obtain the powerful position that exists in a high-quality LMX relationship with their leader (Zhang et al., 2015). From the leader level view, the LMX relationship would be more likely to develop into a high-quality relationship as leaders value those individuals whose high power motivation motivate them to behave in ways of value to the relationship including self-management and mastery of tasks and therefore provide the support that describes a high-quality LMX relationship (Li, Liang, & Crant, 2010). LMX quality and creativity are related in a complex manner (Olsson et al., 2012; Volmer et al., 2012), and within that complexity

lies the explanation in part of how power motivation as the independent variable acts on creativity as the dependent variable.

Mediation by LMX is important in understanding the relationships between leadership styles and outcomes other than LMX. LMX quality acts as a mediator in a relationship between the complex leadership-style construct servant leadership (SL) and the follower outcome of helping behavior (Zou, Tian, & Liu, 2015). SL theory emphasizes altruistic leader characteristics such as leader's considering the importance of the organization over the individual, considering their needs as leaders as less important than the needs of followers, and caring about positive results for all stakeholders (Barbuto & Hayden, 2011; Reed, Vidaver-Cohen, & Colwell, 2011). The servant leader leads by example rather than dictatorial edict (Zou, Tian, & Liu, 2015). That LMX quality was found to be positively related to SL is not surprising given the composition of SL; components include altruistic calling, emotional healing, wisdom, persuasive mapping, and organizational stewardship (Barbuto & Hayden, 2011). Altruistic leaders will put others interest first, a trait that would build the trust that is foundational to LMX quality. Leaders who have the ability to help followers heal should likewise have a strong positive reciprocal relationship with those followers. A wise leader perceives the needs of others and anticipates how they might help their followers through mentorship and by providing resources. These activities directly related to LMX quality. Leaders who use persuasion rather than authority are also able to build the teamwork relationship of LMX that strengthens the dyad's ability to accomplish unstructured tasks. Ethical behavior and the desire to make a strong contribution to society are the basis of organizational stewardship and provide additional strength to followers with congruent traits. The strong relationship

of SL to LMX quality is the basis for LMX's mediating role explaining follower behavior outcomes from SL such as helping behavior. Each of these components of SL is related positively to LMX, and the sum of the components, that is the SL construct as a complex leadership style accounted for 63% of the variance in Barbuto and Hayden's 2011 study.

The complex leadership style of transformational leadership (TL) and outcomes of this style are also mediated by LMX quality. For example, TL is negatively related to VTI and positively related to LMX quality (Tse et al., 2013). LMX quality had no mediating role in explaining that negative relationship of TL with VTI. However, a less direct relationship was found for LMX to have mediating effects in that affective commitment (AC) was found to mediate between TL and VET with LMX mediating the relationship between AC and VTI and VTI mediating the relationship between LMX and VET (Tse et al., 2013). In this way, it can be inferred that LMX does mediate TL and VTI, but the data has not been structured for a valid analysis to support that conclusion. The pathway from leader behaviors to turnover requires broad studies to explain how the relationships work, not just that there are relationships found or inferred. Understanding the individual constructs within the pathway can then be used to understand the "why" behind the "how".

Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational leadership (TL) is comprised of leader traits and behaviors that together lead followers to and through change. Followers consider the needs of the group at least equal to if not greater than their individual needs (Bass, 1985). Early study of TL and outcomes based on the identified traits and behaviors focused on TL as the studied construct rather than examining the sub-dimensions. However, it has been found that

studying the sub-dimensions that describe TL was of greater value in understanding TL theory and its implications (Antonakis & House, 2014; Deinert, Homan, Boer, Voelpel, & Gutermann, 2015; Li, Zhao & Begley, 2015; Parr, Hunter, & Ligon, 2013; Saboe, Taing, Way, & Johnson, 2015). The traits and behaviors of transformational leaders are divided into five dimensions namely idealized influence attributed, idealized influence behavior, individual consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation (Loon, Lim, Lee, & Tam, 2012; Tse et al., 2013).

Idealized influence provides the basis for charismatic leadership qualities, qualities useful in effecting change through shared vision, shared values, and shared belief in the organization's goals and needs. The leader exhibits symbolic power as the leader enjoins followers by describing a better future so that following is an almost unconscious action (Antonakis, Fenley, & Liechti, 2011). Coaching and mentoring are behaviors by the leader focused on individual attention; this comprises the individual consideration dimension. The leader understands and acts in these ways to develop not only a relationship with the individual follower, but also to develop that follower's capabilities and capacity, actions that are rewarding to the individual (Loon et al., 2012). Coaching and mentoring are part of the relations-oriented behaviors described by Yukl (2012). Transformational leaders are visionaries, and as such, transformational leaders articulate their vision of the future to inspire individuals to internalize this vision. Internalization creates a shared vision that leads to individual change through inspirational motivation rather than due to transactional motivators (Loon et al., 2012). Transformational leaders also inspire individuals to think and act creatively through

intellectual stimulation. The leader wants their followers to solve problems in new ways, and the leader supports this innovation goal (Loon et al., 2012).

TL augments organizational performance in several ways. Four types of performance have been measured often enough for a meta-analysis to provide unambiguous results (Wang, Oh, Courtright, & Colbert, 2011). Individual contextual performance describes how well an individual is fulfilling the job's role. High performers would support their organization by exceeding expectations, by going above and beyond their job description, a set of behaviors describing organizational citizenship as a construct (Saboe, Taing, Way, & Johnson, 2015). Contextual performance was positively affected by TL, but task performance, doing the required job duties well, was not affected. Transactional leadership elements (e.g. wages) did have a positive effect on task performance (Wang et al., 2011). A leader might take this information to heart knowing they can inspire through charisma exceptional contextual performance, but leaders had better pay well for task performance.

Transformational leaders promote team cohesion and team effort. Within top management teams, shared vision and shared goals relate to increased team performance and also to increased organizational performance. Transformational leaders through their individualized efforts and attention can create work environments and transactional incentives that motivate team members to greater personal performance leading to greater organizational performance (Wang et al., 2011).

TL studies concerning turnover have informed VET theory. For example, organizational performance is enhanced by functional levels of VET and low VTI (DeConinck, 2011; Hur, 2013; Wallace & Gaylor, 2012). TL is positively related to VET

and negatively to VTI (Afacan-Findikli, 2015): the mechanism for this relationship is through group related constructs including affective commitment, the individual's belief in the organization, rather than LMX quality, a supervisory dyadic based construct (Tse et al., 2013). Transformational leaders develop affective commitment in their followers by inspiring followers to aspire to meet group goals over their individual goals and needs. These charismatic leadership behaviors of transformational leaders are not correlated with LMX quality and thus LMX quality would not mediate a correlation between these behaviors and VTI (O'Donnell et al., 2012).

Relations-oriented Leader Behaviors

Studying the subscales of TL such as the five relations-oriented leader behaviors does provide evidence that these five behaviors could be valuable in improving organizational performance through decreased VTI with LMX as the mediator. These five behaviors are positively related to LMX quality (O'Donnell et al., 2012), and LMX quality is negatively related to both VTI and actual turnover (DeConinck, 2011). This mediating relationship as described in this study has yet to be reported in the literature. A hierarchical taxonomy by Yukl (2012) described five leader-relations oriented behaviors, namely consulting, delegating, developing, recognizing, and supporting. "For relations-oriented behavior the primary objective is to increase the quality of human resources and relations, which is sometimes called 'human capital'" (Yukl, 2012, p. 69). These five behaviors were derived from TL theory's individualized consideration category of behaviors; other categories of leader behaviors are task-oriented, change-oriented, and external but were not studied here (Antonakis & House, 2014).

Consulting. Consulting behavior by a leader is often combined in the literature with delegating behavior to describe a construct named empowering (Yukl, 2012), but in this study consulting behavior was studied separately from delegating behavior and so empowering behavior was used. Consulting behavior is the real request for input from a follower and authentic use of that input in decisions, especially if the decision affects the follower significantly.

Delegating. Delegating behavior applies to decision-making rather than actual work efforts. A leader delegates in this context when decisions formerly made by the leader are made by the follower at the leader's instigation.

Developing. A leader exhibits developing behaviors when they provide the means for the follower to advance in their career, build new skills, and increase the confidence of the follower in their efforts.

Recognizing. Recognizing behavior is both formal and informal. It can include extrinsic reward as well as intrinsic. The important factor is whether the follower feels adequately recognized and rewarded for efforts made.

Supporting. Empathy and sympathy shown by a leader comprise the main dimensions of the supporting behavior. A leader shows support when (a) expressing an interest in the individual follower regarding their feelings when they are upset, (b) showing confidence that the follower can accomplish tasks, and (c) encouraging the follower to develop a trusting dyadic relationship with the leader.

Voluntary Employee Turnover Theory

Turnover has been studied for many years regarding (a) its direct financial impact on organizations (Wallace & Gaylor, 2012), (b) its effect on organizational performance

(Batt & Colvin, 2011; Hur, 2013), (c) the indirect costs to the organization (Hester, 2013), (d) societal implications (Faia, Lechthaler, & Merkl, 2014), (e) management practices affecting turnover (DeConinck, 2011), and (f) multiple combinations of factors (Gilmartin, 2013; Wallace & Gaylor, 2012). People gain employment and stay with an employer for varied reasons, and they quit or are terminated for varied reasons as well (Westover, Westover, & Westover, 2010). The following discussion regarding VET theory establishes the importance of managing turnover to minimize its financial impact. The theories on which HRD practices might be based are explored especially regarding the extent of the focus on content or process or an integration of both. The term *content* as used in VET theory refers to the motivations, attitudes, and rational thought processes of decision-making as introduced by March and Simon in 1958. Decisions mark the minor and major change points in turnover. The term *process* in this context refers to the actions resulting from these decisions, including inaction, as described by Lee and Mitchell (1994). With these beginnings, VET theories placed varied importance on the inputs to decisions and the resulting behaviors or change in attitudes. The theories vary in scope as well, with some describing a few key content or process constructs and others attempting a more encompassing modeling with multiple content and process constructs combining in ways that affect outcomes in the turnover process. Integrated models of VET are concerned both with the steps taken by the individual and the reasons behind those steps (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). Content models had failed to explain studied voluntary turnover, so the attitudinal path models that were content-based were questioned for their usefulness (Russell & Sell, 2012). Research into the decisions and resulting steps individuals take during the turnover process integrated the content of those

decisions with the actual events in the individual's home and work life pertaining to activities within the VET pathway. In terms of journalism, content is the "why"; process is the "what, when, and how" of the individual "who".

The financial impact of turnover. While some turnover is functional regarding the costs and benefits, managers tend to believe less turnover is better than more turnover even if not optimal and act accordingly to avoid the immediate realized financial impact of turnover (Kumar et al., 2014; Wallace & Gaylor, 2012). The direct financial cost of turnover of a position varies depending on the industry, the type of position, and the immediate needs of the organization. For example, the medical services industry has been studied using the nursing turnover cost calculation methodology (NTCCM), a widely used instrument for collecting and analyzing turnover data for medical services employers (Li & Jones, 2013). For nurses in Australia a NTCCM study showed an average cost per position turnover was $49,000 (Roche et al., 2014) comprised of recruiting and training costs, costs associated with a vacant position such as temporary staffing, hiring costs, new hire orientation and training, decreased productivity due to newness to the position, overall unit loss of productivity, and termination costs. However, the study found significant differences existing in costs with variance due to geography, specialization, prior experience, and work setting as many of the costs of turnover are directly related to the varying pay for the position which varies with these factors (Li & Jones, 2013).

Generalizing results of turnover cost studies are difficult due to the many variables to consider (Allen, Bryant, & Vardaman, 2010). In an attempt to promote evidence-based strategies in the study of turnover, twelve separation costs, twelve

replacement costs, and seven cost-offsetting benefits were identified (Allen et al., 2010). Of these thirty-one variables, sixteen had tangible costs or benefits that can be accounted for fairly easily in dollars such as advertising costs. The other fifteen were intangible costs such as the change in workforce diversity. While there is methodology available to price intangible costs and benefits, that methodology is not straightforward and is highly subjective (Mansour, 2016). Allen et al. (2010) counseled that at best any scheme to quantify financial cost of turnover will have value only when the organizational leaders making use of the scheme agree on the input definitions, calculation methodology, and relative weighting of results, item by item.

In a study of the cost of turnover of blue collar workers due to workplace accidents, the authors found an average direct cost of turnover of $272. The cost was so low because the pool of replacement employees was large and readily identified and available (Lebeau, Duguay, & Boucher, 2014). However, this study's conclusion echoed Allen et al. (2010) in counseling organizational leaders that the information provided in the research paper was highly microeconomic in nature rather than macroeconomic. Reliance on generalizations from the study was risky. There is great difficulty in assigning a methodology for pricing intangible costs related to replacing workers due to the lack of a generalized model (Jallon, Imbeau, & DeMarcellis-Warin, 2011; Lebeau et al., 2014).

The understanding of the financial impact of employee turnover should force organizational leaders to design and implement HRD strategies to reduce turnover. One area studied that exemplifies this is customer facing-employees as human resource assets employed for profitable activities. Turnover was found to reduce profits if these

employees were viewed by customers positively, while profits were not affected if these employees were viewed otherwise (Subramony & Holtom, 2012). The authors suggest two HRD practice courses of action: (a) terminate employees viewed other than positively, and (b) implement hiring, development, and supervisory practices designed to maintain a workforce of employees who will be viewed by customers positively. These HRD practices include reducing VET of valuable employees because high levels of attrition negatively impact customer-perception of service levels resulting in lower profits (Subramony & Holtom, 2012). The important element in this type of study is to show profit-minded management why research-informed HRD practices to reduce dysfunctional VET and withdrawal behaviors associated with high VTI are organizationally important in both the short and long term.

The negative impact of the intention to turnover. There is an impact to organizations from employees who have the intention to some extent to voluntarily leave employment, but may or may not eventually act on that intention to terminate employment (VTI). These negative impacts related to employees with higher VTI derive from the lack of organizational citizenship behavior by the employee, withdrawal behaviors by the employee, and lower LMX quality relationships with their supervisor (Dulebohn et al., 2012; Harris et al., 2013; Shapira-Lishchinsky & Tsemach, 2014). These negative withdrawal behaviors are the withholding of inputs (Harrison & Newman, 2013; Li, Barrick, Zimmerman, & Chiaburu, 2014) including psychological behaviors such as daydreaming, unnecessary conversations with co-workers, low job effort, wandering, letting others do their work, and thinking about leaving employment (Li et al., 2014). Actual physical withdrawal behaviors extending beyond the psychological

behaviors include leaving work early, taking longer than average breaks, stealing, falling asleep while working, absence, and substance abuse on the job (Shapira-Lishchinsky & Tsemach, 2014). Employees exhibiting high VTI may also exhibit antagonistic withdrawal behaviors including reporting others for work violations, formally filing complaints, being argumentative, disobedience to directions, and rumor mongering (Shapira-Lishchinsky & Tsemach, 2014).

Researchers posit that the individual's locomotion (goal-driven activity) may cease to exist regarding organization goals and perhaps replaced with locomotion regarding personal goals including potential VET (Bélanger, Pierro, Maur, Falco, Carlo, & Kruglanski, 2015). Taken together, an employee who thinks and acts in such ways that are not congruent with organizational goals has a direct impact on team performance and indirectly affects performance by negatively affecting morale, for example (Afacan-Findikli, 2015). The degree to which an individual will exhibit withdrawal behaviors varies with both the degree to which they have the intention to quit and controlling psychological forces such as impulse control, extraversion, personal goals, and conformation to social norms (Zimmerman, Swider, Woo, & Allen, 2015). These forces for exhibition or inhibition create a continuum of behaviors that create degrees of temporary or eventual permanent withdrawal from current employment (Harrison & Newman, 2013). Referring to VET theory, it is important to distinguish between withdrawal behaviors as part of the process and content of potential or real turnover and counterproductive work behaviors (CWB). CWB is a set of behaviors that strongly overlap withdrawal behaviors but are exhibited by employees who may have no VTI at all but are simply employees who are counterproductive (Harrison & Newman, 2013).

Some researchers do combine withdrawal behavior measures with CWB measures making the assumption that CWB is a form of withdrawal and not just rebellion (Li et al., 2014). Some withdrawal behaviors are more strongly related to actual turnover than others including absenteeism with a correlation with turnover of .25, but lateness with only a .01 correlation with turnover (Berry et al., 2012).

The content model of VET. The modern origin of voluntary employee turnover (VET) theory derives from March and Simon's (1958) content model developed from their influence model of organizational behavior. The influence model emphasized motivation (content) over behavior (process) (Russell & Sell, 2012; Waldman et al., 2012). Employees made individual rational decisions to terminate employment based on objective factors such as compensation and alternative employment availability. The early content model emphasized an employee's motivations to terminate employment rather than the turnover process. Additionally, early models focused on reasons to leave rather than also discussing reasons to stay (Waldman et al., 2012). As the content model developed, studies found predictability of withdrawal behavior as related to ease of departure and desirability of the alternative to current employment (Burton, Holtom, Sablynski, Mitchell, & Lee, 2010). The desirability of alternatives was a comparison of current job satisfaction as a possible reason to stay and the perceived potential satisfaction of the alternative (Hom et al., 2012). Alternatives need not be other employment: return to school, unemployment, and family-care are examples of alternatives to current employment. The outcome of this decision-making process, to leave or not, derived from stimuli acting on memories, goals, and personal values and was highly dependent on the understanding by the individual of the stimuli.

Misunderstanding stimuli such as organizational changes can result in organizationally unintended responses by individuals including valued employees voluntarily terminating (Hom et al., 2012).

The decision-making described in content models of turnover is influenced by drivers that are not necessarily transactional in nature. Transactional influences include pay scales, workplace environment, and the nature of the work to be done. Employees are also influenced by factors affecting the content based construct job embeddedness (JE). JE is studied as a combination of all the reasons an employee stays at a job rather than quitting (Kiazad, Holtom, Hom, & Newman, 2015). These content forces would include, but are not limited to, the employee's relationship with their supervisor described by LMX quality, commitment to the organization, job satisfaction, and community embeddedness; these forces counteract content forces positively related to VET (Hom et al., 2012). JE is derived from a variety of previous studies, theories, and modeling (Lee, Burch, & Mitchell, 2014). The content of the decision to leave or not leave current employment would include the quality of the employee's LMX relationship with their leader (DeConinck, 2011) as well as how their leader employed transformational leadership behaviors (Tse et al., 2013). If an employee believes in their ability to meet their leader's expectations and their leader meets the employee's expectations (i.e. exchange fairness), they are less likely to exhibit VTI. This correlation was mediated by exchange fairness and organizational trust (Clinton & Guest, 2014).

The unfolding model of voluntary employee termination. The unfolding model of voluntary employee termination (UMVET) developed by Lee and Mitchell (1994) is an integrated model of VET and describes the VET process as a series of steps unfolding

over time to reveal the pathway to termination (Shipp, Furst-Hollaway, & Rosen, 2014). The pathway described by the UMVET includes both content constructs as well as behavioral constructs that are the steps in the process. The behavioral steps theorized need not be sequential or equal in time or strength; skipping steps and returning to steps is normal. These steps include, but are not limited to, employee recognition that change may be desirable, the search for alternatives, evaluating alternatives, a decision to terminate, and the employee acting on the decision to terminate. The VET process is not irreversible, and leader interventions can affect the process (Waldman et al. 2012). The unfolding model contains both content elements describing stimuli, motivation, and decision-making elements identifiable as discreet actions including job search activities (Kulik, Treuren, & Bordia, 2012). The five studied transformational leadership based relations-oriented behaviors have an important role here as it has been shown that these behaviors affect motivations and behaviors of subordinates (O'Donnell et al., 2012).

A central construct in the unfolding model is the presence of critical events labeled *shocks* (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). Early theorists would identify the shock contained in the UMVET as a stimulating decision-making (March and Simon, 1958). However, in the UMVET, a shock is more than a stimulus, it is both process and content. The shock is part of the process towards VET; it is an identifiable event that disrupts the status quo for the employee. For example, British Royal Air Force members had higher turnover if the member perceived a breach of trust; the breach of trust was a shock as discussed in the UMVET (Clinton & Guest, 2014). Similar results of expectations not being met resulting in higher VET were found in several other industries (Maden, Ozcelik, & Karacay, 2016).

Five decision paths are described in the UMVET model; the five paths differ along three dimensions: (a) the perceived strength of the shock; (b) whether the employee has an internal script to follow based on previous experience or planning; and (c) availability of alternatives to employment (Shipp et al., 2014). These three dimensions were derived from image theory describing how a person makes decisions based on their perceived internal image of what is desirable compared to their understanding of the current situation. The self-image would include LMX as well as VTI (Falzer & Garman, 2012). The shocks associated with the unfolding model vary in four dimensions: (a) positive to negative; (b) expected to unexpected; (c) inside to outside; and (d) low to high in strength (Kulik et al., 2012).

These four dimensions combine to describe the theory's five pathways to VET in the UMVET model namely Path 1, Path 2, Path 3, Path 4a and Path 4b (Kulik et al., 2012; Shipp et al., 2014). Path 1 describes an employee stimulated by an expected shock and reacting quickly. Quickness made possible because the employee has an internal script in place to compare the new environment to their self-image (Kulik et al., 2012). Employees following Path 2 may also voluntarily terminate employment, but the shock creates such a strong effect that the employee may quit without searching for alternatives or following a script. Path 2 might also be followed by a positive shock such as winning the lottery allowing an employee to simply quit without economic consequence (Kulik et al., 2012).

A shock that causes an employee to pursue a Path 3 VET process proceeds from first experiencing the shock then engaging in a larger, more rational decision-making process than found in Paths 1 or 2 (Kulik et al., 2012). The employee weighs alternatives

to current employment by viewing their internal self and how change in their environment through VET might better the match of image and environment (Kulik et al., 2012). In Paths 4a and 4b, the stimulus does not consist of a sudden event. There is no specific shock as a stimulus for change or perhaps stimulus is cumulative from a series of weak shocks. With Paths 4a and 4b the employee realizes over time a cumulative violation to their image. There are similarities between Path 4a and Path 2 in the way the employee quits without searching for alternatives. Path 4b differs from Path 4a in the same way Path 4b is similar to Path 3: the employee quits after finding an acceptable alternative (Kulik et al., 2012; Shipp et al., 2014).

In all pathways, the shock in the process stimulates the content element of decision-making such that an employee may become more motivated to consider leaving employment (Kulik et al., 2012). The shock may affect the behavioral intentions within the construct VTI by modifying the internalized picture of the member's current employment and personal situation. For example, a leader might show disloyalty to the employee through a public humiliation such as passing the employee over for promotion. This disloyalty would be reflected in lower LMX quality as loyalty is a category of relations-oriented behavior positively related to LMX quality (O'Donnell et al., 2012). This decreased LMX quality directly relates to higher VTI and possible VET (DeConinck, 2011) or short of termination, dysfunctional withdrawal behaviors that negatively affect personal and organizational performance (Christian & Ellis, 2014). The UMVET consolidated the external events, the psychological content, and the actual resulting behaviors into a model which described the real-world including VTI, LMX quality, and relations-oriented leader behaviors.

The intermediate linkages model. Closely related to the UMVET is Mobley's (1977) integrated model called the intermediate linkages model (ILM) of VET. Mobley (1977) proposed for discussion that while job dissatisfaction is likely present in a decision to quit as Marsh and Simon (1958) proposed, there may be mediating and moderating factors between recognition of the dissatisfaction and the outcome of VET. The ILM as proposed by Mobley was not descriptive; the model provided the basis for studying both the content and process of VET, but Mobley did no testing (Mobley, 1977). Since 1977, there has been substantial work done to explicate factors theorized by the ILM and to understand how high-performance HRD practices can be applied to enhance the likelihood of retaining valuable employees while reducing negative withdrawal behaviors of disengaged employees exhibiting high VTI (Aryee, Wulumbwa, Seidu, & Otaye, 2012; Wittmer, Shepard, & Martin, 2014). Aryee et al. (2012) applied the ILM to understand better how human resource practices contained in empowerment theory affected the outcome of low VET among high-performance employees. As with the UMVET, the ILM which is empowerment based fits closely with the content and process constructs studied by O'Donnell et al. (2012) regarding the transformational leadership theory based relations-oriented leader behaviors and DeConinck (2011) regarding LMX quality correlated with VTI. Empowerment theory states that a high empowerment organizational climate leads to greater job satisfaction through information sharing, autonomous work environment, and rational and consistent accountability for work product (Dhladhia, 2012).

The voluntary turnover model. The voluntary turnover model (VTM) described by Allen et al. (2010) is the result of the authors' disagreement with current modeling

regarding the lack of evidence-based HRD strategies derived from situational variables. The VTM is an integrated model describing the key attitudes comprising the content present in the process of VET. The VTM is predictive showing independent variables affecting dependent variables as well as moderating and mediating effects. The VTM integrates much of the previous work in VET theory. The model is based on five turnover drivers namely on-boarding, job characteristics, leadership and relationships, work environment, and individual characteristics. This broad set of inputs is affected by attitudes including organizational commitment and job satisfaction to result in a level of withdrawal activities from low to high. These withdrawal activities comprise the turnover process, a process that includes the shocks and scripts described in the UMVET (Lee & Mitchell, 1994), evaluation of alternatives first described by March and Simon (1958), and VTI (DeConinck, 2011). The model is designed to overcome the tendency of managers to make decisions based on ambiguous information while pretending the information is complete and accurate (Allen et al., 2010). The model can be used to collect needed information on employer specific turnover and apply this data to the situational context to design and implement appropriate HRD strategies to retain valuable employees. Important to the data collection is to understand why employees choose to voluntarily leave or stay. The model's origin is a meta-analysis of studies relating variables affecting the VET process resulting in finding the five important drivers of turnover. Applicable to this study are the leadership and relations drivers that include relations-oriented leader behaviors as well as LMX quality. VTI is a prominent member of the withdrawal process driver category.

The expanded criterion framework. The expanded criterion framework model (ECFM) of employee turnover theory proposed in 2012 by Hom et al. attempts to clearly identify the theoretical framework of turnover to aid understanding and prediction regarding employee turnover. The ECFM is both content and process oriented (Hom et al., 2012). Regarding the content of the decision-making process, the ECFM describes four proximal withdrawal states: enthusiastic stayer, reluctant stayer, reluctant leaver, and enthusiastic leaver. These states are proximal to actual termination of employment. The proximal withdrawal states are based on factors in categories described as (a) employee preference to leave; (b) employer control; and (c) other extrinsic control. Preference to leave is a yes or no dichotomy in the model, but scalability is possible. Employer control has three levels: the employer wants the employee to stay, is neutral, or wants the employee to leave. Other extrinsic control describes the pressures to stay or leave such as high cost to leave, no pressure to stay, or high pressure to leave. These three categories result in the four withdrawal states (Hom et al., 2012). VET is included in this model, but this model attempts to encompass all employee turnover events (Hom et al., 2012). Of interest to this study would be how the proximal withdrawal states described by Hom et al. (2012) are related to the constructs to be studied here: relations-oriented leader behaviors, LMX quality, and VTI.

The ECFM is criticized for reliance on actual turnover data rather than measuring alternative constructs such as VTI as a proxy measure of turnover (Bergman et al., 2012). This challenge can be resolved by understanding whether the researcher is interested in (a) employees who voluntarily leave, (b) all employees who leave, (c) employees who might voluntarily leave but with appropriate intervention might stay, or (d) other research

questions (Maertz, 2012). Researchers interested solely in VET would add to the ECFM through the study of proximal withdrawal states on the VET pathway including relations-oriented leader behaviors, LMX quality, and VTI. This study was interested in VTI as a construct of behavioral intention not VTI as a proxy for actual turnover, so this study did not collect actual turnover data.

The forces model. The forces model emphasizes motivation as part of the content of decision-making and is the primary consideration similar to March and Simon's contention in 1958 (Maertz et al., 2012). The model seeks to explain why employees embark on the process of VET; while process is acknowledged, the model is not process oriented. The forces model is content oriented emphasizing motivations for an employee to proceed towards voluntary termination or to re-engage and not quit. The forces theory applies findings from studies in motivation not related to VET theory to extend the range of understanding of VET. A synthesis of findings from attitude research and turnover research presented nine motivators or forces affecting VET: affective, contractual, calculative, alternative, behavioral, normative, moral, constituent forces, and community embeddedness (Maertz et al., 2012). These are what Allen et al. (2010) would call "key attitudes" (p. 53) in their voluntary turnover model. The forces model provides an understanding of how motivational forces mediate organizational outcomes including VET. Work satisfaction and pay satisfaction are affected in some way by one or more of the forces altering the outcome of VTI (Maertz et al., 2012). Leader relations-oriented behaviors and LMX quality have been shown positively related to work satisfaction implying this study's results could add to the forces model. The model is a framework

that researcher may include in research into direct relationships such as pay satisfaction on VTI to understand better the results of their study.

Criticism. There is very little disagreement in the VET models at present. Differences are in the degree of reliance on content versus process as the predictive or descriptive elements. Criticism of turnover models identifies the lack of diversity in the models; the majority of models contain variables based on affect, behavioral intentions, and the mechanistic process of the job search (Allen, Hancock, Vardaman, & McKee, 2014; Waldman et al., 2012). There are significant contributions from these studies that are additive to the theory but not revolutionary; these are only passably evolutionary arguably supporting the proposition. To revisit the beginnings of theory and reworking theory rather than building on a shaky foundation has been suggested (Russell, 2013). The idea of a foundation that needs rebuilding is also discussed regarding how data is gathered and analyzed: the analytical mindset (Allen et al., 2014). Fifty-two years of research regarding VET were analyzed regarding data collection methods, data analysis, and reporting (Allen et al., 2014) resulting in recommendations for future research including greater heterogeneity of samples using multi-employer, multi-industry samples (Allen et al., 2014). Data gathering and measurement for recent research relied primarily on survey instruments and methods (Russell, 2013). A broader mindset would include more interview research and greater use of experimental designs (Russell, 2013). If there is a dominant analytical mindset, then new modeling differs little from existing theory resulting in little advancement in theory (Allen et al., 2014).

Voluntary Turnover Intention

Voluntary turnover intention (VTI) is an important construct to this study as VTI is an outcome of LMX and an antecedent of VET. This construct describes is a set of behavioral intentions relating to turnover; VTI is not a behavior or trait (DeConinck, 2011). A behavioral intention is described in the theory of planned behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) to explain variance in actual behavior when that behavior is observed in a specific context. The TPB is not a general causal theory, rather the TPB sets out a way to measure the likelihood of an observable behavior actualizing. The theory allows for the aggregation of many motivational factors into a conceptual framework of intentions. These intentions collectively describe the level of intention to behave in some way with two provisions: (a) the behavior is voluntary and (b) the individual perceives they are able to perform the behavior to some extent (Ajzen, 2011).

The two drivers of voluntary action according to the TPB are the intention to act and the perceived behavioral control (PBC). The intention to act is an aggregation of the motivations to act while the PBC is the self-perceived amount of control the individual has regarding accomplishing the behavior. For example, a rational person may have a high desire to run a marathon, but they have zero belief they can do so. Alternatively, the same person may have no desire to swim a mile, knows they are capable of doing so, but they just don't want to swim a mile (Taylor & Francis, 2011). The intention to act has the greater value in predicting subsequent voluntary behavior; PBC is predictable only if PBC is rooted in reality as it is the actual ability to perform that allows for completion of the behavior. If the behavior of interest is to attempt some act not reliant on completion, then the PBC has a different definition than the ability to complete that act, rather the

PBC is the ability to attempt the act. This explanation resolves the criticism based on the observation that rational people over estimate their abilities (Ajzen, 2011). The intention to act is predicted by attitudes, subjective norms, and PBC (Taylor & Francis, 2011). Prediction of both the intention and actualization of the behavior depends on the variables being stable from the time of measurement to the time of action (Ajzen, 1991).

Returning to voluntary termination intention, VTI is the aggregate motivational forces towards and away from voluntarily terminating current employment. Some studies show a prediction value of VTI for VET as low as 4% (Russell, 2013). Reviewing the construct relationship in the TPB, this likely means that either VTI is low or if VTI is high, then PBC must be low. The important consideration in this study is VTI level, as actual voluntary termination is not of interest.

Constructs of Interest

Voluntary turnover intention (VTI). VTI describes the behaviors and attitudes of an employee considering leaving employment. VTI is positively related to dysfunctional withdrawal behaviors that harm organizational performance (Berry et al., 2012; Hom et al., 2012). HRD practices can be enhanced by an awareness of how VTI affects attitudes, behaviors, and outcomes (Shuck et al., 2014).

VTI is operationalized as a scale variable used both as a proxy for actual turnover rates (DeConinck, 2011) and as the construct of interest (Bergman, Payne, & Boswell, 2012). VTI is a simple unidimensional construct usually measured with several questions such as ‘‘I am thinking about leaving this organization’’ and ‘‘I am planning to look for a new job’’ (Babalola, Stouten, & Euwema, 2014, p. 6), “I hope to find a new job next year” (Li et al., 2017, p. 198). VTI is used as a proxy measure to provide immediate data

for analysis rather than data gathered over time for a longitudinal study (Wells et al., 2014). There was some disagreement as to the efficacy of using VTI as a proxy for actual turnover (Hom et al., 2102); however, this study did not utilize VTI as a proxy for actual turnover. VTI was utilized as the studied construct itself as it is valuable to organizations to understand what makes someone want to quit rather than studying only those who have already quit (Ahmed et al., 2013; Babalola et al., 2014; Chang, Wang, & Huang, 2013; Christina & Ellis, 2014; Jung, 2014; Li et al., 2017; Waldman et al., 2012). An organization that allows turnover which costs more than it saves is dysfunctional and inefficient; leaders should remedy the situation prior to VET to enhance organizational performance through direct reduction in costs and the reduction in organizationally dysfunctional withdrawal behaviors related to employee disengagement (Hancock et al., 2013).

Reducing VTI is a way to meet organizational goals by retaining key employees (Chang et al., 2013; Shuck et al., 2014; Watty-Benjamin & Udechukwu, 2014). Organizations can reduce VTI through structure and leadership behaviors (Russell, 2013; Russell & Sell, 2012). Russell and Sell (2012) found the lack of good two-way communication as a reason for VTI for which they suggested employers initiate structures and leadership behaviors to enhance communication. Recent work has focused on particular parts of the pathway to VET including VTI. DeConinck's (2011) work in showing how LMX quality affects VTI fit well with previous research designs by measuring the specific supervisor-employee relationship that affected the desire to leave employment. Wells and Peachey (2011) studied fully employed athletic coaches determining positive transactional and transformational leadership behaviors reduce VTI.

They concluded the relational behaviors of transformational leadership found in their sample had a similar effect on VTI as had been shown in previous business management studies. Mahsud et al. (2010) had shown relations-oriented behaviors as antecedents of higher quality LMX which suggested further evidence of a pathway that included relations-oriented behaviors. This agrees with the findings that TL behaviors, including relations-oriented behaviors, are positively related to leader effectiveness and leader effectiveness is negatively related to VTI (Wells et al., 2014), supporting the need for the additional research contained in this study into the relationship between these behaviors and the outcome of VTI.

Leader relations-oriented behaviors. Relations-oriented behaviors by leaders are described in TL theory as the set of behaviors a leader engages in to affect the relationship the leader has with subordinates (Bass, 1985; Yukl, 2012). Bass (1985) is the seminal work regarding TL theory describing TL as appealing to followers' intrinsic values rather than the extrinsic rewards used in transactional leadership to motivate. Transformational leaders use charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration to elicit responses from followers based on the followers' intrinsic needs and goals (Waldman et al., 2012). Relations-oriented behaviors are the leader behaviors that have been found to affect the social exchange relationship between the leader and the follower and are namely supporting, recognizing, developing, consulting, and delegating (Littrell, 2013; Mahsud et al., 2010; Yukl, 2012). These behaviors create cooperation between leaders and members and also within work-groups. Activities related to these behaviors include social exchanges appropriate between a leader and follower at work such as special training, personal recognition for

contributions, direct attention by the leader to follower's personal problems, and promotion of a harmonious work environment (Ford, Ford, & Polin, 2014). Surveys are used to elicit follower feelings regarding leader support for the follower, recognition of good work, care for the development of skills, openness to listening to followers, and the level of trust the leader has in passing work and responsibility to followers (Yukl & Taber, 2002). Following O'Donnell et al. (2012) these behaviors are the only elements of transformational leadership theory that were of concern in this study.

Leader-member exchange (LMX). LMX theory is a relationship-based approach to understanding how vertical dyads consisting of how a leader (supervisor) and a member (subordinate) accomplish organizational tasks together (O'Donnell et al., 2012); LMX quality as a construct was first described by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) as the relationship developed between the leader and member developed in part due to leader behaviors (O'Donnell et al., 2012). There is a positive relationship between LMX and leadership effectiveness indicating leaders desiring positive results from followers should develop high-quality LMX relationships with subordinates a dyad at a time. Subordinates should respond to this individualized attention and produce desirable results (Sun, Chow, Chiu, & Pan, 2013). Low VTI is one such desired result (DeConinck, 2011). Early studies found that while leadership style was not a factor in turnover, the leader behaviors related to improving LMX quality were negatively correlated with turnover suggesting the mediating role of LMX for the outcome of VET (Graen, Hoel, & Liden, 1982). It is this suggestion that was the basis for this study.

LMX acts as a mediator between antecedents and consequences within the dyadic relationship of the leader and member so that measured LMX quality indicates good

leadership effectiveness (Dulebohn et al., 2012). High-quality LMX relationships contain trust elements that provide the manager with reason to delegate tasks to that subordinate or to consult with that subordinate about a given task. Empowerment is a critical element of leader behavior in the transformational leadership model (Ismail, Mohammed, Sulaiman, Mohamad, & Yusif, 2011). These relations-oriented leader behaviors lead to high-quality LMX (O'Donnell et al., 2012). LMX is a multidimensional construct and includes moderating, mediating, and direct effects among constructs in organizational behavior theory (Dulebohn et al., 2012). Variables that have been found to affect LMX include leader empathy, ethical behavior by leadership, and relations-oriented behaviors (supporting, delegating, consulting, and recognizing) (Mahsud et al., 2010).

VTI related to LMX quality. VTI is an outcome of LMX quality (DeConinck, 2011; Li et al., 2017; Wells & Peachey, 2011). Transformational leadership attributes and behaviors affect LMX quality positively and increase follower's trust and loyalty which in turn decrease VTI (Wells & Peachey, 2011). The relationship between TL variables and VTI was mediated by LMX quality and organizational commitment (Ahmed et al., 2013). Transactional leadership behaviors also had a negative relationship with VTI indicating that employees stay not only because of loyalty and trust which are intrinsic rewards, but also because they are paid well which is an extrinsic reward (Wells & Peachey, 2011). LMX quality is in the pathway of a member voluntarily quitting his position (DeConinck, 2011). This pathway includes organizational identification and organizational commitment as antecedents of VTI. Voluntary turnover intention was related to VET with a coefficient of 0.43 (DeConinck, 2011).

Support for Theory Development

Models of VET agree that VET theory describes a process with identifiable steps (Allen et al., 2013; Hom et al., 2013; Russell, 2013). The models also agree that there are content variables to be considered in understanding why an employee takes those steps (Allen et al., 2013; Hom et al., 2013; Russell, 2013). They do not agree completely on what these steps are, the order steps are taken, whether steps can be skipped or returned to, and what content variables to consider (Allen et al., 2013; Hom et al., 2013; Russell, 2013). This agreement and non-agreement while interesting were not important to the discussion of this study. Rather what was important was the agreement in the models that before quitting, a rational employee exhibits the intention to terminate such as described by the construct VTI (Allen et al., 2013; Hom et al., 2013; Russell, 2013).

The literature regarding VET theory supported the need to understand better the relationships among constructs in voluntary employee turnover theory (DeConinck, 2011; Hom et al., 2012; Li et al., 2017). While the constructs included in this study were individually well defined, and the correlations among pairs and in some cases the mediating and moderating effects of some variable affecting these correlations, there was no conclusive study specific to the interest of this study. Relations-oriented behaviors from transformational leadership theory have been related to LMX quality, as has LMX quality to VTI. The literature suggested extending theory by relating relations-oriented behaviors directly to VTI and examining whether LMX quality mediated this correlation. The importance of understanding VET through modeling was to inform leadership and HRD practices to mitigate costly employee misbehavior and direct turnover costs. Misbehaviors associated with high VTI include lateness, stealing, and drug use on the

job. If relations-oriented behaviors affected VTI negatively, and LMX quality mediated this correlation, then leaders could act in ways to improve LMX quality to decrease VTI and thus decrease the negative organizational outcomes of high employee VTI. There was no recent research found that reported results regarding the research questions of this study as a cohesive study.

Summary

LMX theory provided the framework for this research. LMX quality is central to whether members work well with leaders to accomplish the leader's goals (O'Donnell et al., 2012). Assuming the leader's goals are consistent with organizational goals, high-quality LMX helps accomplish the organizational goals as well. Antecedents to LMX quality are studied to understand how better quality (or worse) LMX relationships develop (Mahsud et al., 2010); what are the inputs to LMX quality? TL as a multi-dimensional construct is positively related to LMX quality (Wells & Peachey, 2011). However, TL theory contains many leader behaviors and characteristics; researchers study subsets to better understand relationships between constructs related to LMX quality. Leader relations-oriented behaviors are a subset of these behaviors a leader might employ to potentially affect LMX quality to better meet organizational goals (Yukl, 2012). It has been shown that these relations-oriented leader behaviors affect LMX quality positively, thus they are antecedents to high-quality LMX relationships (O'Donnell et al., 2012).

One organizational goal researchers have studied recently is lowering VTI. VTI is a construct in VET theory (DeConinck, 2011) describing the behavioral intention of an employee considering voluntarily quitting current employment. Organizational leaders

should work at reducing VTI; employees having higher VTI have been shown to detrimentally affect organizations through (a) negative behaviors before quitting (if that is the terminal result) (Hancock et al., 2013; Shim et al., 2015) and (b) the high direct and indirect resource costs associated with actual terminations and replacements of valuable employees (Hester, 2013; Wallace, & Gaylor, 2012). VET theory currently integrates both the process and content of voluntary turnover including leadership behaviors and characteristics affecting turnover (Allen et al., 2014; Waldman et al., 2012). TL as a multi-dimensional construct correlates negatively with VTI in followers (Wells & Peachey, 2011). High LMX quality also correlates negatively with VTI in followers (DeConinck, 2011). What had not been found in the extant literature was how the five relations-oriented leader behaviors as subscales of transformational leadership behavior correlate with VTI, and whether LMX quality mediates these correlations. Understanding the direct relationships and any mediation informs HRD practices that might enhance a leader's ability to actively affect organizational behavior to better meet organizational goals.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the correlation between five relations-oriented behaviors and VTI and whether LMX mediated these correlations. The five independent variables in this study were the five relations-oriented leader behaviors contained in transformational leadership theory namely supporting, recognizing, developing, consulting, and delegating (O'Donnell et al., 2012). These five behaviors are subscales of the broader composite leader-behavior construct of transformational leadership behavior previously studied (Wells & Peachey, 2011). The hypothesized mediating variable was LMX quality (DeConinck, 2011; O'Donnell et al., 2012). The dependent variable was member VTI (DeConinck, 2011). LMX was also an independent variable as required by mediation analysis. The dependent variable was member VTI (DeConinck, 2011). Eleven research questions were presented in the first chapter as follows:

RQ1. What is the relationship between supporting behavior and VTI?

RQ2. What is the relationship between recognizing behavior and VTI?

RQ3. What is the relationship between developing behavior and VTI?

RQ4. What is the relationship between consulting behavior and VTI?

RQ5. What is the relationship between delegating behavior and VTI?

RQ6. What is the relationship between LMX quality and VTI?

RQ7. Does LMX quality mediate the relationship, if any, between supporting behavior and VTI?

RQ8. Does LMX quality mediate the relationship, if any, between recognizing behavior and VTI?

RQ9. Does LMX quality mediate the relationship, if any, between developing behavior and VTI?

RQ10. Does LMX quality mediate the relationship, if any, between consulting behavior and VTI?

RQ11. Does LMX quality mediate the relationship, if any, between delegating behavior and VTI?

Hypotheses were designed as rejection supported in that rejecting the null hypothesis supported a positive answer to the research question as follows:

$H1_0$: There is no negative relationship between supporting behavior and VTI.

$H1_a$: There is a negative relationship between supporting behavior and VTI.

$H2_0$: There is no negative relationship between recognizing behavior and VTI.

$H2_a$: There is a negative relationship between recognizing behavior and VTI.

$H3_0$: There is no negative relationship between developing behavior and VTI.

$H3_a$: There is a negative relationship between developing behavior and VTI.

$H4_0$: There is no negative relationship between consulting behavior and VTI.

$H4_a$: There is a negative relationship between consulting behavior and VTI.

$H5_0$: There is no negative relationship between delegating behavior and VTI.

$H5_a$: There is a negative relationship between delegating behavior and VTI.

$H6_0$: There is no negative relationship between LMX quality and VTI.

$H6_a$: There is a negative relationship between LMX quality and VTI.

$H7_0$: LMX quality does not mediate the relationship between supporting behavior and VTI.

$H7_a$: LMX quality does mediate the relationship between supporting behavior and VTI.

$H8_0$: LMX quality does not mediate the relationship between recognizing behavior and VTI.

$H8_a$: LMX quality does mediate the relationship between recognizing behavior and VTI.

$H9_0$: LMX quality does not mediate the relationship between developing behavior and VTI.

$H9_a$: LMX quality does mediate the relationship between developing behavior and VTI.

$H10_0$: LMX quality does not mediate the relationship between consulting behavior and VTI.

$H10_a$: LMX quality does mediate the relationship between consulting behavior and VTI.

$H11_0$: LMX quality does not mediate the relationship between delegating behavior and VTI.

$H11_a$: LMX quality does mediate the relationship between delegating behavior and VTI.

Research Methods and Design

This correlational and mediational research collected and examined data from a nonprobability cross-sectional sampling using an ex post facto questionnaire. The data was used to find (a) correlations between relations-oriented leader behaviors and VTI and (b) correlation between VTI and LMX and (c) mediating effects of LMX quality on the

correlation between the studied behaviors and VTI. A quantitative research design was appropriate because the variables considered in this study were quantitative, wherein each variable can take on a value that represents the measure of the constructs and is both numerical and ordinal in nature (Bryman, 2012). A nonprobability sampling does not provide valid data for analysis of the possible variance in the population variables. While this deficiency was noted, the convenience and low cost of the voluntary nonprobability sampling were beneficial to this study (Levine, Stehpah, & Szabat, 2014; Wilson, 2014). The research questions posed asked about characteristics existing in the population, a descriptor of ex post facto methods. Previous research regarding relations-oriented leader behaviors, LMX, and VTI that were used for comparisons to findings of this study followed this method (DeConinck, 2011; O'Donnell et al., 2012). Statistical analysis provided descriptions of relationships between variables in the same manner as previous research (DeConinck, 2011; O'Donnell et al., 2012). These descriptions are discussed regarding strength and direction and compared to previous studies.

Leadership studies utilize quantitative cross-sectional research ex post facto methods to a significant extent (Bryman, 2011; Gardner, Lowe, Moss, & Cogliser, 2010). Cross-sectional studies were more prevalent than longitudinal designs (Gardner et al., 2010). Recent work in leadership has increasingly utilized qualitative and experimental methods (Bryman, 2011; Gardner et al., 2010), and researchers have suggested that extending their quantitative work utilizing qualitative methods would provide valuable data (O'Donnell et al., 2012). However, experimental quantitative methods, qualitative, and mixed methods were not considered appropriate as the research questions for this study were derived primarily from work done previously using cross-sectional data from

questionnaires obtained from a nonprobability sample regarding characteristics previously existing in the sample members. This was a limiting factor of the study.

Population

The population studied was leader-member dyads consisting of sales professionals in the United States following DeConinck (2011). The purposes of this research were: (a) to confirm the correlation between relations-oriented leader behaviors and LMX quality, (b) confirm the correlation between LMX and VTI, (c) to describe the correlations between the relations-oriented leader behaviors and VTI, and (d) to describe the mediating effect of LMX on the correlation between relations-oriented leader behaviors and VTI. The sales profession was chosen because this profession has significant dysfunctional turnover (DeConinck, 2011; Skiba, Saini & Friend, 2016) and thus potentially avoidable significant costs associated with turnover (Kumar, Sunder, & Leone, 2014).

Sample

The sample was limited to sales professionals identified in two ways: (a) through the purchase of an email list from a commercial firm in the business of supplying these lists; (b) supplying written invitations to take the online survey at gatherings of sales professionals. Participation was voluntary and anonymous which limited the sampling to a nonprobability sample. Confirmation of the participant being a sales professional was requested at the beginning of the survey and also through questions at the end of the survey. The questionnaire elicited ex post facto data with no experimental manipulation. The questionnaire was based on the combination of all or part of three instruments utilized in previous studies. Based on G*Power 3.1.9.2 (Faul, 2014), a sample size

calculation tool, the minimum number of participants for this correlation and mediation analysis was 138 (Liu et al., 2014; Tomczak et al., 2014). Previous work (DeConinck, 2011) obtained an 82% useable response rate indicating a list of approximately 300 should suffice however due to a response rate of just 6% from the email effort, additional responses were solicited via written invitation at gatherings of sales professionals at training events. There were 192 valid responses.

Instruments

Because this study extended the work of previous recent research, measurement procedures were used that included the instruments from this previous work on relations-oriented leader behaviors and LMX by O'Donnell et al. (2012) and LMX and VTI by DeConinck (2011). Both previous studies were quantitative nonprobability ex post facto designs as was this study. The variables tested for in this study were contained in in these previous scholarly works. The previous work provided substantial support for these instruments for the purposes of those studies; these were the same purposes as for using these instruments in this study.

LMX- is a twelve-item survey instrument scale with four subscales of three items each found by O'Donnell et al. (2012) to have an alpha of 0.95 indicating high internal consistency. The subscales measure the four constructs affect, loyalty, professional respect, and contribution. Affect refers to how well the member likes his leader. "My supervisor is a lot of fun to work with" is a sample item (Liden & Maslyn, 1998, p. 56).The loyalty subscale measures the member's perception of how strongly his leader might publicly support him in controversy. "My supervisor would defend me to others in the organization if I made an honest mistake" is a sample item of this subscale (Liden &

Maslyn, 1998, p. 56). Professional respect refers to the member's perception of his leader's competence. "I am impressed with my supervisor's knowledge of his/her job" is a sample item of this subscale (Liden & Maslyn, 1998, p. 56). Contribution measures the member's perception of their willingness to work beyond job expectations. A sample item for this subscale is "I am willing to apply extra efforts, beyond those normally required, to further the interests of my work group" (Liden & Maslyn, 1998, p. 56). Taken together, these twelve items describe the dyadic relationship that is the social exchange between leader and member. LMX-MDM is measured on a seven-point Likert-type scale providing ordinal data points ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree (O'Donnell et al., 2012). A higher point value indicated the higher the agreement to statements such as, "I like my supervisor very much as a person" (Liden & Maslyn, 1998, p. 56). This type of data is appropriate for analysis using IBM® SPSS® Amos (Arbuckle, 2010). The full scale of twelve items was used. O'Donnell et al. (2012) obtained ordinal survey data using the LMX-MDM instrument. Dr. Liden in 2015 permitted the use the instrument for this study

Transformational leadership theory based relations-oriented leader behaviors was measured using a shortened version of the Management Practices Survey as was used by O'Donnell et al. (2012). O'Donnel et al. (2012) found an internal consistency of alpha >.77. The MPS consists of 64 survey items; 20 of these items apply to the relations-oriented behaviors of interest in this study as well as those studied by O'Donnell et al. (2012). Twenty items from the Management Practices Survey (Yukl et al., 2002) were used by Mahsud et al. (2010) and O'Donnell et al. (2012) to survey for relations-oriented behaviors and included sample items such as "Shows concern for the needs and feelings

of individual members…, Praises effective performance… Provides advice and coaching …, Asks for ideas and suggestions when making decision…, [and] trusts members to make decisions without getting prior approval" (p. 567).

A shortened version was appropriate to reduce the total work for each participant while still obtaining the desired data (O'Donnell et al., 2012). Each of the eleven behaviors in the full survey had been shown to have validity independently, so eliminating unnecessary items did not affect the validity of the result (O'Donnell et al., 2012). Reducing the required number of responses for the participant was practical while still valid. The MPS has also shown validity when administered online (O'Donnell et al., 2012).Dr. Yukl permitted the use MPS and to shorten it for this study in 2015.

VTI was measured using the four-question instrument called here the Voluntary Termination Intention Survey (VTIS). This instrument was developed and used by DeConinck (2011) ($\alpha = 0.82$). VTI refers to the internalized psychological set of beliefs a person has regarding their possibly voluntarily terminating current employment. The four questions in the survey measure that behavioral intentions of the participant to voluntarily terminate current employment. A sample item from this survey was, "Within the next year, I intend to leave this profession" (DeConinck, 2011, p.34). This measure was appropriate for this study since it is not the fact of termination that is important data, rather it is the relationship to relations-oriented leader behaviors and the social exchange relationship that was the focus of this study as it was with a portion of DeConinck (2011). This survey has shown validity when administered online. Dr. DeConinck permitted the use of this instrument in 2015.

Three occupation questions were included. These three questions were not used

for statistical analysis for testing of the hypotheses. These three questions gathered information regarding industry, work role, and size of unit managed to further ensure the participant was a sales professional.

LMX-MDM. Leader-member Exchange Multidimensional is a widely used survey instrument consisting of twelve items divided into four three-item subgroups measuring member perceived leadership attributes of their immediate supervisor. LMX-MDM is scored on a Likert scale with seven possible responses ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The four subgroups test for the leader attributes of professional respect, loyalty, affect and contribution. A sample item for professional respect is, "I respect my manager's knowledge of and competence on the job." A sample item for loyalty is, "My manager would come to my defense if I were 'attacked' by others." A sample item for affect is, "My manager is the kind of person one would like to have as a friend." A sample item for contribution is, "I am willing to apply extra efforts, beyond those normally required, to meet my manager's work goals." The 1998 work by Liden and Maslyn to develop the LMX-MDM instrument included validation of the instrument including acceptable confirmatory factor analysis at the null level assuming none of the four variables were related, a single factor model which posits all items describe the same dimension, a two-factor model combining the four elements into two describing the work related attributes of contribution and professional respect compared to a combination of affect and loyalty, and a three-factor model which is the same as the two-factor model but separates affect and loyalty to be tested as individual factors. The hypothesized four-factor model resulted in scores as follows: CFI = .986; GFI = .960; AGFL =.930 (Liden &Maslyn, 1998). Analysis of the scale found reliable internal

consistency (alphas for professional respect, loyalty, contribution, and affect were .92, .78, .60, and .90 respectively). Validity, including response bias, convergence, discriminant, and criterion-related, was found acceptable. Comparison with other instruments extant in 1998 included LMX-7 (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), a unidimensional instrument reporting only LMX quality and not sub-components as hypothesized in LMX-MDM, found that LMX-MDM correlated at .84 suggesting that if a single score of LMX quality were desired rather than the multidimensionality described by LMX-MDM, then LMX-MDM could be substituted for LMX-7.

Current support for the use of LMX-MDM when interested in LMX quality as unidimensional construct, as was used in this study, included a 2012 replication by O'Donnell et al. of a 2009 study done by Yukl et al. Yukl et al. (2009) studied the relationship between relations-oriented leader behaviors and LMX quality using LMX-7 to measure the unidimensional construct LMX quality. O'Donnell et al. (2012) replicated this study substituting LMX-MDM for LMX-7. While there were differences in results, the overall conclusion by O'Donnell et al. (2012) was that both instruments tested the same unidimensionality of LMX quality, with LMX-MDM providing additional data useful for analysis. LMX-MDM was also supported as reliable with alpha scores ranging from .87 to .96 for the twelve behaviors tested. Eisenberger, Karagonlar, Stinglhamber, Neves, Becker, Gonzalez-Morales, and Steiger-Mueller (2010) averaged the twelve items of the LMX-MDM scoring for an overall score of LMX quality. Liden (2015) provided the current LMX-MDM instrument and permission for use.

Criticism of instruments used for reporting LMX quality is based primarily in determining what is being measured and then how the results are used. Sheer (2015)

studied more than seventy research works with LMX quality as a central construct and found no specific, consistent definition of LMX quality other than being a social exchange relationship developed between leader and member. However, Sheer (2015) found that even when the definition included the exchange relationship factor, most studies did not examine the relationship, rather the studies were one-sided in that the data was derived from either the leader side of the exchange, or the member side, but not both. Bernerth, Armenakis, Field, Giles, and Walker (2007) focused on this same issue when developing their leader-member social exchange (LMSX) instrument to better describe the social relationship aspects that are the basis for the original LMX work as a social exchange description of behavior where a leader and member exchange resources and support for work and loyalty rather than a cognitive state (Sheer, 2015). This study, however, was not specifically interested in the relationship between the leader and member as such, rather in finding whether there was support for a focus on LMX quality in and of itself as a mediator between how a leader behaves and the voluntary termination intention of an employee. If there were such a finding, then this would support Sheer's enthusiasm for a focus on the behaviors within the relationship that partially describe leader-member exchange.

MPS. The Management Practices Survey (Yukl, 2015; Yukl et al., 2002) is a questionnaire consisting of sixty-four items scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "To a very great extent" to "Not at all, not applicable". The sixty-four items are divided into sixteen subgroups of four to describe an area of manager behaviors. These subgroups are namely clarifying, supporting, envisioning, external monitoring, planning activities, recognizing, encouraging innovation, representing, monitoring operations,

developing member skills, encouraging collective learning, networking, problem-solving, advocating change, consulting about decisions, and delegating (Yukl, 2012; 2015). This research was interested in the relations-oriented behaviors within the subgroups of supporting, recognizing, developing member skills, consulting about decisions, and delegating as studied by O'Donnell et al. (2012). A sample item from supporting is, "Shows sympathy and understanding when a member is worried or upset." A sample item from recognizing is, "Provides recognition for member achievements or important contributions." A sample item from developing member skills is, "Makes assignments that allow members to develop more skills and confidence." A sample item for consulting about decisions is, "Modifies a proposal or plan to incorporate member suggestions and deal with their concerns." A sample item from delegating is, "Encourages members to take responsibility for determining the best way to do their work." The MPS was developed from the management behavior survey consisting of 115 items and the original MPS of 110 items. The wording of the current version of MPS used in this research as developed by Yukl (2012; 2015) provided for better description of the dyadic relationship rather than group-oriented behaviors. Testing of the items as to whether they correctly described the behavior showed correct classification in studies done in 1984, 1985, 1986, and 1988 (Yukl & Lepsinger, 1990). Internal consistency was shown through Cronbach alpha scores for each subgroup greater than .84. Pearson r scores showed acceptable stability over time for the items. Yukl et al. (2002) revisited the MPS to test the validity of the taxonomy. They found internal consistency with alpha scores greater than .80 for the scale items. Inter-correlations were tested finding acceptable chi-squared results indicating the goodness of fit for the items to the model. CFI, GFI, and RMSEA testing

also showed the goodness of fit of the items to the model. By testing the model on a two- and three-factor basis, Yukl et al. (2002) were also able to determine that three categories of behavior best fit the data namely task, relations, and change behaviors. This finding was the basis for the relations-oriented behaviors categorization of this research. Recent work by Yukl (2012) had added a fourth category of external behaviors such as networking and was included in the current four category taxonomy on which the MPS is based. Yukl (2015) provided the current version and permission for use.

VTIS. The Voluntary Turnover Intention Survey is a four-item questionnaire developed by DeConinck (2011) to score an employee's behavioral intention to quit current employment. The VTIS is scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". A sample item is, "Within the next six months, I intend to search for another job" (DeConinck, 2011). The overall validity of DeConinck's study was assessed as acceptable with GFI, AGFI, and NFI all over .80 and RMSEA at .056. DeConinck developed these four questions from the previous work using three items developed by Konovsky and Cropanzano (1991) which had an internal consistency alpha of .84.

There is current discussion regarding the instruments and methods used in turnover research. Russell (2013) asked the question as to whether it is time to fundamentally change how turnover is studied. The point of view presented was that turnover research does not rigorously include all appropriate variables, nor does it accurately reflect actual behaviors, rather the research had limited focus and used proxy measure inappropriate for valid conclusions. Additional criticism from Allen et al. (2013) suggested that turnover research had become the victim of a particular analytical mindset

that in effect limited the growth and usefulness of recent research. Allen et al. (2013) through a meta-analysis of recent research found clusters of populations studied, methods used, and variables researched. While Sell (2013) and Allen et al. (2013) have valid points, their criticism does not apply to this research. Their criticism is mostly regarding actual turnover stating that actual turnover is not predicted by proxy measures such as VTI and that surveys are not a substitute for exit interviews at the time of the actual turnover. It was not the purpose of this research to study the actual outcome of turnover. The purpose was in part to study the behavioral intentions described by VTI and VTI's relationship to other constructs. This study examined how VTI related to leader behaviors and how LMX quality mediated that relationship.

Operational Definitions of Variables

LMX-MDM. Leader-member Exchange - Multidimensional is a measure of leader-member exchange capturing follower psychological perceptions of leader behaviors and attributes (Liden & Maslyn, 1998). The 12-item scale capturing the manifestations of leader behaviors and attributes was developed by Liden and Maslyn. The construct consists of four dimensions namely affect, loyalty, contribution, and professional respect (Liden & Maslyn. 1998). The four dimensions are highly correlated allowing for an overall single-factor measurement of the manifestation of LMX quality (Erdogan & Enders, 2007; Holliday, Martin, & Martin, 2010; Liden, Erdogan, Wayne, & Sparrowe, 2006; O'Donnell et al., 2012). Permission to use the full scale for this study was obtained (Liden, 2015).

Relations-oriented behaviors. Relations-oriented behaviors are a subset of five of the eleven leader behaviors described in transformational leadership theory (O'Donnell

et al., 2012; Yukl, 2012). These five behaviors were measured using a shortened version of the Management Practices Survey (MPS) (O'Donnell et al., 2012, Yukl et al., 2009) consisting of survey items applicable to only these five behaviors. Each of the eleven behaviors has been shown to have validity independently, so eliminating items do not affect the validity of the result (O'Donnell et al., 2012). The MPS has also shown validity when administered online (O'Donnell et al., 2012). O'Donnell et al. (2012) obtained ordinal survey data using a shortened version of the MPS. Permission to use the MPS and permission to shorten it for this study was obtained (Yukl, 2015).

Voluntary Turnover Intention. VTI is the measured intention of an employee to quit current employment. This readiness is interpreted from answers to questions such as "Within the next six months, I intend to search for another job" (DeConinck, 2011, p. 34). Answers are very likely, somewhat likely, not likely at all. Alternatively, reverse coded questions could be used such as: "I would not consider taking another job" (Lambert & Paoline, 2010, p. 142) with a Likert-type scale anchored by strongly disagree to strongly agree. While Paoline (2010) used a single question to measure VTI, DeConinck (2011) used a four question scale in his study to examine VTI focusing on obtaining responses more time-bound such as: "Within the next six months, I would rate the likelihood of leaving my present job as high" (p. 34). DeConinck (2011) obtained ordinal data using this scale to find relationships between LMX and VTI.

Data Collection, Processing, and Analysis

Sampling of the individuals was nonprobability by providing the survey instrument to a group of available sales professionals. First, an email list of sales professionals was obtained from a marketing company in that business and other public

sources. The list members were sent an email describing the purpose of the survey seeking their voluntary participation. The survey was a voluntary response through an online, anonymous response link in a personalized email to the participants using SurveyMonkey® to gather the data. Second, a written invitation was distributed to sales professionals attending training sessions. The invitation contained instructions for accessing the same online survey as the email participants.

The survey design was informed by the tailored design method described by Dillman, Smyth, & Christian (2009) and Stern, Bilgen, & Dillman (2014). The first page of the online data gathering was the Informed Consent Form as approved by the Institutional Review Board of Northcentral University. Selecting "NEXT" to enter the survey indicated informed consent by the participant. The survey instrument consisted of four sections: (a) relations-oriented leader behaviors as observed by members consisting of the shortened MPS; (b) leader-member exchange quality as observed by members consisting of LMX-MDM; (c) voluntary turnover intention as reported by members consisting of the VTIS; and (d) occupational questions to determine industry and job function. Answers were collected on a Likert-type scale for analysis consistent with the previous studies by DeConinck (2011) and O'Donnell et al. (2012) that were the basis for this study. The original method was to collect data over a two-week period (Schuck et al., 2014). However, collection was made in three efforts over a three-month period due to low participation rates I the first two efforts. Survey instruments can be found in Appendices A, B, and C.

Many internet-based panel survey questionnaires include in the invitation an incentive for the receiver to respond (David & Ware, 2014). These incentives vary in

timing, type, and amount. The incentive might be provided at the outset during the invitation to potentially create a social contract between the invitee and the investigator. The incentive may be promised only if the survey is completed. The incentive can be social (a grateful and thankful appeal to the ego of the recipient), monetary, or otherwise of monetary value such as an iPad Nano. The amounts can vary as well as the chance of receiving the incentive (Busby & Yoshida, 201; Herring, Butler, Hall, Bennett, Montgomery, & Fraser, 2014; Holland, Ritchie, & DuBois, 2015; Hu, Cheong Wong, & Wang, 2015; LaRose & Tsai, 2014; Singer & Ye, 2013). There have been several key experiments to provide data to researchers interested in how incentives might increase response rates for internet-based surveys (Dykema, Stevenson, Kniss, Kvale, González, & Cautley, 2012; Laguilles, Williams, & Saunders, 2011; Patrick, Singer, Boyd, Cranford & McCabe, 2013; Pedersen & Nielsen, 2016; Sauermann & Roach, 2013). While the studies agreed that (a) providing an incentive increased response rate compared to providing no incentive, and (b) that larger incentives provided greater response rates compared to providing smaller incentives, there was not agreement on the size of the incentive and whether there were diminishing returns of size versus increased response rate. Surveys providing no social or monetary incentive still had sufficient response rates for the surveys in question (David & Ware, 2014; Laguilles et al., 2011). Of interest to the researcher regarding response rate are two goals: (a) ensure sufficient response to provide meaningful data regarding number of responses and percent responding to avoid the problem of non-response bias, and (b) cost of the survey in total and per response (Singer & Ye, 2013). This dissertation research did not provide a monetary incentive for response initially, but due low response the email list was once again polled with an

incentive valued at $500. This second email effort elicited no additional response, so the incentive was not used in further recruitment. Research has shown that even with providing no incentive, provided the survey is worded well and a sufficient number of invitations are sent, that the resulting response will be sufficient for data analysis and having an insignificant non-response bias.

Hypotheses were tested to describe the correlation of VTI and relations-oriented behaviors employed by the leader, the correlation of LMX and VTI, and the mediation of the correlations between the studied behaviors and VTI by LMX quality. Analysis using IBM® SPSS® Amos including the PROCESS macro written by Hayes (2016) provided analyses for examination. Mean, standard deviation, and Cronbach's alpha were calculated and compared to data from the validation studies for the instruments used all or in part to develop the survey for this study. Zero-order correlation was used to describe the direct relationship between the variable sets in the first six hypotheses. A first-order regression analysis was used to determine the degree of mediation by LMX on the correlations between the studied behaviors and VTI.

Mediation is conceptually modeled in Figure 2 including the pathways of effect in both the direct relation of X as the independent variable to Y as the dependent variable labeled c, and the indirect relationship of X to Y measured with M as the mediating variable present. Mediation by M on the correlation between X and Y is present when c is greater than c' according to the methodology described by Baron and Kenny (1986).

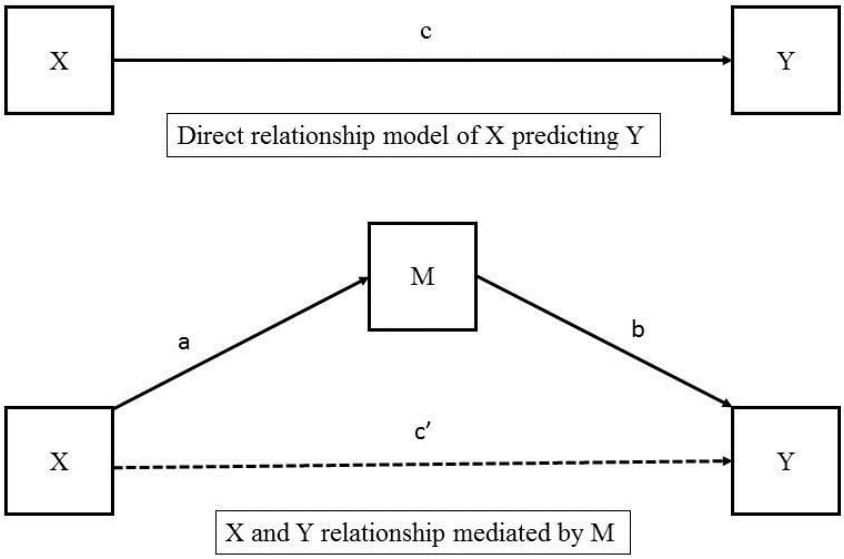

Figure 2. Conceptual model of mediation.

The analysis of mediation between variables in hypotheses seven through eleven was examined through the four steps identified by Kenny (2014) using IBM® SPSS® 24 with the PROCESS Macro add-in written by Hayes (2016). The first step was to establish that the causal variable, the behavior, correlated with the outcome variable of VTI. This meant that VTI varied with leader behaviors. The second step examined the relationship between the causal variable and the mediating variable. This determined that LMX quality varied with leader behaviors. The third step involved establishing that the mediator, LMX, affected the outcome variable. This included showing VTI varied with both leader behavior variables and LMX quality. The fourth and final step showed that LMX quality completely or partially explained the relationship between leader behaviors and VTI and so was a mediating variable in that relationship. It was established that the

effect of leader behaviors on VTI while controlling for LMX quality was zero for full mediation in some cases and greater than zero but less than the direct relationship for partial mediation in others (Kenny, 2014).

Assumptions

The study was a non-random sampling of a population of sales professionals. There was an assumption that the sampling was representative of the population. The pool of potential participants was first drawn from a large database maintained by a third party provider of sales professional contact information and then included attendees at sales professional training events. An additional assumption was that the sampling was large enough to provide a statistical description of the population from the sampling. The pool of potential participants was large enough to provide a sufficient number of completed responses for statistical analyses. It was assumed that participants were honest and thoughtful in their responses. The survey instrument was a compilation of instruments previously used with success indicating that participants do answer appropriately. A third party collected the information providing a basis for assuming confidentiality and privacy while also providing sufficient reason to assume an avoidance of researcher bias in data collection. This process has been shown to provide the privacy and confidentiality required by ethical standards.

Limitations

Limitations to this study consisted of the elements not in control of the researcher. These limitations provide the basis for criticism of interpretation and validity of the study. There were limitations due to the interpretation and validity of conclusions from the statistical analyses. Previous studies utilizing the survey questions used in this study

provide the basis for an implied validity of this study's results as the methods for this study were a close derivation of previous studies shown valid and with supportable interpretations. While statistical science assumes no absolute correctness, using well-documented techniques does provide supportable conclusions.

Delimitations

The study was limited to sales professionals in the United States. This limitation was made to follow closely the studies previously done by DeConinck (2011) to build on those results. Sampling only sales professionals limits the external validity thus limits usefulness of the results as generalization to other professions may not be supportable. Additionally, the limitation to the United States may limit the generalization of results to other venues and cultures. Another limitation was that sales professionals made up the sample rather than including supervisors. This limited the scope of the study to the member level of the dyad limiting the usefulness in applying study results to the supervisor level of LMX quality. This limitation was in keeping with much of the previous work in LMX theory; studies tend to research either the member or the supervisor level.

Ethical Assurances

The ethical considerations for this study included awareness, privacy, confidentiality, and human rights. Regarding awareness, the participants were provided a description of the study, the reasons for the study, the process, and the procedures to protect privacy and hold their responses confidential. These safeguards were acknowledged by the participant prior to data collection. Privacy was provided by using a third party data collection process (SurveyMonkey®) through an invitation to participate

that did not include any personally recognizable data nor was personally recognizable data collected during the survey. The ability to collect Internet Service Provider information was not utilized as this would provide potentially personally recognizable information. Confidentiality was maintained during the data collection process as no one was made aware of participation or non-participation by invitees and after the study through the destruction of all electronic data after an appropriate interval. Only summary data was made available publicly. Human rights were considered in the survey method; no personal harm was considered remotely likely in normal circumstances as reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of Northcentral University.

Summary

The purpose of this quantitative non-experimental study was by using an ex post facto survey design to collect sufficient data to draw conclusions regarding (a) correlations between relations-oriented leader behaviors and VTI, (b) the correlation between LMX and VTI, and (c) the mediation by LMX quality of correlations between relations-oriented behaviors and VTI. The eleven research questions posed provided the basis for testable hypotheses regarding these possible relationships. Taken as a while, the research question answers provided the basis for extending LMX theory and the VET model.

The population consisting of sales professionals and sampling method of the population were described in this chapter. The sampling was not randomized, but 192 valid responses to the survey were sufficient for the required for statistical analysis. The survey was administered through SurveyMonkey® to provide anonymity and privacy as well as lessening the possibility of researcher bias. The survey consisted of items from

LMX-MDM, the Management Practices Survey, and the Voluntary Termination Intention Survey. These instruments were used in recent studies regarding similar questions posed in this study. Correlation analysis and first-order regression as performed in recent studies were performed to provide the basis for conclusions for the study as well as comparisons to previous research.

Chapter 4: Findings

The problem examined in this study was that while it had been found that LMX was negatively related to VTI, and five relations-oriented behaviors described in transformational leadership theory had been found to positively related to LMX, no study was found in literature describing the relationship of relations-oriented behaviors and VTI, and whether LMX mediated these correlations. Confirming previous studies as well as describing new relationships in this manner expands the knowledge of leader-member exchange theory and overall organizational leadership theory. This study was designed as a non-experimental quantitative survey-based analysis to confirm the previously described relationships while also testing for these additional relationships.

The study included six independent variables consisting of the five relations-oriented behaviors and LMX quality. The dependent variable was VTI. LMX quality was also considered a mediating variable for the study. The quantitative non-experimental method utilized all or part of three existing survey instruments to measure these seven variables. These instruments were appropriate for this research as each had been used in previous published scholarly research examining the same or similar relationships as this study. The survey instrument consisted of thirty-six questions answered on a Likert-type scale. Twelve questions measured LMX using the LMX-MDM. Four questions measured VTI using the VTIS instrument. Twenty questions were used from the Management Practices Survey consisting of four questions for each of the five relations-oriented behaviors measured. Statistical analysis included in this chapter includes (a) variable mean, range, and variance; (b) tests results for distribution normality; (c) correlations

among variables; and (d) results of mediation analysis of LMX on the correlations between the five behaviors and VTI.

Each of the eleven research questions is discussed in this chapter. The discussion repeats the research question, the null hypothesis, and the alternate hypothesis for each question. The statistical findings are referred to find support for the null hypothesis, absent which the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate accepted if within the acceptable error tolerance. This chapter includes evaluation of the findings compared to previous scholarly work. Discussion including interpretation and significance of these results is provided in the next chapter.

Results

Statistical analysis. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistical analysis of the 192 valid responses to the internet-based survey. The five relations-oriented behaviors were scored using the applicable questions from the Management Practices Survey instrument developed by Yukl, Gordon, and Taber (2002) as was used by O'Donnell et al. (2012). This portion of the survey consisted of four questions per behavior totaling twenty questions scored from 1 ([exhibits this behavior] to a very great extent) to 5 (not at all). Each of the five behaviors was scored as an average result per participant. Cronbach's alpha scores for the five behaviors tested ranged from 0.84 to 0.90 compared to the range of 0.87 to 0.96 found by O'Donnell et al. (2012). VTI was scored using the Voluntary Termination Intention Survey instrument as used in DeConinck (2011) consisting of four questions scored from 1 (strongly agree [that the participant has this thought of quitting]) to 5 (strongly disagree). VTI scores are the average of the four responses per participant. Cronbach's alpha was 0.89 compared to DeConinck (2011) of 0.84 (Konovsky &

Cropanzano, 1991). LMX was scored using the LMX-MDM survey instrument developed by Liden and Maslyn (1998) as used in O'Donnell et al. (2012) consisting of twelve questions scored from 1 (Strongly agree [that this aspect of their relationship is high-quality]) to 7 (Strongly disagree). LMX scores are the average of the twelve responses. Cronbach's alpha was 0.92 compared to 0.95 (O'Donnell et al., 2012).

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Items	Range	Minimum	Maximum
Supporting	192	5	3.00	2.00	5.00
Recognizing	192	5	3.00	2.00	5.00
Developing	192	5	3.75	1.25	5.00
Consulting	192	5	3.00	2.00	5.00
Delegating	192	5	3.25	1.75	5.00
Voluntary Termination Intention	192	5	4.00	1.00	5.00
Leader-member Exchange	192	7	4.83	2.17	7.00

	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Deviation	Variance
Supporting	3.95	0.06	0.77	0.60
Recognizing	3.93	0.06	0.84	0.70
Developing	3.59	0.07	0.97	0.94
Consulting	3.47	0.06	0.87	0.76
Delegating	3.77	0.07	0.94	0.88
Voluntary Termination Intention	1.94	0.08	1.07	1.15
Leader-member Exchange	5.66	0.08	1.04	1.08

Table 2 presents the skewness and kurtosis testing for normality of the distributions for each variable. Skewness describes the centrality of the results as compared to a normal distribution. Kurtosis describes the steepness of the curve compared to a normal distribution. Nearness to a normal distribution is a necessary condition for linear regression to have valid results. Normal range for both statistics is -1.0 to 1.0.

Table 2

Test for Normal Distribution

	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Suporting	-0.58	0.18	-0.40	0.35
Recognizing	-0.50	0.18	-0.71	0.35
Developing	-0.29	0.18	-1.01	0.35
Consulting	0.01	0.18	-1.09	0.35
Delegating	-0.35	0.18	-1.01	0.35
Voluntary Termination Intention	1.00	0.18	0.08	0.35
Leader-member Exchange	-0.97	0.18	0.99	0.35

Table 3 presents the correlations among the variables using zero-order analysis.

Table 3

Correlations Between Important Study Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. VTI	-	-.457**	-.265**	-.411**	-.437**	-.387**	-.473**
2. Supporting		-	.721**	.743**	.632**	.604**	.625**
3. Recognizing			-	.709**	.498**	.440**	.568**
4. Developing				-	.641**	.636**	.667**
5. Consulting					-	.663**	.609**
6. Delegating						-	.639**
7. LMX-MDM							-

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
N = 192

Table 4 presents summary data from the first-order regression of LMX on the relationship between behaviors and VTI. The mediation analysis was conducted using the PROCESS macro for SPSS 24 with 5000 bootstrap resamples. The total effect of the independent variable (the behavior) and the mediating variable (LMX) on the dependent variable (VTI) is shown. This total effect is divided between the indirect and direct effect of the behavior on VTI when LMX is included in the regression analysis. The PROCESS

macro calculated these percentages directly; the four-part mediation analysis described by Baron and Kenney (1986) that compares the correlation in Table 2 with the direct effect in Table 4 of the same paired variables supported these results.

Table 4

Analysis of LMX as Mediator of the Relationships between Leader Behaviors and Voluntary Turnover Intention

		95% C.I.			
	Estimate	LLCI	ULCI	% of Total Effect	p
Support predicting VTI					
Total	-0.6325	-0.8088	-0.4563		>0.001
Indirect via LMX	-0.266	-0.4139	-0.1262	42.05	0.0003
Direct	-0.3665	-0.5846	-0.1485	57.95	0.0011
Recogition predicting VTI					
Total	-0.3387	-0.5153	-0.162		0.0002
Indirect via LMX	-0.3461	-0.4899	-0.2285	1 02.19	>0.001
Direct	0.0074	-0.1892	0.204	-0 02.19	0.9408
Development predicting VTI					
Total	-0.4549	-0.5994	-0.3105		>0.001
Indirect via LMX	-0.2644	-0.3921	-0.1419	58.11	0.0001
Direct	-0.1906	-0.3764	-0.0047	41.89	0.0445
Consulting predicting VTI					
Total	-0.5384	-0.6968	-0.3801		>0.001
Indirect via LMX	-0.246	-0.3839	-0.1027	45.69	0.0001
Direct	-0.2924	-0.4841	-0.1007	54.31	0.0030
Delegating predicting VTI					
Total	-0.4429	-0.594	-0.2919		>0.001
Indirect via LMX	-0.2788	-0.4227	-0.1224	62.95	>0.001
Direct	-0.1641	-0.3508	0.0226	37.05	0.0845

Note. N = 192; C.I.= confidence interval; Analyses conducted using bias-corrected bootstrapping. Significance of indirect effects calculated from Sobel test.

Assumptions. Valid regression analysis performed in this study required the variables to have an approximately normal distribution. Two statistics used to describe normality are skewness and kurtosis. Skewness is the amount of probable asymmetry of

the curve while kurtosis is the degree of sharpness of the curve. Normal range for both statistics is -1.0 to 1.0. Table 2 presents the test results: all variables had results within that range indicating a distribution suitable for linear regression analysis described by Tabachnick and Fidell (2013). Based on these two tests of normality, the zero-order correlations and first-order linear regressions were performed.

Research questions and hypotheses. Research questions are listed below with the corresponding null hypothesis. The hypotheses are worded as rejection supported so that if the null hypothesis is rejected, then the alternate hypothesis is accepted and supportive of the research question.

Research question 1. This research question in this study was: What is the relationship between supporting behavior and VTI? The corresponding hypothesis set for this study was:

$H1_0$: There is no negative relationship between supporting behavior and VTI.

$H1_a$: There is a negative relationship between supporting behavior and VTI.

Table 3 shows a correlation of r = -0.457 between supporting behavior and VTI, so the null hypothesis is rejected resulting in accepting the alternate hypothesis that there is a negative relationship between supporting behavior and VTI.

Research question 2. This research question in this study was: What is the relationship between recognizing behavior and VTI? The corresponding hypothesis set for this study was:

$H2_0$: There is no negative relationship between recognizing behavior and VTI.

$H2_a$: There is a negative relationship between recognizing behavior and VTI.

Table 3 shows a correlation of r = -0.265 between recognizing behavior and VTI, so the null hypothesis is rejected resulting in accepting the alternate hypothesis that there is a negative relationship between recognizing behavior and VTI.

Research question 3. This research question in this study was: What is the relationship between developing behavior and VTI? The corresponding hypothesis set for this study was:

$H3_0$: There is no negative relationship between developing behavior and VTI.

$H3_a$: There is a negative relationship between developing behavior and VTI.

Table 3 shows a correlation of r = -0.41 between developing behavior and VTI, so the null hypothesis is rejected resulting in accepting the alternate hypothesis that there is a negative relationship between developing behavior and VTI.

Research question 4. This research question in this study was: What is the relationship between consulting behavior and VTI? The corresponding hypothesis set for this study was:

$H4_0$: There is no negative relationship between consulting behavior and VTI.

$H4_a$: There is a negative relationship between consulting behavior and VTI.

Table 3 shows a correlation of r = -0.437 between consulting behavior and VTI, so the null hypothesis is rejected resulting in accepting the alternate hypothesis that there is a negative relationship between consulting behavior and VTI.

Research question 5. This research question in this study was: What is the relationship between delegating behavior and VTI? The corresponding hypothesis set for this study was:

$H5_0$: There is no negative relationship between delegating behavior and VTI.

$H5_a$: There is a negative relationship between delegating behavior and VTI.

Table 3 shows a correlation of r = -0.387 between delegating behavior and VTI, so the null hypothesis is rejected resulting in accepting the alternate hypothesis that there is a negative relationship between delegating behavior and VTI.

Research question 6. This research question in this study was: What is the relationship between LMX quality and VTI? The corresponding hypothesis set for this study was:

$H6_0$: There is no negative relationship between LMX quality and VTI.

$H6_a$: There is a negative relationship between LMX quality and VTI.

Table 3 shows a correlation of r = -0.473 between LMX quality and VTI, so the null hypothesis is rejected resulting in accepting the alternate hypothesis that there is a negative relationship between LMX quality and VTI. This was a stronger correlation than the -0.37 found previously by DeConinck (2011).

Research question 7. This research question in this study was: Does LMX quality mediate the relationship, if any, between supporting behavior and VTI? The corresponding hypothesis set for this study was:

$H7_0$: LMX quality does not mediate the relationship between supporting behavior and VTI.

$H7_a$: LMX quality does mediate the relationship between supporting behavior and VTI.

The model tested LMX as a mediator of the relationship between supporting behavior and VTI. Supporting behavior was significantly predictive of VTI when controlling for LMX ($B = -.6325$, $t = -7.0801$, $p < .0001$) and explained approximately 20.88% of

variance. Of this effect, approximately 42.05% of the effect was indirect through the mediator LMX (Bootstrap 95% C.I. 20.22 - 68.97). A Sobel test for the significance of the mediator also indicated it was significant (Z = -3.6216, p = .0003). These results indicate that the effect of supporting behavior on VTI is partially mediated by LMX. The null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis $H7_a$ is supported.

Research question 8. This research question in this study was: Does LMX quality mediate the relationship, if any, between recognizing behavior and VTI? The corresponding hypothesis set for this study was:

$H8_0$: LMX quality does not mediate the relationship between recognizing behavior and VTI.

$H8_a$: LMX quality does mediate the relationship between recognizing behavior and VTI.

The model tested LMX as a mediator of the relationship between recognizing behavior and VTI. Recognizing behavior was not significantly predictive of VTI when controlling for LMX (B = -.3387, t = -3.7817, p = .0002) and explained approximately just 7.00% of variance. Of this effect, approximately 100% of the effect was indirect through the mediator LMX (Bootstrap 95% C.I. 61.71 – 218.91). A Sobel test for the significance of the mediator also indicated it was significant (Z = -5.1232, p < .0001). These results indicate that the effect of recognizing behavior on VTI is fully mediated by LMX. The null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis $H8_a$ is supported.

Research question 9. This research question in this study was: Does LMX quality mediate the relationship, if any, between developing behavior and VTI? The corresponding hypothesis set for this study was:

$H9_0$: LMX quality does not mediate the relationship between developing behavior and VTI.

$H9_a$: LMX quality does mediate the relationship between developing behavior and VTI.

The model tested LMX as a mediator of the relationship between developing behavior and VTI. Developing behavior was significantly predictive of VTI when controlling for LMX (B = -.4549, t = -6.2125, p < .0001) and explained approximately 16.88% of variance. Of this effect, approximately 58.11% of the effect was indirect through the mediator LMX (Bootstrap 95% C.I. 29.43 – 95.50). A Sobel test for the significance of the mediator also indicated it was significant (Z = -3.9708, p = .0001). These results indicate that the effect of developing behavior on VTI is partially mediated by LMX. The null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis $H9_a$ is supported.

Research question 10. This research question in this study was: Does LMX quality mediate the relationship, if any, between consulting behavior and VTI? The corresponding hypothesis set for this study was:

$H10_0$: LMX quality does not mediate the relationship between consulting behavior and VTI.

$H10_a$: LMX quality does mediate the relationship between consulting behavior and VTI.

The model tested LMX as a mediator of the relationship between consulting behavior and VTI. Consulting behavior was significantly predictive of VTI when controlling for LMX (B = -.5384, t = -6.7064, p < .0001) and explained approximately 19.14% of variance. Of this effect, approximately 45.69% of the effect was indirect through the mediator LMX

(Bootstrap 95% C.I. .1708 - .8313). A Sobel test for the significance of the mediator also indicated it was significant (Z = -3.8529, p = .0001). These results indicate that the effect of consulting behavior on VTI is partially mediated by LMX. The null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis $H10_a$ is supported.

Research question 11. This research question in this study was: Does LMX quality mediate the relationship, if any, between delegating behavior and VTI? The corresponding hypothesis set for this study was:

$H11_0$: LMX quality does not mediate the relationship between delegating behavior and VTI.

$H11_a$: LMX quality does mediate the relationship between delegating behavior and VTI.

The model tested LMX as a mediator of the relationship between delegating behavior and VTI. Delegating behavior was significantly predictive of VTI when controlling for LMX (B = -.4429, t = -5.7848, p < .0001) and explained approximately 14.98% of variance. Of this effect, approximately 62.95% of the effect was indirect through the mediator LMX (Bootstrap 95% C.I. 623.89 – 124.13). However, the direct effect of delegating behavior on VTI was not significant due to a p-value > .05 (B = -.1641, t = -1.7443, p = .0845) thus mediation analysis of the effect of LMX on this correlation is not possible meaning the remaining 37% cannot be concluded to be due to delegating behavior. A Sobel test for the significance of the mediator also indicated it was significant (Z = -4.2636, p < .0001). These results indicate that the effect of delegating behavior on VTI is fully mediated by LMX. The null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis 11_a is supported.

Evaluation of Findings

Findings agree with extant literature discussing the positive relationship between relations-oriented leader behaviors found in transformational leadership theory and leader-member exchange quality including O'Donnell et al. (2012). The findings also agree with the negative relationship found between leader-member exchange and voluntary turnover intention found by DeConinck (2011). The purpose of this study was to find new information regarding these previously found relationships. The findings present new information describing the direct correlation between each of the five studied relations-oriented leader behaviors and VTI. This information on the correlations can be used to extend the understanding of the interrelationships between other variables contained in VET theory and LMX theory through the inclusion of these newly described correlations. The finding of mediation by LMX of the correlation between each of the five studied behaviors and VTI furthered understanding of the centrality of LMX in these examples. The finding in this study supported the recommendation that research regarding relationships between variables in organizational leadership and organizational behavior should consider the effect of LMX and not rely solely on correlations of independent and dependent variables. The powerful mediation by LMX quality was an important finding and informed the recommendations for practical use of the research to a greater extent than if the mediation by LMX had not been researched and found.

The information added to LMX theory and overall organizational leadership theory from this nonexperimental post hoc quantitative study regarding the finding of the mediating role of LMX quality on the relationship between relations-oriented leader behaviors and VTI enhanced understanding of how leadership behaviors affect outcomes,

specifically amelioration of negative outcomes associated with high VTI. Taken as a whole, this study suggests leaders could have a direct impact on undesirable VTI through relations-oriented behaviors. The data also suggests that attention to LMX as a central concern of leaders is very impactful, and the behaviors studied here are only a subset of variables affecting followers' intentions and actions.

Summary

The analyses of the survey data gathered in this nonexperimental study provided for answers to eleven research questions. The first five questions regarded confirming the positive relationship between LMX and relations-oriented behaviors, namely and in order of research question supporting, recognizing, developing, consulting, and delegating. The null hypotheses were worded to provide rejection support for the research question and in each of these first five research questions, the null hypothesis was rejected providing for support for the positive relationship between the behavior in question and LMX quality. These findings agreed with the literature including recent work by O'Donnell et al. (2012). The sixth research question asked if there was a negative relationship between LMX and VTI as found previously by DeConinck (2011). The null hypothesis that stated there was no negative relationship was rejected in this analysis and supported the alternate showing a negative relationship did exist between these two constructs.

Testing for the first six questions provided the needed finding the correlations between the independent variables and the dependent variable. These correlations were the basis for the next five questions regarding mediation. Questions seven through eleven were worded to ask if LMX acted as a mediating variable between the found relationships between the five relations-oriented leader behaviors as independent variables and VTI as

the dependent variable. It was necessary to find the significant relationships between the behaviors and VTI and between LMX and VTI to support regression analysis of mediation (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Additionally, the collected data was found to be approximately normally distributed, another requirement of the mediation analysis used in this study.

Questions seven through eleven were worded to ask if, for each of the five behaviors, does LMX quality mediate the found relationship between the behavior of interest and VTI? Mediation is indicated if regression analysis showed a lessening of the effect of a studied behavior on VTI when regressed in a first-order analysis to include LMX quality as a possible mediator. The null hypothesis for each was worded to state that there was no mediating effect, thus rejection of the null hypothesis would support the alternate that stated there was mediation found. The null hypothesis was rejected in all five questions, questions seven through eleven. Full or partial mediation was present in all five cases. Implications, recommendations, and conclusions based on the results of this study are discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Implications, Recommendations, and Conclusions

This chapter includes the results of this study including data analysis, implications of the results, recommendations, and conclusions based on the full discussion contained in this manuscript. It is important in this discussion to keep at the forefront the problem that was addressed. Voluntary employee turnover is costly to organizations both in direct hard-dollar outlays and indirect costs both before and after turnover. Modeling of employee turnover includes descriptions of the process of turnover as well as the content. Process describes the steps taken while content describes the motivations of an employee considering turnover. The problem addressed in this study was derived from the idea that a leader can behave in ways that build a relationship with their follower so that the process and content of turnover are affected to reduce voluntary turnover.

High voluntary turnover intention (VTI) may be the final indicator that a valued employee intends to depart (DeConinck, 2011; Shim et al., 2015; Russell & Sell, 2012). High VTI was associated with negative behaviors and attitudes related to employee disengagement (Dulebohn et al., 2011; Shim et al., 2015). While previous studies had found leader-member exchange quality (LMX) correlated with VTI negatively (DeConinck, 2011) and relations-oriented behaviors positively correlated with LMX quality (O'Donnell et al., 2012) the correlations between the five studied relations-oriented leader behaviors and VTI, and the mediating role of leader-member exchange quality on these correlations was not clearly understood (Ahmed et al., 2013; Wells & Peachey, 2011). The problem was that without understanding how relations-oriented behaviors acted on VTI, HRD practices were not well informed to provide leaders with the needed behavioral tools. Understanding how LMX quality, a well-studied construct,

affected the correlation between the five studied behaviors and VTI makes it easier to formulate better HRD practices providing behavioral tools that are under the direct control of leaders to achieve lower VTI. These better informed HRD practices could increase achievement of organizational goals such as lower human resource costs due to lower VET. The purpose of this quantitative research was to find and quantify the correlations between the five studied behaviors and VTI, the correlation between LMX and VTI, and the mediating role of LMX on the correlations between each of the five behaviors and VTI.

The research utilized a survey instrument containing thirty-six questions regarding LMX quality, VTI, and the use of five relations-oriented behaviors. The five behaviors are contained in TL theory and are namely supporting, recognizing, developing, consulting, and delegating. LMX was measured using the twelve questions of the LMX-MDM instrument developed by Liden and Maslyn (1998). VTI was measured using the four questions from the Voluntary Termination Intention Survey developed by DeConinck (2011). Relations-oriented behaviors were measured using twenty questions taken from the Management Practices Survey developed by Yukl et al. (2002) applicable to these five behaviors. In this study, the five relations-oriented behaviors were independent variables paired with VTI as the dependent variable. LMX was also considered an independent variable paired with VTI in order to perform mediation analysis. LMX was considered a mediating variable in the regression analysis of the correlations between the behaviors studied and VTI. Power analysis computed a minimum sample size of 138 which was exceeded by the 192 valid responses. Zero-order correlations and first-order regressions were computed using SPSS® 24 including the

PROCESS macro written by Hayes (2016). Mediation analysis followed the standard four-step process as described by Baron and Kenny (1986).

Several limitations in external validity exist in these analyses that limit generalization of any conclusions. These limitations could be ameliorated in several ways. First, an experimental or a quasi-experimental design could provide more powerful data than obtained from the chosen non-experimental design. In an experimental design, independent variables can be manipulated to test multiple conditions whereas this study relies on data that already existed and drew conclusions from just one condition. The non-experimental data also severely limited conclusions regarding causation. Correlations themselves are not causal, and even though first-order regression does supply some data that can imply causation, causation is not conclusive. A second limitation was that the sample did not provide data favorable to generalization. The population samples consisted of sales professionals only. The population sampled did not consider industry distribution, geographic distribution, or work-role of the participant. These limitations reduce external validity. To generalize from the data gathered that the results apply to (a) a broad set of industries, (b) a large geographic region, including worldwide, or (c) that sales professionals of all types and roles are the same was not supportable by the study design and analysis.

For these limitations to be ameliorated to increase external validity, multiple studies should be performed. These would include studies replicating this design as well as other designs such as experimental and qualitative research. Samples should include participants across industries and geographies. Reducing these limitations was beyond the scope of this study.

It is important to research ethically. The ethical research was ensured by the study design as approved by the Institutional Review Board of Northcentral University. Key elements included providing informed notice of the intent of the study and obtaining consent to the provisions (Appendix D). Additionally, privacy and confidentiality were maintained through anonymous participation in the survey using a third-party site for collection and collecting no personally identifiable information. The data has been fully de-personalized and are stored in a secure location for the appropriate period.

Implications

This study answered eleven research questions. Each question is addressed in the following including the implications of these finding question-by-question as well as a whole cloth.

RQ1. What is the relationship between supporting behavior and VTI?

There was a negative correlation between the two variables (Pearson's $r=-.457$, $n=192$, $p<.01$) meaning that when supporting behavior by a leader is reported as present by the member, the member will have a lower behavioral intention to quit their current position. This finding makes intuitive sense since supporting behavior involves sympathy and understanding, two leader traits that would act to lessen effects of workplace and non-workplace issues that could lead to thinking of quitting. It is important to note that while correlational analysis does not solve for causation, there is an implication that they are tied together in some manner.

RQ2. What is the relationship between recognizing behavior and VTI?

There was a negative correlation between the two variables (Pearson's

r=-.265, n=192, p<.01) meaning that when recognizing behavior by their leader is reported as being present by a member then the member has fewer thoughts of quitting. This correlation was not as strong as for the other four behaviors, but still, it does show that a leader who gives recognition often and well should have members who are less likely to have the behavioral intent, VTI.

RQ3. What is the relationship between developing behavior and VTI?

There was a negative correlation between the two variables (Pearson's r=-.411, n=192, p<.01) supporting a conclusion that a leader perceived by a member to have the member's development as a priority such as providing opportunities for training or involving the member in special projects for learning purposes will have members who have a lower intentions to quit. The only age data utilized in this study was the requirement that the participant was between ages 18 and 65; this lack of data limits the ability to examine whether developing behavior and VTI are correlated differently by age group as one might intuit that developing is more important to younger members who are newer to employment and perhaps see growth opportunities differently than older employees nearer the end of their working career.

RQ4. What is the relationship between consulting behavior and VTI?

There was a negative correlation between the two variables (Pearson's r=-.437, n=192, p<.01) meaning that members who perceive their leader as consulting with them on decisions, for example, have fewer thoughts of quitting. While this study is not a study in psychological make-up, it could be ventured to say that people like to be consulted on decisions. This leader behavior would lead to fewer thoughts of leaving their work. Further study into the relationships between variables found in this study

could be based on the psychology of the relationship, perhaps extending into causation analysis of results from experimental designs.

RQ5. What is the relationship between delegating behavior and VTI?

There was a negative correlation between the two variables (Pearson's $r=-.387$, $n=192$, $p<.01$) meaning that, while not as strong as three other behavior variables tested, members who report their leader as delegators have less strong intention to quit. One limitation of this study was that the role of the participant in the sales profession was not a variable considered. If this data had been collected with sufficient definition to examined by role, it is possible that the reason for this lower but still significant finding might have more explanation. For example, if a person is a retail sales person, it might be difficult for a sales manager to find activities to delegate, meaning finding an activity or decision that is not already part of the salesperson's job description. Alternatively, a vice-president with middle managers reporting to their position may find it very easy to delegate tasks and decisions that could be handled at either their level or below, depending on whether the vice-president is a delegator.

RQ6. What is the relationship between LMX quality and VTI?

There was a negative correlation between the two variables, Pearson's $r=-.473$, $n=192$, $p<.01$ meaning that this study supports previous findings by DeConinck (2011) that the better the LMX quality, the lower is the member of the dyad's intention to voluntarily terminate employment. This is an important finding for two reasons. First, this correlation agrees with previous work on which this study was partially based. Findings that did not support the previous work would seriously undermine the foundation of this study. Second, finding this correlation was necessary for the regression

analysis discussed in the next five research questions. The correlations found to answer the first five research questions were also required for the regression analysis. The meaning of this negative correlation is that a broad set of antecedents to LMX quality can also be studied for their relationship as an independent variable to VTI as the dependent variable as was done in this study. These additional studies could analyze the correlation of pairs or with the mediation by LMX of the correlation, if any, of the pairs as was also computed in this research.

RQ7. Does LMX quality mediate the relationship, if any, between supporting behavior and VTI?

Supporting behavior was significantly predictive of VTI when controlling for LMX ($B = -.6325$, $t = -7.0801$, $p < .0001$) and explained approximately 20.88% of variance. Of this effect, approximately 42.05% of the effect was indirect through the mediator LMX (Bootstrap 95% C.I. 20.22 - 68.97). The importance of regression analysis is the ability to discuss pathways and to some extent causation, something not possible with correlation analysis alone. The meaning these findings are that while the study already showed a correlation between supporting behavior as the independent variable and VTI as the dependent variable, the mediation analysis describes a pathway from the independent variable's strength affecting the outcome of the dependent variable. The pathway analyzed was the relationship of supporting behavior in this case to LMX, LMX to VTI, and to what extent did the level of LMX quality affect the relationship between supporting behavior and VTI. Mediation levels range from none to full; in between is described as partial and to what percent. In this case about 42% of the effect of supporting behavior on VTI was explained by the level of LMX quality; LMX partially

mediated the effect of supporting behavior on VTI. This analysis indicated the importance of high LMX quality, absent which the effect of supporting behavior would be lessened. The importance to informing HRD practices is that focus on the behavior alone is less likely to have the desired outcome of lowering VTI's negative organizational effects that combining HRD practices that consider both the leader behavior and LMX quality overall. A limiting factor in this recommendation was the study's examination of sales professionals; different results might come from other roles informing HRD practices differently.

RQ8. Does LMX quality mediate the relationship, if any, between recognizing behavior and VTI?

The model tested LMX as a mediator of the relationship between recognizing behavior and VTI. Recognizing behavior was not significantly predictive of VTI when controlling for LMX (B = -.3387, t = -3.7817, p = .0002) and explained approximately just 7.00% of variance. Of this effect, approximately 100% of the effect was indirect through the mediator LMX (Bootstrap 95% C.I. 61.71 – 218.91). Recognizing behavior had the lowest correlation to VTI of the five behaviors tested in this study. The mediation analysis found that approximately all of this correlation was due to the level of LMX. Studying recognizing behavior confirmed the importance of LMX to inform HRD practices for reducing VTI since recognizing behavior is positively correlated (r=0.568) with LMX. Recognizing behavior should be supported by HRD practices to support LMX quality which in turn supports lowered VTI. It is again possible that the limitation to the sales profession if lifted and studies considered role as a variable then this result might differ by role. For example, sales professionals generally have multiple formal

recognition programs in place to acknowledge their contributions to overall achievements. Other roles such as IT professionals may not have such programs the lack of which could make the recognition behavior by their direct supervisor potentially both more prevalent and important regarding lowering VTI when controlling for LMX.

RQ9. Does LMX quality mediate the relationship, if any, between developing behavior and VTI?

The model tested LMX as a mediator of the relationship between developing behavior and VTI. Developing behavior was significantly predictive of VTI when controlling for LMX ($B = -.4549$, $t = -6.2125$, $p < .0001$) and explained approximately 16.88% of variance. Of this effect, approximately 58.11% of the effect was indirect through the mediator LMX (Bootstrap 95% C.I. 29.43 – 95.50). Developing behavior causes lower VTI both directly and indirectly through LMX. This partial mediation of the effect meant that a leader that helps followers improve would lower VTI without regard to LMX quality, but if the leader-member exchange is high-quality, the developing behavior (which helps build high-quality LMX) will have a stronger effect on VTI. This finding again emphasized that the behavior alone is not the only consideration leaders should have if they wish to lower VTI in their followers, but the broader construct LMX should also be considered. As noted in the literature review in this manuscript there are many antecedents to LMX that deserve attention. Without stratification of the data by age or work-life stage, a limitation of this study, further questions such as whether developing behavior by leaders is more important to younger, less experienced, employees than to those who might be less interested in development due to their age being near retirement or at a stage in their career for which development is not available or desirable.

RQ10. Does LMX quality mediate the relationship, if any, between consulting behavior and VTI?

The model tested LMX as a mediator of the relationship between consulting behavior and VTI. Consulting behavior was significantly predictive of VTI when controlling for LMX ($B = -.5384$, $t = -6.7064$, $p < .0001$) and explained approximately 19.14% of variance. Of this effect, approximately 45.69% of the effect was indirect through the mediator LMX (Bootstrap 95% C.I. .1708 - .8313). Since all five of the studied behaviors are from TL theory, and TL theory is about getting people to do what the leader wants, it is easy to intuit that if someone is asked their opinion about work subjects in a sincere manner, they could be more likely to feel better about their job and thus have fewer or less strong thoughts about quitting. Consulting behavior by itself was effective in lowering VTI, but the results show that about half of the total effect was explained by the level of LMX. In other words, it is possible to lower VTI through consulting behavior, but it is more effective to improve consulting behavior by the leader and attend to other antecedents to LMX quality for reducing VTI. As with the other four behaviors studied here, the limitations of the study negatively impacted the generality of the data to other roles.

RQ11. Does LMX quality mediate the relationship, if any, between delegating behavior and VTI?

The model tested LMX as a mediator of the relationship between delegating behavior and VTI. Delegating behavior was significantly predictive of VTI when controlling for LMX ($B = -.4429$, $t = -5.7848$, $p < .0001$) and explained approximately 14.98% of variance. Of this effect, approximately 62.95% of the effect was indirect

through the mediator LMX (Bootstrap 95% C.I. 623.89 – 124.13). However, the direct effect of delegating behavior on VTI was not significant due to a p-value > .05 (B = -.1641, t = -1.7443, p = .0845). Mediation analysis of the effect of LMX on this correlation is not possible meaning the remaining 37% cannot be concluded to be due to delegating behavior. The results regarding delegating behavior differ from the results regarding the other four studied behaviors in that the direct effect of delegating behavior on VTI when controlling for LMX was not found to be significant. It cannot be confidently stated that delegating behavior was effective in lowering VTI absent LMX quality. While there is a correlation between delegating behavior and VTI, the correlation is explained 63% by LMX, but the remaining 37% cannot be satisfactorily explained statistically. One limitation of this study was its size. While power analysis supported the sample size, a greater number of responses might have improved the significance level of the analysis in this case to an acceptable level.

Recommendations

Informing HRD practices to increase leader awareness of how these five behaviors can affect organizational performance is a practical application of this research. This practical application was supported by the findings. The recommendation for use was to incorporate the knowledge added from this study to develop HRD practices to inform the teaching of organizational leadership in the areas of relations-oriented behaviors, LMX, and VTI. There were significant correlations found between the five relations-oriented leader behaviors of supporting, recognizing, developing, consulting, and delegating as found in TL theory and the behavioral intentions described by VTI. These correlations strongly indicated that leaders who sincerely exhibit these behaviors

would strengthen the organization's attempts at reducing undesirable outcomes associated with high VTI. Attention to these behaviors to improve LMX relationships resulting in desirable outcomes that are associated with higher quality LMX including lower VTI. For example, educating leaders regarding these constructs including practical exercises in applying this knowledge could reduce VTI. This study's results show that this same education could promote other positive organizational goals as utilizing these behaviors also correlates with higher quality LMX. Higher quality LMX explains part or all of the behavior's correlation with VTI. LMX has been shown to be important in multiple organizational outcomes. These findings present an opportunity to inform leadership in ways leaders can proactively personally positively affect outcomes through specific behaviors. The full or partial mediation of the five behaviors' correlations with VTI suggest that attention to LMX is important in linking leader behavior to the organizational goal of lower VTI. LMX theory is supported by this study's findings is the significance of LMX in the VET content and process.

Recommendations for future research followed those of many studies included in the literature review including (a) gathering more data per participant, (b) expand the scope both by role and geography, and (c) utilize designs other than non-experimental ex post facto quantitative as was prevalent in the literature. The expanded data set could allow stratification of the data for additional analysis by age, gender, workplace role, and work experience. There are many other factors that could be included, but at some point participants opt-out of the research process due to overload. For example, many questions could be asked regarding non-work life and non-demographic aspects of the participant which could prove valuable. These might include constructs such as embeddedness to

understand better how members feel about staying where they are in the community might mediate or moderate the effect of behaviors on VTI, especially when controlling for LMX quality. Role and geography could both be variables of interest to have a greater degree of confidence in external validity necessary for generalizing the findings. Knowledge of how geography or work role affect how leader behaviors reduce VTI in the presence of LMX would help tailor recommendations for the use of the study findings.

Mediation analysis does provide data for some support for answering "how" of correlations, but for valid causation conclusions, research should be experimental in design. This would be possible, for example, from a longitudinal study of VTI before and after leader participation in training concerning the importance of and use of relations-oriented behaviors. Control groups are possible by having training in a subject unlikely to cause a change in VTI. Experimental results could even show an incremental change in VTI if the appropriate leader training were incremental in nature. Training could continually expand on the subject matter over time to incrementally increase the use of these five leader behaviors.

Criticism of recent research would apply to this study as well concerning a possible existence of a dominant analytical mindset; alternative designs are needed to expand the information gathered and the usefulness of that information. Qualitative analysis, especially if gathered longitudinally, would provide significantly different data perhaps with the same conclusions, but the research process and analysis would provide a broader understanding of these conclusions. Different designs could also provide data conflicting with the current literature challenging understanding by posing significant questions. This is a distinct possibility when a dominant analytical mindset exists; the

studies become self-confirming and not challenging due to what may be a research design bias.

Conclusions

This study produced three major results derived from the hypothesis testing of the eleven research questions. These three are:

1. Relations-oriented behaviors as described in TL theory are negatively related to VTI as an outcome of organizational behavior. Higher levels of each of the five behaviors individually were associated with lower levels of VTI.
2. Finding that LMX was also correlated with VTI allowed for mediation analysis of LMX as a mediator in the correlation between each relations-oriented behavior and VTI. The mediation analysis showed (a) no mediation for delegating behavior, (b) partial mediation for the three behaviors of supporting, developing, and consulting, and (c) full mediation for delegating behavior.
3. The research found that LMX was a stronger predictor of VTI than the five relations-oriented leader behaviors individually and thus LMX theory should continue to be central to further research and practical applications.

The study results reinforced the recommendation for HRD professionals to emphasize the teaching of relations-oriented leader behaviors as a practical way for leaders to proactively affect LMX quality. While these behaviors were shown to be associated with a reduction in the undesirable member VTI, this result was partially or fully explained by the existence of high-quality LMX. Many antecedents to LMX quality exist as do many outcomes. Relations-oriented leader behaviors as antecedents to LMX

and other outcomes differ from other antecedents because these behaviors can be considered as variables under leader control. A leader can improve their leadership skill set to include or improve these behaviors and thus actively participate in the pathway to positive organizational results.

Limitations of this study provided recommendations for future research. While this study was sufficient for the conclusions reached, an increase in the amount and type of data gathered as well as to data identify diversification by role type and geography would provide data for to increase external validity for broader conclusions and greater ability for generalization. Design diversification was also recommended including the need to address the dominant analytical mindset that is evidenced by the prevalence of quantitative non-random ex post facto survey research designs. Qualitative research would provide different data for analysis. Experimental designs could describe causation. LMX was shown by this study to be important in leader relations-oriented behaviors affecting VTI, but the broader result was that LMX theory was important in that relationship indicating that this research can fit within broader conceptualization if additional research were conducted to increase external validity.

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Appendices

Appendix A- Management Practices Survey

Managerial Practices Survey (Modified 2015)

Instructions: Please describe how much your boss uses each managerial practice or leadership behavior. The term "unit" refers to the team, department, division, or company for which your boss is the designated leader, and the term "members" refers to the people who report directly to your boss. Think about each type of behavior separately, and do not allow your general evaluation of the manager to bias your answers about specific behaviors. For each item, select one of the following response choices and write the number or code for it on the line provided.

5 To a Very great extent
4 To a Considerable extent
3 To a Moderate extent
2 To a Limited extent
1 Not at all, or Not applicable

Supporting

___ 1. Shows concern for the needs and feelings of individual members of the work unit
___ 2. Provides support and encouragement when there is a difficult or stressful task
___ 3. Expresses confidence that members of the unit can perform a difficult task
___ 4. Shows sympathy and understanding when a member is worried or upset

Recognizing

___ 5. Praises effective performance by members of the work unit
___ 6. Provides recognition for member achievements or important contributions
___ 7. Provides recognition for good performance by the team or work unit
___ 8. Recommends high performing members for appropriate rewards

Developing Member Skills

___ 9. Provides helpful feedback and coaching to members who need it
___ 10. Makes assignments that allow members to develop more skills and confidence
___ 11. Provides helpful career advice and mentoring to members
___ 12. Encourages members to use available opportunities for improving their skills

Consulting about Decisions

___ 13. Consults with members before making decisions that will affect them.
___ 14. Asks members for ideas and suggestions when making decisions about the work.
___ 15. Encourages members to express any concerns about a decision or plan they are asked to implement.
___ 16. Modifies a proposal or plan to incorporate member suggestions and deal with their concerns.

Delegating

___ 17. Encourages members to take responsibility for determining the best way to do their work.

___ 18. Trusts members to make an important decision without getting prior approval.

___ 19. Assigns an important task and lets a member decide how to do it without interfering.

___ 20. Encourages members to take the initiative to deal with an immediate problem rather than waiting for someone to tell them what to do.

Appendix B- LMX-MDM

LMX-MDM

Please select your response from the 7 presented below and enter the corresponding number in the space to the left of each question.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

___1. I respect my manager's knowledge of and competence on the job.

___2. My manager would defend me to others in the organization if I made an honest mistake.

___3. My manager is the kind of person one would like to have as a friend.

___4. I do not mind working my hardest for my manager.

___5. My manager would come to my defense if I were "attacked" by others.

___6. I like my manager very much as a person.

___7. I do work for my manager that goes beyond what is expected of me in my job.

___8. I admire my manager's professional skills.

___9. My manager defends (would defend) my work actions to a superior, even without complete knowledge of the issue in question.

___10. My manager is a lot of fun to work with.

___11. I am willing to apply extra efforts, beyond those normally required, to meet my manager's work goals.

___12. I am impressed with my manager's knowledge of his/her job.

Appendix C- Voluntary Intention to Turnover Survey

Turnover Intentions (items measured on a scale ranging from 1 “strongly disagree” to 5 “strongly agree”)

1. Within the next six months, I intend to search for another job.

2. Within the next year, I intend to leave this profession.

3. Within the next six months, I would rate the likelihood of leaving my present job as high.

4. Within the next year, I rate the likelihood of searching for a job in a different profession as high.

Appendix D- Notice and Consent

Informed Consent Form

My name is David F. Smith. I am a student at Northcentral University. I am conducting a research study on how you perceive your manager's practices and the relationship you have with your manager. I am completing this research as part of my degree. I invite you to participate.

Activities:

If you participate in this research, you will be asked to complete a 39 item survey. This should take you about 15 minutes.

Eligibility:

You are eligible to participate in this research if you:

You are eligible to participate in this research if you:

1. Are between ages 18 and 65
2. And are fully employed in a sales organization
3. And have a sales manager you report to

You are not eligible to participate in this research if you do not meet the above criteria.

I hope to include 300 people in this research.

Risks:

There are minimal risks in this study. A possible risk includes a breach of confidentiality so that your private information is made public. Since some of the questions are regarding your opinions about your manager and your work, having this information made public could be a problem for you at work if your answers were identified as coming from you.

To decrease the impact of these risks, you can skip questions that provide personal information that could identify you. The survey does not collect any personal information, so you shouldn't have to skip any questions, but you have that choice.

Benefits:

If you decide to participate there are no direct benefits to you.

The potential benefit to others is an increase in knowledge of how salespeople relate to their managers, how managers are perceived by their direct reports, and how this relates to the idea of changing jobs. This information can be used to help teach managers how to be better at relating to their direct reports to improve the workplace.

Confidentiality:

The information you provide will be kept confidential to the extent allowable by law. Some steps I will take to keep your identity confidential are:

1. I will not ask for any personal information such as your name, location, or phone number during the survey.
2. As you know from receiving this email, I do have this contact information, however when taking the survey there will be no connection between this invitation which does have your email and the information gathered during the survey.
3. Answers by individuals taking the survey will not be associated with any individual information and results will be published only as what the group of participants said in total, not individually.
4. All data collected will be held by me in a locked location known only to me so that even though the data cannot be associated with an individual, should there be a way to do this somehow, the data will not be available.

5. All individual data will be destroyed at the appropriate time.

The people who will have access to your information are my dissertation chair and me. The Institutional Review Board may also review my research and view your information.

I will secure your information with these steps:

1. I will keep all of the electronic data stored offline on disk in a locked cabinet.

2. The online collection of information in this survey process will be deleted from all servers.

I will keep your data for 7 years. Then, I will delete electronic data and destroy paper data.

Contact Information:

If you have questions for me, you can contact me at my academic email: D.Smith5399@email.ncu.edu

My dissertation chair's name is Dr. Robert George who works at Northcentral University and is supervising me on the research. You can contact him at his NCU email: R.George@ncu.edu.

If you have questions about your rights in the research, or if a problem has occurred, or if you are injured during your participation, please contact the Institutional Review Board at: irb@ncu.edu or 1-888-327-2877 ext 8014.

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation is voluntary. If you decide not to participate, or if you stop participation after you start, there will be no penalty to you. You will not lose any benefit to which you are otherwise entitled.

Consent:

Continuing this survey by clicking on the NEXT button below indicates your understanding of this consent form.