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# The Effect of Communication on Careers in Mediating by Leader Member Exchange with Political Skills as a Moderating Variable

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## Abstract

This study analyzed the effect of communication on a career mediated by the leader member exchange with Political Skill as a moderating variable. The sampling method used in this study is a saturated sample that was distributed to all employees and lecturers at one of the University in Jakarta, with a population of 149 people. By distributing questionnaires to as many as the population within 2 weeks and the questionnaires that were successfully answered were 97 questionnaires via google form. Data analysis method in this study uses Partial Least Square with the help of Smart PLS software. The results of this study indicate: H1 Communication on career with a significant level of 0.002, H2 The quality of leader member exchange (LMX) affects career by 0,000, while H3 Communication has no effect on careers mediated by the quality of leader member exchange by 0.582, H4 The quality of leader member exchange has no effect on careers by 0.730 and H5 Quality superior-subordinate relations do not affect the career moderated by political expertise by 0.396.

**Keywords:** Career, Communication, Leader Member Exchange, Political Skill

## 1. Introduction

Human resources are the company's most important assets because of their role as subjects of implementing policies and operational activities of the company. Today, the latest developments see employees not as mere resources, but rather in the form of capital or assets for institutions or organizations. Therefore, the resources owned by the company such as capital, methods and machinery cannot provide optimum results if it is not supported by human resources that have optimum performance. For this reason, employee capabilities must be empowered through training, education and development. Human resource management can be interpreted as the utilization of human resources in the organization, which is carried out through the functions of human resource planning, recruitment and selection, human resource development, career planning and development, compensation and welfare, work safety and health, and industrial relations (Marwansyah, 2012).

Career in an organization is very important. Every employee who works in an organization would want an increase in his career. Developing careers are often associated with the future of employees, although they do not guarantee success. Basically every employee working in an organization or company carries different values and motivations. As for one of the motivations that shape their desires and ambitions to achieve success at work is a career. As (Mangkunegara, 2013) stated, a career is someone who wants to work in the organization where he works for a long time until retirement age. Likewise, (Mathis and Jackson, 2006) also stated that a career is a series of positions related to work that a person occupies throughout his life.

While career development according to (Flippo, 2010) can be interpreted as a series of work activities that are fragmented but still constitute or have a mutually complementary, sustainable relationship and give meaning to one's life. Career development is an employee activity that helps employees plan their future careers in the company so that the company and the employees concerned can develop themselves to the fullest. The aim of all career development programs is to match employee needs and goals with career opportunities available at the company now and in the future (Dubrin, 2005). The establishment of a well-designed career development system will help employees determine their own career needs and match employee needs with company goals (Rivai, 2004). Career development tools include skills, education and experience and behavior modification and improvement techniques, which provide added value so that one can work better. With career development, it is expected that every company leader can provide opportunities for employees in developing careers. Of course this career development needs the support of various factors (Marwansyah, 2012).

The power of effective communication is indeed extraordinary. Every company definitely needs effective communication so that all employees can work together towards the same goal. Apart from that effective communication is very closely related to career development. Sometimes not everyone can communicate effectively so that it has adverse effects, especially when it can dramatically affect a career. Communication is defined as the process of transferring information, ideas, understanding from one person to another in the hope that the other person can interpret according to the intended purpose (Mangkunegara, 2013). Likewise, (Ivancevich *et al.*, 2007) describes communication as the transmission of communication and understanding through the use of shared symbols from one person or group to another.

International surveys prove that the first rank for success in career and business is Communication and Public Speaking. This is related to the ability to convey ideas and influence others both personally and in masses. The Employment Research Institute in 2005 revealed that hard skills only contribute to a person's success in life by only 18%, while 82% is contributed by abilities called soft skills. The more skilled a person speaks, the more the quality of his intelligence and intellect will show. In reality the higher the position of a person, the more they will be required to speak in public. So that communication can indirectly describe the quality of its human resources. Within an organization of course also have the same view of quality human resources. The role of a leader in the organization is needed in the application of human resource quality development because an effective leader can revive the organization which is expected to provide instructions, advice and encouragement to employees. Bosses in the company have roles such as motivating, inspiring and stimulating employee development (Turek and Turek, 2013). In some leadership theories that have been put forward by experts where each leader must treat his employees properly and fairly without any difference. But in reality, sometimes the leader will build relationships with employees based on the quality of interaction as in the Leader Member Exchange theory. Leader member exchange is an improvement in the quality of the relationship between supervision and employees will be able to improve the work of both (Morrow *et al.*, 2005). As a result of time pressure, the leader establishes that there is a special relationship with a group of followers. This group is divided into two, first called in groups, which consist of people who are trusted and get an imbalance in this case the attention of a leader and tend to get special rights including career (Robbins and Judge, 2008). Those followers who have a certain mastery orientation develop this relationship that is more stable because such employees always turn to their superiors to find valuable information and experience that can provide prospects for developing skills that can benefit the company. This expertise can be in the form of Political Skill (Robbins and Judge, 2008).

Political Skill is a relatively new construction that utilizes an individual's ability to influence a situation (Ferris *et al.*, 2005). In general, political skills are the ability to effectively understand others at work, and use that knowledge

to influence others to act in ways that enhance personal or organizational goals. Political skills are the potential of individuals who have good interpersonal use of positions and networks. High individual political skills can affect others effectively. This shows that individuals who have high political skills can consciously manage their own behavior to effectively influence their relationship partners. On the other hand, individuals with low political skills have a lack of understanding and consequently are unable to consciously manage their behavior in the workplace and effectively influence others less.

Specifically someone who has political skills will easily cover the negative side, is able to manage the dynamics of relationships and is often involved in impression management. When someone meets other people, there are usually many reasons for him to show an impression to others. Because in general, a person wants himself to be accepted by the public as intelligent, friendly, and morally good. So this can make it easier for employees to take advantage of the situation in developing a career.

Prior study by (Jacob w. Breland *et al.*, 2007) examining the relationship between leader member exchange and objective measures of career success, it is likely that the quality of the direct leader-subordinate relationship is also an important predictor of subjective career success. In addition, due to the political nature of one's career development, it has been suggested that one's personal style and the impression it creates are positively related to subjective career success.

The study was motivated by several reasons including ineffective communication between superiors and subordinates directly within the University. In addition, the quality of the leader-subordinate relationship is directly chosen as a variable because it wants to prove whether there are differences in attitudes between superiors and subordinates that affect career. This study is interesting to learn, because this study uses the variable political exclusion where many people think something that smells of politics is negative, even though it can be positive. The selection of research objects is also based on the case that there are still many of the number of employees who have worked more than 10 years not showing career advancement. Career development is not only for structural positions but also for functional lecturers. As can be seen in the following diagram.

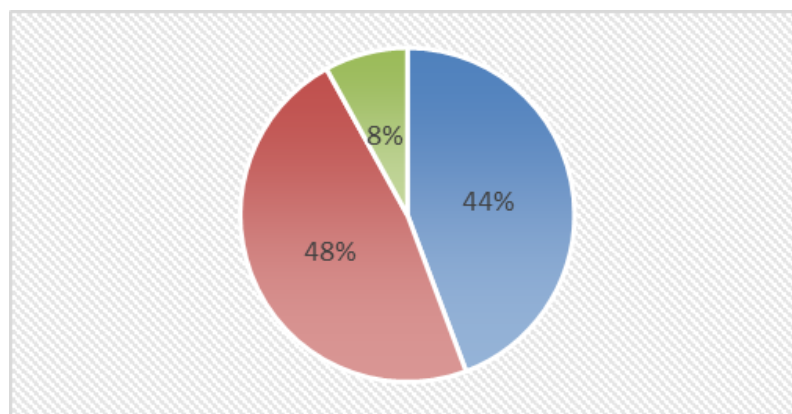


Figure 1. Percentage of Number of Employees for the Period of 1988-2019

It can be seen in the diagram above that there are 48% of employees who have never experienced career advancement from 1998-2019, and there are 44% who have served or experienced career advancement with more than 2 years of work experience while it is only 8% of employees who got less than 2 years of work experience. This proves that the career growth of lecturers and staff has slowed so that post study is necessary to examine the factors causing career development at the University.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Prior Study and Hypothesis Development

### 2.1.1. Communication and Career Development

Communication is generally an exchange of information carried out by two or more people with a specific purpose and objective. Communication is the sending and receiving of information, news, or messages made by two or more people so that the intent or message can be understood. Communication suggests that a thought, a thought, a meaning or a message are held in common. Communication envelops everything we do. Communication is a tool used by humans to carry out social interactions, both individually with individuals, individuals with groups or groups with groups (Mulyana, 2005). Communication skills can increase interpersonal benefits, which is a special skill, not only for self and family development, but also for career advancement.

Hypothesis 1. The higher the communication skill, will increase the probability of career development.

### 2.1.2. Communication and Leader Member Exchange

Communication is the most important skill in our lives. We spend most of the time we are aware and wake up to communicate. As with breathing, we think of communication as an automatic thing that just happens, so we don't have the awareness to do it effectively. If the organization is considered as a structure, then communication is a real substance that flows up, down, and sideways in an organization. Someone must have broad insight, honest, responsible, brave in making decisions, and also have good communication skills. Good communication between employees is easy for them as they are to collaborate with others even capable communication to improve the quality of relations between superiors and subordinates.

Hypothesis 2. Higher communication skill will increase Leader Member Exchange

### 2.1.3. Leader Member Exchange mediate Communication and Career Development

Leader member exchange is an improvement in the quality of the relationship between supervision and employees will be able to improve the work of both. Leadership studies are mostly done because leadership studies are important in organizations because they have a certain impact on the progress of the organization and others. That is because leadership is related to organizational performance (Morrow *et al.*, 2005). Leader member exchange theory explains the process of making roles between leaders and subordinates and the exchange relationships that develop over time (Yukl, 2015). Communication skill will increase the process of leader member exchange, therefore will also increase chance of career development.

Hypothesis 3. Higher communication skill will increase career development that mediates by Leader member exchange.

### 2.1.4. Leader Member Exchange and Career Development

Leader exchange members focus on a two-way relationship between leaders and employees, with the aim of maximizing company performance with building positive interactions between leaders and employees. Leader member exchange describe the process of making a role between a leader and each of subordinates and is an exchange relationship that will continue to develop. In addition, the impact of leader member exchange can increase career development (Truckcnbrodt, 2000).

Hypothesis 4. The more effective leader member exchange, the higher the opportunity for career development.

### 2.1.5. Leader Member Exchange and Career Development moderates by Political Skill

Political Skill is the ability to obtain the power needed to achieve goals. Individuals who have socially intelligent political abilities, have accurate perceptions about their own and other people's behavior and social interaction in general, which allows them to be influential (Ferris *et al.*, 2005; Robbins and Judge, 2008). Political Skill is the potential of individuals who have good interpersonal use of positions and networks. Employees must help other employees demonstrate, transmit, and impress themselves in the organization. Even seen having a high level of confidence. people who have political ability tend to have balanced self-confidence, so it's not arrogance. The most essential aspect of Political Skill is authenticity or sincerity. Real Political Skill is a positive force, and is essential for the success of work and careers in today's organizations.

Hypothesis 5. The more effective leader member exchange, the higher the opportunity for career development moderates by political skill.

## 2.2. Conceptual Model

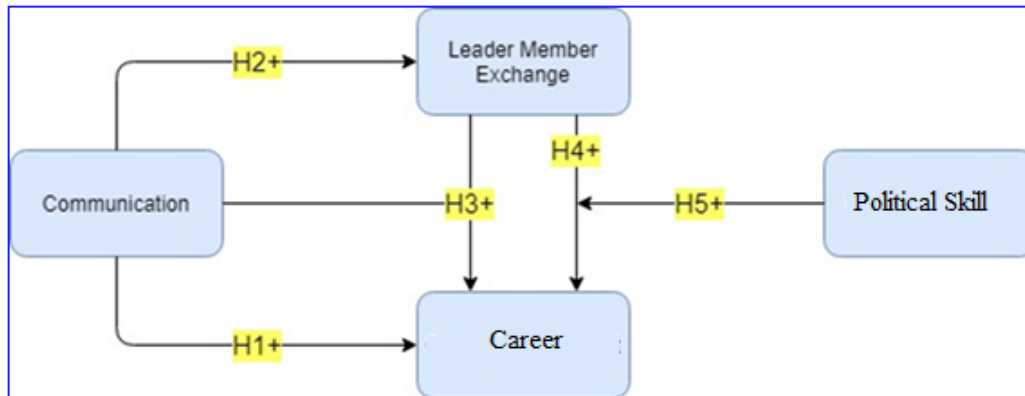


Figure 2. Conceptual Model

Source: Adapted from Truckenbrodt: 2000, and Morrow *et al*: 2005

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Data Source

This study is using primary data, data collected by researchers directly from the main source, collecting this data requires time in the form of a questionnaire to be given to lecturers and employees in one of the University in Jakarta. While secondary data can be obtained from the results of other people's research made for different purposes but can be utilized. Data and information collection is carried out through surveys by distributing questionnaires that are distributed directly by the researchers themselves to lectures and employees who are directly involved in either structural or functional position. The questionnaire provided contained a number of requests for filling out the questionnaire to the respondents accompanied by a list of questions or structured statements submitted to the respondent for response according to the conditions experienced by the respondent concerned. In this questionnaire the closed question model is used. The closed form is a question that has been accompanied by alternative answers before, so that respondents can choose one of the alternative answers. Answer choices ranged for each questionnaires on a scale 1 to 5.

### 3.2. Sample Selection

The population is the whole subject of study. If someone wants to examine all elements in the research area, then the research is a population study or census study. The population and sample in this study is Lecturers and Employees in one of the University in Jakarta area with a total of 149 person. Sampling techniques are basically grouped into two, Probability Sampling and Nonprobability Sampling. In this study the authors used the Nonprobability Sampling method, while the sampling method used was saturated sampling.

### 3.3. Variable Measurements

Researchers take measurements of existing variables using research instruments. The research instrument is a measuring instrument developed with reference to the characteristics of the research variables that are set to be studied. Variables in this research are Communication, Leader Member Exchange, Career Development, and Political Skill. Furthermore, indicators are determined to be measured through a number of statement items in the research instrument. Communication is based on respondent's degree of access to information, media quality, and information load. Leader member exchange is based on respondent's degree of how well leaders and subordinates level of respect, trust, and obligation. Career development is based on how well respondent's think of organization

policy, performance, educational background, and trainings. While Political Skill is a self assessment variable based on social astuteness, interpersonal, networking abilities, and sincerity.

### 3.3. Models and Analysis

This study uses Structural Equation Model (SEM) analysis to test the hypotheses. While Partial Least Square (PLS) is one of the SEM model that based on variance. SEM based Covariance generally tests causality or theory while PLS is more predictive in nature. PLS is a powerful analysis method (Ghozali, 2011), because it is not based on many assumptions.

## 4. Results And Findings

Table 1 depicts the estimates of the hypothesis tested. Hypothesis 1 and 2 put Communication as independent variable, while Career and Leader Member Exchange act as dependent variables, respectively. Hypothesis 3 put Leader Member Exchange role in mediating Communication and Career. Hypothesis 4 test the direct relationship of Leader Member Exchange and Career development. While hypothesis 5 will test Political Skill in moderating the relationship of Leader Member Exchange and Career.

Table 1: Estimates of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis Testing	Estimates	Mean	S.D.	T-Stat.	P-values
Communication --> Career (H1)	0,382	0,403	0,126	3,042	0,002
Communication --> LME <sub>x</sub> (H2)	0,749	0,757	0,048	15,750	0,000
Communication - LME <sub>x</sub> - Career (H3)	-0,047	-0,028	0,085	0,551	0,582
Leader Member Exchange --> Career (H4)	-0,050	-0,092	0,145	0,346	0,730
Political Skill--> LME <sub>x</sub> - Career (H5)	0,091	0,078	0,107	0,850	0,396

Hypothesis 1 examines the effect of Communication on Career development, based on the significant and positive result ( $p = 0,002$ ;  $\beta = 0,382$ ), hypothesis 1 is supported. Hypothesis 2 examines the effect of Communication on Leader Member Exchange, and based on the significant and positive result ( $p = 0,000$ ;  $\beta = 0,749$ ), hypothesis 2 is also supported. Hypothesis 3 examines the role of Leader Member Exchange in mediating Communication and Career with insignificant and negative result ( $p = 0,582$ ;  $\beta = -0,047$ ), therefore hypothesis 3 is not supported. Hypothesis 4 examines the direct effect of Leader Member Exchange on Career development, and based on the insignificant and negative result ( $p = 0,730$ ;  $\beta = -0,050$ ) therefore hypothesis 4 is also not supported. Hypothesis 5 put Political Skill in moderating the relationship of Leader Member Exchange and Career development, and based on the insignificant and positive result ( $p = 0,396$ ;  $\beta = 0,091$ ), hypothesis 5 is also not supported. Below figure is the complete relationship between variables.

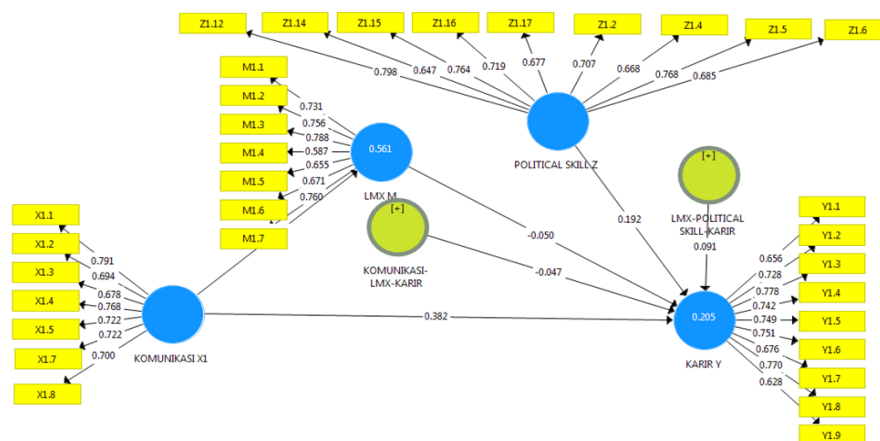


Figure 3. Relationship of Each Variables

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

This study has empirically findings about the effect of Communication on Careers mediate by the quality of Leader Member Exchange with Political Skill as moderating variable. This study use 97 respondents that consist of Lectures and Employees at one of the University in Jakarta. This study has shown that H1 and H2 is supported by the result, while H3, H4, and H5 is not supported by the results.

- H1 Communication influences career because lecturers and staff have effective communication skills. Because if someone has weak communication skills or a lack of communication with people around him, it will be increasingly difficult to get the desired career achievement. This is in line with research conducted by Margaret Hilton Bahniuk (a), Susan E. Kogler Hill (b) & Holly J. Darus (c) (1996) with the title *The Relationship of Power-Gaining Communication strategies to career success*, the results of his research stated These communication variables are supported.
- H2 Communication affects leader member exchange because communication in an organization has a very important role, especially between leaders and subordinate employees. As has been done by the employees and lecturers in this research, they build leader member exchange relationships because of the frequent intensity of communication that exists between the two. Truckenbrodt (2000: 234) states that in an organization seen from the relationships and interactions between superiors and subordinates, can be grouped into two groups, namely in groups and out groups. Employees who have a high relationship and interaction between leaders and subordinate employees are included in the group and outside the group in the group is out group.
- H3 communication has no effect on careers mediated by leader member exchanges. This is because most of them do not make a close relationship as a means of mediation for communication and career. meaning that communication will continue to influence career without being mediated by a leader member exchange.
- H4 Leader member exchange has no effect on career. survey results show that leader member exchanges built by employees and lecturers at the University cannot influence careers because they prioritize the quality of each individual not because of the closeness of leader member exchange.
- H5 Leader member exchange has no effect on careers that are moderated by political skills. Although this hypothesis has no effect, it turns out that the results of political skill data processing are able to strengthen the relationship between leader member exchange and career.

Based on the results of the research that has been done, there are some suggestions that can be considered for further research, namely:

- Researchers hope this research can be useful for research then by expanding other variables.
- For future studies are expected to be used as reference material for other company research
- For future studies are expected to conduct research related to careers in a company or industry that has broad career paths.

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