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# Dyadic Relationships

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## Abstract

We provide a review of research on dyadic relationships in work settings. The development, maintenance, and termination of relationships are discussed. Considerable attention is placed on the context in which dyadic relationships take place. Most recent developments in the study of dyadic relationships have involved multilevel research designs that incorporate direct and moderating influences of contextual variables on relationships. A wide range of contextual variables are included, from immediate work group characteristics to overarching aspects of the context, such as national culture.

## DYADIC RELATIONSHIPS

Descriptions of organizational effectiveness often focus on the characteristics and actions of top management, especially CEOs, conjuring images of visionary statements being broadcast in an attempt to motivate the employees. Despite the importance of the vision and guidance of top leaders, much of organizational functioning and ultimate effectiveness takes place within ubiquitous dyadic interactions occurring at all levels of the organization. Indeed, “the dyad is arguably the fundamental unit of interpersonal interaction and interpersonal relations” (Kenny et al. 2006, p. 1). Although there are basic characteristics found in all types of dyadic relationships, given our focus on organizational psychology and organizational behavior, we limit our coverage to dyadic relationships that occur in organizational settings. Dyadic relationships are central to many topics within the study of organizations, including leadership, groups, social networks and corresponding development of social capital, and boundary spanning relations. We cover all of these in our review with a special emphasis on leader-follower dyadic relationships.

## FUNDAMENTALS OF DYADIC RELATIONSHIPS

Although groups are sometimes defined as being comprised of “two or more individuals” (Mathieu et al. 2014, p. 131), we contend that dyads may be better conceptualized as a key element or building block of groups. This is because much of the interaction that occurs between the group leader and each group member and between individual group members takes place within dyadic interactions. Indeed, dyadic relationships are pervasive in organizations, taking multiple forms, such as leader-follower, mentor-protégé, teammate-teammate, and coworker-coworker relationships. Dyadic relationships also represent the key components of social networks. Although on occasion organizations hold assemblies attended by all employees, or leaders hold team meetings, much of what transpires in organizations occurs in one-on-one interactions. Research in social psychology has provided a foundation for the way in which dyadic relationships have been studied in the organizational sciences within the realm of major topical areas, such as person perception, attraction, similarity, personality, values, liking, and respect. Although the focus of much social psychology research on these topics has been on friendship and romantic relationships, much of what has been learned is relevant for the study of dyadic relationships in organizations. Indeed, organizational researchers have applied social psychological research to the study of dyadic relationships in the context of for-profit and nonprofit organizations. In addition to the accomplishments that may emerge from the integrated efforts of dyadic members, key relationships also may be utilized by members of the dyad in the way they evaluate themselves (Cross et al. 2000).

### Person Perception

All dyadic relationships begin with person perception processes in which both parties of the new dyad engage. Despite the extreme complexity involved in the process of socially categorizing human beings (Kang & Bodenhausen 2015), a body of research on consensus at zero acquaintance (Ambady et al. 1995) consistently shows that people are quite accurate in their initial impressions of others (Ambady & Rosenthal 1992). Encoding of nonverbal cues, such as facial expressions, appears to be critical in the formation of initial impressions of qualities in people that are salient for investment in time and effort required to form lasting dyadic relationships with the other person. Indeed, it has been observed that, “people rapidly make attributions from faces, such as whether a person is trustworthy” (Todorov et al. 2015, p. 520).

## Attraction

It is through person perception that one's level of attraction to an individual is determined. First impressions may be dominated by nonverbal cues (Todorov et al. 2015), including facial expressions, body movements, physical characteristics, and appearance (Eastwick et al. 2014). Upon further interaction, assessment of verbal behavior enables an assessment of personality, attitudes, and values. An established finding from social psychology is that people tend to be attracted to individuals who express similar attitudes and values (Byrne 1971). Interestingly, perceptions of similarity have been shown to be more important for outcome behaviors than is demographic similarity (Liden et al. 1993, Turban & Jones 1988). Similarity in some personality types, such as positive affectivity (Bauer & Green 1996) and proactive personality (Zhang et al. 2012), have also been shown to enhance attraction. When similarity is perceived, liking is enhanced, which further contributes to attraction.

Admiration and respect have also been identified as important determinants of attraction. In work settings, individuals viewed as being technically or professionally skilled tend to be respected by others. Grover (2014, p. 27) refers to this as "appraisal respect." Indeed, professional respect emerged in critical incident interviews by Liden & Maslyn (1998) as a key dimension determining the quality of dyadic relationships between a leader and follower. And the importance of respect flows in both directions, as quality relationships require that both parties of the dyad respect and demonstrate this respect for their partners. Similar to leader-follower dyads, it has also been shown that respect between teammates is critical for team cooperation (De Cremer 2003).

## Relationship Development

Relationships form the fabric of life as we know it. Humans are and have been social beings throughout their time on earth. Not surprisingly, a voluminous body of research on relationships conducted within many diverse fields of study, including psychology, sociology, and anthropology, has emerged (Ferris et al. 2009). Although differences exist across types of relationships, such as romantic, family, kinship, and work, communalities exist as well. For example, respect, trust, and shared attitudes and values are salient in the development of virtually any type of dyadic relationship. One central part of relationship development is role taking and role making that occurs for both parties of a dyadic relationship (Katz & Kahn 1966, 1978). Graen (1976) relied on this work to propose the influence of formal leaders in providing assistance to newcomers in the organization. Specifically, he outlined the processes through which leaders help newcomers define their new roles in the organization. It is through the type and amount of assistance provided that the quality of relationships between the leader and each follower began to diverge from one another, leading to differentiated leader-follower relationships.

**Role making and role taking.** Expanding on the work of Kahn et al. (1964), Dienesch & Liden (1986) and Graen & Scandura (1987) proposed models of dyadic relationship development. Initial interactions are depicted in Graen & Scandura (1987) as commencing with sent roles from the higher status member, which are either received or rejected by the lower status member of the dyad. If the sent role is accepted by the member, the member behaves accordingly and the behavior is evaluated by the superior. This process is repeated until the superior offers a working relationship to the member, which is referred to as role making. Over time, role routinization occurs and the dyadic relationship is established. An important point often overlooked in research on relationship development, especially those in which one partner is of higher status than the other, is that both

parties are involved in the development of the relationship, such that a lower status individual may be proactive in contributing to the nature of the relationship that evolves.

**Intention attributions.** Dienesch & Liden's (1986) model of a dyadic relationship also includes an initial sent role phase (referred to as delegation) but provides more emphasis on the member's influence in the developmental process. Of critical importance to the model are the attributions made concerning their dyadic partners' behaviors during the role development process. Dienesch & Liden (1986) reasoned that high quality relationships form when both members of the dyad attribute their counterpart's behaviors as being genuine in their intent to benefit the relationship. Attributions tend to be positive when resources and support are freely exchanged between a leader and follower. Dasborough & Ashkanasy (2002) expanded on these ideas by presenting a model focusing on the central role of attributions of intention in the development and functioning of dyadic relationships. The more genuinely sincere the intentions of the dyadic partner, the more that partner is liked and trusted, and the more likely that the relationship will become one of high quality. Furthermore, when positive attributions are made concerning the dyadic partner's behavioral intentions, the more favorably partners are thought to respond to feedback received from their dyadic partner (Fedor 1991).

Attributions made concerning the behaviors and intentions of their dyadic partners appear to have crucial implications for relationships. For example, Jiang et al. (2013) discovered that followers' trust in leaders was positively affected by the receipt of favors from the leader, only when the favors were thought to be based on the focal follower's merit, but trust was not influenced by personal favors that were not linked to merit. Consistent with the results of studies exploring attributional processes within dyadic relationships, Maslyn & Uhl-Bien (2001) empirically investigated the effort each member of the dyad exerted on behalf of the relationship and found that the most favorable outcomes occurred the more effort each person put into the relationship.

**Relational leadership.** Brower et al. (2000) proposed an integration of trust and leader-member exchange (LMX) literatures in an attempt to better understand the development and maintenance of dyadic relationships; they labeled this integration of trust and LMX relational leadership. The approach stresses the importance of trust in dyadic relationships. Interestingly, trust has been identified as a key element of LMX by Graen & Scandura (1987), and trust surfaced in critical incident interviews conducted by Liden & Maslyn (1998) in the initial stages of their scale development for a multidimensional measure of LMX (also see Liden et al. 2015). However, in the content validation phase of the scale development, content experts were not able to differentiate between items written to assess the loyalty dimension of LMX and the trust dimension. Rather than making a second attempt to write items capable of distinguishing between trust and loyalty, Liden & Maslyn (1998) chose to retain only the loyalty dimension, because that dimension had already been identified in LMX theory development (Dienesch & Liden 1986). The relational leadership approach returns trust as a central determinant of the quality of dyadic interpersonal relationships, with the role sending process described as a way for each dyadic partner to test the extent to which they can trust each other (Brower et al. 2000). Werbel & Henriques (2009) extended this research by discovering that leaders and followers relied on different cues in assessing the degree to which they could trust the other. Specifically, supervisors began to trust followers when they consistently fulfilled sent roles/task assignments correctly, whereas followers' perceptions of the leader's interactional justice were key to the development of their trust in leaders. It has been argued that relational leadership can be expanded considerably beyond the integration of trust and LMX to capture the dynamics of relationship development. For example, Uhl-Bien (2006) contends that relational leadership is capable of addressing limitations in LMX theory and measurement,

specifically, better capturing the way in which relationships form, with an emphasis on the role that followers play in LMX relationship development.

## Maintenance and Termination of Dyadic Relationships

Likely due to the extreme difficulty in collecting long-term longitudinal data, little is known about the nature of dyadic relationships over time. Why is it that some relationships maintain high quality over long periods of time, whereas others decrease in quality, ultimately disintegrating until the relationship is terminated? Also, what enables some relationships to increase in quality across time? Although a multitude of approaches can be utilized in searching for answers to these questions, we explore two that we contend are especially salient with respect to maintenance or change in dyadic relationships: psychological contract breach/fulfillment and shocks (both positive and negative).

**Psychological contract breach.** Psychological contracts were defined by Schein (1970) as the expectations held by employees and employers concerning what each owes the other. Although both parties can be responsible for breach, breach generally refers to employee perceptions of promises made by the employer that have not been fulfilled. Because the immediate superior is seen by most employees as the key representative of the organization (Levinson 1965), psychological contract breach can stress the dyadic relationship between leader and follower, because the follower often views the leader as responsible for the breach. When promises are not kept, trust declines, as does the quality of the dyadic relationship. Interestingly, counter to hypotheses, Zhao et al. (2007) did not find psychological contract breach to be related to employee turnover. It is possible, however, that when employees experience breach, especially when they attribute the lack of contract fulfillment to the leader, they are inclined to terminate the relationship with the leader and transfer it to another unit within the organization.

**Shocks.** As Lee & Mitchell (1994) describe, shocks are dramatic events that have an immediate negative impact on employees, because they typically involve a loss of trust in a dyadic partner (Burton et al. 2010). A breach in a psychological contract represents a shock that may have an immediate negative impact on the quality of an interpersonal relationship. Although not discussed explicitly in the literature, we contend that individuals may also experience positive shocks, perhaps better described as pleasant surprises, such as an unexpected bonus, award, or promotion. When such surprises are attributed to a dyadic partner, such as an immediate leader, it may cause an upturn in the quality of the relationship. For example, Anand et al. (2010) found that low LMX employees receiving special treatment from the leader, termed an idiosyncratic deal (or i-deal) by Rousseau (2005), responded by engaging in a higher level of organizational citizenship behaviors. Interestingly, in this study receipt of i-deals was assessed from leader reports and LMX was based on follower perceptions. Given that correlations between leader and follower reports of LMX tend to be only moderately correlated ( $\rho = 0.37$  in Sin et al.'s 2009 meta-analysis), it is possible that leaders providing i-deals to low LMX followers viewed the LMX relationship more positively than the followers receiving the i-deals. Alternatively, leaders may have provided i-deals to low LMX members as a way to motivate them. Although not measured in this study, it is likely that upon receiving i-deals, these low LMX employees perceived an increase in the quality of their dyadic relationships with the immediate leader.

## CONTEXT SURROUNDING DYADIC RELATIONSHIPS

All dyadic relationships take place within particular settings that can vary dramatically (Johns 2006, Liden & Antonakis 2009). For example, the size of a work group can influence the nature of

a dyadic relationship between a leader and follower. At the same time, however, country or even worldwide economic conditions may also impinge on dyadic relationships. In this section, we focus on more immediate aspects of the context, such as the network of relationships in which any dyadic relationship is embedded. Perhaps one of the most welcome trends in organizational research is inclusion of contextual variables in research designs. Although immediate contexts have been considered for decades, such as in Fiedler's (1967) contingency theory or Hersey & Blanchard's (1969) situational leadership theory, research over the past decade has increasingly integrated aspects of the larger context in research, including studies that focus on dyadic relationships. Thus, extending far beyond the consideration of contextual factors, such as follower maturity levels (Hersey & Blanchard 1969), research is now modeling the influence of group, organization, and even societal influences on individual attitudes and behaviors (e.g., Rockstuhl et al. 2012, Schaubroeck et al. 2012) with much greater regularity than was previously the case. Theory development that better captures the context coupled with new analytic tools, such as advances in multilevel analysis capabilities (e.g., Muthén & Muthén 2012), has contributed to the identification of salient aspects of the context, as well as a better understanding of the way in which the context influences individual- and dyad-level variables.

### **Social Comparison**

Organizational psychology research, on which our review of dyadic relationship is centered, acknowledges that social comparison is a principal element of organizational life. Festinger (1954) proposed that all individuals strive to compare themselves with similar others to evaluate their opinions, abilities, and standing. Even though the classic social comparison theory (Festinger 1954) focused mainly on an individual's cognition of social comparison, a similar notion of comparison exists at the dyadic level within organizations (see also Vidyarthi et al. 2010). In the realm of dyadic relationships, social comparison of one dyad with other dyads is both innate and ubiquitous, because dyads lack objective criteria to evaluate the quality of their relationship. Also, organizational dyads never exist in a vacuum as dyadic relationships are always embedded in a network of other social relationships that one or the other party maintains with the other actors in the organization (Balkundi & Kilduff 2005, Sparrowe & Liden 1997). There also exist other independent dyads in the organization, which are of interest to the focal dyad (Eby et al. 2013, Ferrin et al. 2006). However organizational psychology research, barring a few notable exceptions, has treated and studied dyadic relationships in isolation.

Because dyads exist for a purpose, share resources with others, and have outcomes with implications beyond the focal dyad, members of dyads evaluate their relationships in light of other relevant dyadic relationships. Indeed research in LMX, a dyadic relationship between manager and follower, shows that members of dyads constantly compare their quality of relationship with other parallel dyadic relationships including those within the workgroup (e.g., Hu & Liden 2013, Vidyarthi et al. 2010) and sometimes outside the organization (Vidyarthi et al. 2014). Because social comparison is a central feature of social life (Buunk & Gibbons 2007), the comparison process is essential for evaluation of the work environment surrounding the dyad. The assessment of dyadic relative standing, in turn, determines aspirations and behaviors of dyadic relationships (Gardner et al. 2002, Wood 1996). This notion is supported in LMX research (e.g., Graen et al. 1982, Hu & Liden 2013, Vidyarthi et al. 2010). Specifically, members rely on social comparison with workgroup peers as referents when evaluating the quality of their dyadic relationships with leaders. These comparisons entail both objective estimation (relative LMX; see Henderson et al. 2008) and subjective assessment (LMX social comparison; see Vidyarthi et al. 2010) of relative dyadic standing, such that both explain additional variance in outcomes.

Given the wide prevalence of social comparison in the milieu of organizational dyadic life, the process and the context of social comparison offers a comprehensive framework to explain interlinkages between dyadic relationships and their correlates. This line of research is informative because it not only recognizes that potentially additional variance in relationship quality accrues from the comparative aspect of the dyadic relationship, but social comparison also partly provides an explanatory mechanism for why theories, such as social exchange theory (Blau 1964), relative deprivation theory (Crosby 1976), or organizational justice theory (Adams 1965) account for the relationships established in their respective literatures. For instance, extending LMX research to a dual leader context, Vidyarthi et al. (2014) established that social comparison processes are likely to be activated when one party of the dyad simultaneously maintains a relationship with a different party leading to a comparison between these two relationships. Thus, one dyadic relationship acts as a contextual condition for the other, such that one dyadic relationship undergoes evaluation and modifications with the other relationship as a frame of reference (Vidyarthi et al. 2014). Using a sample of consultant workers reporting to two independent supervisors, Vidyarthi et al. (2014) showed that employees engage in social comparison between the two simultaneous dyadic relationships and they together affect attitudinal and behavioral outcomes.

Other dyadic relationships are also based on shared trust and affect between the parties (Eby et al. 2013, Sherony & Green 2002), and a similar notion of social comparison exists in the minds of dyadic members, even though extant research in mentor-protégé and coworker-coworker dyads has not yet explored this aspect of social comparison. In this regard, several questions need resolution in future research. For example who is the referent in different dyadic social comparisons? Future research should also explore why members engage in social comparison and if and how such comparison transcends the workgroup or other sociostructural boundaries in organizations (Gilbert et al. 1995, Goodman & Haisley 2007). Another potential research question concerns whether positive social comparison with a significant member of the organization, such as a mentor or a coworker, can mitigate the negative effects of a dyadic relationship with an abusive supervisor. Thus, social comparison between different types of dyadic relationships (e.g., a focal employee comparing her leader-member and mentor-protégé relationships) offers new avenues for future research.

## Social Networks

An especially important aspect of the context with respect to dyadic relationships in organizations is the larger constellation of relationships in which a dyadic relationship is embedded (Sparrowe & Liden 1997). In its simplest form, the dyadic relationship between persons A and B can be influenced by the relationships that these two individuals hold with person C. Heider (1958) demonstrated that if A has a good relationship with C but B does not, this can put substantial stress on the relationship between A and B. The relationships with C represent an important aspect of the context that influences the dyadic relationship between A and B. Indeed, a dyad enjoys special advantages when A and B are engaged in a high quality relationship and at the same time both are also engaged in a high quality relationship with C (Tortoriello & Krackhardt 2010). This situation, termed a Simmelian tie, is essentially a tie embedded within a clique and serves to strengthen the dyadic relationship between A and B (Krackhardt 1998).

Research has also uncovered the importance of larger social networks on dyadic relationships as well as on individual members of dyads. Sparrowe & Liden (2005) found that when leaders shared network contacts, termed sponsorship, with high LMX followers, the followers increased their centrality in the influence network only when their leaders were well-respected in the larger organizational advice network. Indeed, it was found that sponsorship was a blessing when the



leader was well-respected, but a curse if the leader was not highly regarded by members of the organization. Focusing more on the effects of social networks on the leaders of dyadic relationships, Goodwin et al. (2009) found that leaders reported higher quality LMX relationships with followers who were high in advice centrality. The results of these studies reveal that dyadic relationships of both leaders and followers are affected, either positively or negatively, by characteristics of the larger social networks in which their dyadic relationship is embedded.

## Workgroup Attributes

To face increasing competition and resulting complexity of work, organizations worldwide are resorting to the use of workgroups (Morgeson et al. 2010). Thus, workgroups are increasingly becoming the social, demographic, and structural context in which employees are embedded in the workplace. Workgroup attributes, namely composition (i.e., size, member diversity), structure (i.e., task and outcome interdependence), and interpersonal processes (i.e., cohesiveness) represent the different facets of workplace context that shape employee attitudes and behaviors, and set boundaries to antecedents and consequences of dyadic relationships.

**Workgroup composition.** The association between dyadic relationships and workgroup size has been examined by leadership researchers, and findings suggest that as workgroup size increases, leaders tend to form fewer high quality relationships (Green et al. 1993, Schyns et al. 2005). This is because establishing high quality relationships requires significant investment of time and effort (Maslyn & Uhl-Bien 2001)—finite resources that the leader can expend on only a select few followers. In fact, social psychologists have always maintained that group size affects group dynamics, and larger group sizes have been associated with poorer team processes and lower performance (Brewer & Kramer 1986, Hackman 1990). However, it is not clear how dyadic relationships between mentor and protégé or coworkers are affected by group size. Future research should explore if dyadic exchanges between coworkers follow a pattern similar to LMX in large groups. The value, meaning, and effectiveness of mentoring relationships in large groups demand research attention as well. As group size increases, role expectations become less clear, open communication becomes more of a challenge, and members are more inclined to deindividuate their colleagues. Under those conditions, mentors' support in clarifying roles and responsibilities and their unconditional acceptance and encouragement (Eby et al. 2013) should become quite important, and have higher impact on protégé outcomes. Mentoring should be a big source of support also, because more members in large groups are likely to have lower quality relationships with the leader.

Aside from size-, surface-, and deep-level diversity of members are the other important aspects of group composition. Harrison et al. (1998) define surface level diversity as easily visible differences usually based on group members' race, ethnicity, sex, etc. The vast majority of research on diversity suggests that individuals draw their social identity from surface-level attributes, categorize themselves and others based on those identities, and create category-driven in-groups and out-groups, such that in-group members are favored and out-group members are discriminated against (Tajfel & Turner 1986, Turner 1982). Deep-level diversity, however, refers to less visible differences, such as personality, working style, or cultural values, that can be understood only after considerable interactions between two parties. Scholars assert that both types of diversity influence relationship creation and maintenance in workgroups. LMX researchers maintain that it is deep- rather than surface-level similarity between leader and follower that matters for the relationship quality (Bauer & Green 1996); however, there is some evidence that as sex diversity in the workgroup increases the average quality of LMX decreases (Vecchio & Brazil 2007). It may be



that the increased diversity makes it difficult for leaders to fulfill everyone's conflicting needs, and thus there are fewer high quality relationships in a group. Future researchers should examine if these effects of surface diversity on leader-follower relationships hold across different industry and cultural settings. Researchers should also explore the effects of diversity on coworker relationships. Diversity research suggests that minorities do not feel a sense of belonging to the group and that reduces their attachment to the organization. There is some evidence that minority coworkers try to fit in by mimicking the behaviors of members representing the majority (David et al. 2015). It is not yet understood how these phenomena play out at the dyadic level. For example, how much weight do coworkers allocate to surface differences as compared to deep-level differences when establishing relationships? Furthermore, does the relationship quality hold as group diversity changes? For example, if women go from being minority to majority, does that change the relationship quality between two coworkers? If the majority of the members of a workgroup think a certain way, do the minority coworkers try to change their thinking styles to match the majority?

In terms of exploring diversity, mentoring literature has primarily focused on understanding the effects of mentor-protégé surface- and deep-level similarities. The consensus seems to be that similarity on deep-level attributes, such as personality or interests, creates more effective relationships, whereas surface-level similarities are not particularly relevant (Eby 2012, Eby et al. 2013). Mentoring scholars also suggest that mentors usually hail from majority groups, which poses difficulties for minorities in finding mentors, establishing trust-based relationships with them, and getting full support possible from the mentoring relationship (O'Brien et al. 2010, Ragins 1997). It has also been opined that mentors hailing from minority groups may not be seen as effective, because of the lack of insider status and of abundant social connections (Kram 1985, Ragins 1997). Future research should go beyond individual-level attributes and dyadic similarity to delve into the effects of group-level diversity on mentoring relationships. For instance, mentoring might be more important in groups with high rather than low surface- or deep-level diversity. High diversity groups have been associated with more conflict (e.g., Jehn et al. 1999), because of members' wide range of values, preferences, and needs, which may at times be at odds with those of others. Having a supportive mentor to clarify role expectations, rights, and responsibilities; help set appropriate goals and accomplish tasks; and provide unconditional acceptance is likely to be more important in highly diverse groups. Another avenue for future research is how group diversity changes the extent and type of support garnered from mentoring relationships. There is some evidence that female mentees tend to report more socio-emotional rather than career-specific support from their mentors (O'Brien et al. 2010). Empirical research is needed to explore if this phenomenon is true in female-dominated groups, for it is possible that gaining majority status will reduce female mentees' sensitivity to social affiliation-related support. Research is also needed to check if mentor-protégé similarity on surface-level attributes, such as age or sex, becomes relevant in predicting mentoring outcomes when the group composition is such that subgroups are formed on the basis of those demographic attributes.

**Task and outcome interdependence.** Task interdependence represents the degree to which group members depend on each other to accomplish their tasks, whereas outcome interdependence reflects the degree to which members' outcomes are tied to one another (Kiggundu 1981, Wageman 1999). In high task interdependence groups, member jobs and workflows are designed in such a way that members need to share critical resources, such as task-specific information, materials, and skills to achieve their goals. In high outcome interdependence, groups' performance is assessed and rewarded for the group rather than the individual, making the entire group sink or swim together. Interdependence is a structural attribute in that the organization decides how job tasks will be structured and accomplished, and whether the outcomes will be determined on

an individual level or group level (Courtright et al. 2015). Interdependence thus sets the stage for all member interactions and relationships in workgroup settings. Indeed, LMX research suggests that the increased communication due to task interdependence facilitates members' knowledge of each other's competence, skills, and performance, which makes them more accepting of leader-follower relationship quality differences in the group (Liden et al. 2006). Leadership scholars also assert that leaders play a more important role in high task interdependence groups, because of increased complexity of resource assignments and task coordination (Burke et al. 2006). More research is needed to understand the concomitant effects of outcome and task interdependence on leader-follower relationships. For instance, under high outcome interdependence, members perceive a common fate for the entire group and strongly identify with the group, which may reduce the importance of the relationship with the leader. Future research should also explore if workplace mentoring transitions from being a dyadic to a group-level relationship in a manner similar to sports teams and coaches.

Coworker relationship literature suggests that employees maintain several dyadic exchanges with other coworkers (coworker exchange; CWX), such that having a wide range of relationship quality with coworkers reduces employee attachment to the organization (Sherony & Green 2002). More research is needed to understand if task interdependence forces employees to create better quality relations, which acts to reduce the diversity of CWX quality. Similarly, there is some evidence that high quality CWXs are associated with a higher level of socio-emotional support and task-related resource sharing (Omilion-Hodges & Baker 2013). Future research needs to investigate if task interdependence acts as a substitute to CWX and motivates individuals to share resources even with colleagues with whom they have a medium to low quality exchange. Furthermore, scholars should investigate the effect of task interdependence on negative relationships between coworkers. Does interdependence worsen an already low quality CWX, or does having a better understanding of the other party help to improve dyadic relationship quality? Finally, although there is evidence that interdependence strengthens coworker relationships, because of increased interactions and mutual need satisfaction (Courtright et al. 2015), research needs to explore if those relationships are maintained in the long run after the interdependence has been removed. In other words, can organizations use interdependence as an intervention to establish, maintain, and improve workplace relationships?

**Group cohesiveness.** Cohesiveness is a social attribute that represents the degree to which members are attracted and attached to the group (Dobbins & Zaccaro 1986). Cohesive groups are characterized by an environment of camaraderie and trust as member commitment to group goals motivates them to collaborate and effectively coordinate their efforts (Castaño et al. 2013). Affiliation with highly cohesive groups becomes part of members' self-concepts, which increases their acceptance of group norms and roles and consequently increases the group's influence. Group cohesion is thus an influential factor in determining the genesis and aftermath of all relationships in the workplace. Indeed, leadership scholars have found a positive association between group cohesion and LMX quality (Cogliser & Schriesheim 2000). This may be because the effort and cooperation extended by members in meeting group goals also promote a high quality relationship with the leader. However, it is not clear if high group cohesion forces leaders to establish uniform quality relationships with all members, as differentiating between members of a close-knit team likely jeopardizes group stability. Scholars have largely focused on the group cohesion to group performance relation (e.g., Castaño et al. 2013), but future research should go beyond that and compare the value accorded by members in cohesive groups to relationships with the leader and the coworkers, and the subsequent effects. In a highly cohesive group it is possible that members interact primarily with coworkers to draw socio-emotional and instrumental support, such that a

high quality LMX does not accrue any additional advantages to the employee or to organizational effectiveness. By the same token, mentoring may be redundant in highly cohesive groups.

## Climate

Climate refers to workgroup members' shared perceptions of their work environment. Joyce & Slocum (1984) argued that group aggregate perceptions describe "organizational settings in psychological terms" (p. 722), and thus provide an understanding of how individuals interpret and respond to their surroundings. These shared perceptions evolve as members gather social cues about organizational policies, procedures, norms, and values through communication and repeated interactions with other group members (Salancik & Pfeffer 1978). Members thus create a shared reality, which then has a bearing on all of their choices and actions in both positive (e.g., feeling satisfied, helping coworkers) and negative (e.g., feeling stressed, stealing from workplace) directions. Climate research suggests that within one group multiple climates pertaining to distinct facets or foci of the organizational setting may coexist (e.g., Liao & Rupp 2005, Schneider 2000). Extant research has focused on three types of climate relevant to justice, safety, and service.

**Justice climate.** Justice climate refers to workgroups' collective perceptions of fairness meted out by authority figures in the organization (Mossholder et al. 1998). Justice scholars have identified three distinct climates reflecting workgroup cognitions of the extent to which the outcomes are equitable (i.e., distributive justice climate), the organization's procedures and policies are justly implemented (i.e., procedural justice climate), and employees are treated with respect and dignity in day-to-day interactions (i.e., interactional justice climate). Justice research further asserts that employees perceive the organization and the workgroup leader as two unique sources of justice, such that distinct justice climates with distinctive consequences exist for the two foci (Liao & Rupp 2005). Research has shown that high justice climate engenders positive employee attitudes and behaviors, such as job satisfaction, leader satisfaction, attachment to the organization, organizational citizenship, and reduced turnover, which increase organizational effectiveness in the form of unit-level productivity and customer satisfaction (Whitman et al. 2012). Justice climate thus sets a powerful backdrop for interpreting all signals passing through a workplace setting.

Justice climate research clearly suggests that employees care not only about their own treatment, but also how their teammates are handled (Colquitt 2004). Stoverink et al. (2014) found that supervisor's bad interpersonal treatment meted to one's colleagues created a more cohesive team, possibly because of the presence of a common enemy. Future research should explore if poor justice climate increases the importance of coworker relationships. In the absence of fair supervisors or fair procedures designed by the organization, employees may depend on support provided by coworkers. By the same token, mentoring relationships may provide the certainty and acceptance that low procedural and/or interpersonal justice climates do not. Future research should also explore how justice climate sets boundaries for leader-follower relationships. In a positive climate, leaders may establish a few high quality and many medium to low quality ones, without worrying about creating perceptions of favoritism. Similarly, a positive climate may allow leaders to create individualized employment arrangements, such as a flexible work schedule designed to fulfill an employee's unique needs without any undesirable consequences to team dynamics. In a low justice climate, however, employees may be reluctant to seek unique arrangements lest they further undermine the group justice climate.

**Safety climate.** Safety climate refers to group aggregate perceptions of the organization's procedures, policies, and norms for maintaining employee safety (Schneider 2000, Zohar 1980). Safety

climate provides an understanding of what safety-oriented behaviors are expected and rewarded by the organization. Safety climate fosters employee commitment to safety and engenders safe behaviors, such as compliance with safety regulations and promotion of safe work practices. Not surprisingly, safety climate is associated with enhanced job satisfaction, general health, and well-being (Clarke 2010, Nahrgang et al. 2011).

Safety climate research has largely focused on the influence of climate on safety behaviors and outcomes, such as the number of workplace accidents and injuries (Clarke 2010). There is a paucity of research examining the effects of climate on workplace relationships and their consequences. In one of the rare investigations including LMX and safety climate, Hofmann et al. (2003) found that LMX motivated employees to engage in safety-related citizenship behaviors, such as increased safety communication and commitment to safety only within a positive safety climate. These findings demonstrate that although LMX has consistently shown a positive effect on employee citizenship behaviors that are not demanded or specified by the employment contract (Dulebohn et al. 2012, Ilies et al. 2007), content-specific discretionary behaviors are dependent on the presence of content-focused climate. Future research should investigate if safety climate also impinges on the effects of other dyadic relations, such as those between coworkers on employees' safety behaviors and other outcomes. Another potential avenue for future research is to explore if safety climate helps create stronger dyadic relationships. For instance, research has shown that safety climate engenders employee perceptions of being cared for by the organization and thus heightens their organizational engagement (Nahrgang et al. 2011). It can then be expected that safety climate will also strengthen leader-follower and coworker-coworker relationships, for they are representatives of the organization, and it is through their attitudes and actions that organizations demonstrate their support and care for employees. With respect to mentoring, it is possible that the support received from the relationship substitutes for safety climate, for in the absence of safety climate protégés are more likely to rely on their mentor's advice and guidance for safety.

**Service climate.** Service climate reflects employees' shared perceptions of the organization's concern for customers in the form of policies and practices for creating, delivering, and maintaining services for customers (Chuang & Liao 2010, Schneider 1990). Research has shown that service climate emphasizes management commitment to customer service and motivates employees to cooperate with each other and with customers to provide high quality service (Hong et al. 2013). However, the effect of service climate on dyadic relationships between employees, coworkers, leaders, mentors, and customers is not clear. Service climate informs employees on the desirability of customer-centered behaviors, which likely require considerable support from coworkers. Customer problems may be idiosyncratic and may muddy employee role expectations—a difficult situation further worsened by time constraints. Coworkers may help by listening sympathetically, share their own experiences in similar situations, and offer task-specific skills and information (Chiaburu & Harrison 2008). Future research should explore if these dependencies arising from service climate strengthen the effect of coworker relationships on employee outcomes. Furthermore, because service climate requires dealing with increased complexity of tasks and higher levels of coordination with team members (issues for which the leader can provide help) leader-follower relationships may become more important in predicting employee outcomes as well.

## Organizational Culture

Organizational culture refers to a set of attributes that make an organization unique, just like personality is unique for each human being. These attributes comprise members' shared beliefs and values regarding role expectations and behavioral norms in the organization (Schein 2010).

Organizational culture provides the context in which members interpret all of their interactions, understand their role expectations, develop attitudes toward the workplace and its constituents, and choose the behaviors in which to engage (Peterson & Smith 2000). An organization's culture provides cues about what is desirable or acceptable in that environment, and thus shapes how, when, and why members relate to one another. By specifying desirable behavioral norms culture serves as a social control mechanism in that members are motivated to notice and correct behaviors that are incongruent with the culture (Sorensen 2002). For example, if the organizational norm is that members collaborate with one another and share the outcomes, then within-group competition will not be tolerated. These norms are usually established by the founding members and are propagated, maintained, and enhanced through stories, symbols, rituals, routines, and special language over the life of the organization.

O'Reilly et al. (1991) were among the earliest scholars to advocate systematic analyses of organizational culture through quantitative rather than qualitative methods. There since have been several taxonomies of culture; however, O'Reilly and colleagues' organizational culture profile remains the most popular and empirically validated approach to understand how cultural differences between organizations systematically influence member attitudes and behaviors. The organizational culture profile defines seven aspects of organizational culture: innovation, stability, attention to detail, outcome orientation, aggressiveness, team orientation, and respect for people. The degree to which an organization emphasizes few or more of these facets sets it apart from all other organizations in its industry. Innovative organizations encourage risk-taking and creativity, whereas cultures high on stability expect employees to maintain the status quo, and detail-oriented organizations expect employees to be analytical and precise. Outcome orientation refers to an organization's tendency to emphasize results rather than the processes used to achieve those, whereas aggressiveness describes the tendency for employees to be competitive rather than cooperative. Team-oriented organizations stress cohesiveness and cooperation, and people-oriented organizations focus on caring for the employees.

Research on workplace relationships maintains that not all of the organizational cultural norms are relevant to the internal constituents: employees, coworkers, and managers. Erdogan et al. (2006) proposed that aggressiveness, team orientation, and respect for people are the internally focused facets of organizational culture that are likely to shape dyadic relationships, such as those between leaders and followers, mentors and protégés, and coworkers. These scholars found distinct effects of these three cultural dimensions on LMX relationships and their outcomes. Leader-follower relationships were of higher quality in team-oriented organizations, because the cultural norms encourage employees to form harmonious, strong, friendship-based relationships and to collaborate with each other. Team-oriented cultures were characterized by generalized rather than immediate norms of reciprocity, which reduced employees' sensitivity to outcome equity insofar as developing high quality relationships with the leader was concerned. In contrast, aggressive cultures encouraged employees to be competitive and to outperform each other, which increased their sensitivity to outcome fairness. Cultures high on respect for people emphasized caring and respect for employee rights, which motivated employees to expect interactional fairness from their leaders (Erdogan et al. 2006).

Despite widespread awareness among organizational scholars about the pervasive effects of culture in shaping member attitudes and behaviors, empirical research is lacking in this area (Anand et al. 2011, Chiaburu et al. 2013, Eby et al. 2006). Research needs to pursue several avenues to understand the effects of organizational culture on the dyadic relationship between leaders and followers. For instance, the leader behaviors that are desirable in one culture may be taboo or ineffective in another. Erdogan et al. (2006) found that interpersonal fairness became more important in determining leader-follower relationship quality in people-oriented organizations

but not in aggressive organizations. Extending this argument to abusive supervision (Tepper 2007), we argue that employees in people-oriented cultures are not likely to expect or tolerate a leader who abuses subordinates. An aggressive culture, however, may not be resistant to such leader behaviors. Leader behaviors, such as creating internal competition and openly demeaning subordinates in case of failures or setbacks, might be efficacious in organizations with aggressive cultures. However, such behaviors are not likely to be effective in organizations with high people orientation, such as Southwest Airlines. Furthermore, high quality relationships may be incongruent with the schema of employees in an aggressive culture and may not accrue any benefits to the employee or the organization. Research needs to examine not only what leader behaviors are needed to create high quality dyadic relationships in different cultures, but also the efficacy of those relationships.

Organizational culture may also shape the value and attention members accord to their relationships with different stakeholders. Chiaburu et al. (2013) assert that the degree to which one is influenced by the coworkers may be dependent on the surrounding cultural context. Future research should explore if in aggressive organizations members invest higher effort in building relationships with leaders (or those in positions of formal power) rather than with coworkers who are at the same level in the organizational hierarchy and are potential competitors. This is because a high quality relationship with the leaders is likely to provide additional resources, better task assignments, and opportunities for advancement (Dulebohn et al. 2012). In a team-oriented culture, however, coworkers may matter more than the leader, because work is structured to be done in collaboration with team members, and task goals may be difficult to accomplish without coworker support. Furthermore, the literature on coworker relationships asserts that employee outcomes are influenced not only by positive coworker behaviors but also the negative ones (Chiaburu & Harrison 2008). Future research should explore to what degree an organization's culture makes a particular behavior salient and change its effect on other group members. For instance, in team-oriented organizations interpersonal citizenship behaviors (i.e., helping coworkers) are part of members' role expectations, so their absence rather than presence is likely to be salient. Employees who do not exhibit helpful behaviors are likely to be considered deviants and avoided or punished by others. Lack of these behaviors, however, will not get much attention in aggressive organizations, because the shared mental models do not demand cooperation from coworkers. In fact, exhibiting citizenship behaviors represents a deviation from the cultural norms, which may raise questions from the group about the focal member's motivations.

There is some evidence that the effectiveness of mentoring relationships is a function of organizational support (e.g., Eby et al. 2006); however, it is not clear what type of cultures encourage or deter individuals both from seeking and offering mentoring. Kram (1985) asserted that lack of rewards for relationship building can hinder formation of mentoring relationships. Future research should explore differences both between the level of mentoring and its outcomes across organizations that espouse different cultural values. A team-oriented organization with its emphasis on collaboration and relationship building is more likely to have a high level of quality mentoring relationships than an aggressive organization. In a team-oriented organization, individuals are more likely to express their need for guidance, and develop trust-based relationships with others who are willing to share their skills, experiences, and social connections to provide support for their protégés' career and personal growth. Furthermore, cultural differences are likely to set boundaries to the effects of mentoring. In people-oriented organizations, employees perceive caring, respect, and socio-emotional support, which they reciprocate with strong feelings of affiliation. Although research has shown a consistent linkage between mentoring support and employee attachment to the organization (Eby et al. 2013), mentoring may not be able to induce additional affiliation in a people-oriented organization.



Moreover, the organizational culture may also influence whether formal or informal mentoring is practiced. The organization may not need to create formal mentoring programs to match mentees with prospective mentors, if organizational members are already frequently meeting and communicating in an open manner, as is common in team-oriented cultures. Aggressive cultures with competition rife between employees, however, may benefit from formal mentoring programs designed and run by human resources. Finally, the content of mentoring support may vary across cultures. Eby et al. (2013) identify three distinct aspects of mentoring relationships—instrumental support (e.g., task-related assistance) needed to realize protégé goals, psychosocial support (e.g., unconditional acceptance and encouragement) for protégés' personal and emotional growth, and the quality of the relationship (e.g., liking and satisfaction with mentor). In an aggressive organization, protégés might seek and appreciate instrumental support needed to give them an edge over the competition more than psychosocial support.

## National Culture

How we perceive and respond to our world is largely shaped by our national or societal cultural values (Chen et al. 2009). Hofstede (1980) was one of the first researchers to analyze the effect of cultural differences among different societies through a four-dimensional model of societal culture. Later research demonstrated that within each society there is considerable variation in individuals' cultural values, and these individual-level variations are more closely related to individual-level outcomes (Kirkman & Shapiro 2001). Two of the dimensions proposed by Hofstede, individualism-collectivism and power distance, have received considerable attention from researchers. Individualism-collectivism refers to the extent to which oneself is construed in an interdependent manner. Collectivistic individuals tend to define themselves in interdependent terms, which leads them to put great emphasis on their relationships and focus on fitting in as well as maintaining harmony with their groups (Markus & Kitayama 1991). In contrast, individualists have an independent concept of self and perceive some distance between them and their close others. The differences in self-construal shape how individuals relate to others, which in turn influences their goal selection and prioritization in social as well as work domains (Triandis 1994, 1995). Collectivistic individuals tend to strongly identify with their groups, follow group norms, and subjugate personal goals to those of the collective. Those high on individualism, however, tend to focus on their unique attributes and needs.

Hofstede (1980) defines power distance as the extent to which uneven distribution of power is accepted in a society. On an individual level, power distance indicates the degree to which an individual accepts power asymmetry in societal institutions or organizations. An individual high in power distance is likely to accept hierarchy as well as show deference to authorities and obey them, whereas one low in power distance is likely to believe in equal rights for everyone (e.g., Earley & Gibson 1998). These differences in acceptance of power asymmetry lead to variations in how individuals relate to authority figures in both social and work domains.

LMX researchers have explored both individualism-collectivism and power distance as boundary conditions to antecedents to LMX—and LMX to outcome relationships (e.g., Dulebohn et al. 2012). Only a handful of studies have actually assessed individual-level cultural values along with LMX (e.g., Erdogan & Liden 2006); however, LMX research has been conducted in multiple countries with enough societal-level variation that scholars have been able to use meta-analytical techniques to explore how culture shapes the effects of LMX (Rockstuhl et al. 2012). This research asserts that the beneficial effects of LMX on organizational effectiveness through employee satisfaction and citizenship behaviors are stronger in societies with a low rather than



high degree of power distance and collectivism. This may be because in collectivistic societies personalized relationships that create differences between group members are not preferred, and the social/psychological distance resulting from high power distance makes the leader a distal influence (Anand et al. 2011, Vidyarthi et al. 2014). Future research should investigate how other aspects of LMX, such as relationship development and maintenance, may be shaped by cultural values. Erdogan & Liden (2002) proclaim that high power distance followers perceive their leader as a powerful entity, who can control their success or failure in the workplace. Such followers are likely to invest significant effort in building and maintaining a high quality relationship with the leader, who governs the resources needed to accomplish job tasks. Aside from power distance, future research should also investigate how leader's collectivism influences leader-follower relationships. One of the fundamental principles of LMX theory is that leaders differentiate between their followers such that a workgroup is characterized by only a few high quality exchanges (Liden & Graen 1980); however, a collectivistic leader may create relationships of a uniform quality with most group members (i.e., low differentiation) to maintain harmony in the workgroup.

Cultural values are also likely to change the tenor of other dyadic relationships in the workplace, such as those between coworkers or between mentors and protégés; however, this perspective has not garnered much attention in extant research despite scholars' calls for probing the effects of culture on mentoring and coworker relationships (e.g., Allen et al. 2008, Ng & Sorensen 2008). There is some evidence that in collectivistic cultures individuals are more likely to consider coworkers as friends and part of their family (Morris et al. 2008). Similarly, the meaning and importance of mentoring likely differs across cultures; however, mentoring research is largely based on Western samples, which makes it difficult to generalize the findings to other cultures (Allen et al. 2008). Future research must explore how nonhierarchical dyadic relationships are formed and maintained in various cultures. Individualists tend to form exchange relationships based on market pricing; that is, resources are shared according to each party's contribution and there is less expectation of continued exchanges over time. Exchange relationships formed by collectivists, however, are based on the generalized norm of reciprocity (Gouldner 1960) or communal sharing (Fiske 1991). Resources are shared without keeping track of what each party contributed, parties expect exchanges to continue over an extended period of time, and the relationship itself becomes paramount. It is likely that collectivists not only form high quality exchanges with their coworkers (and mentors), but also maintain those in the long term. Collectivism is also likely to accentuate the importance of relationships between coworkers and their subsequent effects. Finally, research should also explore the negative side of collectivism. Empirical evidence suggests that collectivists devalue and avoid individuals with non-normative characteristics, because those characteristics might hinder group functioning (Kinias et al. 2014). It remains to be seen how this phenomenon plays out in the work domain, i.e., to what degree collectivists reject their coworkers' non-normative behaviors.

Although research done in Western cultures suggests that mentoring relationships are more effective in the beginning and eventually fade away (Van Dyne 1996), it may not be true in collectivistic societies where relationships are of utmost importance and are nurtured in the long run. Mentor-protégé relationships might span a lifetime for collectivists. Similarly, the content of mentoring and its value may also vary across cultures. In a collectivistic society where relationships are prized above all, it is possible that psychosocial support and quality of relationship matter more than instrumental support coming from a mentor. Cultural values may shape mentor-mentee relationship in other ways. For instance, mentoring literature suggests that protégé perceptions of mentor support increase as similarity with the mentor increases (Eby 2012). The beneficial effects of mentoring might be amplified when mentor and mentee are congruent in their collectivism, such that both parties value the relationship and make substantial efforts to develop it. Finally, it has not yet been decided which practices change the effectiveness of mentoring across cultures.

DuBois et al. (2002) found that ongoing mentor training and frequent interaction between mentor and protégé are best practices to support mentoring success in Western cultures. High power distance cultures may need additional interventions, such as communication training for protégés. Mentors typically tend to have more experience, skills, social connections, and higher position in the organizational hierarchy (Kram 1985), all factors that can create a power differential between mentor and protégé, and thus disrupt the relationship. Protégé training may mitigate any negative effects of dyadic power asymmetry. In addition to generalizing findings of extant research, scholars need to investigate what are the best practices and interventions to ensure effective mentoring.

## MEASUREMENT OF DYADIC RELATIONSHIPS

All dyadic relationships, including leader-follower, mentor-protégé, and coworker-coworker relationships, involve interdependence, exchange, and reciprocity between the two parties. For example, Scandura et al. (1986, p. 580) noted that a dyadic relationship such as LMX is “a system of components and their relationships involving both members of a dyad in interdependent patterns of behavior sharing mutual outcome instrumentalities.” Similarly, Heider (1958) emphasized the import of maintaining a balance among various relationships in the workgroup setting. A dyadic relationship entails active reciprocal exchange between the two parties such that the relationship goes only as far as both parties allow. This fact echoes in Graen & Scandura’s (1987) argument that one party may or may not take the role expected by the other party. Therefore, any measure of dyadic relationships should, at least partly, account for the perspective of both parties. However, extant research has rarely investigated the joint perception of the exchange partners. For example, mentoring researchers (Eby et al. 2013) as well as LMX scholars (Anand et al. 2011) admit that measuring dyadic relationship quality from only one party’s perspective lacks precision and may even be erroneous.

As the term relationship is inherent in the dyadic relationship, the concept of mutuality seems critical for an accurate understanding—of dyadic relationships. Because dyadic relationships involve more than one party, emphasis on one party alone is a limitation that must be resolved. Interestingly, although the role of shared understanding between the parties in a dyadic relationship dates back to the works of Blau (1964), Heider (1958), Homans (1958), and Emerson (1976), empirical research has not embraced and followed this theorizing. This disconnect may be partly because researchers, up until recently, lacked the conceptual and statistical tools to operationalize mutuality. Another reason may stem from the observation of lower than expected correlation in perspectives of the two parties. For example, in the LMX literature, scholars have noted the importance of mutuality by conceptualizing terms such as agreement (Gerstner & Day 1997, Sin et al. 2009), balance (Cogliser et al. 2009, Matta et al. 2015), or convergence (Zhou & Schriesheim 2009), but have found low to moderate levels of agreement between follower and leader perceptions (Gerstner & Day 1997, Liden et al. 1993, Scandura et al. 1986, Sin et al. 2009). Consequently, LMX research has explored various modifications to the use of a single party-based measure of relationship quality. For instance, Harris et al. (2014) have used the algebraic difference between two coworkers’ perceptions of LMX as the measure of relational separation between them. Using a balance theory (Heider 1958) approach, Tse et al. (2013) and Sherony & Green (2002) calculated relationship quality similarity in triads involving the leader and two coworkers and examined its effect on outcomes. Gooty & Yammarino (2016) defined the degree of dissimilarity in follower and leader perceptions of LMX as dyadic dispersion in LMX and examined its moderating effect on LMX-outcome relationships. These studies, although extending the conventional measure of LMX, fall short of using convergence in two parties as the true representation of dyadic relationship quality.

One way to overcome the existing limitation in the measurement of a dyadic relationship is to first measure the perceptions of both parties and then estimate the convergence (or divergence) in their perceptions as a meaningful variable representing dyadic relationship quality. When the parties disagree in their perceptions, the direction of divergence is also meaningful (e.g., Schyns & Day 2010). Edwards and colleagues (Edwards 1994, Edwards & Parry 1993) have repeatedly called for this refinement in measurement when two actors or variables jointly represent one cognition, as is the case of dyadic relationship quality. Edwards (1994) specifically showed potential problems with using algebraic difference score as a measure of agreement (or disagreement) between two parties, which some researchers have tended to use as a proxy for measuring dyadic relationships. Edwards' work as well as follow-up research shows that convergence and divergence between the two perspectives using a polynomial regression framework is a more appropriate method to capture the dyadic component of a relationship. Although researchers in recent years have increasingly used polynomial regression and response surface methodology to examine the effect of two independent variables on an outcome variable, this method has not been formally used to quantify dyadic relationships. Employing this method to measure dyadic relationships suggests using a combination of perception terms such as  $\text{Party 1} + \text{Party 2} + (\text{Party 1})^2 + (\text{Party 1}) * (\text{Party 2}) + (\text{Party 2})^2$  to represent convergence, which would be an improved measure of the dyadic relationship. Extant empirical research in dyadic relationships has not yet documented this effect of reciprocal exchange as captured by the preceding equation. The proposed approach also has the potential to overcome rater bias in the existing practice of measuring dyadic relationships on the basis of one party. Finally, the proposed method provides an avenue to explore the meaning and effect of both convergence and divergence in the perspectives of dyadic partners.

## PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

"People make the place" (Schneider 1987) seems to be the resounding conclusion of research on dyadic relationships in the workplace. Specifically, leaders, mentors, and coworkers shape a wide range of outcomes for both the employee and the organization. Leadership scholars have consistently shown that high quality leader-follower relationships engender several positive outcomes including role clarity, job satisfaction, attachment to the organization, performance, and citizenship behaviors (Dulebohn et al. 2012). Along with the leaders, coworkers also play an important role in enriching individuals' work lives (Hu & Liden 2013, Liden et al. 2000, Sherony & Green 2002). Examining coworker relationships as the focus of workplace social environment, Chiaburu & Harrison (2008) found that coworker support affects employee role perception, work attitudes, workplace effectiveness, and work withdrawal. The positive effects of coworker support held even after accounting for leader influence and other potential influences. Paralleling the findings of LMX and coworker relationship research, a meta-analytic summary of mentor-protégé relationships shows that the quality of the dyadic relationship molds attitudinal, behavioral, career, and health outcomes of employees (Eby et al. 2013). In fact, this research maintains that mentoring changes individuals' career trajectories while also enriching all other domains of their lives.

Given the vast literature on dyadic relationships, several practical implications can be offered for the different stakeholders in organizations and beyond. Because the touted benefits of effective leadership stem from the relationship quality, training both parties to develop and maintain a relationship of high quality is arguably the most practical prescription. Organizations must invest in training both managers and subordinates in developing higher quality relations. Furthermore, because cultural values may impinge on these social linkages (Rockstuhl et al. 2012) organizations stand to reap rich dividends by combining cross-cultural training with leadership training programs. Leader-follower relationship building will also benefit from matching dyadic pairs on

deep-level characteristics (e.g., personality, working styles, etc.) rather than focusing on surface similarities (e.g., age, sex, or race) as suggested by research findings (e.g., Bauer & Green 1996).

Globalization, changing workforce demographics, and technological changes are transforming the scope and definition of dyadic relationships. With the United States becoming a truly pluralistic nation with no single race being the majority (Cooper 2012) and millennials entering the workforce with a new set of work values and expectations, dyadic relationships are poised for change in fundamental ways. Nontraditional work structures including matrix organizations with multiple reporting relationships (e.g., one employee reporting to two or more managers), virtual work teams (e.g., geographically distributed teams), and personalized work arrangements geared to suit employees' unique needs and goals are increasingly common in workplaces. Fortunately, extant studies, although limited in number, are extending classic conceptualizations such as those of LMX to these new contexts (e.g., Anand et al. 2010, Vidyarthi et al. 2014). This has important practical implications. For example, leaders supervising virtual teams need to recognize that because affect and proximity are critical components of relationship development, they need to be meaningfully substituted with online interactions. Leaders also need to develop substantial familiarity with subordinates' work and cultural values. Similarly, with the new workforce valuing work-life balance and seeking meaning in work, leader-follower relationships should not be based on strict bureaucratic rules or policies, but rather should make way for flexibility and appreciation of interests beyond the work-for-earning-wage-only paradigm.

In today's incredibly diverse and fast-paced workplace—abounding with uncertainties and complexities of multiple sources and types (Richard & Miller 2013)—mentoring makes more sense than ever. One major problem facing many contemporary organizations is a lack of minority mentors hailing from traditionally underrepresented communities such as women and racial minorities (O'Brien et al. 2010). Organizations need to invest in systems or cultures that reward mentoring and thus encourage a more diverse group of mentors to come forward so that protégés hailing from minority groups are able to form close relationships and reap the fullest extent of benefits innate to the relationship (Ragins 1997). Mentoring programs can also benefit from training so that both mentors and mentees realize their role expectations and learn how to create and maintain mutually fulfilling relationships. This training should be combined with a program to match individuals with mentors based on characteristics that may foster deep-level similarities (e.g., previous work or life experiences, interests) to boost effectiveness of these relationships, as asserted by mentoring research (Eby 2012). Finally, organizations must nurture mentoring relationships by facilitating frequent mentor-protégé interactions (e.g., approximately once a week). Another practical implication of mentoring research is that individuals can mitigate abusive supervision-related issues (Tepper 2007) with the help of a mentor. When the supervisor does not provide task-related support, breaks promises, and demeans the subordinate, socio-emotional and instrumental support from the mentor can make all the difference.

Among the various dyadic connections a focal employee maintains at any given time, coworker relationships generally outnumber all others. The opportunities to observe and interact with coworkers are frequent and numerous, therefore coworkers play a large role in shaping individuals' work lives. As organizations are moving toward team-based work structures and more service-oriented work roles, managers and employees need to pay more attention to the applications and implications of coworkers' influence, for research shows that positive coworker relationships can mitigate the ill effects of stressors and reduce burnout (Fernet et al. 2010), enhance satisfaction with both work and life (Simon et al. 2010), and motivate higher performance and citizenship behaviors (Chiaburu & Harrison 2008). Negative coworker relations, however, can evoke negative emotions, reduction in work effort, and counterproductive work behaviors such as taking long breaks or wasting coworkers' time to hinder organizational effectiveness (Sakurai & Jex 2012).

**Table 1** Questions to guide future research

Topic	Questions
Relationship development, decline, improvement, and termination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Why is it that some relationships maintain high quality over long periods of time, whereas others decrease in quality, ultimately disintegrating until the relationship is terminated?</li> <li>■ What enables some relationships to increase in quality across time?</li> <li>■ Although psychological contract breach is not related to employee turnover, when followers attribute the lack of contract fulfillment to the leader, are followers inclined to terminate the relationship with the leader and transfer to another unit within the organization?</li> </ul>
Social comparisons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Who is the referent in different dyadic social comparisons?</li> <li>■ To what extent do social comparison referents transcend the workgroup or other sociostructural boundaries in organizations?</li> <li>■ Can a positive social comparison with a significant member of the organization, such as a mentor or a coworker, mitigate the negative effects of a dyadic relationship with an abusive supervisor?</li> </ul>
Workgroup composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Do mentoring dyadic relationships become more important to protégés from large groups where the leader typically cannot devote as much attention to each follower?</li> <li>■ Do the effects of surface diversity on leader-follower relationships hold across different industry and cultural settings?</li> <li>■ How much weight do coworkers allocate to surface differences as compared to deep level differences when establishing relationships?</li> <li>■ Does the relationship quality hold as group diversity changes? For example, if women go from being minority to majority, does that change the relationship quality between two coworkers?</li> <li>■ Are mentoring relationships more important in groups with high rather than low surface or deep level diversity?</li> <li>■ In female-dominated groups, does having majority status reduce female mentees' sensitivity to social affiliation-related support?</li> </ul>
Task and outcome interdependence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Under high outcome interdependence conditions, because members tend to perceive a common fate for the entire group and strongly identify with the group, do they see the relationship with the leader as being less important?</li> <li>■ Do increased levels of task interdependence force employees to create better quality relationships with each other, thereby reducing the diversity of coworker exchange quality?</li> </ul>
Group cohesiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Do members of highly cohesive groups interact primarily with coworkers to draw socio-emotional, instrumental, and mentoring support, deeming leader-member exchange (LMX) relationships relatively less important?</li> </ul>
Justice climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Does poor justice climate increase the importance of coworker relationships?</li> <li>■ Does a positive climate allow leaders to establish a few high quality and many medium to low quality ones, without worrying about creating perceptions of favoritism?</li> <li>■ Does a positive climate allow leaders to create individualized employment arrangements (i-deals), such as a flexible work schedule designed to fulfill an employee's unique needs, without any undesirable consequences to the team dynamics?</li> </ul>
Safety climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Does safety climate impinge on the effects of dyadic relationships, such as those between coworkers, on employees' safety behaviors and other outcomes?</li> </ul>
Organizational culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What leader behaviors are needed to create high quality dyadic relationships in different cultures?</li> <li>■ In organizations characterized as having aggressive cultures, do members invest higher effort in building relationships with leaders (or those in positions of formal power) rather than with coworkers who are at the same level in the organizational hierarchy and are potential competitors?</li> <li>■ To what degree does an organization's culture make a particular behavior salient and change its effect on other group members?</li> <li>■ Are there differences both between the level of mentoring and its outcomes across organizations that espouse different cultural values?</li> </ul>

(Continued)

**Table 1** (Continued)

Topic	Questions
National culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How are aspects of LMX, such as relationship development and maintenance, shaped by cultural values?</li> <li>■ Are leaders high in collectivism less inclined to differentiate between followers in forming LMX relationships?</li> <li>■ How is the formation and maintenance of nonhierarchical dyadic relationships influenced by cultural values?</li> <li>■ To what degree do collectivists reject their coworkers' non-normative behaviors?</li> <li>■ What are the best practices and interventions to ensure effective mentoring?</li> </ul>

Furthermore, occupations involving greater social intensity such as caregiving and customer support, as opposed to jobs with technical requirements, such as software development, need to be more cognizant of the need for developing supportive coworker relationships (Chiaburu & Harrison 2008). Organizational interventions to strengthen coworker relationships may include well-designed socialization programs so that coworkers get to know each other and start off on the right note, a task structure including tight interdependence of outcomes so the team becomes cohesive, conflict resolution mechanisms, and supportive leadership. Research shows that coworker conflict can have far-reaching effects on team dynamics and organizational effectiveness

**Table 2** Implications for practitioners

Topic	Implication
National culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Mentor training and frequent interaction between mentor and protégé are best practices to support mentoring success in western cultures. High power distance cultures may need additional interventions, such as communication training for protégés.</li> <li>■ Because cultural values contribute to the nature of dyadic relationships, organizations stand to reap rich dividends by combining cross-cultural training with leadership training programs.</li> </ul>
Relationship development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Because of the benefits that stem from relationship quality, training on relationship development and maintenance should be provided to both leaders and followers.</li> <li>■ Match dyadic pairs on deep level characteristics (e.g., personality, working styles, etc.) rather than focusing on surface similarities, such as age, sex, or race.</li> <li>■ Leaders supervising virtual teams need to recognize that because affect and proximity are critical components of relationship development, they need to be meaningfully substituted with online interactions. Leaders also need to develop substantial familiarity with subordinates' work and cultural values.</li> <li>■ Leader-follower relationships should not be based on strict bureaucratic rules or policies but rather should make way for flexibility and appreciation of interests beyond the work-for-earning-wage-only paradigm.</li> </ul>
Mentoring relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Mentoring programs can also benefit from training so that both mentors and mentees realize their role expectations and learn how to create and maintain mutually fulfilling relationships.</li> <li>■ Mentoring programs should match individuals with mentors based on deep level characteristics.</li> <li>■ Mentoring can help mentees mitigate abusive supervision related problems.</li> </ul>
Coworker relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Positive coworker relationships should be nurtured as they can mitigate the ill effects of stressors and reduce burnout.</li> <li>■ Organizational interventions should be employed to strengthen coworker relationships. Methods may include socialization programs that enable coworkers to get to know each other, task structures including tight interdependence of outcomes so the team becomes cohesive, conflict resolution mechanisms, and supportive leadership.</li> </ul>



(Harris et al. 2011). Given the recent industrial trends of team-based work, offshoring work to countries that value collectivism and higher power distance, and an increasingly diverse workforce in the United States, an increased emphasis on building coworker relationships is imperative.

## CONCLUSION

Just as dyadic relationships are central to the fabric of life, they represent the key building blocks of organizations as well. Much of what transpires in organizations takes place via dyadic interaction between leaders and followers, between mentors and protégés, and between coworkers. These relationships evolve within an extremely complex context. Given that researchers have just begun to uncover the direct and moderating influence of contextual elements on relationships, many future research opportunities wait to be addressed. We summarize our suggestions for future research and practitioner action in **Tables 1** and **2**, respectively.

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