
Investigating Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) and Digital Competency's Effects on Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) in Gen Z Retail Employees of Bandung

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the extent to which Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) and digital competence influence Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) among Gen Z employees in the retail industry of Bandung. The research employs purposive sampling, selecting respondents who have been employed for at least one year, resulting in a total of 205 participants from the retail sector. Data analysis techniques include quantitative methods to assess the individual and combined effects of LMX and digital competence on OCB. The findings indicate that both LMX and digital skills significantly affect OCB among Gen Z retail employees. The implications of this research provide valuable insights for organizations adapting to digital transformation, emphasizing the importance of effective leadership and the development of relevant digital competencies for the younger workforce.

Keywords: Leader-Member Exchange, Digital Competency's, Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Gen Z.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology has transformed the operations of modern organizations, particularly in the retail sector, which now heavily relies on the digital capabilities of its employees (Ciampi et al., 2021; Gonzalez-Varona et al., 2024). In this context, the unique characteristics of Generation Z, often referred to as digital natives, present both challenges and opportunities for leadership and organizational behavior (Alruthaya, Nguyen, &

Lokuge, 2021). As organizations strive to maintain performance and employee engagement, concepts such as Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) have become crucial areas of research, especially in a labor market increasingly dominated by Gen Z (Kapil & Rastogi, 2020).

Before delving into the research further, this section will explain the theories underlying each variable and the conceptual framework that integrates the three research variables into one

model. The foundational theory for this research model is Social Exchange Theory. In other words, the grand theory driving this research model is Social Exchange Theory. Social Exchange Theory illustrates that the relationship between two parties, such as supervisors and subordinates, is based on reciprocity principles. Each party tends to offer something positive if they receive something positive in return. In the workplace context, when employees feel valued, supported, and treated fairly by their supervisors, they are motivated to reciprocate with attitudes and behaviors that benefit the organization, such as working harder or assisting colleagues. This theory emphasizes that social interactions within organizations resemble mutually beneficial "exchanges" (Blau, 1964).

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) is a theory that explains the quality of relationships between supervisors and subordinates, where a strong relationship is characterized by mutual trust, respect, and reciprocal support. Supervisors who have high LMX relationships with their subordinates tend to provide more attention, opportunities, and resources, while subordinates reciprocate with improved performance, loyalty, and positive behaviors in the workplace. This strong relationship has been shown to enhance employee motivation and engagement (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

Digital competency refers to an individual's ability to effectively use digital technology in both work and daily life. It encompasses skills related to searching, understanding, processing, and sharing information securely and ethically. This competency involves not only the operation of devices or applications but also includes the ability to communicate, collaborate, solve problems, and adapt to the ever-changing technological landscape (Vuorikari et al., 2016).

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) refers to the voluntary behaviors exhibited by employees that are not formally outlined in their job descriptions, yet significantly contribute to the smooth operation and effectiveness of the organization. Examples of OCB include helping coworkers without being asked, maintaining a tidy work environment, and suggesting process improvements. These behaviors typically arise from a sense of belonging, commitment, and job satisfaction, ultimately having a positive impact on the overall performance of the organization (Organ, 1988; Podsakoff et al., 2009).

Many researchers have sought to understand how a strong relationship between supervisors and subordinates can motivate employees to go beyond their primary responsibilities. According to LMX theory, when the bond between leaders and employees is positive, mutual trust and support develop, encouraging employees to voluntarily engage in positive actions, such as assisting coworkers or making additional contributions to the organization (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Ilies, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007). Additionally, digital competency plays a crucial role as it affects how employees perceive their roles, adapt to changes, and exhibit behaviors that benefit the organization (Barboutidis & Stiakakis, 2023; Firmansyah et al., 2022). However, in the increasingly digital workplace—particularly in the retail sector—the relationship between LMX, digital competency, and positive behaviors such as OCB among Generation Z employees remains underexplored. Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by examining Gen Z retail employees in Bandung, Indonesia.

Previous research has explored the relationships between LMX, digital competency, and OCB, particularly the partial relationships

between LMX and OCB, as well as between digital competency and OCB (Truckenbrodt, 2000; Organ, 1988; Barboutidis & Stiakakis, 2023). However, empirical evidence directly linking all three variables within a single study is still limited, especially among specific generational groups working in digitized industries (Zhang et al., 2021; Tano, Meyer, & Bruch, 2023). Additionally, the rapid growth of the digital economy in Indonesia, coupled with a predominance of young workers, makes this context highly relevant for investigating how leadership and digital skills can influence positive employee behaviors in the workplace (Malik, Yahya, & Aras, 2025).

This study enhances knowledge in the field by thoroughly examining the relationships among the investigated variables. Theoretically, it is grounded in Social Exchange Theory, or Blau's (1964) theory of social exchange, which posits that social relationships at work are built on mutual benefits. Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory, as a mid-level theory, builds on this idea by emphasizing that the relationship between supervisors and subordinates is crucial in this exchange process (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Moreover, this research also draws on findings from studies in digital HR and organizational behavior, which indicate that digital skills not only impact task performance but also influence positive employee attitudes and behaviors, such as Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) (Suswati, 2022; Firman, Saerang, & Nelwan, 2022). This theoretical foundation shapes the research framework, where LMX and digital skills are assumed to impact OCB.

Based on this theoretical framework, the research problem is formulated as follows: To what extent do LMX and digital competency

influence OCB among Gen Z employees working in the retail industry in Bandung? The objective of this study is to directly examine the impact of LMX and digital competency on OCB among Gen Z retail employees. By analyzing the effects of each factor and their combination, this research aims to provide valuable insights into effective leadership and the development of relevant digital skills for the younger generation in the workplace. Such insights will assist organizations adapting to digital transformation (Wulani & Junaedi, 2020). This study employs path analysis as its primary analysis technique, utilizing SPSS software to test the relationships among the variables.

The hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows: H1 posits that Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) significantly influences Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB). H2 suggests that Digital Competency has a significant impact on OCB. Lastly, H3 asserts that both Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) and Digital Competency together have a significant effect on Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB).

This study holds significant importance for both theoretical development and practical application. Theoretically, it enhances the understanding of Social Exchange Theory (SET) and LMX Theory by integrating digital competency as a supporting factor in the supervisor-subordinate relationship. Practically, the research provides tangible evidence for retail managers on how to effectively manage and develop Gen Z employees in a work environment increasingly reliant on technology (Chaerunnisa & Hasan, 2023; Daud & Handayani, 2023).

Overall, this research aims to address a critical gap by combining studies on leadership, digital competency, and voluntary behaviors among Gen Z employees. The findings are

expected to enrich academic insights while offering practical benefits, particularly for sectors that are labor-intensive and technology-driven.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a quantitative approach to determine whether there is an influence between the leader-member exchange and digital competency on positive workplace behaviors (Organizational Citizenship Behavior), particularly among Gen Z employees working in the retail sector in Bandung (Kapil & Rastogi, 2020; Tano et al., 2023). The research is explanatory in nature, aiming to understand the causal relationships among the variables, especially in organizations undergoing changes due to digitalization (Ciampi et al., 2021).

The study focuses on Gen Z employees, defined as individuals born between 1997 and 2012, who work in the retail sector in Bandung. Respondents are selected using purposive sampling, with the criterion that they have at least one year of experience in the industry (Alruthaya et al., 2021). A total of 205 respondents participate, providing a sufficient sample for analysis using path analysis with the assistance of SPSS software (Götz et al., 2020).

Data were collected through the distribution of questionnaires both online and in-person. The questionnaire consists of three main sections to measure the key aspects of the study: LMX, digital competency, and OCB. Respondents were asked to respond to statements on a scale from 1 to 5, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The LMX questionnaire was adapted from Truckenbrodt (2000), the digital

competency section from Barboutidis & Stiakakis (2023), and the OCB section from Organ (1988).

Before collecting the main data, the researchers conducted a pilot test (pre-survey) involving 40 respondents to ensure that the measurement tools were accurate and reliable. Validity tests were performed by checking whether each question in the questionnaire had a strong enough correlation with the overall section being measured. A correlation value greater than 0.3 (Sugiyono, 2020) was considered valid. Meanwhile, reliability tests assessed whether respondents' answers were consistent. In this case, a minimum Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.6 was required for the instrument to be considered sufficiently reliable (Firman et al., 2022).

To analyze the data, the researchers employed path analysis using SPSS version 23. This analysis aims to determine the direct effects of LMX and digital competency on OCB (Kapil & Rastogi, 2020). Before conducting the analysis, the data were tested to ensure they met statistical assumptions, including normal distribution, absence of multicollinearity (where independent variables are too strongly related), and no issues with heteroskedasticity (uneven distribution of data) (Götz et al., 2020).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research aims to analyze the impact of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) and digital competence on the Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) of Generation Z employees in the retail industry of Bandung. As an initial step, a descriptive analysis is conducted on the

demographic data of respondents, including gender, age, education level, and length of employment. The results indicate that the majority of respondents are individuals aged between 21 and 25, most of whom are high school graduates, and a significant portion have worked for less than three years (Kapil & Rastogi, 2020).

Table 1. The characteristics of the respondents

NO	Characteristic	Total	%
1	Gender		
	Laki-laki	90	43,9%
	Perempuan	115	56,1%
2	Age		
	15-20 years	40	19,51%
	21-25 years	105	51,27%
	26-30 years	60	29,27%
3	Education level		
	High School	147	71,71 %
	Diploma	6	2,93 %
	Garduate	52	25,36%
4	Experience		
	1-3 years	110	53,66%
	4-6 years	50	24,39%
	> 7 years	45	21,95%

The characteristics of the respondents are summarized as follows. In terms of gender, 90 respondents, or 43.9%, are male, while 115 respondents, making up 56.1%, are female.

Regarding age, 40 individuals fall within the 15-20 years range, accounting for 19.51% of the total, while 105 respondents, or 51.27%, are aged between 21-25 years. Lastly, 60 respondents, representing 29.27%, belong to the 26-30 years age group.

When examining education levels, the majority, 147 respondents, or 71.71%, have completed high school. Six respondents hold a diploma, representing 2.93%, and 52 individuals, or 25.36%, have graduated from university. In terms of work experience, 110 respondents, or 53.66%, have 1 to 3 years of experience, 50, representing 24.39%, have 4 to 6 years, and 45 individuals, or 21.95%, have more than 7 years of experience. This demographic breakdown provides key insights into the profile of the participants involved in the study.

The validity test was conducted on all items in the questionnaire using item-total correlation analysis. The results indicated that each item exhibited a correlation value greater than 0.3, confirming their validity. For reliability assessment, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient was used, revealing that all constructs demonstrated alpha values exceeding 0.6, with Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) at 0.876, Digital Competence at 0.918, and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) at 0.876. These figures suggest a high level of reliability, consistent with previous studies (Ilies, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007; Barboutidis & Stiakakis, 2023; Organ, 1988).

Further analysis of the quality metrics showed that LMX had a validity range of 0.383 to 0.698 with a reliability coefficient of 0.872. Digital Competency demonstrated a validity range of 0.442 to 0.728 and a reliability of 0.914. Finally, Organizational Citizenship Behavior had a validity range of 0.342 to 0.609 and achieved a reliability

score of 0.873. These findings affirm the robustness of the constructs utilized in the study, indicating that they are both valid and reliable for assessing the variables of interest.

Before conducting path analysis, classical assumption tests were performed, including normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests. The normality test yielded a Kolmogorov-Smirnov significance value with an Asymp. Sig (2-tailed) of 0.059. This result, being greater than 0.05, indicates a normal distribution of the data. The multicollinearity test produced a Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) of 1.286 and a Tolerance value of 0.778, demonstrating that Tolerance is greater than 0.1 and VIF is less than 10. These findings confirm the absence of multicollinearity among the variables. The heteroscedasticity test, conducted using the Glejser method, indicated p-values for X1 at 0.093 and for X2 at 0.108 (both $p > 0.05$). Additionally, scatterplot analysis indicated a uniform data spread, suggesting no signs of heteroscedasticity (Götz, Donzallaz, & Jonas, 2020).

The path analysis was then executed to examine the direct effects of independent variables on the dependent variable. The results revealed that Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) has a positive and significant impact on Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), with a path coefficient of 0.538 (significance level $p <$

0.01). Digital competence also positively and significantly affects OCB, represented by a path coefficient of 0.343 ($p < 0.01$). The R-squared value of 0.581 indicates that 58.1% of the variability in OCB can be explained by the variables LMX and digital competence (Kao, Cho, & Kao, 2023; Zhang, Liu, & Wang, 2021; Firmansyah et al., 2022).

The hypothesis testing was conducted based on the significance values derived from the path analysis. The first hypothesis (H1), which posits that Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) positively influences Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), is accepted with a coefficient of 0.538 (significance level $p < 0.01$). The second hypothesis (H2), which asserts that digital competence positively impacts OCB, is also accepted with a coefficient of 0.343 ($p < 0.01$).

These findings reinforce the notion that both the quality of leader-member relationships and employees' digital skills play a significant role in encouraging extra-role work behaviors within the retail work environment (Kapil & Rastogi, 2020; Suswati, 2022; Malik, Yahya, & Aras, 2025). This underscores the importance of fostering strong interpersonal relationships and enhancing digital competencies to promote a culture of proactive and engaged employee behavior.

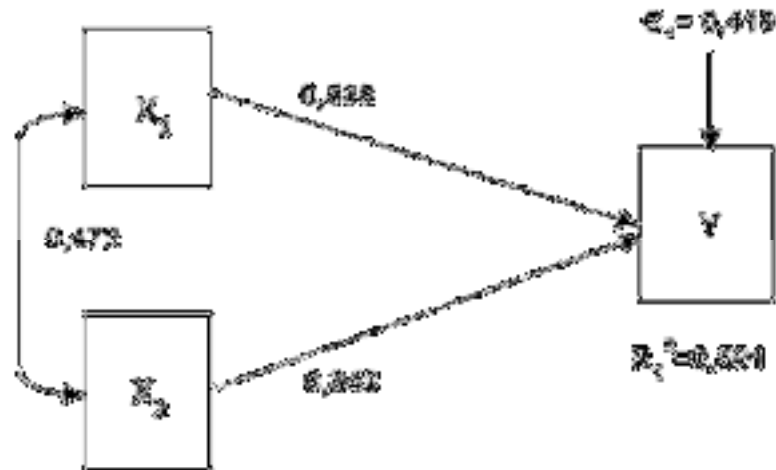


Figure 1

The Influence of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) and Digital Competency on Organizational Citizenship Behavior

VARIABLE	DIRECT INFLUENCE	INDIRECT INFLUENCE		TOTAL
		X1	X2	
X1	0.289		0.087	0.376
X2	0.118	0.087		0.205
TOTAL	0.407	0.087	0.087	0.581

Table 2. The Influence of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) and Digital Competency on Organizational Citizenship Behavior

The diagram illustrates that both paths from Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) and digital competency positively influence Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), as indicated by their coefficients (Barboutidis & Stiakakis, 2023). The direct influence of Leader-Member Exchange (X1) on OCB (Y) is 0.289, which translates to 28.9%. The indirect effect of LMX (X1) through digital competency (X2) is 0.087, or 8.7%. Therefore, the total influence of Leader-Member Exchange (X1) on OCB (Y) is 0.376, equating to 37.6%.

For digital competency (X2), the direct influence on OCB (Y) is 0.118, which is 11.8%. The indirect effect of digital competency (X2) through Leader-Member Exchange (X1) is also 0.087, or 8.7%. Consequently, the total influence of digital competency (X2) on OCB (Y) amounts to 0.205, or 20.5%. Overall, the total influence, considering both direct and indirect effects from Leader-Member Exchange (X1) and digital competency (X2) on OCB (Y), is 0.581, representing 58.1%. This highlights the significant

role both factors play in enhancing extra-role behaviors in the workplace.

The results of this study provide a realistic picture of how voluntary work behavior emerges among young people working in technology-based retail industries. These findings serve as an important foundation for further discussing their impacts and benefits, both theoretically and in practical applications (Tano, Meyer, & Bruch, 2023; Alruthaya, Nguyen, & Lokuge, 2021). This research aims to explore how the quality of leader-member interactions (Leader-Member Exchange/LMX) and digital competencies influence voluntary work behavior (Organizational Citizenship Behavior/OCB) among Generation Z employees in the retail sector in Bandung, Indonesia. The findings indicate that both LMX and digital competencies have a positive and significant impact on OCB. This means that leadership quality and digital skills play crucial roles in encouraging young employees to engage in positive actions beyond their formal duties, especially in technology-rich work environments (Kao, Cho, & Kao, 2023; Barboutidis & Stiakakis, 2023; Ilies, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007).

These findings can be explained as follows: when leaders establish good and trusting relationships with their subordinates, employees feel valued, recognized, and become important members of the team. This sense of belonging motivates them to engage in Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) (Götz, Donzallaz, & Jonas, 2020). On the other hand, employees with high digital competencies are more adaptable to technological changes, more confident in completing tasks, and more willing to contribute extra efforts beyond their regular duties for the organization's advancement (Ciampi, Bontis, & Palacios-Marqués, 2021; Gonzalez-Varona,

Cuadrado-Ballesteros, & García-Sánchez, 2024; Suswati, 2022).

Compared to previous research, these results align with Social Exchange Theory proposed by Blau (1964) and the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory. Earlier studies by Truckenbrodt (2000) and Organ (1988) also affirm that a positive relationship between leaders and team members can enhance positive behaviors in the workplace. Similarly, Barboutidis and Stiakakis (2023) highlight the crucial role of digital competencies in shaping work behaviors in the modern era. However, few studies investigate these three factors together in the context of Generation Z, particularly in the Indonesian retail sector. Therefore, this research contributes new insights, both theoretically and through empirical evidence (Alruthaya, Nguyen, & Lokuge, 2021; Firman et al., 2022).

Theoretically, this research integrates perspectives on leadership and digital competencies by demonstrating that digital skills can complement traditional leadership styles. The findings reinforce the view that Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) remains effective in workplaces populated by digitally savvy employees. Both LMX and digital competencies can work together to foster voluntary behaviors that benefit the organization (Kapil & Rastogi, 2020; Tano, Meyer, & Bruch, 2023; Zhang, Liu, & Wang, 2021). This integration contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of employee behavior in organizations undergoing digital transformation (Malik, Yahya, & Aras, 2025).

From a practical standpoint, the results provide guidance for retail managers and HR practitioners. Organizations should invest in training that enhances not only leadership abilities for managers but also digital skills for employees.

Establishing strong relationships between leaders and staff can be a crucial strategy to boost engagement and commitment among Generation Z employees, who are inclined to value personal connections within a digitally modern work environment (Cha & Borchgrevink, 2024; Daud &

Handayani, 2023). Moreover, improving digital literacy through skill development programs can further encourage voluntary behaviors that support organizational performance (European Commission, 2022; Firman, Saerang, & Nelwan, 2022).

CONCLUSION

This research highlights the significant influence of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) and digital competency on Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB). The findings reveal that a strong, trusting relationship between leaders and their team members fosters an environment where employees feel valued and motivated to engage in behaviors that benefit the organization. Furthermore, employees with high digital competencies are better equipped to adapt to technological changes and demonstrate confidence in their roles. This dual influence of LMX and digital skills combines to promote voluntary behaviors that enhance organizational performance, especially in technology-driven workplaces.

These insights underscore the importance of nurturing both quality leadership and digital training within organizations, particularly for Generation Z employees, who thrive in environments that foster personal connections and modern technological practices. As organizations continue to navigate digital transformations, leveraging these findings can help cultivate a more engaged and productive workforce.

However, this study also has limitations. The cross-sectional design prevents the establishment of causal relationships and fails to

capture behavioral changes over time (Ramadhani & Wardhani, 2024). Additionally, the research focuses on a single industry within one region, meaning the findings may not be applicable to other contexts. Moreover, the data was collected through self-reporting, introducing potential bias as respondents might answer in ways they perceive as socially acceptable (Chaerunnisa & Hasan, 2023).

For future research, it is advisable to adopt a longitudinal approach, involving a broader sample across different industries and regions. Incorporating additional data collection methods, such as interviews or observations, could enhance the study's richness. A mixed-method approach that combines quantitative analysis with qualitative insights may provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors driving voluntary behavior in the workplace. Comparative studies across generations could illuminate how different age groups respond to leadership and digital changes (Santoso et al., 2022). Furthermore, adding moderating or mediating variables such as organizational climate, intrinsic motivation, or digital culture could strengthen and detail the research model (Putra et al., 2024; Purwanto et al., 2021).

This research enriches the discourse on organizational behavior by integrating leadership quality and digital skills in the context of Generation Z employees. The findings are relevant both regionally and generationally,

providing crucial insights for academics and practitioners to better understand and manage employee behavior in the digital work era.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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