



Leader-Member Exchange and Turnover Intention: Investigating Their Causal Relationship from The Perspective of The Banking Sector

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ABSTRACT: *These days, relationship-based approaches of leadership are catching academics' attention. The article primarily investigated the effect of leader-member exchange level on subordinates' intention to leave. Methodologically, the study was explanatory research in design. Besides, cross-sectional survey method was employed in attempting to gather the relevant data at one point in time. Proportional quota samples were selected from eight purposively chosen commercial banks with more than 15 years of operational experience. A total of 399 respondents were participated in the survey. However, as a sum of 371 respondents gave appropriate feedback and their response score included in the final data analysis. Exploratory factor analysis via SPSS software and confirmatory factor analysis via AMOS software was executed. Structural equation modeling via AMOS software was applied to examine the causal link between leader-member exchange variables and turnover intention. The overall analysis result shows that, professional respect dimension has a negative and significant effect on turnover intention of employees. Furthermore, contribution dimension has a negative and significant effect on turnover intention of subordinates. The study result gives a clue that the contribution leaders and followers are reciprocating with each other and professional respect as how far dyad member has established reputation with each other; significantly affects turnover intention of subordinates in the banking sector. There was little to be discovered about the causal relationship of investigated variables, because the study used a cross-sectional survey design. Hence, future studies should be conducted in a way that includes longitudinal research designs and data collection using a variety of techniques.*

KEYWORDS: *Affect, Loyalty, Contribution, Professional Respect, Turnover Intention*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Because the effectiveness of the leadership process is so crucial to an organization's success, leadership is regarded as one of the most important parts of the organizational context (Yukl, 2001). According to existing research, leadership demonstrates an interpersonal skill that is used to persuade subordinates in organizations to work toward the common good (Parris & Peachey, 2013; Plsek & Wilson, 2001). The relationship between the leader and their followers is the most important aspect of leadership. One of the fundamental aspects of leadership is developing relationships. According to Fairholm (2001), one of the fundamental characteristics of leadership that is appropriate for observing their linkage is the development of coherent relationships. Effective leaders inspire their teams and the entire organization to take ownership of tasks, think creatively about solutions to challenges, and make decisions that will benefit both their individual teams and the organization as a whole (Kara et al., 2013).

The leader-focused approach and the relationship-centric approach are the two primary diverging approaches of leadership research, according to Chan and Mak (2012). Previous research has outlined the ties between leaders and followers in unambiguous, reciprocal social exchange terms. A few studies that come to mind include those by Janssen and Van Yperen (2004), Lam et al., (2007), and Wang et al. (2005). The relationship-based approach, according to Wang et al. (2005), focuses more specifically on how one-on-one reciprocal social interactions between the leader and follower develop, maintain, and strengthen the dyadic connection. The leader-member-exchange (LMX) idea is the best explanation for this strategy (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

Leader-member exchange can be described as the type of communication that takes place between a leader and a follower, as well as the extent to which they provide each other with emotional support and trade valuable resources (Wayne & Green, 1993; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). In an organizational setting, it is the dyadic interaction between leaders and followers in which they have a unique type of relationship with each one. Researchers have made an effort to address the request for a theoretical integration of leadership characteristics and leader-member exchange studies, as highlighted by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) and Wang et al., (2005). When a worker identifies a harmonious relationship with a supervisor, the worker is more likely to want to repay the favor by lowering their desire to leave the company (Kim & Barak, 2015).

II. JUSTIFICATION

The issue of turnover is becoming a headache for many business organizations. Turnover intention is the organizational member's subjective decision to leave their existing position, which differs dramatically from actual turnover behavior (Liao et al., 2017). In other ways, turnover intention can be defined as the intentional willfulness to leave an organization (Tett & Meyer, 1993). It can be characterized as a worker's level of enthusiasm or initiation to leave a specific organization.

High leader-member exchange personnel have the advantage of receiving far more help from their leaders because they typically have a trust-based connection with their superiors (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Low leader-member exchange personnel, on the other hand, might not have close relationships with their own managers. Employees with low-quality leader-member interaction may not receive resource and information assistance from their leaders, in contrast to those with high-quality leader-member exchange. High-quality leader-member exchange individuals belong to in-group members and as a result, they receive preferential treatment such as integration into the leader's personal network (Sparrow & Liden, 2005). Additionally, subordinates who engage in high-quality leader-member exchanges are more likely to be pretty comfortable with their work and are less likely to consider leaving (Han & Jekel, 2011).

The detrimental association between leader-member interchange and turnover intention has been examined in a number of research studies. For instance, the study of Bauer et al (2006) discovered that leader-member exchange is negatively connected to both the intentions of new executives to leave and the actual turnover rate. Additionally, the study of Brunetto et al., (2010) discovered a favorable association between the supervisor-subordinate relationship and nurses' affective commitment, which would indicate low intentions of turnover. Moreover, the study conducted by Le Blanc et al., (1993) found out a negative correlation between LMX and one's likelihood to quit their employment. However, little is done on the causal relationship between leader-member exchange and turnover intention of subordinates in the banking industry. According to Karakas and Sarigollu (2013), it is more appropriate to conduct studies by focusing on quality of leader-follower relationships in customer-oriented industries where interpersonal sensitivity is regarded as more critical. As a result, it seems justifiable to predict the negative relationship between leader-member exchange and subordinates turnover intentions in case of commercial banks where interpersonal relationship is a way for business fortune.

III. THEORY AND HYPOTHESIS

The core tenet of LMX theory contends that a relationship between a leader and follower develops mutual trust, respect, influence, and responsibility (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Followers appreciate task challenges that align with their work values in high-quality leader-member interactions, and having the chance to do so enables followers to contribute to the significance of work in the workplace (Chan & Mak, 2012). Regarding this, Han and Jekel's (2011) argument demonstrates that high quality leader-member exchange subordinates are more likely to be satisfied with their positions and less likely to consider leaving. Workers may have negative attitudes towards an organization when they perceive imbalanced exchanges with supervisors and the organization (Wayne et al., 1997). When a worker perceives a balanced connection with a supervisor, they are more likely to want to repay a favor to the organization by lowering their desire to leave (Kim & Barak, 2015). Such conduct is associated with a need to balance social exchange, as stated by Kim and Barak (2015) in their explanation. Members of high leader-member interaction have been proven to be less likely to leave the organization as a result of their leader and them being in harmonious relationships (Bauer et al., 2006).

Empirical studies have already shown how crucial leader-member exchange is to worker outcomes (Wayne et al., 1997). There is a significant but negative association between leader-member exchange and turnover intentions, according to the results of a recent meta-analysis (Dulebohn et al., 2012). According to Liden and Masyln's (1998) study, there is a negative causal relationship between leader-member interchange and turnover intentions. Moreover, research by Kim and Barak (2015) demonstrates that the intention to leave the company is negatively impacted by leader-member interchange. In accordance with the aforementioned possibilities, the researcher hypothesized that;

Hypothesis 1: Affect dimension of leader-member exchange is negatively related to turnover intention.
Hypothesis 2: Loyalty dimension of leader-member exchange is negatively related to turnover intention.
Hypothesis 3: Contribution dimension of leader-member exchange is negatively related to turnover intention.
Hypothesis 4: Professional respect dimension of leader-member exchange is negatively related to turnover intention.

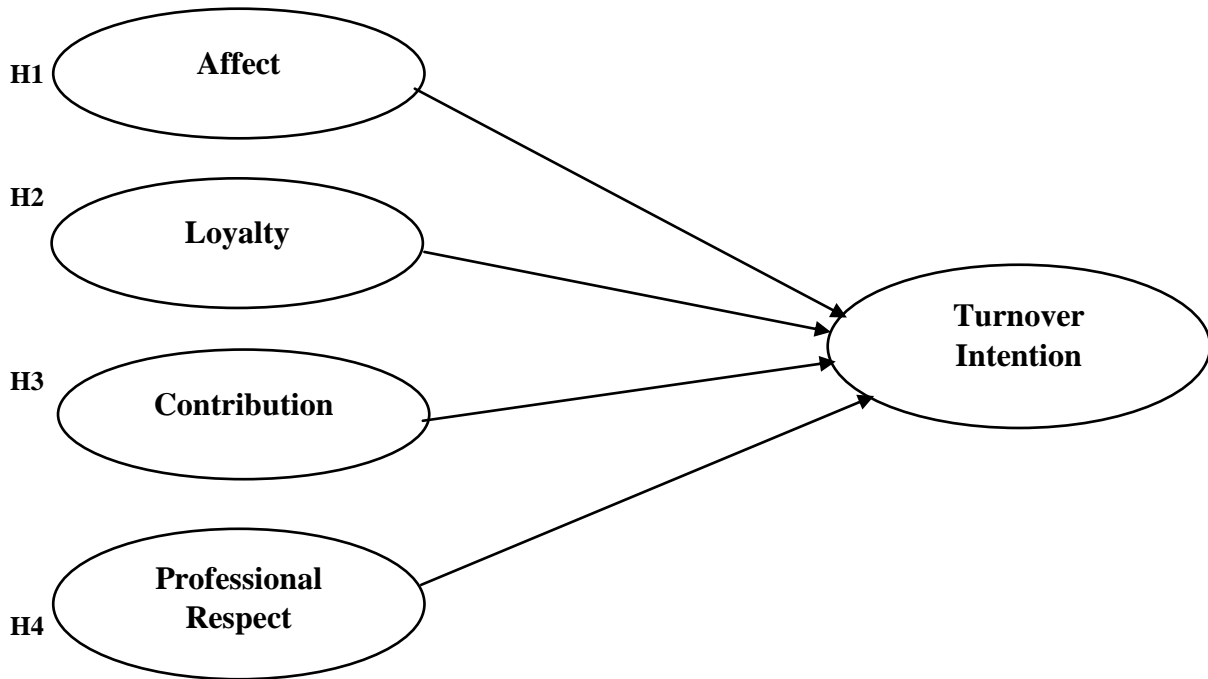


Figure-1: Hypothesized Research Model

Source: Own development, 2023

IV. METHOD

Procedure

The study used a cross-sectional survey method with an explanatory research design. Through direct interaction with workers at their actual workplaces, the data collection activity was carried out. The branch managers at the time assisted in contacting randomly chosen responders. Proportional number of respondents were chosen from each branch of the chosen banks. Their willingness was initially confirmed, and questionnaires were handed to them in accordance. In such a manner, the data collection process was handled.

Sample

Proportional quota samples were selected from eight purposively chosen commercial banks with more than 15 years of operational experience. The survey included a sample of 399 respondents drawn from chosen commercial banks in Ethiopia. The final data analysis included 371 useable responses, which is an overall rate of 93% from all participants. The analysis's findings indicate that 266 respondents (71.7%) are males, while 105 respondents (28.3%) are females. The majority of respondents are from Commercial bank of Ethiopia (39.1%) followed by Awash Bank (15.4%), Bank of Abyssinia (10.8%), Dashen bank (9.2%), Nib International Bank (9.2%), Wegagen Bank (6.5%), Hibret Bank (6.2%) and Lion International Bank (3.8%).

Measures

Measurement items are taken from previous researchers who've tested it empirically.

Leader-Member Exchange Variables: Subordinates perception of the leader-member exchange relationship was examined by the LMX scale of subordinate's perspective from the study of Greguras and Ford (2006). Twelve elements make up the measuring scale, which assesses four aspects of leader-member exchange: Affect, Loyalty, Contribution and Professional Respect dimensions of LMX. Using a 5-point Likert scale, all item responses were evaluated.

Turnover Intention: The scale from Bal and Kooij (2011), which consists of five items focused at thinking about quitting the organization, was used to gauge turnover intention. A 5-point Likert scale was used to gauge the intention of followers to leave.

V. ANALYSIS

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis using the Maximum Likelihood Extraction and Promax Rotation approach was carried out (Gaskin, 2017). The outcome of the KMO and Bartlett's Test demonstrates that the data was valuable for factor analysis. KMO measure of sample adequacy was .786, suggesting that the data were adequate and suited for factor analysis (Yong & Pearce, 2013). KMOs larger than 0.5 are typically acceptable (Kaiser, 1974). The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, which had a p-value of 0.001 and an approximate Chi-Square value (df=136) of 5054.575, was also judged to be very significant. Factors having a rotational eigenvalue greater than one (1) were kept, as indicated by Zhang et al., (2000). As a result, five (5) factors with eigenvalues greater than one were generated, which is precisely the same as the number of the preset constructs of leader-member exchange and turnover intention.

	Pattern Matrix ^a				
	Turnover Intention	Professional Respect	Affect	Loyalty	Contribution
TI1-I am actively looking for a job outside my organization	.868				
TI3-I am seriously thinking about quitting my job	.862				
TI4-I often think about quitting my job at my organization	.860				
TI2-As soon as I can find a better job, I will leave my organization	.835				
TI5-I think I will not be working at my organization five years from now	.814				
LMX_PRD2-I respect my supervisor's knowledge of and competence on the job		.945			
LMX_PRD3-I admire my supervisor's professional skills		.885			
LMX_PRD1-I am impressed with my supervisor's knowledge of his/her job		.883			
LMX_AD2-My supervisor is the kind of person one would like to have as a friend			.928		
LMX_AD1-I like my supervisor very much as a person			.913		
LMX_AD3-My supervisor is a lot of fun to work with			.859		
LMX_LD2-My supervisor would come to my defense if I were 'attacked' by others				.924	
LMX_LD3-My supervisor would defend me to others in the organization if I made an honest mistake				.919	
LMX_LD1-My supervisor defends my work actions to a superior, even without complete knowledge of the issue in question				.848	
LMX_CD3-I do not mind working my hardest for my supervisor					.910
LMX_CD2-I am willing to apply extra efforts, beyond those normally required, to meet my supervisor's work goals					.901
LMX_CD1-I do work for my supervisor that goes beyond what is specified in my job description					.878

Extraction Method: **Maximum Likelihood**.
 Rotation Method: **Promax with Kaiser Normalization**.^a
a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Table-1: Exploratory Factor Analysis

Source: SPSS Output, 2023

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

To check the study variables' construct distinctiveness, confirmatory factor analyses were carried out. In order to determine the model's goodness-of-fit, a number of model-fit criteria recommended by Hair et al., (2010) were used. As a result, it was determined that the measurement model for the specified scales met the model-fit standards and provided a good match to the data. The analysis result shows fit indices such as $\chi^2=220.119$, degrees of freedom=109, CMIN/DF or Normed $\chi^2=2.019$, CFI=0.978, SRMR=.0283 indicating a very good model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Gaskin & Lim, 2016) and an error-index RMSEA = .052 with PCLOSE=.329 providing additional support for an excellent model fit (Hair et al., 2010).

As shown in Table- 2, the values of the average variance extracted (AVE) were discovered to be more than 0.50, which is a sign of convergent validity (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Maximum shared variance (MSV) and average shared variance (ASV) were used to evaluate discriminant validity in cases where all values of AVE were greater than those of MSV & ASV showing the presence of discriminant validity (see Table-2).

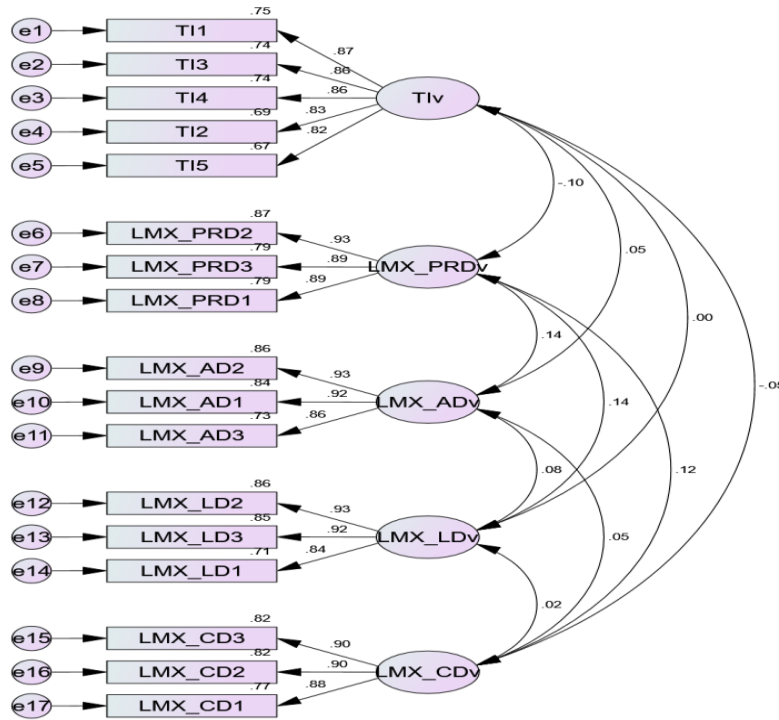


Figure-2: CFA Result

Source: AMOS Output, 2023

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	Tiv	LMX_PRDv	LMX_ADv	LMX_LDv	LMX_CDv
Tiv	0.927	0.719	0.010	0.929	0.848				
LMX_PRDv	0.931	0.817	0.020	0.935	-0.100†	0.904			
LMX_ADv	0.928	0.811	0.018	0.934	0.046	0.136*	0.900		
LMX_LDv	0.925	0.805	0.020	0.934	0.004	0.143*	0.083	0.897	
LMX_CDv	0.924	0.803	0.016	0.925	-0.047	0.125*	0.048	0.019	0.896

Note=Tiv=Turnover Intention Variable, LMX_ADv=Leader-Member Exchange-Affect Dimension Variable, LMX_LDv=Leader-Member Exchange-Loyalty Dimension Variable, LMX_PRDv=Leader-Member Exchange-Professional Respect Dimension Variable, LMX_CDv=Leader-Member Exchange-Contribution Dimension Variable
 Significance of Correlations: † $p < 0.100$, * $p < 0.050$, ** $p < 0.010$, *** $p < 0.001$
 Thresholds From: Hu & Bentler (1999)

Table-2: Model Validity Measures

Source: AMOS output, 2023

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The analysis was conducted using structural equation modeling via AMOS software to investigate the structural linkage between leader-member exchange variables and turnover intention. Since the data showed little non-normality characteristics, bootstrap maximum likelihood (bootstrap-ML) in AMOS was used in the path analysis process to generate plausible results. Although bootstrapping uses resampling techniques to get statistical conclusions, it is appropriate in this study since it does not require that the data be normally distributed (Frost, 2020). The structural model's goodness of fit was examined before interpreting the analysis's

findings. The results of each fit indicators for the model shows: $\chi^2 = 182.151$, $DF = 110$ and $CMIN/DF = 1.656$; $CFI = .986$, $SRMR = .030$ and $RMSEA = .042$ with $PCLOSE = .885$ which implies the overall structural model is an excellent fit to the data (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Gaskin & Lim, 2016). Furthermore, Goodness of fit index (GFI) which is .945, Normed-fit index (NFI) value of .965 and Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) values which is .982, provides more evidence that the structural model has an excellent goodness of fit (Hair et al., 2010).

Hypothesis	Parameter	Estimate	B.S. S.E.	Bootstrap C.I.		P-Value	Decision
				Lower	Upper		
H1	TIV<-LMX_ADv	.047	.039	-.034	.123	.224	Not Supported
H2	TIV<-LMX_LDv	.023	.041	-.066	.096	.585	Not Supported
H3	TIV<-LMX_CDv	-.139	.058	-.169	-.008	.048*	Supported
H4	TIV<- LMX_PRDv	-.124	.067	-.268	-.006	.039*	Supported

Note:
 > *Coefficient is significant at p-value of .05
 > **R²**-value for endogenous variable: Turnover Intention= 20%

Table-3: Path Analysis on Effects of Leader-Member Exchange variables on Turnover Intention

Source: AMOS output, 2023

The overall analysis result shows that affect and loyalty dimensions of leader-member exchange doesn't have a significant effect on turnover intention of subordinates. Due to this reason, hypothesis 1 & 2 are not supported. Nonetheless, professional respect dimension has a negative and significant effect on turnover intention of employees with unstandardized regression weight (B) of -.124, bootstrap standard error of .067 and bootstrap confidence interval of [-.268, -.006], which comes out to be significant at p-value of <.05 (p = .039*). Furthermore, contribution dimension has a negative and significant effect on turnover intention of subordinates with unstandardized regression weight (B) of -.139, bootstrap standard error of .058 and bootstrap confidence interval of [-.169, -.008], which is found to be significant at p-value of <.05 (p = .048*). As a result, hypothesis 3 & 4 are supported.

The result is consistent with Kim and Barak's (2015) research which shows that leader-member exchange has a detrimental effect on the intention to leave the company. The study of Han and Jekel (2011) shows that, leader-member exchange was significantly and negatively associated with lower turnover intentions. Moreover, the study of Saeed et al. (2014) also found out that leader membership exchange has a direct negative and significant influence on turnover intention. Turnover intention was negatively influenced by leader-member exchange (Han et al., 2014; Kim & Yi, 2019).

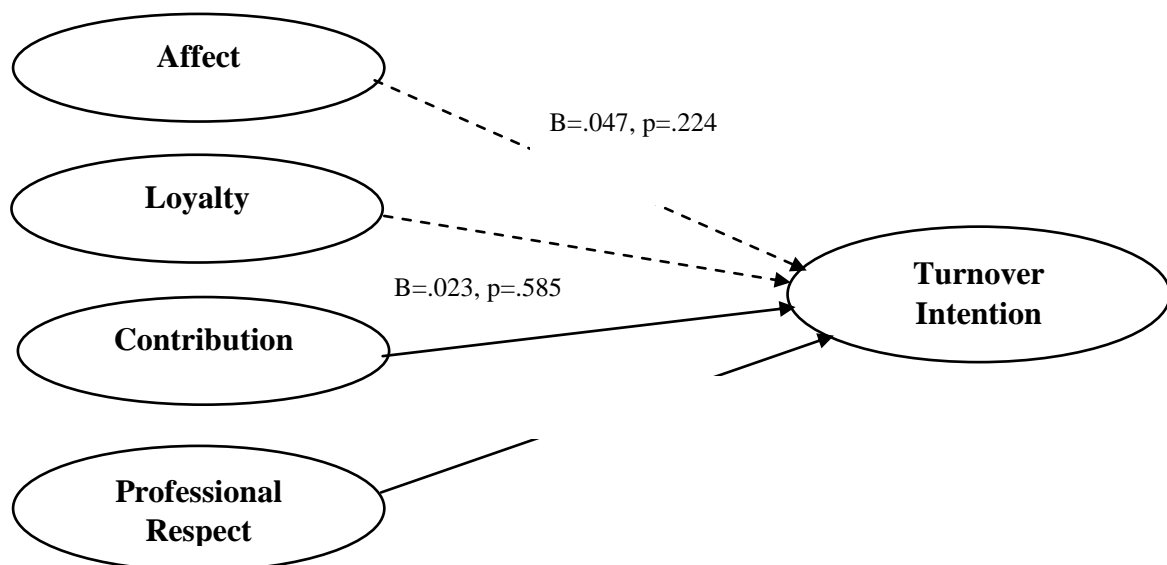


Figure-3: Path analysis results

Source: Own development, 2023

Moreover, the squared multiple correlations result (R^2 -value) was also examined. It is estimated that the predictor of turnover intention i.e., leader-member exchange variables explain 20 percent of its variance which is significant at p-value of $<.05$ ($p = .013^*$). To put it another way, the error variance of turnover intention is roughly 80%, which accounts for other variables that are not taken into account during the prediction procedure. Even though there is no commonly agreed-upon cut-off point, it is generally accepted that the higher the value of the squared multiple correlations, the greater the explanatory power of the regression model, and hence, the better the prediction of the endogenous variables will be (Gaskin, 2017).

VII. CONCLUSION AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The study result gives a clue that the contribution leaders and followers are reciprocating with each other and professional respect as how far dyad member has established reputation with each other; significantly affects turnover intention of subordinates in the banking sector. The study advances the leader-member exchange theory by demonstrating the importance of the exchange between leaders and followers in lowering the likelihood of staff turnover. The investigation of effect of leader-member exchange on turnover intention level of subordinates may broaden the understanding of leadership research in the context of the banking sector. Because of the study's use of a cross-sectional survey methodology, only less can be learned about causality. As a result, future studies must be carried out in a manner that involves data collection using several approaches and longitudinal research designs.

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