

# THE COWORKER'S IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT, LMX AND INTERPERSONAL DEVIANCE: THE MODERATING EFFECT OF A FELLOW EMPLOYEE'S LMX

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## ABSTRACT

*This study investigated the interrelationship that holds between co-workers' impression management, LMX and their interpersonal deviance as observed by fellow employees and the moderating effect fellow employee's LMX have on the relationship between co-workers' LMX and their interpersonal deviance towards fellow employees. Data were collected using a survey research design. Respondents included 202 employees who work in the service industry in Surabaya, Indonesia. Hypotheses were tested using SEM and multi-group analysis. This study found that coworkers' impression management had a positive impact on their LMX and the relationship between coworkers' LMX and their interpersonal deviance depended on their fellow employees' LMX. This study focused on the relation among employees and provided a model that relate coworkers' behaviors-impression management and interpersonal deviance, as antecedents and consequences of their LMX, with how the similarity or difference of fellow employees' LMX contributes to the coworkers' involvement in deviant behavior, as seen by fellow employees and in the context of a country with high power distance which is usually more receptive to impression management behavior.*

**Keywords:** Impression Management, LMX, Interpersonal Deviance.

## INTRODUCTION

The organization as a workplace comprised of individual employees who work together to achieve certain goals. In the regular activities of the organization, individual employees must interact and complete the task together, either directly or indirectly, with their coworkers. Support from coworkers is important to create positive working conditions. However, in reality, coworkers' behaviors can worsen the working environment and result in some negative impacts for individual employees (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008). Employees' perception towards coworkers' behavior can be influenced by employment situations. One of these situations is the quality of the relationship between superior and subordinates or Leader-Member Exchange (LMX).

The LMX theory explains how superiors use their power to develop different exchange relationships with their subordinates (Yukl, 1989). According to this theory, leaders will divide their subordinates as in-group (employees who have high quality LMX) and out-group (employees with low quality LMX). However, one can be a member of the in-group because he/she uses impression management behavior towards his/her supervisor (Engle & Lord, 1997). Employees with low LMX may use influential tactics on their supervisors for securing valuable

resources. This is because they in comparison with employees of high LMX have less access to those resources, such as support from supervisor and careers (Epitropaki & Martin, 2013). Individuals may expect that their impression management tactics can make their supervisor like them and such attitude determines the quality of their LMX (Engle & Lord, 1997).

Maslyn & Uhl-Bien (2005) found that out-group members perceive the success of their coworkers' (i.e., the in-group members) impression management behavior more than they perceive their own. They perceive that their coworkers become in-group members because they use impression management behavior. This finding is interesting because employees do not perceive their own impression management behavior but that of their coworkers and these behaviors make them succeed. However, most of the previous studies that investigated the relationship between impression management and LMX focused more on the assessment of the relationship between individual employees and their superior. Those studies requested employees to report their own impression management as well as their LMX (Colella & Varma, 2001; Lian, Ferris & Brown, 2012), asked employees to assess their own impression management, while the quality of LMX was reported by their supervisor (Deluga & Perry, 1994; Carlson, Carlson & Ferguson, 2011); or requested employees to measure their own LMX but impression management was measured by the supervisor's rating (Weng & Chang, 2015). Koopman, Matta, Scott & Conlon (2015) examined the relationship between ingratiation and LMX, but they focused on how supervisors could maintain their high quality relationship with in-group members. Even though coworkers also have an important role in the relationship between supervisor-fellow employees and how individuals perceive their marketplace (Omilion-Hodges & Baker, 2013), there were very few research studies of LMX which focused on the relationship between fellow employees and their coworkers (Omilion-Hodges & Baker, 2013) or between LMX and impression management.

The previous studies focused more on investigating the positive consequences of being in-group members (Naseer, Raja, Syed, Donia & Darr, 2016). For example, in-group members will engage more in safety behavior (Zhou & Jiang, 2015), Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) (Sun, Chow, Chiu & Pan, 2013) and creativity (Olsson, Hemlin & Pousette, 2012). These results are in line with the social exchange theory, i.e., if one party receives benefits from another party, he/she must reciprocate it with good things (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). According to Zhou & Jiang (2015), in-group members who have obtained good things from their supervisors such as support, respect and trust, will feel obliged to respond with positive behavior. However, Lian et al. (2012) found that an employee with high LMX, who experienced abusive supervision, would be more engaged in interpersonal deviance. On the other hand Naseer et al. (2016) found that in-group members, who have a despotic leader, will engage less in Organizational Citizenship Behavior-Organization (OCBO), Organizational Citizenship Behavior-Individual (OCBI) and creativity. In addition, Naseer et al. (2016) also found that interactions between politics and LMX and a despotic leader result in negative work behavior, precisely for employees with high LMX. Moreover, supervisors who show their subordinates lack of trust and respect (Shu & Lazatkhan, 2017) and perform arbitrary behavior on a group of subordinates, such as abusive behavior (Lian et al., 2012; Xu, Loi & Lam, 2015) can be a model of negative behavior for a group of subordinates. One form of negative behavior among individual employees has been investigated in terms of interpersonal deviance (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). Therefore, it is possible that in-group members may engage in deviant behavior towards other people such as their coworkers. Despite this reality, there is a lack of studies that investigate the negative behavior of in-group members (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008).

Summarizing the discussion, we find some important issues: first, whether employees with high-quality LMX will act negatively to their counterparts. Second, whether coworkers who are perceived to be successful in their impression management-those who have become in-group members-will try to maintain and strengthen the quality of their relationship with their supervisor by engaging in deviant behavior and third, whether the quality of fellow employees' LMX is important to differentiate the effect of coworkers' LMX on their deviant behavior against fellow employees. Although these issues are interesting, there have been very few studies that investigated the issue of coworkers' behavior, of those who became in-group members as a result of their impression management behavior-especially, as it are seen through the eyes of their fellow employees.

In this current study, we focused on the relationship among employees-i.e., what fellow employees perceive about their coworkers' behavior as well as their coworkers' LMX quality with their supervisor. Specifically, we looked into coworkers' impression management and their deviant behavior toward fellow employees as an antecedent and consequence of LMX. We argue that individuals who use impression management and become in-group members will try to maintain their position. It is possible that they will engage in deviant behavior directed to other employees, to make others look bad. Moreover, we argue that individuals who are in a high quality relationship position will engage in deviant behavior targeting individuals who are in a low quality relationship with the same superior. Contrary to Koopman et al. (2015) who focused on how supervisors maintain quality LMX, we propose that the high quality LMX condition of individual employees which was built by impression management tactics against their supervisor may have an impact on how the employees maintain the quality of their relationship. In contrast to previous studies, we asked the respondents to report their coworkers' impression management behavior, LMX and interpersonal deviance against them.

This current study investigated the effect of coworkers' impression management behavior, which is directed to the supervisor, on their LMX, impact of coworkers' LMX on their interpersonal deviance, which is directed to fellow employees and the moderating effect of fellow employees' LMX on the relationship between coworkers' LMX and their interpersonal deviance. Furthermore, we investigated whether coworkers with high quality LMX will engage in deviant behavior towards fellow employees with the same or different LMX quality. Respondents of this study were employees who work in a variety of service industries in Surabaya. Surabaya is one of the greatest trading cities in Indonesia. Indonesia is a country where society has a high cultural value of power distance (Hofstede, 2007). Impression management is considered as something normative within a specific cultural context such as in high power distance cultures (Zaidman & Drory, 2001). Specifically, the distinction of in-group and out-group and perception of organizational politics are more prevalent in countries with high power distance (Naseer et al., 2016). However, there were very few studies that discussed impression management behavior in such cultural situations (Zaidman & Drory, 2001; Xin, 2004; Ward & Ravlin, 2017).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Coworker's Impression Management Directed to the Supervisor and LMX Quality**

Impressions management is defined as "the process by which individuals influences the impressions of others towards them" Rosenfeld, Giacalone & Riordan (1995); Kacmar, Carlson & Bratton (2004), by manipulating the information they impress (Kacmar et al., 2004).

Impression management behavior arises when people want to create and maintain a specific identity (Zaidman & Drory, 2001), to change people's perceptions of them and to construct the appropriate behavior for a particular situation (Ward & Ravlin, 2017). To attain these objectives, individuals will demonstrate verbal and non-verbal behavior, so that they will be seen as more pleasant (Bozeman & Kacmar, 1997). As mentioned by Dorry & Zaidman (2007), individuals tend to use impression management behavior when they interact with other people who have higher status and power and valuable resources. Thus, individuals use impression management behavior by manipulating their identity in order to look nice to target resources. Moreover, impression management behavior can be done because of the influence of personal and situational factors (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Related to the situational factors, when a person has a high dependence on another party for a valuable resource or limitations on the resources he/she wants, he/she will engage in impression management tactics (Zaidman & Drory, 2001). This is consistent with the power-dependence theory of Emerson (1972); Tepper et al. (2009), that the dependence of a person is inversely proportional to his/her power. In other words, the lower the person's power, the more dependent he/she is on the other party who has higher power. Impression management behavior is carried out by members of the organization and is directed to all those who interact with them in their daily work activities (Hewlin, 2009). According to the power-dependence theory, subordinates potentially engage in impression management behavior to obtain valuable resources from their supervisors. Valuable resources could be a good relationship with supervisors or opportunity to get interesting assignments as well as important roles. Indeed, impression management tactics can be used to attain successful careers (Diekmann, Blickle, Hafner & Peters, 2015). Weng & Chang (2015) also mentioned that in-group members, rather than out-group, enjoy the benefit of career development opportunities. Those valuable resources can be accessed if employees have a good relationship quality or high-quality LMX with their supervisors.

Impression management tactics can include self-focused tactics of self-promotion and other-focused tactics, other-enhancement, opinion conformity and favor rendering (Kacmar et al., 2004). Self-focused tactics provide benefits to increase others' opinion of a perpetrator's competence. While other-focused tactics can increase the affection and attractiveness of the perpetrator (Kacmar et al., 2004; Weng & Chang, 2015). Self-promotion consists of some behaviors: self-description-perpetrators describe themselves as being attractive, self-presentation-perpetrators give a statement about their attractiveness and self-enhancing-perpetrators communicate their qualities (Kacmar et al., 2004). Individuals perform other enhancement by flattering others and showing an interest in the target's life. Individual make an opinion-conformity by giving approval to the target's opinion. While favor rendering is the behavior of individuals who offer helps or performs un-requested tasks for the target (Kacmar et al., 2004).

As noted by Zaidman & Drory (2001), it is a natural thing if a subordinate tries to create a positive impression in front of his/her supervisors. This is because he/she wants to maximize the rewards he/she may receive Schlenker (1980); Zaidman & Drory (2001). One of the benefits is that of obtaining a high-quality relationship with his/her supervisors. Kacmar et al. (2004) state that one of the goals of using impression management behavior is related to LMX. In the concept of LMX, leaders tend to select a group of subordinates and they will have a high-quality relationship with those subordinates. Furthermore, subordinates may focus impression management behavior to their supervisor as a way of avoiding punishment and abusive

supervision (Tepper, Duffy, Hoobler & Ensley, 2004). As a result, through high quality LMX with their supervisors, they receive more positive treatment from them.

Social exchange theory is the basis for explaining LMX. LMX describes the relationship between superiors and subordinates and focuses on the exchange relations between the two sides (Dulebohn, Wu & Liao, 2017). According to the social exchange theory, reciprocity is one of the rules in exchange, that is, if one party gets benefits from others, he/she will respond with positive behaviors (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). In LMX, supervisors may choose in-group members based on their liking, as they consider their subordinates as pleasant and competent individuals (Dulebohn, Wu & Liao, 2017). Nevertheless, some studies suggest that the superior can also choose subordinates based on their impression management behavior (Othman, Foo & Ng, 2010). Therefore, employees who want to become in-group members can use this opportunity, being liked by supervisor as people who are competent and pleasant, by using impression management. In this case, there was bias towards appraisal performance done by the supervisor (Othman et al., 2010). Mayer, Keller, Leslie & Hanges (2008) noted that the process of relationship-forming between subordinates and superiors will be observed by other subordinates. Maslyn & Uhl-Bien (2005) also found that employees perceive coworkers' ingratiation as a way to become in-group members.

### **The Effect of Coworker's LMX Quality on Interpersonal Deviance towards Fellow Employees**

Chiaburu & Harrison (2008) suggested that the lateral relations between individual employees and coworkers may drive a conflict where one party can engage in behaviors that deviate from the norm or engage in deviant behavior that is directed to other people in the same level of relationship. According to Bennett & Robinson (2000), deviant behavior that is directed to another person, for example coworkers, is termed as interpersonal deviance. Some forms of interpersonal deviance are ridicule and treating other employees with negative manners (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). Moreover, individual employees will engage in deviant behavior towards a target that is considered as having an inferior status or has the same status as theirs (Aquino, Tripp & Bies, 2001). However, according to the social learning theory, individuals will engage in interpersonal deviance because they take their supervisor's behaviors as model (Aquino, Douglas & Martinko, 2004) and learn from their environment about what behaviors are acceptable (Aquino & Douglas, 2003). Likewise, Naseer et al. (2016) noted that in-group members will try to have the same behavioral identity with their superiors. In addition, according to the social identity theory, in-group members will attempt to conform their identity to their superior including their behaviors (Naseer et al., 2016). Meanwhile out-group members may be perceived by their superior as undesirable persons (Naseer et al., 2016). It is possible that out-group members will perceive in-group members as people who behave as unpleasantly as their supervisor. In the context of LMX, the supervisor will use different behaviors for in-group and out-group members. Individual who have low quality relationship with their supervisor, may experience mistreatment from their supervisor (Penhaligon, Louis & Restubog, 2009). As a result in-group members may become disrespectful and act negatively towards out-group members.

People with high hierarchical status are considered to have valuable resources desired by others, such as work conditions, authority, autonomy and recognition (Aguino & Douglas, 2003). In the context of high power distance culture, people will respect individuals with high status and privileges may indicate a person's high status (Atwater, Wang, Smither & Fleenor, 2009). As in

LMX's concept, the leader provides some privileges to in-group members such as trust and support. Based on the results of the present study, we argue that in some cultural context such as in a high power distance culture, the close relationship individuals have with their superior may indicate a high status for them. In addition, Aquino, Grover, Bradfield & Allen (1999) found that the hierarchy status has an effect on the perception of the target of unpleasant behavior. It is possible that fellow employees may perceive that their coworkers with high-quality LMX may engage in deviant behavior toward them. Moreover, individuals who engage in impression management may continue to do this tactic over time to maintain their relationship with the target and receive benefit from him/her (Carlson et al., 2011). Therefore we argue that a fellow employee may perceive that his/her coworkers, who are in-group members due to their impression tactics, will try to maintain that position. Thus, for that reason, a fellow employee may perceive that those coworkers engage in negative behavior against him/her so that he/she may look bad in the eyes of their superiors.

According to Aquino & Douglas (2003), individuals who are in a higher hierarchical status will engage less in antisocial behavior than those who are in low hierarchical status. It can be due to the fact that individuals who are in lower hierarchical status engage in antisocial behavior as an effort to maintain respect from others (Aquino & Douglas, 2003). However, in the context of LMX, employees may feel dislike for their counterparts who have a different LMX quality (Tse, Lam, Lawrence & Xu, 2013). Thus, we argue that in-group members, who may engage in impression behavior, also will engage in negative behavior toward others in order to obtain respect. It is possible that others may see impression management actors, although they have high quality LMX with supervisor, as incompetent persons.

### **The Fellow Employee's LMX as a Moderator of the Relationship between Coworker's LMX and His/Hers Interpersonal Deviance**

As noted by Omilion-Hodges & Baker (2013), the behavior of individuals toward their peers depends on the LMX quality of individual employees and their coworkers. We argue that fellow employees may perceive their coworkers, who are in-group members, as engaging in deviant behavior toward them if the fellow employees are out-group members. As Aquino et al. (2001) noted that employees with higher status have more power, it can be inferred that individuals with higher status can have more negative impact on the welfare of individuals with lower status positions. Consistent with Aquino et al. (2001); Tse et al. (2013) argued that in-group members may try to remove out-group members from the social networks. Specifically, coworkers will perform unpleasant behavior to fellow employees in an attempt to expel them from the working group (Hershcovis et al., 2007). However, if fellow employees and coworkers have the same LMX (whether high or low), they will maintain a good relationship between them (Omilion-Hodges & Baker, 2013).

In this study, we argue that employees may perceive their coworkers becoming in-group members because of their impression management behavior. In addition, coworkers who are in a higher position-those who have high-quality of LMX with their superiors-may attempt to make other employees look bad in the eyes of their superiors. Tepper et al. (2004) found that subordinates who do not use impression management behavior will get negative treatment from their superiors. On the other hand their coworkers who engage in impression management do not experience the negative behavior they receive from their supervisors. It is possible that in order to maintain their high quality relationship, coworkers may try to impress and show that they are better than others-they may engage in interpersonal deviance targeted to fellow employees. This

behavior may be directed to employees with lower status or the out-group members. Meanwhile employees who are in the same high quality position will perceive the coworker's deviant behavior less.

## HYPOTHESES

- H<sub>1</sub>: Coworker's impression management is positively related to his/her LMX.*
- H<sub>2</sub>: Coworker's LMX is positively related to his/her interpersonal deviance.*
- H<sub>3</sub>: A Fellow employee's LMX has an effect on the relationship between a coworker's LMX and his/her interpersonal deviance targeted to a fellow employee. When fellow employee's LMX is high, the relationship between a coworker's LMX and his/her interpersonal deviance will be negative and positive when the fellow employee's LMX is low.*

## METHODOLOGY

### Sample and Procedure

The population of this study consisted of the non-managerial employees working in various service industries in Surabaya, Indonesia. The sample of this study was determined based on convenience sampling. Employees who work in the service industry have a high tendency to meet and communicate directly with their customer. This interaction plays an important role in the perception of customers regarding the service quality. It is possible that the quality of their work will be affected by their work situation, such as their relationship with coworkers and supervisor. We distributed questionnaires to 225 respondents. There were 202 questionnaires (90% response rate) which can be used for hypothesis analysis. The respondent characteristics were as follows: mostly women, i.e., as many as 115 of the sample (56.9%), aged less than 35 years (148 people, i.e., 72.8%), unmarried (117 people, i.e., 57.9%), finished university studies (S1) (117 people, i.e., 57.9%) and with tenure of less than 5 years (138 people, i.e., 68.3%).

### Measures

Impression management variable was measured using a short version-10 indicators of Wayne & Ferris (1990; on Yun, Takeuchi & Liu, 2007). The Employee's LMX and the coworker's LMX were measured by the seven indicators of Scandura & Graen (1984; on Wayne, Shore & Liden, 1997). The co-worker's interpersonal deviance was measured using the 7 indicators of Bennett & Robinson (2000). Respondents were asked to respond using a seven-point scale ranging from "never" (1) to "every day" (7) to indicate the frequency with which coworkers perform deviant behaviors on them.

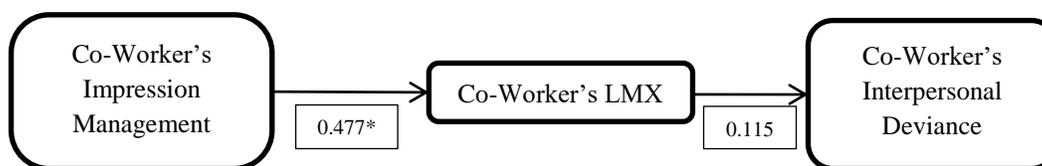
We ask each respondent to perceive the behaviors of one of his/her coworker (impression management and interpersonal deviance), as well as the quality of the relationship between him/herself and his/her coworker with the same supervisor. Respondents used a 5-point scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree to report their level of agreement to a series of statements about their own LMX, a coworker's LMX, a coworker's impression management targeted to their same supervisor and a coworker's interpersonal deviance targeted to them. Hypothesis testing is done by using path analysis and for analyzing moderating hypothesis, we used multi-group analysis.

## RESULTS

Table 1 below shows means, standard deviations and correlations. The reliability test showed that all variables have Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.78. We used Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to confirm that all measured constructs were independent. The measurement model consisted of three variables: coworker's impression management and interpersonal deviance. Figure 1 shows that the three-factor model indicated a good fit to the data: CMIN/df=2.198, IFI=0.902, RMSEA=0.077 and CFI=0.901.

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Co-worker's Impression Management	3.415	0.711	0.86			
2. Co-worker's LMX	3.603	0.625	0.431**	0.79		
3. Co-worker's Interpersonal deviance	1.677	0.971	0.115	-0.11	0.87	
4. Employee's LMX	3.770	0.673	-0.117	-0.150*	0.102	0.80

Notes: n=202, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  values are reported on the diagonal



**FIGURE 1  
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CO-WORKER'S IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT,  
HIS/HER LMX AND HIS/HER INTERPERSONAL DEVIANCE**

We used Structural Equation Modeling to test our hypotheses. Specifically, we used a multi-group analysis to assess the effect of fellow employees' LMX as a moderating variable. The results showed that coworker's impression management was positively related to their LMX quality (supported hypothesis 1) ( $\beta=0.477$ ;  $p<0.01$ ). But coworker's LMX was unrelated to his/her interpersonal deviance targeted to a fellow employee ( $\beta=0.115$ ; n.s); thus hypothesis 2 was unsupported. Hypothesis 3 proposed that fellow employee's LMX has an effect on the relationship between coworker's LMX and his/her interpersonal deviance targeted to a fellow employee. When fellow employee's LMX is high, the relationship between a coworker's LMX and his/her interpersonal deviance will be negative and positive when a fellow employee's LMX is low. The results partially supported hypothesis 3. This study found that a fellow employee's LMX has an effect on the relationship between the coworker's impression management and his/her LMX ( $\Delta\chi^2$  ( $\Delta df=1$ ;  $p<0.05$ )=13.047). Moreover, this study found that when fellow employee's LMX is high, the relationship between coworker's LMX and his/her interpersonal deviance will be negative ( $\beta=-0.408$ ;  $p<0.01$ ). However, when a fellow employee's LMX is low, there is no relationship between a coworker's LMX and his/her interpersonal deviance ( $\beta=0.159$ ; n.s.) (Table 2).

Table 2 THE MODERATING EFFECT OF FELLOW EMPLOYEE'S LMX ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COWORKER'S LMX AND HIS/HER INTERPERSONAL DEVIANCE		
Co-worker's interpersonal deviance		
Co-worker's LMX	Low LMX	High LMX
	0.159	-0.408**
constrained model $\chi^2 (235)=440.197$	unconstrained model $\chi^2 (234)=427.152$	
$\Delta\chi^2(\Delta df=1; p<0.05)=13.047$		

Note: N=202, \* $p<0.05$ , \*\* $p<0.01$ , High LMX (n=104), low LMX (n=98), median=4

## DISCUSSION

According to Greenberg et al. (1987); Miller & Thomas (2005), coworkers can help show realities and have influence on employees' behaviors in the workplace. This current study identified the role of coworkers' behavior as perceived and experienced by fellow employees. We argue that the coworkers' impression management was related to their LMX quality and that their LMX quality was related to their interpersonal deviance targeted to their fellow employees. This study found that, based on fellow employee's perceptions, coworkers' impression management could increase their quality relationship with their superiors. This finding supported the first hypothesis and consistent with the arguments of Othman et al. (2010) and the study by Maslyn & Uhl-Bien (2005). Moreover, we found that coworkers' LMX was not related to their interpersonal deviance targeted to fellow employees. This study found that the relationship between coworkers' LMX and their deviant behavior towards fellow employees depended on fellow employees' LMX. This result showed when fellow employees' LMX was high: the higher the coworkers' LMX, the lower their deviant behavior targeted to fellow employees. But when fellow employees' LMX was low, the positive relationship between coworkers' LMX and interpersonal deviance towards fellow employees was not significant. These results provided partial support for the third hypothesis.

The results showed that employees may feel less dislike for their coworkers who have the same relationship quality (whether high or low) with the same supervisor. It is because they will try to get closer and have a harmonious relationship with their fellow employees (Tse et al., 2013). This argument is consistent with the findings of this study that coworkers who have the same high LMX quality with fellow employees will be less engaged in deviant behavior against them. But coworkers who have low quality LMX may engage in deviant behavior towards their fellow employees who have high LMX. As noted by Robinson & Greenberg (1998), individuals may engage in workplace deviance because they perceive unfair treatment from their supervisor.

According to Tse et al. (2013), employees will feel more dislike for coworkers who have a different relationship quality with the same supervisor. Especially for employees who have low LMX, they may try to protect themselves better and reduce their sense of inferiority and then take some actions to balance their condition of quality LMX (Tse et al., 2013). In line with this, Bies & Tripp (2005); Hershcovis et al. (2007) stated that individuals who engage in aggressive behavior attempt to repair the unjust situation. Tse et al. (2013) found that the individual's feeling of dislike for his/her coworkers will encourage hostile emotions and an unwillingness to help and support each other. This finding supports the finding of Mayer et al. (2008) that individuals with low LMX will engage in deviant behavior when coworkers have high LMX. Thus, coworkers

who have a different LMX quality compared to fellow employees will engage in deviant behavior towards them. In addition, subordinates who want to respond to the supervisor who treated them unfairly might not want to target their deviant behavior directly to their supervisor (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007). The reason is that they fear their supervisor's reprisal. They would direct their deviant behavior towards others such as coworkers.

Interestingly, the positive relationship between coworkers' LMX and interpersonal deviance targeting fellow employees was not significant, when fellow employees' LMX was low. It is possible that some employees who are in-group members indeed engage in deviant behavior towards their counterparts, i.e., the out-group members, because they want to maintain their LMX quality. But some employees do not engage in deviant behavior towards their counterpart in the low LMX. The possible explanation is that employees are friends with each other despite being on a different relationship quality with their superiors. This friendship can actually give benefit for out-group members because they can get information from their friends who have high quality relationship with the superior. In addition, impression management is directed towards a specific target, for example a supervisor, who is considered to have valuable and important resources (Kacmar et al., 2004; Weng & Chang, 2015) and the impression management actors usually build a good impression of the target over time (Carlson et al., 2011). Therefore, it is possible that the impression management actors are more focused on maintaining their position by building positive image of self-competence and being a pleasant person, only directed to their supervisors.

## CONCLUSION

### Managerial Practices

The results of our study supported the hypotheses that coworker's impression management is positively related to his/her LMX quality and a fellow employee's LMX has an effect on the relationship between coworker's LMX and his/her interpersonal deviance targeted to the fellow employee. Specifically, when a fellow employee's LMX is high, the relationship between coworker's LMX and his/her interpersonal deviance will be negative. These findings have some practical implications. First, this study provides support to the observation that individuals may use impression management to obtain high-quality relationships with their supervisor, in the context of high power distance culture. Thus, in the day-to-day realities of the organization, supervisors must be aware and more careful in evaluating their subordinates, especially in the selection decision of in-group members. In particular, in high power distance cultures, such as in Indonesia, the relationship of superior-subordinate is described as a father-son relationship (Hofstede, 2007). The superior as a "father" is expected to give care and support to his "son", i.e., his subordinate (Irawanto & Ramsey, 2011). Therefore, if the supervisor is perceived to be making a biased assessments in choosing in-group members because of the employees' impression management, it is possible that out-group members will perceive injustice committed by their supervisor. In Indonesia, the people have high collectivist cultural values. In high collectivist cultures, group welfare and harmony are important (Zaidman & Drory, 2001). Thus it is possible that individuals who perform impression management behavior and gain privileged positions from their supervisor will be considered to be reducing group harmony. Organizations can also minimize the impression management directed to the supervisor through employee selection, i.e., by choosing those who are personally less likely to engage in such behavior, such as persons with high self-esteem and low self-monitoring (Kacmar

et al., 2004). In addition, organizations can strengthen the cohesiveness among employees as this may lower the positive relationship between impression management and LMX (Weng & Chang, 2015)

Second, individuals who are perceived to have a high LMX will be less engaged in deviant behavior directed to their counterparts with the same LMX quality. However, if the quality of LMX is different, co-workers who have low LMX will be more perceived to engage in deviant behavior. Therefore, supervisors should recognize that different treatment of their employees will lead to the increasing of out-group members' perception of injustice. While it is possible that societies with high power distance culture do not respond negatively to the negative behaviors of their supervisor (Tepper, 2007), employees who experience injustice can direct their retaliation towards in-group members. However, organizations can minimize those risks by not choosing candidates who are inclined to engage in deviant behaviors, such as those with strong retaliation norms (Wu, Zhang, Chiu, Kwan & He, 2014). In addition, organizations can provide role-play training for supervisors about the impact of their differentiated treatments of subordinates.

### **Limitation and Future Research**

This study has a few limitations. First, the data of this study are cross-sectional and based on self-report data. This may result in biased finding. Thus causal relationships should be considered carefully (Xu et al., 2015). However, since the self-report data are collected anonymously, it can still be expected to reveal the negative behavior experienced by respondents (Thau, Bennet, Mitchell & Marrs, 2009). The next studies can investigate those variables in the future. Second, this study was conducted in Indonesia and respondents were employees who work in the service industry. Therefore, in order to increase the external validity of the results, future studies may investigate those variables using different samples and countries, especially countries that share the same cultural values with Indonesia.

In this study, we asked respondents to perceive their coworkers' impression management and their interpersonal deviance towards them and, to perceive their LMX quality and their coworkers' LMX quality with the same supervisor. Thus, this study can capture factual reality regarding the negative behaviors of co-workers, especially because people usually tend to cover their own negative behaviors. This study found that the profile of coworkers' LMX has negative consequence depending on their fellow employees' LMX. Hence, future research needs to investigate the role of other variables, such as coworkers' personality and fellow employees' performance and competence that might amplify or reduce the coworkers' deviant behavior towards their fellow employees. In addition, it is necessary to investigate whether in-group members will imitate their supervisor's behaviors, especially the negative behavior a supervisor would show when dealing with out-group members.

This study showed that the LMX quality (in the formation of in-group and out-group) and the consequences of differences treatment by supervisor towards those groups can have an impact on negative employee behavior, especially for out-group employees. However, it is possible that employees have been received the formation of in-group and out-group as a workplace phenomenon. In this regard, the future studies can identify variables that may strengthen or weaken the impact of LMX quality on their negative behavior, for example, employee acceptance of different relationship qualities with superiors, organizational support and the closeness of relationships among employees.

Our study provided a relationships model of coworkers' behaviors (impression management and interpersonal deviance) and their LMX as observed by fellow employees. We argued that coworkers with high LMX will engage in deviant behavior towards their fellow employees depending on their fellow employees' LMX. We found that the coworkers' impression management was significantly and positively related to their LMX. In addition, when fellow employees' LMX is high, the relationship between the coworkers' LMX and their interpersonal deviance will be negative. But there is no relationship between coworkers' LMX and interpersonal deviance when their fellow employees' LMX is low.

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