

## **ABSTRACT**

In advancing research on leader-member exchange, we propose a multi-level model in which cooperative communication mediates interpersonal exchange relationships and group cohesion. With a sample of 375 manager-employee dyads working in 48 groups in Malaysia, we tested the model by using hierarchical linear modeling (HLM). We found that, the individual variables of leader-member exchange (LMX, measured by dyadic agreement) and team-member exchange (TMX) positively predicted cooperative communication at the group level. Further, group cooperative communication positively predicted perceived group cohesion. Most importantly, cooperative communication mediated the relationship between LMX and perceived group cohesion and the relationship between TMX and perceived cohesion. These findings validated the proposed model and, in particular, the central role of communication in leader-member exchange processes in workgroups is empirically confirmed.

*Keywords:* leader-member exchange, team-member exchange, cooperative communication, group cohesion