

# **The Effect of Leader-member Exchange and Employee Resilience on Extra-role Performance: the Mediating Effect of Employee Engagement at Work**

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## **Abstract**

This study aims to investigate the relationship between leader-member exchange, employee resilience, employee engagement, and extra-role performance in the banking sector in Saudi Arabia. Specifically, it looks at the function of employee engagement as a mediator in the aforementioned relationships. A questionnaire was used to collect data from 186 participants. The proposed model has been analyzed using PLS-SEM as in Smart-PLS. This study found that both leader-member exchange and employee resilience have effects on employees' extra-role performance through employee engagement. This study is useful as it identifies two key determinants of employee engagement and how, in turn, employee engagement influences their extra-role performance. Performance can be improved by identifying variables or drivers that raise employee engagement levels. Previous research focused on Western nations, while this study looked at organizations in Saudi Arabia. Further implications, limitations, and future directions for research are discussed.

**Keywords:** leader-member exchange, LMX, employee resilience, extra-role performance, employee performance.

## **Introduction**

In this era of globalization, digitalization, and high competition, the service industry has advanced significantly in terms of offering cutting-edge services to clients so as to exceed their expectations. Because of the high expectations of customers, employees are expected to maintain a high level of performance at all times. There is a need for organizations to implement effective leadership practices that raise employee engagement (EE) resulting in extra-role performance (ERP) in order to give the finest services to consumers, resulting in ultimate customer satisfaction (Gibbs & Ashill, 2013).

The key to an organization's growth and success is employee efficiency (van Vuuren & Elving, 2008). Customer satisfaction is always the top objective of management in the service industry. As a result, for organizational performance, these two elements, employee efficiency, and customer satisfaction should be linked (Sharma & Dhar, 2014; Teeratansirikool et al., 2013). Scholars demonstrate that employees who take on additional responsibilities are likely to achieve customer satisfaction (Powell, 2013). ERP refers to an employee's behavior that is in line with their typical work activities and obligations (Organ, 1997; Powell, 2013). Employee ERP improves organizational efficiency while also allowing employees to be more innovative and creative. According to Burney et al. (2009), engaged employees show ERP and are more favorable about the organization's policies and processes. They prepare and drive themselves to show ERP beyond the official role once they comprehend the organization's goals (Organ, 1997). Despite the fact that EE has a significant role in inspiring employees to display ERP, not all studies have looked at this relationship in the context of the service industry in Saudi Arabia. The current study looks at the function of EE as a mediator in the link between leader-member exchange (LMX) and employee resilience (ER) with ERP.

Employee engagement and ERP have been shown to have a significant relationship in previous studies (Albrecht, 2012; Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008; Sulea et al., 2012), and the increased interest in the EE field encouraged the researcher to investigate possible antecedents factors of these outcomes. Better levels of EE can be achieved as a result of leader behaviors that foster openness and mutual trust with employees (Salanova et al., 2011). The study identified LMX and ER as possible predictors of EE and ERP. The LMX theory demonstrates that a leader's behavior is favorably and strongly related to

employee performance (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). According to Uhl-Bien et al. (2000), Employees will display ERP as a sort of organizational citizenship behavior when leaders exhibit interest in their personal development and engage them in decision-making. In addition, employees with strong ER are more likely to adjust to their workplace settings and have the ability to manage difficulties, stress, or contradictory events. The goal of including these variables is to show that predictors are equally represented at the supervisory (LMX) and individual levels (ER). Furthermore, these characteristics play a role in explaining EE and ERP, as proven both theoretically and empirically. The mediating role of EE between LMX and ER as indicators and ERP as an outcome is examined in this article. It uses data from three banks to investigate the proposed model (Figure 1). Several empirical studies utilized EE as a mediator in the relationship between various forms of employee performance and other indicators (Kim et al., 2012). Engagement creates a psychological condition that encourages employees to participate in ERP. Mediation analysis may also be used to determine if the predictors LMX and ER lead to ERP directly or indirectly through EE.

Furthermore, Jaiswal & Dhar (2016) asserted that context has a significant impact on employee behavior and performance. As a result, it is important to investigate if the strength of the factors influencing behavior (engagement and performance) varies in accordance with time and context. In different contexts, different behavioral outcomes may respond differently to the same predictors (Kim, 2007). As a result, it will be beneficial to look into the influence of context-dependent factors on employee behavior. This study adds to the current literature as it examines the relationships between LMX, ER, and ERP, with EE as the mediator. As a result, this research is critical because it gives a deep insight into the behavioral patterns of employees in the banking sector in Saudi Arabia.

## **Literature Review and Hypothesis Development**

According to Kahn (2017), EE is defined as “the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles”. It is a status where engaged employees exhibit themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances. It is a combination of knowledge, emotion, and behavior related to the individual's role performance (Saks, 2006). Because of its link to beneficial results, EE has been one of the most explored

areas in the organizational behavioral field over the last decade and attracts interest from both academics and practitioners. EE has grown in popularity as a result of its significant influence on employee attitudinal and behavioral outcomes, as well as organizational results. The variable is thoroughly explored, and researchers agree on some aspects, such as the relationship with some antecedents and outcomes (Maslach et al., 2001; Saks, 2006). Furthermore, empirical studies demonstrate that EE influences various forms of employee performance such as job performance, context performance, organizational citizenship behaviors, productivity, and discretionary behavior (Christian et al., 2011; Rich et al., 2010). May et al. (2004) found that a higher level of EE is associated with fewer workplace incidents and higher safety ratings.

On the other hand, ERP refers to employee behavior that is not part of the organization's stated job descriptions or formal job roles and duties but benefits the organization (van Dyne & LePine, 1998). It is a discretionary behavior that helps the organization. The ERP has achieved great appeal in study domains such as OCB, prosocial behavior, contextual performance, and discretionary behavior (Burney et al., 2009). There is substantial empirical evidence that ERP is effective in building a healthy work climate that influences organizational performance (Bhatnagar, 2007; Chen et al., 2010). Employees with high ERP will do everything for their organization (Bolino et al., 2010). Extra-role behavior comprises proactive behaviors outside formal roles such as assisting coworkers by addressing their issues, complying with organizational norms and regulations, advocating for the organization, and displaying interest in organizational activities. Sonnentag et al. (2012) found that such behavior adds to the organization by creating a proactive and friendly social environment that helps pursue organizational goals. Researchers argue that ERP is a free resource that adds value without extra cost (Chen et al., 2009). ERP is an employee's emotional and motivational state that stimulates thinking beyond formal limitations and personal interests (Sulea et al., 2012).

### **Leader-member Exchange and Extra-role Performance**

Mutual respect and trust identify a good working relationship, and this type of relationship boosts employees' willingness to provide ERP (Luo et al., 2014; Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1993; Settoon et al., 1996; Wayne et al., 1997). The establishment of a reciprocal relationship between supervisors and their subordinates is facilitated by high-

quality LMX. In such a situation, employees are influenced to go above and beyond their official responsibilities and demonstrate extra-role behaviors (Luo et al., 2014; Podsakoff et al., 2000). It has been argued that LMX and ERP have a direct relationship based on social exchange theory (SET) which suggests that a leader and a follower interact with one another for mutual advantages (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Followers in high-quality LMX relationships receive preferential treatment from their leaders, making them feel obligated to their leaders and, as a result, leading to ERP (Bowler et al., 2010). The LMX has also been linked to a leader's assessment of a follower's job performance (Liden & Graen, 1980; Settoon et al., 1996; Wayne et al., 1997). When leaders and subordinates have a good working relationship, they are more respectful and offer favorable feedback on one other's performance. As a result, employees who have a good working relationship with their leaders feel obligated to return the favor by putting in extra effort on behalf of their boss or organization. As a result, it is suggested that:

H1. Leader-member exchange influences employees' extra-role performance.

### **Employee Resilience and Extra-role Performance**

Several studies attempted to investigate the relationship between ER and performance at different levels in organizations (individual, team, and organization), however, there is still little investigation made on individual levels. For example, Cooke et al., (2019) found that ER can predict employee performance in the banking sector in China. Similarly, Avey et al. (2011) meta-analytical study concluded that ER as part of psychological capital has a significant effect on multiple measures of employee performance. A resilient employee will be more motivated to devote more time and energy to their work, which will improve overall performance. This is especially true since resilient employees can cope well with stressful, tough situations, and rebound from obstacles, allowing them to show their abilities and become more powerful and imaginative. In light of the aforementioned argument, this study suggests the following hypothesis:

H2. Employee resilience influences their extra-role performance.

### **Leader-member Exchange and Employee Engagement**

The LMX theory's main premise is that work-related exchanges shape the relationship between a leader and a subordinate. These relationships can be classified as "good" or "bad" depending on whether they represent trust, respect, and loyalty (Morrow et al., 2005). In high-quality exchange relationships, an employee will receive more time, direction, knowledge, autonomy, and emotional support. on the other hand, low-quality exchange relationships are based on formal roles, job description, and contractual exchanges ((Uhl-Bien et al., 2000). Previous research has shown that a high-quality exchange relationship is crucial for a variety of attitudes and behaviors, including turnover intention (Eisenberger et al., 2010), organizational commitment (Kang et al., 2011), and employee performance (Agarwal et al., 2012; Li et al., 2015). LMX theory describes how a dyadic relationship grows through time using the fundamental premise of the SET (Blau, 2017). According to the SET, responsibilities are formed through a sequence of exchanges between individuals who are in a reciprocal interdependent relationship (Gouldner, 1960).

When their leader gives them autonomy, recognition, support, fair supervision, and development opportunities, employees will be more dedicated (Hwang et al., 2020), creative (Liao & Chen, 2018), and perform at a higher level (Martin et al., 2016). This is in line with Robinson's et al. (2004) conceptualization of EE as a "two-way relationship between employer and employee" (p.9). Furthermore, studies have shown that LMX has an influence on EE in the shape of vigor, devotion, and absorption (Bakker & Leiter, 2015). In accordance with this argument, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H3. Leader-member exchange influences Employee engagement.

### **Employee Resilience and Employee Engagement**

ER has been identified as a key indicator that helps people cope with life's transitions (Waugh et al., 2008). ER in the workplace can be characterized as the psychological ability of an employee to recover from distress, uncertainty, disagreement, deficiency, or even good change, development, and increasing responsibilities (Luthans, 2002). Employees that are more resilient are more energetic in dealing with adversity and may

reduce the impact of a demanding environment by effectively utilizing their psychological capacity (Fredrickson et al., 2008). There is substantial evidence that dispositional traits rarely produce positive outcomes, such as employee performance (Luthans et al., 2007), satisfaction and commitment at work (Youssef & Luthans, 2007), as well as, lower levels of psychological distress (Utsey et al., 2008). Furthermore, Xanthopoulou et al. (2009) studied the effect of self-efficacy, organization-based self-esteem, and optimism, as individuals' typical job resources, on EE. The study utilized the job demand-resource model and found that engaged employees have higher levels of job performance than non-engaged employees as they utilize their personal resources such as self-esteem, optimism, self-efficacy, and resilience, which in turn, helps them have control over the surrounding environment (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4. Employee Resilience influences Employee engagement.

### **Employee Engagement and Extra-role Performance**

LMX provides a solid theoretical basis for the link between EE and ERP (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Saks, 2006). In addition, previous studies confirm the positive relationship between the two variables (Bakker et al., 2011; Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008; Christian et al., 2011; Sulea et al., 2012). Despite extensive research on EE, many topics remain unresolved (Bakker et al., 2011; Crawford et al., 2010), and additional development is required to explore and expand the antecedents and consequences of EE from a different point of view (Albrecht, 2012). EE is a measure of an employee's desire to put in extra effort for the company. Schaufeli et al. (2016) and Christian et al. (2011) found that EE improved both in-role and extra-role performance. According to Kahn (2017), employees with high levels of engagement devote their physical, emotional, and cognitive efforts to fulfill their duties beyond expectations. Despite the fact that this relationship has been investigated by several studies over the past few years in a varied context, the degree of the association between the two constructs is most likely to be different in different settings (Bailey et al., 2017). In accordance with this argument, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H5. Employee engagement influences their extra-role performance.

### **Employee Engagement as a Mediator**

Using EE as a mediating variable adequately explained the relationships between the antecedents and outcomes variables (Saks, 2006). This is consistent with the job demand-resource theory, which links job demand and job resources to organizational outcomes through EE (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). The basic assumption of Kahn (2017) personal engagement model claimed that when employees feel their jobs are important, respected, and engaging, they are more likely to invest their physical, emotional, and cognitive energy fully in their performance. Xanthopoulou et al. (2009) used EE to give an explanation of the relationship between self-efficacy, in-role performance, and ERP. Salanova et al. (2011) also looked at the function of EE as a mediator in the relationship between transformational leadership, self-efficacy, and ERP. When a company gives support, development, and incentives to its employees, engagement levels among employees are more likely to be high, which leads to improved performance (Karatepe, 2013). Other researchers (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008; Rich et al., 2010; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Sonnentag, 2003; Sulea et al., 2012) have all found EE to be a mediator that explains the relationship between human traits and organizational determinants with favorable organizational outcomes. Despite the fact that multiple studies have identified a link between EE and performance, there is still a dearth of empirical studies that explain the significant role of EE in achieving higher levels of employee performance in organizations through LMX and ER. As a result, based on the outcomes of previous studies, it is proposed that:

H6a. Employee engagement mediates the relationship between leader-member exchange and employee extra-role performance.

H6b. Employee engagement mediates the relationship between employee resilience and their extra-role performance.

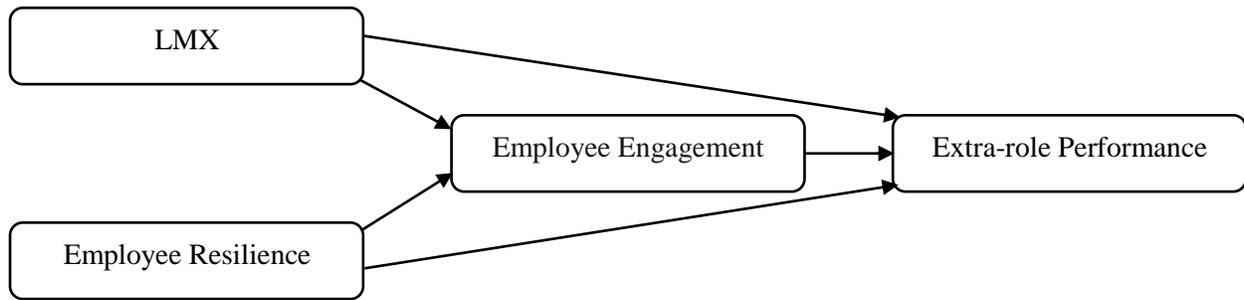


Figure1: Conceptual model.

## Research Methodology

### Sample and Procedure

This cross-sectional study use data collected from employees of three banks in western Saudi Arabia using a non-probability convenience sampling approach. Variables were measured using a questionnaire. Employees were informed in a cover letter that their participation was voluntary and all information would be strictly confidential and used only for research purposes. In all, 186 questionnaires were completed and used in the data analysis of this study. Male responders predominate in the sample (68.2 percent). In addition, the majority of the participants (41.4 percent) were under the age of 30. Within the sample, (67.2 percent) of respondents had a graduate degree, and (21 percent) had a postgraduate degree. In terms of employment duration and experience, (35.5 percent) have less than 5 years followed by (28 percent) who have 6-10 years. Table 1 elaborates on these sample aspects.

**Table 1: Sample Profile.**

Variable	Category	Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	127	68.2
	Female	59	31.7
Age	20s	77	41.4
	30s	45	24.2
	40s	41	22
	50s	23	12.4
Level of education	High school	14	7.5
	Diploma	8	4.3
	Bachelor degree	125	67.2
	Postgraduate degree	39	21
Organizational tenure	Less than 5 years	66	35.5
	6-10 years	52	28
	11-15 years	43	23.1
	above 16 years	25	13.4

## Measures

The questionnaire was divided into five parts that contained items to measure demographic data, LMX, ER, EE, and ERP. These variables were all measured at the individual level. Items created and evaluated in previous research were employed. Each item was scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Furthermore, all scales were back-translated in accordance with Brislin's (1980) suggestions.

**Leader-member exchange:** The LMX was evaluated using a seven-item scale developed by Graen & Uhl-Bien (1995). When compared to other existing measures, meta-analytic

results revealed that LMX 7 has robust psychometric qualities (Gerstner & Day, 1997). The scale's Cronbach's alpha coefficient is 0.898.

**Employee resilience:** ER was assessed using a 14-item, four-point Likert-type scale created by Block & Kremen (1996). One example of a scale item utilized in this study is “I quickly get over and recover from being startled”. The scale's Cronbach's alpha coefficient is 0.937.

**Employee engagement:** EE was measured using a nine-item scale developed by Schaufeli et al. (2016), which included three sub-dimensions: vigor, dedication, and absorption. The scale's Cronbach's alpha coefficient is 0.895.

**Extra-role performance:** The ERP scale developed by Lee & Allen (2002) was used to analyze the data. The instrument includes eight items addressing interpersonal behaviors and eight items addressing organizational-oriented citizenship behavior. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the scale is 0.905.

## **Data Analysis**

Partial least square as in SmartPLS (Ringle et al., 2005) was employed in the main data analysis. PLS-SEM has several advantages over other structural equation modeling approaches such as CB-SEM. Such advantages include; could be used when the research objective is for predicting and identifying key driver constructs; is adequate for examining complex structural models; and does not require a particular data distribution as it is a nonparametric technique (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011). PLS-SEM has two models: measurement and structural. Whereby step one is to assess the measurement model's validity and reliability and step two is to assess the structural model's direct and indirect interaction relationships.

## **Results**

### ***Common Method Variance***

All variables were based on the self-report method, it is, therefore, possible that common method bias may affect the associations among variables in this research. According to Podsakoff & Organ (1986), common method bias is an issue when a single component accounts for the bulk of explained variance. The results of the common method variance

test showed that the general factor explained 54.2% of the variance indicating that common method bias was not a critical issue in the present study.

### Measurement Model

The measurement model concerns the relationships among indicators and their corresponding constructs. It investigates the reliability and validity of the scales employed. The reliability of this study was assessed using factor loading, Cronbach's alpha, and composite reliability (CR). According to Hair et al. (2017), the standardized outer loadings should be higher than .60. Therefore, due to the low loadings of six items, they were excluded from the analysis: one item from LMX (LMX3), one item from EE (EE3), and four items from ERP (ERP5, ERP9, ERP10, ERP13). The Cronbach's alpha values for the four latent variables ranged from 0.895 to 0.937. On the other hand, the CR values for the four latent variables ranged from 0.916 to 0.945. Therefore, the four latent variables satisfied Cronbach's alpha value guidance of at least 0.6 and CR value guidance of at least 0.7 laid out by Hair et al. (2017). Table 2 summarizes the result of the reliability tests.

**Table 2: Factor loadings, AVE, CR, and Cronbach's alpha of items in this study.**

Variables & Measures	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Leader-member Exchange		0.898	0.918	0.652
LMX1	0.806			
LMX2	0.843			
LMX4	0.763			
LMX5	0.808			
LMX6	0.703			
LMX7	0.906			
Employee Resilience		0.937	0.945	0.554
ER1	0.798			
ER2	0.61			

ER3	0.843			
ER4	0.694			
ER5	0.657			
ER6	0.731			
ER7	0.785			
ER8	0.753			
ER9	0.667			
ER10	0.7			
ER11	0.88			
ER12	0.747			
ER13	0.793			
ER14	0.71			
Employee Engagement		0.895	0.916	0.579
EE1	0.807			
EE2	0.869			
EE4	0.61			
EE5	0.769			
EE6	0.773			
EE7	0.817			
EE8	0.692			
EE9	0.719			
Extra-role Performance		0.905	0.922	0.543
ERP1	0.717			
ERP2	0.606			

ERP3	0.708
ERP4	0.789
ERP6	0.692
ERP7	0.767
ERP8	0.675
ERP11	0.879
ERP12	0.825
ERP14	0.674

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On the other hand, validity is measured by convergent, and discriminant validity. Convergent validity is assessed by calculating the Average Variance Extracted (AVE, Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The AVE in this study ranged from 0.543 to 0.652. According to Fornell & Larcker (1981) a score of 0.50 demonstrates acceptability for AVE. Discriminant validity is assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) and the Fornell-Larcker method. The results show that all values of HTMT were less than 0.85 (see Table 3), which has been suggested as a threshold (Henseler et al., 2015). Furthermore, the Fornell-Larcker test shows that the square root of the AVE for each construct was greater than the respective correlation values (Table 4). Therefore validity assessment has been passed between latent variables in this study.

**Table 3: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT).**

	Employee Engagement	Employee Resilience	Extra-role Performance	Leader- member Exchange
Employee Engagement				
Employee Resilience	0.622			
Extra-role Performance	0.841	0.776		
Leader-member Exchange	0.219	0.249	0.204	

**Table 4: Fornell-Larcker Criterion.**

	Employee Engagement	Employee Resilience	Extra-role Performance	Leader- member Exchange
Employee Engagement	<b>0.761</b>			
Employee Resilience	0.205	<b>0.744</b>		
Extra-role Performance	0.39	0.233	<b>0.737</b>	
Leader-member Exchange	0.181	-0.028	0.063	<b>0.807</b>

To sum up, Several tests were employed to examine the reliability and validity of the measurement model, and acceptable results were obtained. Figure 1 illustrates the revised measurement model that was used in the subsequent analysis.

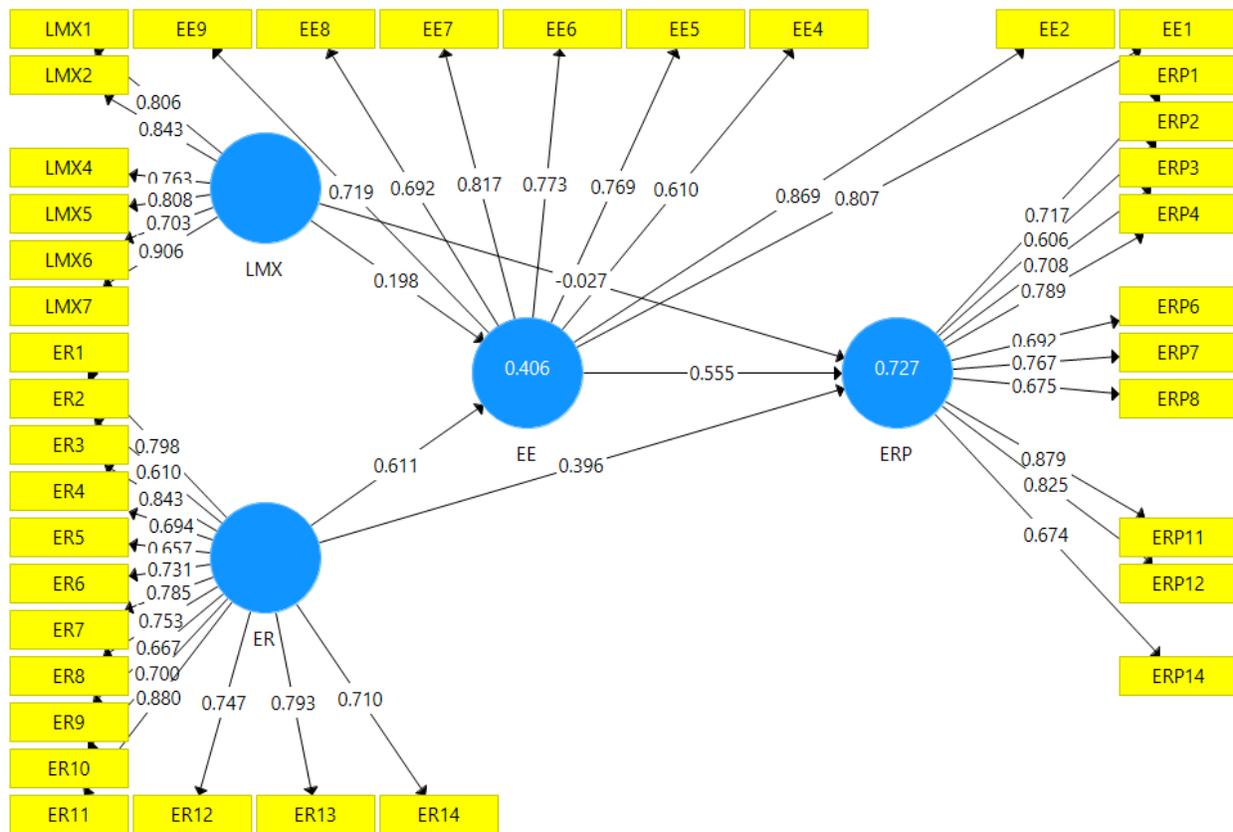


Figure 1 The Measurement Model

### *Structural Model*

The structural model examines the causal relationships between latent constructs. Hair et al. (2017) suggested several steps to assess the structural model that includes; assessment of multicollinearity; assessment of the path co-efficient; and assessment of  $R^2$ ,  $f^2$ , and predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ).

First, variance inflation factor (VIF) was used to assess multicollinearity. In this study, the VIF values of the predictor constructs range from 1.38 to 3.17 which is lower than the offending value of 5 (Hair et al., 2017). Therefore, there are no collinearity issues.

Second, the standardized path coefficient  $\beta$  was obtained from the PLS algorithm, while the statistical significance of each path was determined by the t-value for a given bivariate relationship based on bootstrapping function with 2000 iterations (Palanski et al., 2011). As shown in Table 7, the result of the study did not support the effect of LMX on ERP ( $\beta = -0.027$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Furthermore, the results indicate that the effect of ER

( $\beta=0.396$ , ,  $p<0.01$ ) and EE ( $\beta=0.555$ , ,  $p<0.001$ ) on ERP are significant. In addition, LMX ( $\beta=0.198$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) and ER ( $\beta=0.611$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) have significant effects on EE.

Third, the  $R^2$  examination shows that the  $R^2$  value for EE is 0.672 which indicates that LMX and ER accounted for 67.2% of the variance in EE. The  $R^2$  value for ERP is 0.353 which means that the antecedents variables of ERP in this study accounted for 35.5% of the variance (Table 6).

Forth, the  $f^2$  values are illustrated in Table 5. According to (Cohen & Cohen, 1983) the effect size could be categorized as follows;  $f^2=0.02$  as having a small effect;  $f^2=0.15$  as having a medium effect; and  $f^2=0.35$  as having a large effect.

**Table 5: Effect Size.**

Relationships	$f^2$	Degree of effect
LMX -> ERP	0.002	No Effect
ER -> ERP	0.353	Large Effect
LMX -> EE	0.066	Medium Effect
ER -> EE	0.628	Large Effect
EE -> ERP	0.672	Large Effect

Last but not least, Stone-Geisser's Q-square test (Geisser, 1975; Stone, 1974) was performed to validate the predictive relevance of the research model. The blindfolding procedure implemented in the Smart PLS software reported that the Q-square results range from 0.216 to 0.384 which is greater than 0, which means the research model has a well predictive relevance (Table 6).

**Table 6 Results of  $R^2$  and  $Q^2$  values**

Endogenous Latent Variable	$R^2$ Value	$Q^2$ Value
Employee Engagement	0.672	0.216
Extra-role Performance	0.353	0.384

Last but not least, The bootstrapping method is applied to examine this mediating effect. By dividing the indirect effect ( $ab$ ) by the standard error of the indirect effect, the  $t$  values for the indirect effects can be obtained. The standard deviation of the repeated bootstrap estimates of the indirect effect is denoted by the standard error. The result shows that both LMX ( $\beta=0.11, p<0.01$ ) and ER ( $\beta=0.339, p<0.001$ ) have a significant indirect effect on ERP (Table 7).

**Table 7 Path Coefficient and Hypotheses Testing (Direct and Indirect Effects)**

Relationships	Path Coefficients	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values	Decision
LMX -> ERP	-0.027	0.066	0.401	0.688	Not Significant
ER -> ERP	0.396	0.058	6.785	0.021*	Significant
LMX -> EE	0.198	0.075	2.628	0.009**	Significant
ER -> EE	0.611	0.078	7.802	0.004**	Significant
EE -> ERP	0.555	0.081	6.887	0***	Significant
LMX -> EE -> ERP	0.11	0.042	2.6	0.009**	Significant
ER -> EE -> ERP	0.339	0.051	6.657	0***	Significant

$t$  values are computed through bootstrapping procedure with 186 cases and 2,000 samples

\* $p<0.05$ , \*\* $p<0.01$ , \*\*\* $p<0.001$

## Discussion

This study investigated the role of EE as a mediator factor in understanding the link between predictors (LMX and ER) and an outcome (ERP) in the Banking sector in Saudi Arabia. Despite the fact that there are several research relating to these constructs, a model has been built and tested that combined the two constructs in relation to ERP through EE. The conclusion of this study, like those of prior studies, proceeds in the same direction, but they focus on extending them across diverse sectors, industries, and countries.

This study did not find a positive relationship between LMX and employees' ERP. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is not supported. Several previous studies emphasized the relationship between leadership and employee work-related attitude and behavior, however, these relationships suffer from a lack of consistency in empirical studies. A possible explanation is that leadership behaviors have an indirect relationship with employee outcomes (Northouse, 2016; Schwarz, 2017; Yukl, 2013), which requires a mediating variable.

The relationship between ER and employees' ERP is significant. Consistent with previous studies (Luthans et al., 2007), Employees who are more resilient will be more motivated to devote more time and energy to their jobs, resulting in better overall performance. This is especially true since resilient employees can manage effectively with stressful, difficult conditions and bounce back from setbacks, allowing them to demonstrate their strengths and grow in power and imagination.

This study also looked at the effects of LMX and ER on EE. Previous research has looked at these constructs separately in relation to engagement and found different results based on context, sample, and culture. As a result, in the service-oriented sector such as the banking sector, re-examination of the link between these constructs was critical.

The study found a positive relationship between LMX and EE. Agarwal et al. (2012) concluded that leadership behaviors play a critical role in encouraging engagement. Leaders who provide future guidance and knowledge to their subordinates uncover untapped potential and inspire workers to commit their efforts and capacity to complete job tasks (Meijman & Mulder, 1998). As a result, the immediate supervisor's responsibility in understanding subordinate conduct in an organizational hierarchy becomes crucial (Varma et al., 2005). A good leader-follower relationship, according to Tierney et al. (2010), helps workers efficiently manage tough duties, resulting in organizational success. Employees gain a sense of recognition as a result of such delegating, which leads to a psychological status that includes enthusiasm and devotion to the job and organization. The relationship may differ based on the organizational structure, the position or personality of the leader, and the leader-follower informal interaction (Morrison, 2005). As a result, the organization should create a working environment that fosters positive relationships between employees and their leaders in

order to have employees with higher engagement, and therefore, contribute to the effectiveness of the organization (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997).

ER showed a positive and significant effect on EE. Employees with strong psychological resilience are more engaged with the organization since they have good feelings formed during different situations. The study backs up Simons & Buitendach's (2013) claim that ER has a high predictive ability for EE since engagement is defined as a pleasant work-related experience and mental state. The findings are also consistent with Hobfoll (1989) COR theory, which views ER as an individual resource that can be exploited to alleviate stress caused by the environment and employee performance (Shin et al., 2016). Resilience may play a distinct beneficial function in minimizing the chance of a bad outcome or raising the likelihood of a positive outcome in the form of positive organizational behavior in employee-oriented competitive service sectors (Youssef & Luthans, 2007).

Findings supported that EE has a substantial impact on improving an employee's ERP. These findings support previous research (e.g., Karatepe, 2013; Rich et al., 2010; Salanova & Schaufeli, 2008) that found a substantial link between engagement and ERP. Engaged employees contribute significantly to their organizations and have a rational and emotional attachment, resulting in extra effort (Saks, 2006). Employees that are disengaged are more likely to have a bad attitude and participate in deviant conduct (Kahn, 2017). Employees that are disengaged obstruct the organization's ability to function effectively and reduce employee performance. Low levels of engagement, according to the study, might contribute to poor ERP presentation in customer-oriented services. The low ERP indicated that staff tended to avoid putting up discretionary effort to service customers. It might happen as a result of their lack of commitment and focus on their profession (Rich et al., 2010). EE serves as a tool for instilling significant positive feelings and passion in personnel who are drawn to ERP.

The findings also revealed that EE mediated the relationship between LMX and ER with ERP. The independent factors (LMX and ER) were found to have an indirect relationship with EE. The findings concerning EE's mediating influence are consistent with prior research (e.g., Bakker & Xanthopoulou, 2009; Karatepe, 2013; Rich et al., 2010), which revealed that EE mediates the link between performance outcome and other variables

such as individual and organizational characteristics. When employees are engaged, a solid and trusting connection between the leader and the employees pushes them to go above and beyond the official position requirements (Macey et al., 2009).

### *Theoretical Implications*

The study's findings add to the current literature by giving a complete framework that depicts the interaction between LMX, ER, EE, and ERP in Saudi service organizations, specifically in the banking sector. The current study also contributes theoretically to the body of knowledge regarding the studied variables. The study investigates the function of EE in mediating the relationship between antecedents and performance outcomes. Using data from employees in the banking sector in Saudi Arabia, the study empirically tests a theoretical model describing the antecedents and results of EE. The study's findings attempt to close the gap by combining organizational qualities (LMX) and personal resources (ER) in relation to EE. The current study lays the groundwork for long-term studies on human behavior in the developing and competitive service industry, as well as contributing to previous studies focused on the Western context (Alfes et al., 2013).

An important theoretical implication of this study is employing EE as a mechanism through which job and personal characteristics are linked to employee outcomes. The study investigates the mediating function of EE in the LMX–performance link, in response to a call to investigate the underlying mechanism in which LMX affects ERP through EE. Previous research demonstrated that several intermediating variables can enhance the relationships between leadership behaviors and employee work-related attitude and behavior, as well as provide a better understanding (Northouse, 2016; Schwarz, 2017; Yukl, 2013). The findings also suggest that an employee's psychological resilience should be viewed as a crucial source of pleasant feelings, which could lead to positive attitudes and behaviors such as EE and ERP.

The study's findings indicated that EE is a strong indicator of ERP. Engaged employees are more likely to feel focused, enthusiastic, and inspired to go above and beyond what is expected of them. Finally, the study's main contribution is that it looks at the relationship between EE and both job resources (LMX) and personal resources (ER) and ERP at the same time, using ERP as the consequence variable, as well as LMX and ER as predictor variables to determine the mediating role of EE.

## **Practical Implications**

Employee engagement is a difficult undertaking, especially in employee-oriented service sectors where service needs are always changing. As a result, the study's practical implications include a better understanding of the critical role of EE in producing ERP. The study would provide a greater knowledge of behavioral management, given the complexity of the banking sector operation. As the study elucidates the mechanism of link between LMX, ER, EE, and ERP, experts may implement methods to improve employee performance, which leads to organizational success.

The study highlighted the importance of leaders in increasing EE. As a result, the research recommends that organizations implement new development programs to help leaders better understand their subordinates' challenges and needs, as well as improve their leadership and interpersonal abilities. Organizations can, for example, employ assessment centers to create programs that help leaders understand their subordinates' work behavior (Zagenczyk et al., 2009).

Attracting and maintaining personnel in the service industry would be a major problem. As a result, an organization might use engagement as a means of generating and maintaining an individual's level of enthusiasm and passion for their work. According to research, employees with a high level of engagement have the ability to cope with the demanding environment of a customer-oriented services firm (Yavas & Babakus, 2010). Engaged employees are more likely to engage in extra-role behavior, hence management should take steps to keep their actively engaged employees. As a result, the research may be utilized as a direction for managers to build or adjust organizational development plans and procedures for the improvement of employees, ensuring EE and performance.

## **Limitation and Direction for Future Research**

Despite the fact that the study made a variety of contributions, it has a few shortcomings that might be investigated further. First, the study relies on self-reported data, there is a risk of method variance. Although Harman one-factor testing and common method variance were used to control the effect, there is still a potential for CMB since both the predictor and outcome variables are from the same source. As a result, future studies might eliminate the problem of CMB by employing supervisor ratings of ERP, for

example. Second, the data utilized in the study are cross-sectional in nature, as a result, it is difficult to establish the causal relationship among the variables. A longitudinal study design that incorporates the studied constructs might yield more conclusive results regarding the causal effects. Third, the sample was taken from employees in a specific sector in Saudi Arabia, therefore, it is suggested that the model tested in this study should be evaluated, verified, and generalized across different industries and countries.

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