

How Learning-Goal-Oriented Newcomers Develop Leader-Member Exchange (LMX): A

Dual Mediating Model

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ABSTRACT

Incorporating Abele and Wojciszke (2014)'s dual perspective model of agency and communion (DPM-AC) with LMX theory, this study explores whether and how newcomer's learning goal orientation (LGO) can foster leader-member exchange (LMX) relationships. Through a three-wave field survey among 199 organizational newcomers in China, we found that newcomers' LGO is positively related to LMX after controlling other types of goal orientations. Our results suggest that newcomers' agentic behavior – self-improvement voice, and their communal behavior – knowledge sharing, build up dual mediating mechanisms of this relationship. This study addresses the call for more research on LGO's interpersonal outcomes in the workplace, especially the relationship with the leader. It also contributes to the emerging research on followership and investigating LMX development beyond the dyad. Theoretical and practical implications of the findings are discussed.

Keywords:

Learning goal orientation; LMX; self-improvement voice; knowledge sharing; newcomers; organizational socialization

INTRODUCTION

The need for learning is greater than ever for organizations. However, more organizations rely on employees' individual learning instead of providing formal learning and development (L&D) trainings when faced with market upheavals and disruption caused by COVID-19 pandemic. For example, one survey indicated that, although it is prevalent for organizations to cut their L&D budget, the proportion of leaders or organizations who value staff learning arise from 75% in 2020 to 83% in 2021 (Crowley & Overton, 2021). Employees with learning-goal orientation (LGO) are thus favored in recruitment and training processes. These newcomers treat challenges as learning opportunities and are intrinsically motivated to forge competence and achieve self-growth in a proactive way (Farr, Hofmann, & Ringenbach, 1993; Porath & Bateman, 2006; Tan, Au, Cooper-Thomas, & Aw, 2016). Empirical research also provided ample evidence that these valuable characteristics enable LGO individuals to outperform in organizations indicated by the most important work-related outcomes such as performance and creativity (VandeWalle, Cron, & Slocum, 2001; Porath & Bateman, 2006; Huang & Luthans, 2015).

However, whether and how LGO newcomers perform well in organizational socialization process especially in developing social relationship with leader is not well explored in literature (Janssen & Van Yperen, 2004). Figuring out this question is important because newcomers' positive relationship with leader is the cornerstone for effective leadership, with consequential influence on most organization-concerned outcomes. For newcomers, their fate in the organization largely depends on the quality of their relationships with the leader (Cashman, Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1976). Leaders are not only the most salient agents in organizations,

but also bring necessary working resources and opportunities for newcomers to achieve their learning goal. To address the call for more research about the relationship between LGO and LMX (Vandewalle, Nerstad, & Dysvik, 2019), we will develop this line of inquiry by raising the question about whether and how newcomers' LGO help to develop and maintain LMX.

According to LMX theory (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), the leader invested in relationships with one or several trusted followers to help in the work unit's functioning. The leader not only rely on followers' competence and taking initiatives to handle challenging tasks, but also expect their successful socialization in the work unit to provide social capital and increase collective effectiveness. LGO individuals believe that their competence can be developed through efforts and do not view their abilities as fixed and uncontrollable attribute. This focus on self-growth lead them to adopt self-referent standards and is more likely to take initiatives for self-improvement and cooperate with coworkers for mutual growth, instead of referring others for comparison and competing for superiority. These characteristics are usually more favorable by leaders, providing opportunities to develop long-term social exchange relationships.

To probe into the underlying processes between LGO and LMX, this paper aims to investigate how LGO newcomers' agentic and communal perspective in social interactions helps them to develop LMX. We will draw on Abele and Wojciszke (2014)'s dual perspective model of agency and communion (DPM-AC). This model illustrated that the two fundamental modes of human existence – the need to attain competency (agency) and the need to gain social acceptance (communion) – will navigate individuals' social interaction with others and consequently shape their social relationships. Based on this model, we propose dual mediating mechanisms between newcomers' LGO and LMX (see Figure 1): their *self-improvement voice*

is self-focused taking initiatives that captures the agentic perspective of LGO's social interaction, while their *knowledge sharing* is one type of relationship-building that captures the communal perspective of LGO's social interaction.

This paper intends to help both researchers and practitioners have a more complete understanding towards the effects of LGO in organizations. First, it will contribute to the literature by shedding light on LGO's interpersonal outcomes and the different mechanisms underlying the relationship between LGO and LMX. Second, by responding to researchers' call for investigating LMX development within larger social context, this paper will contribute to the LMX research by adding evidence that newcomers' knowledge sharing, as a communal behavior aiming at relationship-building with coworkers, can contribute to LMX development. Third, our investigation in self-improvement voice will contribute to voice literature where the focus is on organization-oriented voice. We propose that when newcomers are not familiar with the organization or work unit's situations, voice for self-improvement is a good and safe option for them to be noticed by leaders.

Insert Figure 1 about here.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Learning goal orientation originated in the educational literature and was elaborated in Dweck (1989)'s motivational theory, which suggests that individuals with a *learning goal orientation* (LGO) strive to experience and understand new things in order to improve their competence (Dweck, 1989; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Heyman & Dweck, 1992).

Previous research on the consequences of goal orientation mainly focus on work-related outcomes such as performance or creativity, indicating that LGO is favored in this regard (VandeWalle et al., 2001; Porath & Bateman, 2006). However, how LGO individuals perform in interpersonal context is less known, especially in the relationship with leader (see the only exception, Janssen & Van Yperen, 2004). When leader is concerned in LGO research, researchers mainly took a leader-centric perspective and focus on the effect of leadership on cultivating employees' LGO tendency (Coad & Berry, 1998; Kohli, Shervani, & Challagalla, 1998). However, leadership cannot stand on ground without the support of followers, who also constitute important source from which leadership arises (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). By reversing the lens, we adopt LMX theory to illustrate whether followers' LGO helps them to develop social exchange relationship with their leader.

The Relationship Between LGO and LMX

According to LMX theory, leaders have limited time and resources so that they cannot develop high-quality relationships with each member in the work unit. Instead, they need to count on competent and trusted followers to take responsibilities for them and maintain the work unit's overall effectiveness. After the dyad is newly formed, the leader sends roles to these newcomers in order to form an initial assessment towards their motivations, talents and shortages (Graen & Scandura, 1987). LGO members are intrinsically motivated to take challenging roles, learn from the processes and forge their competence, satisfying the leader's expectations of the member's future work competence (Liden, Wayne, & Stilwell, 1993) and creating positive opportunities for exchange to occur such as the exchange of information, support and resources (Graen & Scandura, 1987). Poortvliet, Janssen, Van Yperen and Van de

Vliert (2007)'s experiment showed that when participants were assigned with learning goals, they exhibited a stronger reciprocity orientation with others. As a key element in social exchange, LGO's reciprocity orientation helps to develop the exchanges into sustainable and interlocking behaviors and finally stabilizes the relationship in relatively high quality. Therefore, we propose that:

Hypothesis 1. Newcomers' learning goal orientation is positively related to the quality of leader-member exchange.

Social Behaviors of LGO: Dual Perspective Model of Agency and Communion

To probe into the underlying mechanisms between LGO and LMX, we use Abele and Wojciszke (2014)'s Dual Perspective Model of Agency and Communion (DPM-AC) to construct two different perspectives of social behaviors exhibited by LGO individuals. Agency and communion constitute two fundamental modalities of human existence (Bakan, 1966). Agency is for the existence of an independent organism and manifests in the desire to master; communion is for the individual's participation fitting in larger organism and manifests in cooperation. Abele and Wojciszke (2014) elaborated these two dimensions into human's social interaction and proposed the Dual Perspective Model of Agency and Communion (DPM-AC). They illustrated that developing competence for agentic self and maintaining communal relationships with others coexist to constitute the two fundamental contents of social interaction. This theory complements well with LMX theory: in LMX research, these two perspectives of followers' behaviors provides instrumental values to leaders because leaders not only rely on competent followers to take more responsibilities but also concern about interpersonal harmony and collective effectiveness. Therefore, when

investigating how LGO followers develop relationship with leaders, it would provide a more complete picture to identify both of LGO followers' agentic and communal social behaviors.

We propose *self-improvement voice* from agentic perspective and *knowledge sharing* from communal perspective as characterized behaviors of LGO followers, because these two behaviors share core characteristics with LGO that ability can be developed and learning is a necessary process. Voice is the most direct way to attract the leader's attention and the voice content of self-improvement accords well with LGO's pursue for self-growth and competence development. Knowledge sharing is an important learning strategy of LGO and its features of reciprocity and cooperation beyond the dyad address the call for putting research of LMX development into the consideration within larger organizational context. In the next section, we will illustrate how they function as dual mediating mechanisms underlying the relationship between LGO and LMX.

Learning goal orientation and self-improvement voice

Supervisors expect employees to take initiatives and actively seek opportunities and resources for improving things because job descriptions and organizational training cannot anticipate all the possible work situations that an individual will face (Campbell, 2000). Employees' taking initiatives is goal directed and action oriented (Frese, Fay, Hilburger, Leng, & Tag, 1997). To tailor the concept more suitable for LGO newcomers, we focus on self-improvement aspect in employee voice as self-oriented personal initiatives. Speaking up for the need of self-development marks the first step for LGO newcomers' proactivity in work and attracts leader's attention, therefore is more suitable in the investigation of LGO and LMX.

Employee voice refers to the "intentional expression of work-related ideas, information,

and opinions” (Van Dyne, Ang, & Botero, 2003). Motives of voice can be other-oriented or self-oriented and different motives drive different types of employee voice (Van Dyne et al., 2003). Although they pointed out that more motives of voice await elaboration and individual differences should be considered, the majority of the literature focuses on other-oriented motive and positions employee voice as a form of organizational citizenship behavior for benefits of the organization (for example, LePine & Van Dyne, 1998; Choi, 2007; Burriss, Detert, & Chiaburu, 2008). As comparison, voice for self in the workplace is also very prevalent but receives relatively little attention. Employees may not always have constructive ideas or dare to speak up about their organizations’ procedures or operations, especially when they are not familiar or in relatively low status (Milliken, Morrison, & Hewlin, 2003; Janssen & Gao, 2015), but they always concern how work-related issues affect the self. They may voice through a defensive approach in order to protect their own interest, or through an aggressive approach in order to ask for more work resources to improve the self in the workplace.

To extend the conceptualization of voice for self in the workplace, we argue that, besides self-protection voice raised by Van Dyne et al. (2003), it is also prevalent for employees to voice for self-improvement when they desire progress at work and hold incremental theory about their ability. We define employees’ self-improvement voice behavior as expressing ideas, suggestions and concerns with the goal of improving the self within organizations. For example, employees can suggest ways and ask for more resources to improve their work; they can also discuss about ideas concerning their skill and career development. Self-improvement voice is a type of agentic social behavior not only focusing on individual growth and development, but also aiming to achieve a win-win situation with the organization.

We argue that goal orientation accounts for an important individual difference as antecedent of self-improvement voice. First, LGO individuals treat ability as a malleable attribute that can be developed through effort (Button, Mathieu, & Zajac, 1996; Dweck & Leggett, 1988). They have growth mindset and are more likely to make all kinds of efforts to cultivate work-related competence (Dweck, 2006), with voice as one of the most direct way to notify leaders for acquiring needed resources (Ng & Feldman, 2012). Second, LGO individuals pursue a more competent self but not others' recognition, and they are more willing to initiate new attempts (Matsuo, 2019), enjoy the process of learning even from the failures (Button et al., 1996; Dahling, & Ruppel, 2016; Wang, Song, Chen, & Yuan, 2021). Therefore, the potential risks contained in self-improvement voice such as exposing incompetence to the leader and attracting others' dissatisfaction are less salient for them, making self-improvement voice more likely to happen. Therefore, we propose that:

Hypothesis 2. Newcomers' learning goal orientation is positively related to their self-improvement voice.

Mediating role of self-improvement voice

The leader's time and energy are limited, usually left for those who strive for it (MacMillan, 2013). Being proactive in nature, self-improvement voice enables LGO newcomers to attract the leader's attention, leaving a positive impression that these new members pursue rapid growth and have constructive ideas about how to achieve it. This will not only save time for the leader, waiving efforts to provide training and guidance, and also satisfy the leader's expectation towards the newcomers' future work competence (Liden et al., 1993), make the leader more aware of their needs, and therefore more likely to provide suitable resources to

facilitate their learning goal. Through rounds of interactions will the social exchange relationship between the leader and member develop. Therefore, we propose that:

Hypothesis 3. Newcomers' self-improvement voice mediates the relationship between their learning goal orientation and leader-member exchange.

Learning goal orientation and knowledge sharing

To successfully fit in the organization, newcomers can proactively learn the behaviors and attitudes necessary for playing their role in the workplace (Morrison, 1993). Their amount of learning depends on their socialization processes such as information seeking and relationship building with more experienced members (Wang, Kammeyer-Mueller, Liu, & Li, 2015). In this process, newcomers are more dependent on other members, unless newcomers pay back their newly acquired information or integrate their existing knowledge to provide new insights and establish credibility (Cooper-Thomas, Anderson, & Cash, 2012). Knowledge sharing is such a typical communal behavior which can help them to develop long-term social exchange with coworkers. Building on Cummings (2004) and Pulakos, Dorsey and Borman (2003), Wang & Noe (2010) defined *knowledge sharing* as “the provision of task information and know-how to help others and to collaborate with others to solve problems, develop new ideas, or implement policies or procedures”. Its features of reciprocity and cooperation enable newcomers to successfully integrate in the group.

Although knowledge sharing usually involves extra effort, time and a sense of threat of losing personal competitiveness (Lu, Leung, & Koch, 2006), these deterrents are less salient for individuals with strong desire to learn. This is because LGO individuals adopt self-referent standards instead of being superior to referent others when assessing their personal competence

(Vandewalle et al., 2019). Therefore, compared with competition for superiority, cooperative behaviors such as knowledge sharing is more likely to occur as a positive opportunity for achieving their learning goal.

Knowledge sharing is an important learning strategy for the sharer (Wang & Noe, 2010; Lu, Lin, & Leung, 2012). First, the sharing process enables the sharer to fully understand the knowledge because they need to organize and explain the knowledge to recipients and make them understood (Wang & Noe, 2010). In addition, recipients can raise challenging questions and provide critical feedback to the sharer, helping to develop more comprehensive understanding towards those questions that are ignored or not well understood before (Lu et al., 2012). Third, knowledge sharing helps to develop a reciprocal relationship between the sharer and recipient (Lin & Lee, 2006), providing a positive interpersonal context enabling long-term knowledge exchange and acquisition. Therefore, LGO newcomers are more likely to use knowledge sharing to address their learning goal and build up reciprocal relationships with their colleagues. We propose that:

Hypothesis 4. Newcomers' learning goal orientation is positively related to their knowledge sharing.

Mediating role of knowledge sharing

When investigating in how LMX develops, traditional LMX theory and empirical studies focus on factors within the dyad, such as leaders' and members' characteristics (see summary in Nahrgang & Seo, 2015) or their similarity (e.g. Zhang, Wang, & Shi, 2012). However, many researchers raised up the point that LMX is not isolated in vacuum but embedded in the larger social context where other organizational members should be considered (Sparrowe &

Liden, 1997, 2005; House, Rousseau, & Thomas-Hunt, 1995; Goodwin, Bowler, & Whittington, 2009). We incorporate this perspective using newcomers' knowledge sharing with coworkers as mediating role between LGO and LMX.

Knowledge sharing enables LGO newcomers to build up reciprocal relationships with their coworkers and extend bridges in their social network. This helps newcomers to access to more information and knowledge of the work group (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992) and allows them to marshal resources that finally benefit the work unit or organization, which also align with leaders' interests. In addition, newcomers' social capital can also facilitate the leader to address work-related or interpersonal issues in an informal way (Goodwin et al., 2009). Through knowledge sharing, LGO newcomers provide evidence for their successful socialization into the work unit and add instrumental values for their leaders in collective effectiveness and informal social networking, which contribute to the development of LMX. Therefore, we propose that:

Hypothesis 5. Newcomers' knowledge sharing mediates the relationship between their learning goal orientation and leader-member exchange.

METHOD

Respondents and procedures

We adopted a three-wave longitudinal research design and a newcomer sample to investigate in LMX development, because empirical evidence found out that LMX relationships develop quickly in initial leader-member interaction stage and stabilize through the life of the dyad (Liden et al., 1993; Bauer & Green, 1996).

Our sample consists fresh graduates from a university in a major city in southern China. We collected the first wave data one month before they graduated. 350 students responded and provided their e-mail and mailing addresses. The second wave survey was conducted 6 months after the students graduated. With this time span, we expected most of them would have found a job and started working. An online survey link was sent through e-mails and we also mailed paper copies to those who did not response online. Student ID numbers were checked to avoid repeats. At wave two, we obtained 216 valid alumni responses, for a response rate of 61.7%. Attrition happened for the reasons such as unemployment, continued study and unwillingness for further participation. At wave three which is two months later, we applied the same procedures as the second survey. 199 responded, achieving a response rate of 92.1%. Respondents received monetary compensation for completing both surveys.

The final sample comprises 199 new employees, with 26% male, aging from 21 to 29 years old and all have bachelor's degree. At Time 2, their job tenure ranged from 1 to 6 months. They worked in diversified industries including education and culture (18%), gambling (16%), financial service (16%), government (10%), professional service (9%), other service (8%), travel (6%), trade (3%), information technology (3%), logistics (3%), manufacturing (2%) and others (6%).

Measures

In the first wave, we measure participants' different types of goal orientation and collect demographic information. In the second wave, mediators - knowledge sharing and self-improvement voice – were measured. In the third wave, we measured the dependent variable - LMX.

All variables measured in this study adopted six-point Likert scales ranging from 1, “strongly disagree” to 6, “strongly agree”. As we conducted our research in China, we followed Brislin’s (1980) translation and back-translation procedures to translate all of the English scales into Chinese.

Learn goal orientation. We assessed learn goal orientation with Vandewalle (1997)’s 5-item scale. A sample item is “I often look for opportunities to develop new skills and knowledge” ($\alpha = .91$).

Knowledge sharing. Knowledge sharing was measured by Bock, Zmud, Kim, & Lee (2005)’s five-item scale. A sample item is “I share my experience or know-how from work with other organizational members” ($\alpha = .91$).

Self-improvement voice. We measured self-improvement voice using self-developed four-item scale. Items are “I give suggestions and recommendations regarding issues that affect how I improve my work performance”, “I raise ideas concerning my skill development”, “I speak up to get more resource and support in order to do my work better” and “I speak up with ideas concerning my career development” ($\alpha = .81$).

LMX. We measured LMX with Graen & Uhl-Bien (1995)’s seven-item scale. A sample item is “I have good working relationship with my supervisor” ($\alpha = .91$).

Control variables. We controlled the other two dimensions of goal orientation - prove and avoid goal orientation to rule out alternative explanations of our findings.

Prove and avoid goal orientation. Same as learn goal orientation, we assessed prove and avoid goal orientation with Vandewalle (1997)’s multidimensional scale for goal orientation. Both of the sub-dimension scales for prove and avoid goal orientation have four items. A sample

item for prove goal orientation is “I try to figure out what it takes to prove my ability to others at work” ($\alpha = .83$). A sample item for avoid goal orientation is “I prefer to avoid situations at work where I might perform poorly” ($\alpha = .78$).

Results

Confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs).

Before testing the hypotheses, we used a series of CFAs to assess the model fit of our hypothesized model and the discriminant validity of the focal variables (learn goal orientation, knowledge sharing, self-improvement voice and LMX). The results are shown in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here.

We first specified a model in which all of the items loaded on their corresponding hypothesized latent constructs. This four-factor model produced acceptable fit statistics ($\chi^2 = 421.92$, $p < .01$; TLI = .89; CFI = .90; SRMR = .06). All of the factor loadings were significant, indicating convergent validity. We tested the discriminant validity of the proposed four-factor model by comparing it with alternative CFA models in which we combined constructs that were empirically correlated (e.g., learn goal orientation and knowledge sharing) or had potential for conceptual overlap (e.g., self-improvement voice and knowledge sharing). As shown in Table 1, the proposed four-factor model fitted the data substantially better than any of the alternative models did. These results suggest that our study respondents were able to distinguish the focal constructs well.

Main analysis.

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for and the correlations between all of the study

variables and controls. We did not control employees' gender and age because they were not related to our focal variables, which means whether controlling them did not change the results of our hypotheses testing (Carlson & Wu, 2012). However, we control employee's tenure since it was significantly related to self-improvement voice.

Insert Table 2 about here.

To examine the proposed mediation model, we conducted path analysis with a model constraint feature using Mplus 8.3 (Muthén, Muthén & Asparouhov, 2017). We examined all of the main effects and mediation in Model 1 (Model 1a-c, as shown in Table 3). We also controlled for prove and avoid goal orientation in the models to rule out alternative explanations and make our findings more robust.

Table 3 presents the results of our path analyses. As shown, the relationship between LGO and LMX was positively significant (see Model 1c, $b = .19$, $SE = .09$, $p < .05$), supporting Hypothesis 1. For Hypothesis 2, LGO was significantly related to self-improvement voice (see Model 1a, $b = .23$, $SE = .08$, $p < .01$); thus, Hypothesis 2 was supported. Model 1b showed that the relationship between LGO and knowledge sharing was significantly positive ($b = .33$, $SE = .09$, $p < .001$). Thus, Hypothesis 4 was well supported.

Insert Table 3 about here.

Table 4 presents the bootstrapping results for mediation. As shown, both of the indirect effects through knowledge sharing (estimate = .066, 95% CI [.018, .144]) and through self-improvement voice (estimate = .095, 95% CI [.034, .178]) were positive and significant. Thus,

Hypotheses 3 and 5 were well supported.

Insert Table 4 about here.

DISCUSSION

This study investigated in the underlying processes between newcomers' LGO and the LMX relationship via two perspectives of newcomers' social behaviors: the agentic perspective – self-improvement voice and communal perspective – knowledge sharing. Besides a significantly positive direct relationship between LGO and LMX, we also found that LGO newcomers' self-improvement voice and knowledge sharing both mediated the process from LGO to LMX.

Implications for Theory

This research has several implications for theory. Firstly, we incorporated Abele & Wojciszke (2014)'s DPM-AC model with LMX theory as our theoretical framework to illustrate how LGO followers' agentic and communal behaviors coexist to foster LMX development. Traditional LMX theory and the extant research in LMX development mainly focus on factors within the dyad such as leaders' and followers' characteristics as well as their fit or similarity (e.g. Nahrgang & Seo, 2015; Zhang et al., 2012). Researchers also focus on factors beyond the dyad and propose the social networking perspective (Sparrowe & Liden, 1997, 2005). Taking a follower-centric approach, we integrated these within-dyad and beyond-dyad perspectives into followers' agentic and communal social behaviors.

The investigation in the two proposed agentic and communal behaviors – self-improvement

voice and knowledge sharing - provide additional insights in understanding LMX development. Voice is proactive and attention-seeking in nature and the self-improvement content of voice can satisfy the leader's expectation for the LGO newcomers' growth potential and future competence. While newcomers' self-improvement voice is rather within-dyad behavior, their knowledge sharing extends the interaction scope beyond the dyad to other organizational members. It well addressed the call for studying LMX development in the larger context of the organizations (Sparrowe & Liden, 1997, 2005; House et al., 1995; Goodwin et al., 2009). As an important learning strategy for the sharer (Wang & Noe, 2010; Lu et al., 2012), knowledge sharing enables LGO individuals to acquire more feedback and better understand the knowledge. As a communal social behavior, knowledge sharing helps LGO followers to accumulate social capital and build up reciprocal relationships with colleagues, which consequently provides more utilities for the leader such as informal information and social networking.

Second, one thing worth attention is that the indirect effect of self-improvement voice (estimate = .095) between LGO and LMX was larger than that of knowledge sharing (estimate = .066). According to the main proposition in Abele & Wojciszke (2014)'s DPM-AC model, from actor's self-perception, the agentic content receives more weight than communal content in explaining social information. In this study, all measures were self-rated by newcomers (the actor) and the result therefore verified the proposition that newcomers will attribute their LMX development more to agentic reason (self-improvement voice in this study) rather than communal reason (knowledge sharing in this study).

Implications for Practice

From practical perspective, our focus on newcomers in organizations makes our findings important for HR practitioners especially in recruitment and training processes, so that they can help newcomers to better fit in the organization as well as develop relationships with their leaders. For example, they can foster positive climates for learning. Although learning goal orientation is usually conceptualized as relatively stable trait, it can also be treated as state (see DeShon & Gillespie, 2005, for a review) and cultivated by releasing cues in the environment (Button *et al.*, 1996), such as providing task-focused feedback with comments on achieved progress instead of ego-focus feedback that only praise for good performance (Butler, 1987).

Second, this paper also conveys practical implications to newcomers. It is prevalently known that developing LMX is important for newcomers, but how to develop is rarely discussed. The dilemma lies in the situation that, as newcomers, they may neither be aware or have chance to attract the leader's attention nor have long time to verify their values to the leader, making it hard to initiate the social exchange with the leader. This paper provided practical guidance with two different paths - knowledge sharing with coworkers, and self-improvement voice to the leader – the former is to successfully socialize with the larger organizational group beyond the dyad and accumulate social capital not only for the leader, but also for self; while the latter can help to not only attract leader's attention and increase the leader's expectation towards newcomers' future competence, but also function as a strategy to ask for resources needed for self-improvement. Newcomers are suggested to cultivate their learning-goal-oriented mindsets and use these two strategies to achieve win-win situation with the leader and also the whole organization.

Limitations and Future Research

The present study has several limitations for discussion so that future research can be identified. First, all the measures in this study were self-rated by newcomers, bringing the potential issue of common method bias (Podaskoff, MacKenzie, Lee & Podaskoff, 2003). Although the time lags between data collection provided certain remedy as it separates the measurements temporally (Podaskoff et al., 2003), future research can obtain measures from different sources, especially the leader who may not have same perceptions towards the quality of LMX as followers do. This will also enable future researchers to compare the actor's and recipient's different perceptions and preferences towards the actor's agentic and communal behaviors in social interactions. According to Abele & Wojciszke (2014)'s DPM-AC model, the recipient or the observer values the actor's communal content more than agentic content because communal content is other-profitable. However, this model also illustrated that when it comes to develop social exchange relationships, the actor's agentic traits were preferred by the recipient or observer rather than the actor's communal traits (Abele & Brack, 2013). More theoretical elaboration and empirical evidence are needed in this regard.

Second, although we derive the construct of self-improvement voice based on theoretical foundation, the scale of self-improvement voice was self-developed. More research are needed to identify different types of self-oriented voice and assess their discriminant and nomological validity. For example, we are unknown about whether employees with different types of goal orientation will have different voice motives, content or approaches for their self and how these different types of self-oriented voice influence work-related outcomes. For example, individuals with prove goal orientation aim to win over others and achieve superiority. They may be more likely to voice for self-protection because they view the relationship with others

as competition rather than cooperation. As for individuals with avoid goal orientation, they may shun from any form of voice for self because voice contains risks such as attracting colleagues' dissatisfaction and these risks threat their goal for avoiding others' negative evaluations. This is a fruitful area waiting theoretical and empirical exploration.

Third, through theoretical exploration, we chose self-improvement voice and knowledge sharing as our research lens, but it is necessary to be reminded that newcomer' agentic and communal perspectives are not limited to these two behavioral constructs measured in our study. Future research can investigate in followers' other types of agentic and communal perspectives including traits, cognition and behaviors. In addition, the leader's orientations to agentic achievement or communal harmony also matter in this process. For example, Xu, Loi, Cai and Liden (2019) investigated in leader's achievement or communion goal striving as moderators in the process between followers' taking charge and LMX. Future research can probe into the leader and the follower's fit or similarity in both agentic and communal perspectives and examine whether their (dis)similarity exerts influence on LMX development or other work-related outcomes.

Lastly, besides the traditional focus of LMX theory on the instrumental perspective of social exchange, DPM-AC model provides explanations from another perspective of interpersonal attitudes: in social interactions, individuals' agentic characteristics (being competent) are more likely to attract others' respect while communal characteristics (being sociable) are more likely to attract others' liking (Wojciszke, Abele, & Baryla, 2009). Therefore, the leader's respect and liking for followers shall constitute two attitudinal responses in high quality of LMX relationships. While leader's respect and liking for followers seem to be

implicitly inherent in LMX, they are distinct constructs. Actually, leader's liking for followers has been identified as an important antecedent of LMX (Engle & Lord, 1997; Liden et al., 1993; Dulebohn, Wu, & Liao, 2017). Future research can also take a follower-centric perspective to explore whether followers' agentic and communal perspectives respectively increase the leader's respect and liking which consequently influence their LMX relationships.

CONCLUSION

Informed by dual perspective model of agency and communion (DPM-AC) and LMX theory, this study reveals whether and how LGO newcomers can influence their LMX relationships. Leaders expect followers to get ahead (agency) and get along (communion). From agentic perspective, LGO newcomers can voice for self-improvement to attract the leader's attention for needed resources and develop competence. From communal perspective, they can also build up their social capital through knowledge sharing with colleagues, which also provides instrumental values for leaders. Practitioners shall help newcomers to cultivate their learning-oriented mindset in the organizations to achieve a win-win situation.

TABLE 1**Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

Model	χ^2	<i>df</i>	TLI	CFI	SRMR
4-factor model	421.92	183	.89	.90	.06
3-factor model 1 ^a	587.93	186	.81	.83	.09
3-factor model 2 ^b	617.37	186	.80	.82	.10
3-factor model 3 ^c	662.34	186	.78	.83	.12
3-factor model 4 ^d	864.71	186	.68	.72	.12
3-factor model 5 ^e	865.74	186	.68	.72	.12
2-factor model ^f	1073.88	188	.59	.63	.14
1-factor model ^g	1503.75	189	.40	.46	.15

Note. n = 199.

TLI = Tucker-Lewis index; CFI = comparative fit index; SRMR = standardized root mean square residual.

^a This model combines self-improvement voice and LMX to form a factor.

^b This model combines self-improvement voice and knowledge sharing to form a factor.

^c This model combines learn goal orientation and self-improvement voice to form a factor.

^d This model combines knowledge sharing and LMX to form a factor.

^e This model combines learn goal orientation and knowledge sharing to form a factor.

^f This model combines learn goal orientation, self-improvement voice and knowledge sharing to form a factor.

^g This model combines all measurement items into one factor.

TABLE 2

Descriptive Statistics, Correlations and Reliabilities in Experiment

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Sex ^a	.26	.44	—								
2. Age	22.16	.97	.03	—							
3. Tenure (month)	4.02	6.63	.16*	.22**	—						
4. Learn goal orientation	4.35	.80	.00	.03	.06	(.91)					
5. Prove goal orientation	4.42	.79	-.06	.01	.08	.43***	(.83)				
6. Avoid goal orientation	3.57	.83	.08	.02	.04	-.07	.34***	(.78)			
7. Knowledge sharing	4.16	.73	-.05	-.04	.06	.37***	.13†	-.08	(.91)		
8. Self-improvement voice	3.72	.69	.07	.00	.15*	.34***	.15**	-.09	.39***	(.81)	
9. LMX	3.69	.84	.11	-.10	.07	.31***	.13†	.01	.34***	.51***	(.91)

Note. $N = 199$. Reliability estimates (coefficient alpha) are shown on the diagonal.

^a Sex: 0 = female, 1 = male.

† $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < 0.001$. (two-tailed)

TABLE 3

Path Analysis Results

Dependent variables→	Self-improvement voice		Knowledge sharing		LMX	
	Model 1a		Model 1b		Model 1c	
Predictor variables↓	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>
Learn goal orientation	.23**	.08	.33***	.09	.19*	.09
Knowledge sharing					.20*	.08
Self-improvement voice					.41***	.11
Controls						
Tenure	.02	.01	.01	.01	-.00	.01
Prove goal orientation	.04	.07	.00	.08	-.09	.10
Avoid goal orientation	-.11†	.06	-.05	.08	.10	.08

Note. *N* = 199.

^a Sex: 0 = female, 1 = male.

† *p* < .10 * *p* < .05. ** *p* < .01. *** *p* < 0.001. (two-tailed)

TABLE 4

Bootstrapping Indirect Effects of Learn Goal Orientation on LMX Through Knowledge Sharing and Self-improvement Voice

Indirect path	Stage 1 effect		Stage 2 effect		Indirect effect		Direct effect	
	Estimates	95% CIs	Estimates	95% CIs	Estimates	95% CIs	Estimates	95% CIs
Mediating role of SIV								
Learn → SIV → LMX	.230**	[.083, .377]	.412**	[.212, .625]	.095**	[.034, .178]	.187*	[.010, .354]
Mediating role of KS								
Learn → KS → LMX	.330**	[.166, .520]	.200*	[.042, .370]	.066**	[.018, .144]	.187*	[.010, .354]

Note. $N = 199$. CIs = bias-corrected confidence intervals. † $p < .10$ * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < 0.001$. (two-tailed)

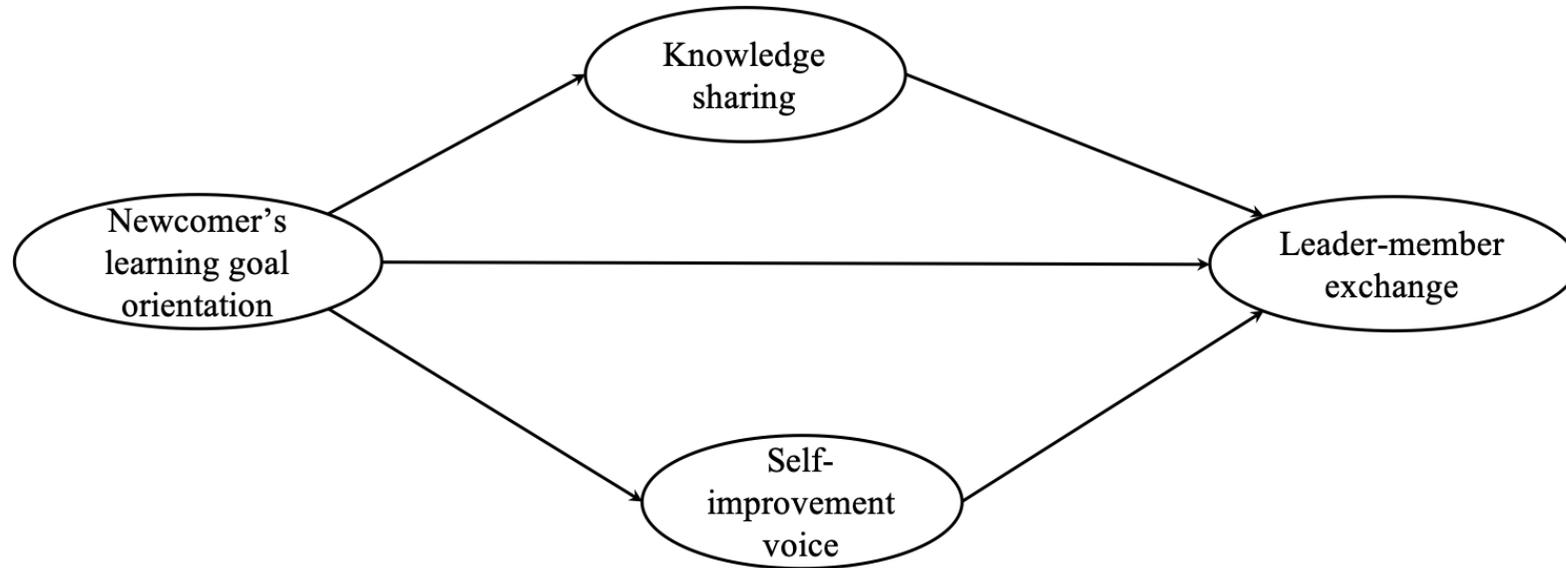
Learn = Learn goal orientation; KS = Knowledge sharing;

SIV = Self-improvement voice;

LMX = Leader-member exchange

FIGURE 1

Theoretical Model Illustration



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