

The mediating role of Communication Satisfaction between Leader's Communication and Turnover Intention

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Purpose: This study is the first to examine the effect of leadership communication on employee turnover intention in microenterprises, as well as the mediating role of communication satisfaction in the relationship between leader's communication and turnover intention.

Methods: This study employed a 2 stages cross-sectional design to collect 436 valid responses by using simple random sampling technic from workers at microenterprises in Sichuan Province, China. The data was analyzed using SmartPLS 4.0 for structural equation modelling and SPSS 20.0 for descriptive statistics.

Results: The results showed that there were significant negative correlations between leadership communication competence, leadership communication style, leadership communication frequency and employee turnover intention; there was a mediating effect of communication satisfaction between leadership communication competence, leadership communication style, leadership communication frequency and employee turnover intention, and it was partially mediated.

Practical implication: This finding suggests that in microenterprises, organizations must recognize the importance of leadership communication on employee turnover intention. Managers in microenterprises need to build good leadership-membership relationships with their employees through appropriate, frequent, and effective communication. Focusing on effective leadership communication, rather than solely on monetary compensation, offers a strategic way to manage

operating costs.

Originality/value: This study confirms leader-member exchange theory and extends the applicability of lmx theory, and also highlights communication satisfaction as a key factor in relationship quality. It points out how employees' subjective experience of communication quality translates into behavioural responses. This study provides a deeper understanding of LMX theory in explaining employee attitudes and behaviours

Keywords: Leadership Communication; Employee Turnover Intention; Communication Satisfaction; SEMs;

1 Introduction

The issue of employee turnover needs more attention. Employee turnover is a substantial problem for management, and it is still an interesting topic of study in the social sciences(Tingfeng et al., 2022). There are several expenses associated with staff turnover that can add up to a large sum for a firm. Furthermore, personnel turnover might threaten the stability of a business (Al-Suraihi et al., 2021). When a major employee or someone in a position of significant influence leaves a company, it can leave the business vulnerable to disruption because of the vacuum left by their departure. However, staff turnover may also have an impact on the culture of a firm(E. S. Wright, 2021). The departure of an employee may have a significant influence on an organization's culture since they take their knowledge, skills, and experience with them. Furthermore, the firm risks losing valuable talent to rivals if its employees leave and decide to take their talents elsewhere (Li et al., 2021). Turnover in staff members also affects how well a company does. Organizational performance can be negatively impacted by employee turnover, which can cause delays in the completion of projects, missed deadlines, and dissatisfied clients (Wynen et al., 2019). In addition, the employee's departure might have an impact on the motivation of other workers, setting off a chain reaction of departures(Huang et al., 2022).

The impacts of employee turnover on microenterprises are significant, and more importantly, they can further amplify their negative impacts on society. Since microenterprises provide a large number of jobs, the poor performance of microenterprises and their closure will put pressure on social employment. At the same time, as microenterprises play a supportive and catalytic role in the socio-economy, this will also lead to the slowing down of economic activities(International Labour Organization, 2019). In turn, high unemployment and economic slowdown can lead to compromised social stability(Hailu Demeke, 2022). Large enterprises have a more substantial influence on economic indicators like GDP growth, investment attraction, and innovation has historically led to a bias towards studying them in academic research(Slavec, 2022). However, most large enterprises have evolved from microenterprises, and some of them will be large enterprises in the future. Microenterprises contribute to the proper functioning of the economy as a whole within the business ecosystem, and the innovations that microenterprises bring to society will contribute to sustainable economic development(Clara Inés Pardo Martínez & Alexander Cotte Poveda, 2022).

According to the 2021 HR White Paper published by Iresearch, the overall turnover rate across all industries is 18.8% in 2021, an increase of 4% compared to 2020. The report concludes that the epidemic in China has eased in the last two years, and there has been a recovery in hiring demand from companies and more outside opportunities for employees, which has led to significantly higher turnover rates. At the same time, employee turnover can lead to a range of impacts, including increased costs, impacting employee work status, and leading to organizational instability (Fig.1 and Fig.2).

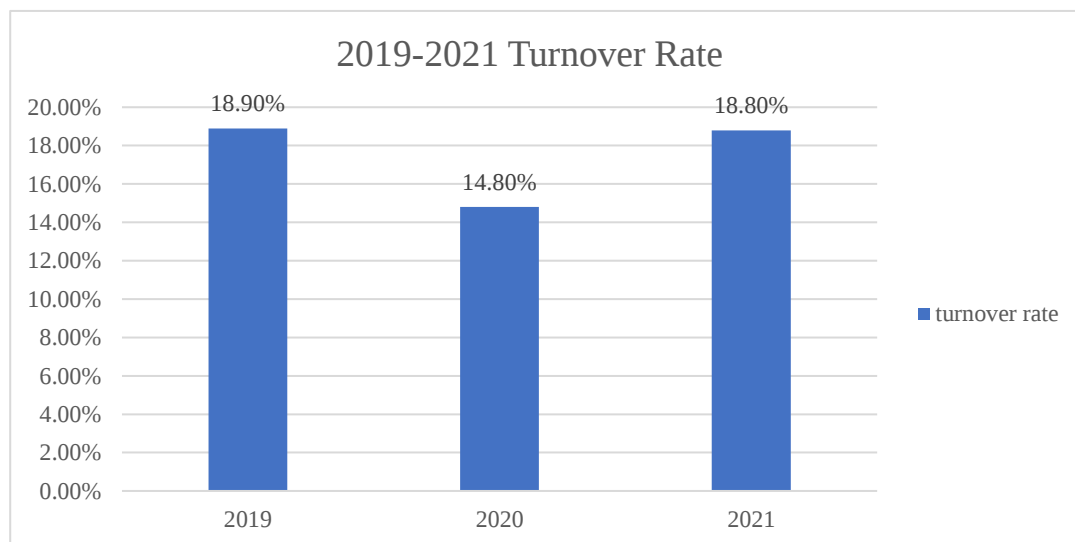


Figure 1: 2019-2020 Job Market Turnover Rate

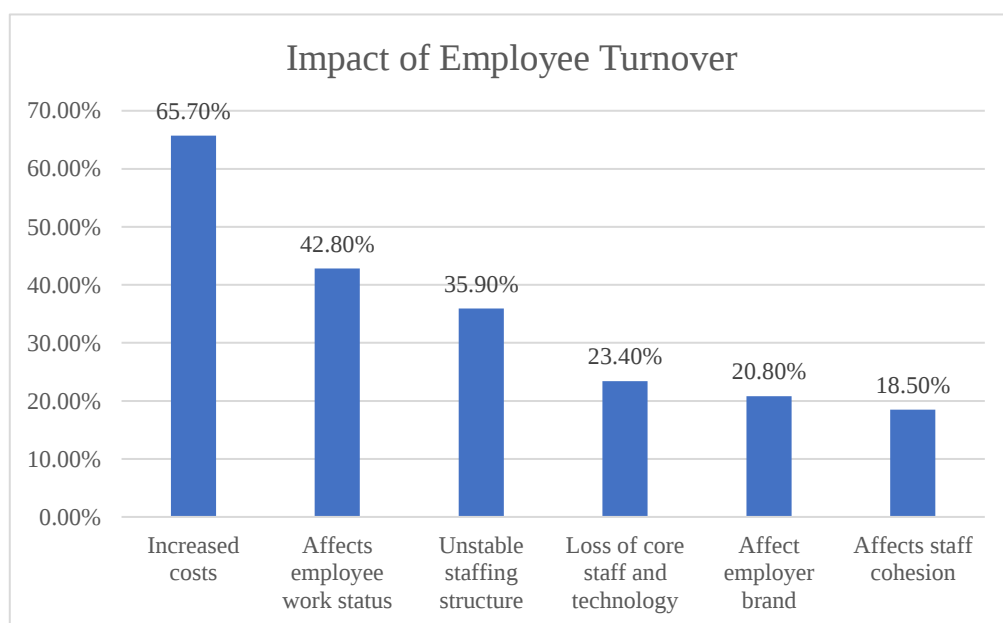


Figure.2: Impact of employee turnover

Leadership communication's effect on employee turnover intentions has received less attention than factors including compensation, bonuses, career advancement opportunities, and job stress in previous studies (Alubelkassaw Belete, 2018). To what extent leadership communication influences employees' intentions to leave

an organization is a topic that has recently attracted the attention of academics (de Leon, 2020; Maged Ezz et al., 2017; Onyekachi & Edwinah, 2018). In light of the importance of effective leadership communication in preventing employee turnover, this study aims to investigate the relationship between these variables. Previous studies have demonstrated the important effects of leadership communication competence, leadership communication style, and leadership communication frequency on employee turnover intentions, but there are some contradictions in the results of these studies, so scholars continue to have a strong interest in this topic.

There is a lack of studies that examine the effects of leadership communication on employee turnover intention in the setting of Eastern cultures. Some academics have argued that this topic needs to be studied in various cultural settings (Men et al., 2021). Employment opportunities, social innovation, increased income in low-income areas, etc. are only some of the many positive outcomes of microenterprises' contributions to the social economy. Microenterprises, on the other hand, are more vulnerable to closure due to their smaller size, higher levels of competitive market pressure, and higher risks of survival (Varghese & B, 2019). Therefore, the purpose of this research is to inquire about the microenterprise in Sichuan Province, China.

This study attempts to explain the relationship between leadership communication and employee turnover intentions through a new perspective and to develop the leader-member exchange theory and Mayo's Human relations theory. The innovation of this study is to explore the influence of leadership communication and employee turnover intentions in microenterprises in the context of Eastern culture, a context that is lacking in previous studies. Eastern cultures tend to use high-context communication, which relies heavily on nonverbal cues and indirect language to convey meaning. This means that messages are often implied rather than explicitly stated and Easterners tend to be more passive in conversations, preferring to listen rather than take a proactive role in the conversation. This may lead to differences in the effect of leadership communication on employee turnover intentions compared to Western backgrounds. In addition, due to the small size of microenterprises, poor risk tolerance, and low material support for employees, leadership communication as a resource will more significantly affect employee turnover intention. This study will also explore the mediating role of communication satisfaction on the relationship between leadership communication and employee turnover intention, a gap suggested in prior research (Men et al., 2021).

2 literature review

2.1 Leader-member exchange theory and turnover intention

The LMX theory of leadership highlights the significance of leaders and their relationships with their followers. According to this theory, the way a leader communicates with his or her followers is crucial. Communication characterized by trust, affection, and mutual respect is indicative of a relationship's quality, which in turn affects job satisfaction and performance (Erdogan & Bauer, 2015). Although there is no failsafe method for gauging employee morale, regular check-ins with management and cordial conversations between coworkers can go a long way toward improving the mood on the job (Mumtaz & Rowley, 2020). Leaders and their followers who are

consistent in their interactions gain from LMX because they can share knowledge and get closer as a result (Chen et al., 2016). Further, one's capacity for effective communication is a key indicator of leadership potential. No matter how hard they try, leaders without strong communication competence will likely only see temporary success, at best. At its core, leadership is about having an impact on others (Omilion-Hodges & Ptacek, 2021). When a high-quality leader-member exchange relationship is established between a leader and an employee, a high level of trust, respect, support, and interaction exists between the leader and the employee. In these situations, communication between leaders and employees is typically open, frequent, and effective. The leader actively shares information, goals, and feedback with employees and is interested in their development and achievement. Communication in this high-quality leader-member exchange relationship can lead to employees feeling valued and fulfilled, increasing their loyalty and sense of belonging to the organization and reducing turnover intention.

2.2 Communication competence and turnover intention

Scholars from different periods and disciplines have defined "communication competency" differently for more than 50 years of study. The term "communication competency" is used to describe the degree to which one can exchange information effectively (M. Wiemann, 1977). Effective communication and timely feedback can reduce turnover in small and medium-sized businesses, as found by Andrews (Andrews & Mohammed, 2020). Honest and constructive communication can also create long-term interpersonal ties between managers and employees. The ability of leaders to effectively communicate has a significant impact on whether or not workers are likely to quit their jobs. Employees are less likely to leave their positions because of good communication in relationships (Delgado & Lubbers, 2021; Mironova & Chorbazhiyska, 2020).

Therefore, this research proposes the hypothesis:

H1: There is a significant relationship between leadership communication competence and turnover intention in micro-enterprises in Sichuan province, China

2.3 Communication frequency and turnover intention

The term "communication frequency" refers to how often people in a group talk to one another (Farace et al., 1977). Effective communication occurs when information is transmitted through the appropriate channels when individuals listen attentively to one another, when there is consistent dialogue or engagement, and when appropriate language is utilized. For a conversation to be effective, it requires regular exchanges of ideas between the sender and the recipient (Chioma & Chukwujekwu, 2015). Interdependence, frequent communication, and the formation of teams might assist reduce potentially problematic group dynamics (Kaufman, 2019). One factor could be that open lines of communication between employees and managers promote a culture of trust. When employees believe in their company's leadership, they are more likely to feel committed to staying put (Lazzari et al., 2022). Workers are more likely to feel liked and valued by their superiors if they hear from them frequently (Curado & Henriques, 2022). Results from the study by Weaver et al reveal that when upper-level managers keep in regular contact with their teams, turnover rates are reduced (Weaver et al., 2021).

Therefore, this research proposes the hypothesis:

H2: There is a significant relationship between leadership communication frequency and turnover intention in micro-enterprises in Sichuan province, China

2.4 Communication style and turnover intention

de Vries et al. defined leadership communication style as a set of communicative behaviors used by managers to optimize hierarchical relationships in interpersonal communication to achieve goals(de Vries et al., 2013). Communication style in this study refers to positive communication styles and attitudes. Each generation has its preferences when it comes to communicating and addressing its coworkers and leaders, but all agree that real-time responses to urgent situations are essential to effectively resolving all difficulties. When one person interrupts another's speech, work, message, or tone, it causes a communication conflict (Stout, 2020). According to research by Bakar & McCann, staff turnover can be decreased if team members feel like they belong on the team and can identify with or adopt the leader's style of communication(Bakar & Mccann, 2015). A leader's ability to effectively communicate with their team can have a major impact on the number of employees who plan to leave their positions. Leaders with a positive communication style are encouraging, kind, and articulate (Banwart, 2020; Baumann, 2017).

Therefore, this research proposes the hypothesis:

H3: There is a significant relationship between leadership communication style and turnover intention in micro-enterprises in Sichuan province, China

2.5 Communication satisfaction and turnover intention

Kandlousi defined communication satisfaction as employee satisfaction between the overall organization's communication process and internal variables of the organization(Sheykh et al., 2010). In this study, communication satisfaction refers specifically to the communication satisfaction between employees and direct leaders. Organizational success depends on elements such as effective communication, employee engagement, and productivity. Milanović & Dragičević-Radičević found that an increase in communication between coworkers led to greater job satisfaction and subsequent workplace motivation. A study of the hospitality industry indicated that if a hotel prioritizes open lines of communication with its staff, it can lower the likelihood that its employees will leave (Abdien, 2019). Additionally, other potential mediators of leadership communication are worth exploring, including communication satisfaction, empowerment, and perceived job meaning.

Mayo's Human relations theory suggests that job satisfaction is an antecedent of employee turnover intention. Communication satisfaction is a part of job satisfaction(Curado et al., 2022) and communication between leaders and members can significantly affect job satisfaction, therefore this study will discuss the mediating effect of communication satisfaction between leadership communication and employee turnover intention.

Therefore, we propose the hypothesis:

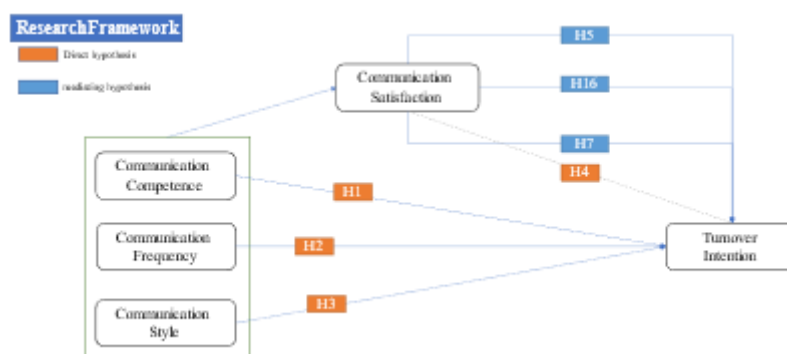
H4: There is a significant correlation between communication satisfaction and turnover intention

H5: Communication satisfaction has a mediating effect between leadership communication competence and turnover intention in Sichuan Province, China

H6: Communication satisfaction has a mediating effect between leadership communication frequency and turnover intention in Sichuan Province, China

H7: Communication satisfaction has a mediating effect between leadership communication style and turnover intention in micro-enterprises in Sichuan province, China

Figure3: Research Framework



3 Methodology

3.1 Sample and Procedure

This study investigated microbusiness employees in Sichuan Province, China. Participants will be informed at questionnaire distribution that this study is for academic research and can withdraw at any time without risk to avoid Common Methods Variance. Two steps completed the process. Demographics, leadership communication competencies, styles, and frequency were collected in the first stage, yielding 713 data. This study's second stage began two months later. In the first stage, we distributed communication satisfaction and turnover intention questionnaires to participants. This study collected 482 questionnaires, resulting in a sample size of 482 participants who completed both surveys. The effective response was 67.6%.

Before joining the study, participants had to meet these criteria: 1) They must work at a micro-enterprise in Sichuan, China, for at least six months to ensure that the Leader can communicate with them; 2) They must have household registration in Sichuan to prove their cultural background; and 4) They must have a direct superior. In 2018, 14.4 million enterprises were registered in Sichuan Province, with 7.026 million micro-enterprises accounting for 53.8 percent of the total(Yan.Zhao, 2020). The sample for this study will be chosen using a primary random sampling method, with the parameters $p=0.5$, $\chi^2=3.841$, $e=0.05$, $N=7026000$, and $n=384.1$ being calculated. This study uses a sample size of 384, which was determined using the formula from Krejcie & Morgan (Robert V. Krejcie & Daryle W. Morgan., 1970). The formula is as follows:

$$n = \frac{\chi^2 N p (1 - p)}{e^2 (N - 1) + \chi^2 p (1 - p)}$$

Notes: n=sample size; N=population size; e=acceptable sampling error; χ^2 =chi-square of degree of freedom 1 and confidence 95%; p=proportion of population

3.2 Measurement Scale

This study used a 7-point Likert scale to collect quantitative data. From strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). Seven questions were used to collect basic demographic information, while the remaining 42 questions pertained to the five variables examined here. Previous research has established the validity and reliability of these scales (Cronbach's alpha > 0.8).

The turnover intention scale items were one of the employee turnover intention scales used in the 2020 research (Su, 2020). The scale consists of six questions, and its validity has been confirmed in previous studies on Chinese employees' turnover intention. The scale has been slightly modified to fit the context better. For example, "I often consider leaving my job" and "My job does not meet my personal needs."

Nine questions directly linked to leadership communication were selected from the communication satisfaction questionnaire used in the study by DeWine & James (Dewine & James, 1988). Since the original scale contains the communication satisfaction of the whole organization, only some questions on employees' satisfaction with their direct leaders' communication were selected for this study. For example, "I trust my direct leader," "My direct leader is friendly to his subordinates."

Based on the research of Madlock (2008), this study chose his questionnaire measuring communication competence. In this study, outdated questions such as "My immediate supervisor is difficult to understand when communicating in writing" were removed. Finally, questions that fit the context of this study were retained, such as "My immediate supervisor deals with me effectively."

This study adapted the self-report version of the Communication Style Questionnaire developed by Montgomery & Norton (Montgomery & Norton, 1981), which measures communication styles across 11 questions. The original scale was about self-evaluation of communication style, but this study modified it to evaluate direct leaders. For example, "The way the immediate supervisor speaks usually impresses me" and "My immediate supervisor is an open communicator."

Kacmar et al. adopted a questionnaire on leadership communication frequency and it consisted of eight items (Kacmar et al., 2003); however, two questions were omitted due to the low prevalence of email use in Chinese SMEs. Some questions included, "How frequently do you write memos to your boss?" "And" How frequently do you call your boss on the phone?

3.3 Data analysis

3.3.1 Demographics profile

There was a total of 482 questionnaires submitted for this study, and 6 of them had missing values. Following the data cleaning and screening process, only 436 questionnaires met the criteria for inclusion in the sample. Following the guideline proposed by Black & Babin(Black & Babin, 2019), the mean replacement was employed to deal with missing data in the sample because the percentage of missing values for each indicator was less than 5%.

Table1 Demographic

Demographic Characteristics	Demographic sub-characteristics	Frequency (N=436)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	177	40.6
	Female	259	59.4
Age	Less than 19	7	1.6
	20-29	193	44.3
	30-39	105	24.1
	40-49	105	24.1
	50-59	26	6.0
	More than 60	27	6.2
Position	Base Staff	256	58.7
	Base managers	165	37.8
	Middle Managers	15	3.4
Years	0.5-1	162	37.2
	1-2	129	29.6
	2-3	103	23.6
Education	Junior high school and below	109	25.0
	High School	189	43.3
	junior college	109	25.0
	Undergraduate University	23	5.3
	Master	6	1.4
size	More than 3	42	9.6
	Less than 10	198	45.4
	10-20	238	54.6

3.3.2 Descriptive analysis

The descriptive statistics for study variables as shown in the Table below which presents the values of standard deviation and mean of the study variables as employed in this study, as previously mentioned, the questionnaire used in this study was designed on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 7.

In this study, descriptive statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS 20.0, and the kurtosis and skewness of all data for all samples were found to be between -2 and +2, indicating that the data meet the need of analysis of SmartPLS (Hair et al., 2020).

Table 2 Descriptive statistics

Name	Mean	Median	Standard deviation	kurtosis	Skewness
TOI	4.051	4.000	1.300	.053	-1.023
CSAT	4.126	4.333	1.332	-.446	-.644
CCOMP	4.541	4.750	1.147	-.547	-.245
CSTY	4.317	4.272	1.088	-.153	-.692
CFRE	4.309	4.166	1.223	.169	-.810

3.3.3 Common method variance

Both procedural and statistical strategies were used to combat the issue of common method bias. Pretesting the survey questionnaire to minimize difficult items and providing clear instructions to promote survey completion were among the efforts attempted to mitigate this bias. According to Harman's recommendation (Harman, 1960), a single-factor analysis was adopted to assess the effect of common technique bias on the dataset, and as the results of the exploratory factor analysis show the first component accounted for just 48.915% of the total variation. This supports the conclusion reached by Fuller et al. that common method bias did not substantially affect the current study (Fuller et al., 2016).

3.3.4 Assessment of measurement model

Assessing a reflective measurement model also involves thinking about its convergent validity. All items' factor loadings must be greater than 0.5, and no items' loadings must come from other structures, for this to be the case (Hair et al., 2021). All 42 items were kept in the analysis since their factor loadings were greater than 0.5. Composite reliability scores for this study's measurement model exceeded 0.8, indicating high levels of agreement across all variables. In addition, the AVE values for all constructs were above the cutoff value of 0.50, indicating that the measurement model is trustworthy.

Table 3 Measurement Model and Reliability and Validity Analysis

Variable	indicator	Outer loading	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Communication Competence (CCOMP)	CCOMP1	0.856	0.944	0.952	0.666
	CCOMP2	0.814			
	CCOMP3	0.827			
	CCOMP4	0.823			
	CCOMP5	0.798			
	CCOMP6	0.733			
	CCOMP7	0.805			
	CCOMP8	0.868			
	CCOMP9	0.872			
	CCOMP10	0.751			
Communication Frequency (CFRE)	CFRE1	0.835	0.909	0.929	0.687
	CFRE2	0.864			
	CFRE3	0.843			
	CFRE4	0.848			
	CFRE5	0.776			
	CFRE6	0.804			
Communication Satisfaction (CSAT)	CSAT1	0.805	0.937	0.947	0.663
	CSAT2	0.815			
	CSAT3	0.803			
	CSAT4	0.783			
	CSAT5	0.846			
	CSAT6	0.838			
	CSAT7	0.82			
	CSAT8	0.803			
	CSAT9	0.814			
Communication Style (CSTY)	CSTY1	0.84	0.940	0.948	0.626
	CSTY10	0.834			
	CSTY11	0.848			
	CSTY2	0.719			
	CSTY3	0.791			
	CSTY4	0.776			
	CSTY5	0.767			

	CSTY6	0.755			
	CSTY7	0.809			
	CSTY8	0.838			
	CSTY9	0.707			
Turnover intention (TOI)	TOI1	0.842	0.918	0.936	0.708
	TOI2	0.848			
	TOI3	0.844			
	TOI4	0.856			
	TOI5	0.822			
	TOI6	0.837			

3.3.5 Discriminant Validity

Table 4 shows that there is sufficient discriminant validity, the existence of discriminant validity is further demonstrated by the HTMT values between the variables, which ranged from 0.381 to 0.835 (Table 5) (Hair et al., 2021).

Table 4 Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) - Matrix

Variable	CCOMP	CFRE	CSAT	CSTY	TOI
CCOMP					
CFRE	0.560				
CSAT	0.570	0.712			
CSTY	0.607	0.798	0.800		
TOI	0.657	0.835	0.834	0.825	

4 Assessment of structural model

4.1 Collinearity statistics (VIF)

To ascertain if there was multi-collinearity, this study looked at how each indicator in the prediction construct performed and if its VIF was less than 5 (Hair et al., 2021). Table 5 displays the findings of this study, all VIF values in this study were under 5, hence multi-collinearity was not a major problem.

Table 5 VIF between latent variables

	CCOMP	CFRE	CSAT	CSTY	TOI
CCOMP			1.545		1.595
CFRE			2.269		2.376
CSAT					2.597
CSTY			2.468		3.198
TOI					

4.2 Significance and Relevance of the Structural Model Relationships

Researchers typically use a p-value to gauge the degree of importance of a coefficient. The p-value is the risk of wrongly rejecting the null hypothesis (Andrade, 2019). A p-value of less than 0.05 indicates a statistically significant link was found, assuming a significance level of 5%. The standard errors from bootstrapping are used to construct confidence intervals, which are the range within which the true population parameters are predicted to lie at a given confidence level. According to the advice of Sarstedt et al., selecting a sample size of 10000 for resampling is a good place to start (Hair et al., 2016).

The determination of the statistical significance of path coefficients was carried out using bootstrapping techniques, which involved the generation of 10,000 subsamples and a two-tailed test, as outlined by Hair et al. (Hair et al., 2021). The resulting path coefficients and their corresponding significance (p-values) are presented in Figure 4.

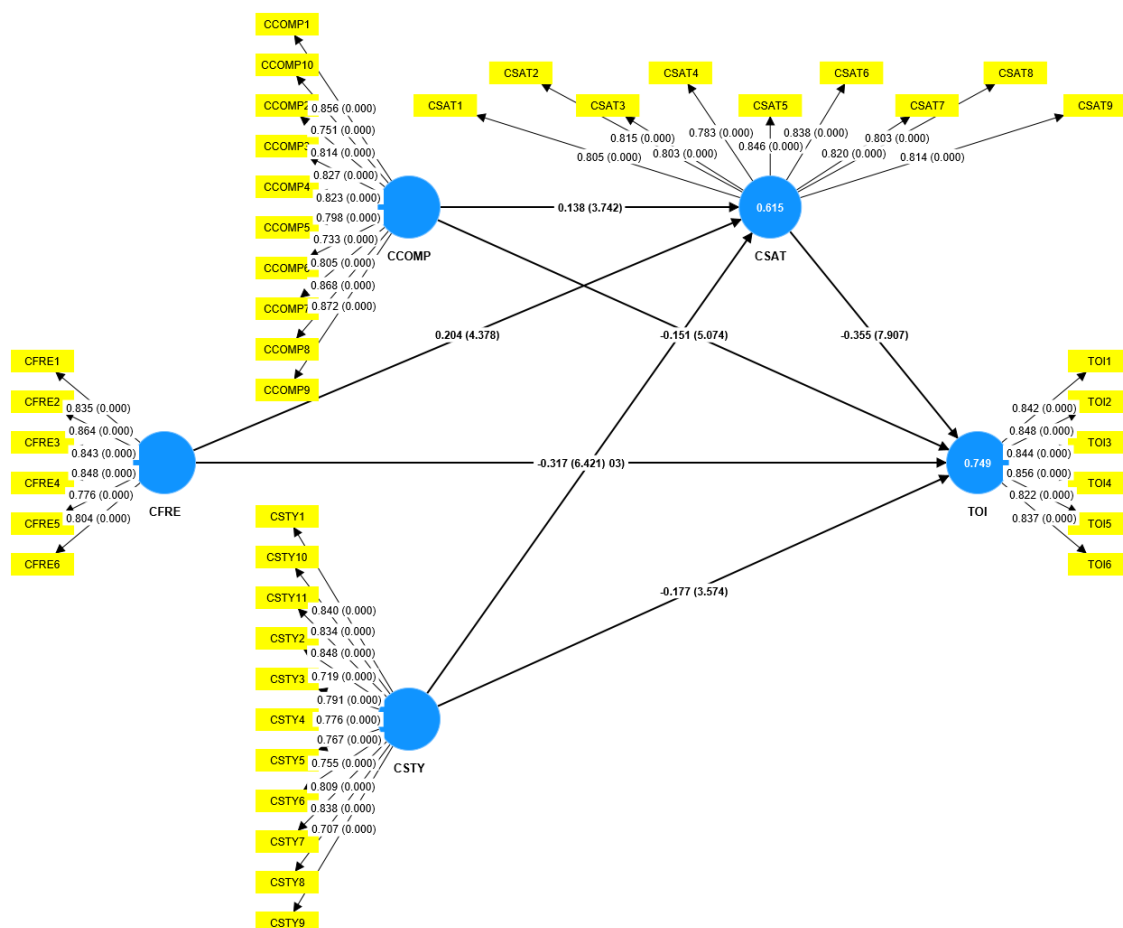


Figure 4 Strength of the relationships and their significance.

The P-values and T-values for each path coefficient in the structural model are listed in Table 6. Standardized estimates of the hypothesized links between constructs are provided by the route coefficients. Path coefficient analysis shows there is a statistically significant relationship between CCOMP and TOI ($\beta = -0.151$, $T = 5.074$, P

< .05), CFRE and TOI ($\beta=-0.317$, $T=6.421$, $P < .05$), CSAT and TOI ($\beta=-0.355$, $T=7.907$, $P < .05$), CSTY and TOI ($\beta=-0.177$, $T=3.574$, $P < .05$).

Table 6 also shows the indirect effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable. The findings indicate that all independent variables (CCOMP, CSTY, CFRE) have significant negative direct effect path coefficients on the dependent variable (TOI). while the mediating variable's (CSAT) direct effect path coefficients on the dependent variable (TOI) are significant and negative. This indicates that there is a mediating effect of communication satisfaction between the independent variables (CCOMP, CFRE, CSTY) and the dependent variable (TOI), and it is partially mediated.

Table 6 Size and significance of the path coefficients

Path				
Path	coefficient	Standard deviation	T-statistics	P values
CCOMP -> TOI	-0.151	0.030	5.074	0.000
CFRE -> TOI	-0.317	0.049	6.421	0.000
CSAT -> TOI	-0.355	0.045	7.907	0.000
CSTY -> TOI	-0.177	0.049	3.574	0.000
CCOMP -> CSAT -> TOI	-0.045	0.014	3.251	0.001
CFRE -> CSAT -> TOI	-0.066	0.017	3.847	0.000
CSTY -> CSAT -> TOI	-0.171	0.033	5.258	0.000

4.3 Model's Explanatory Power

Hair et al. (2019) offer interpretation recommendations for R^2 values, stating that values of 0.75 and above are considered strong, 0.5 and above are considered moderate, and 0.25 and below are considered weak. Table 7 displays the explained variance of the model's variables; CSAT has a moderate direct influence on other variables on CSAT ($R^2=0.615$), whereas TOI has a large direct effect on other variables ($R^2=0.749$).

Table 7 Explained variance (R^2)

Variable	R-square	R-square adjusted
CSAT	0.615	0.612
TOI	0.749	0.747

R^2 values of endogenous latent variables are influenced by external latent variables to varying degrees, and this is represented by the f^2 effect size (Jürkenbeck et al., 2019). The magnitude of the structural relationship between variables is quantified by the impact size (f^2). Low, medium, and high effects of predictor variables are represented by values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35, respectively (Lorah, 2018; Selya et al., 2012). The importance of each variable (f^2) is displayed in Table 8.

Table 8 effect size(f^2)

Variable	CCOMP	CFRE	CSAT	CSTY	TOI
CCOMP			0.032		0.057
CFRE			0.047		0.169
CSAT					0.193
CSTY			0.296		0.039
TOI					

4.4 Model's Predictive Power

Values above zero indicate that the model exceeds the most naive benchmark, as proposed by Shmueli et al. (Shmueli et al., 2019), who propose using the Q^2 predict value to assess the predictive power of PLS-SEM analysis. Table 9 shows that for every metric, PLS-predictive SEM's capability is higher than the naive benchmark, as measured by Q^2 predict values that are all greater than zero. Due to the asymmetry of the errors, the researchers used LM-MAE and PLS-SEM-MAE to compare the results. The model's predictive power was strong for all TOI indicators because their errors were all less than the LM-MAE. Overall, this approach provides a useful framework for evaluating the predictive power of PLS-SEM analysis.

Table 9 PLSpredict Summary of Items

Variable	Q^2 predict	PLS-SEM_RMSE	PLS-SEM_MAE	LM_RMSE	LM_MAE
TOI1	0.491	1.080	0.899	1.097	0.919
TOI2	0.493	1.144	0.954	1.173	0.970
TOI3	0.502	1.118	0.930	1.161	0.958
TOI4	0.512	1.124	0.927	1.155	0.956
TOI5	0.466	1.053	0.856	1.068	0.869
TOI6	0.480	1.097	0.903	1.146	0.944

5 Discussion

The results of this study show that communication competence has a negative effect on employee turnover. There is mixed research on whether or not there is a correlation between a leader's communication competence and whether or not employees are likely to leave their jobs (Delgado & Lubbers, 2021; Mironova & Chorbazhiyska, 2020). Since (Naz & Gul, 2014) examine public administration in Malaysia, the potential explanation for this variation lies in the unique characteristics of the respective organizations being studied. Employees in a multiethnic country like Malaysia may not give much thought to their leaders' ability to communicate effectively because cultural and language diversity are no longer major concerns (Salleh et al., 2017). Leadership communication competence may be a strong predictor of employee turnover intent, but only in regions with limited cultural differences, such as Sichuan, China.

This study's results agree with those found by Bakar & McCann (Abu Bakar & McCann, 2016) and Saunders (Saunders, 2020) that is, communication style significantly affects employee turnover intention. According to research by Bakar & McCann, leaders can foster a feeling of community and trust within their teams by modeling effective communication strategies and encouraging their followers to do the same. Saunders reports that to a large extent, this could be attributed to differences in communication styles.

Leaders who are open and communicative regularly can have a significant effect on how information is shared, leading to greater job satisfaction and less likelihood of resignation (Braun et al., 2015; Pongton & Suntrayuth, 2019). This could be because employees value open communication with their bosses (Weaver et al., 2021). Dugovicova (Dugovičová, 2019) agrees that communication is crucial, and suggests that if the organization wants to keep staff from quitting in revenge, organization should build trust, host open forums, and keep in constant contact with them. The results of this study are in line with those of the aforementioned experts, who found that leadership communication reduced employee turnover intentions in small businesses in China's Sichuan province. One theory to explain this finding is that committed workers are more likely to stay with a company whose leadership values open and honest communication. This is in line with earlier studies demonstrating that when team leaders keep in regular contact with their members, those members are more likely to remain on the team. However, there is a lack of consistency in the studies that have looked at the link between leadership communication and employee turnover intent. Leaders who talk too much risk alienating their teams, which in turn can increase stress, discontent, and even turnover intentions (Marsh et al., 2022; Wijngaards et al., 2022). Furthermore, employees may feel monitored and controlled if executives communicate with them too frequently (Jacobs, 2019).

Therefore, the frequency of leadership communication needs to be adjusted within an appropriate range based on individual employee differences, job nature and needs (Jacobs, 2019). Although some studies have concluded that there is no direct correlation between leaders' communication frequency and employee turnover intention, more studies have shown that there is a relationship between leaders' communication frequency and employee turnover intention. This relationship may be influenced by other factors, such as the leader's communication style, employee job stress, and job satisfaction (K. B. Wright et al., 2014). Therefore, leaders need to adjust communication frequency appropriately according to employees' actual needs and work situations to improve employee's job satisfaction and reduce employee turnover intention. The relationship between leadership communication frequency and employees' turnover intention is most likely not linear but U-shaped. When the communication frequency between leaders and employees is low, the turnover intention of employees will gradually decrease as the communication frequency between leaders and employees increases, however, when this communication frequency reaches a certain level, further increasing the communication frequency between leaders and employees will make employees feel bored and stressed, which will lead to the increase of turnover intention.

This study examined the relationship between communication satisfaction and employee turnover intention in Sichuan Province, China. The results of the current study show that the relationship between communication

satisfaction and employees' turnover intention is significant and there is a negative relationship between communication satisfaction and employees' turnover intention, which indicates that the higher the communication satisfaction, the lower the turnover intention of employees. Previous research has shown that communication satisfaction is related to positive employee behavior at work. In the CMC environment, communication satisfaction is significantly positively correlated with job satisfaction (Bedoya, 2021). Communication can improve job satisfaction and thus increase motivation at work (Milanović & Dragičević-Radičević, 2019). The connection between employees' perceptions of transformational leadership, their communication competence, and their level of job happiness is mediated by their level of communication satisfaction (Ulutürk & Tayfun, 2019). Several studies have shown a significant relationship between communication satisfaction and employee turnover intention. Nursing staff turnover intention was shown to be inversely associated with levels of satisfaction with communication with coworkers, managers, and upper management. Employee satisfaction and retention can be increased by prioritizing open lines of communication and fostering a positive work environment (Naz & Gul, 2014). By providing good communication for employees, the hotel can reduce employee turnover intention (Abdien, 2019). The present study is consistent with the findings of previous studies, namely, that communication satisfaction will significantly affect employee turnover intention. At the same time, this study also found a partial mediating effect of communication satisfaction between leadership communication and employee turnover intention.

Theoretical implication

While LMX theory has traditionally focused on the quality of the relationship between leaders and employees, the results of this study suggest that specific elements of communication play an important role in influencing relationship quality and employee turnover intentions. This finding not only expands the applicability of LMX theory, but also highlights communication satisfaction as a key factor in relationship quality.

This study also validated the mediating effect of communication satisfaction between communication elements and turnover intentions, showing that employees' satisfaction with leadership communication can significantly influence their turnover intentions. This finding highlights the importance of communication satisfaction in LMX theory, pointing out how employees' subjective experience of communication quality translates into higher-level behavioural responses. Theoretically, this provides a deeper understanding of LMX theory in explaining employee attitudes and behaviours and could be used as a theoretical basis for other future research on communication behaviour.

Practical implication

Due to the small size of microenterprises, there is a huge risk of competition in the market, and the payment of competitive salaries and benefits will bring a huge burden to the enterprise. To effectively control operating costs, focusing on communication between leaders and employees will be an effective strategy. Employees are not only concerned about how much money they are getting at work but also about how they are treated by their

leaders(Arendt et al., 2019). Effective leadership communication reduces the indirect costs of employee turnover, but it also improves the employees' sense of achievement, which in turn reduces the employees' need for material goods, and also leads to a reduction in direct operating costs. This strategy can effectively promote the sustainable development of microenterprises. Therefore, the government can increase leadership communication training for microenterprises and improve the communication skills of managers to help microenterprises survive better. At the same time, although it is not necessary to build a sound communication mechanism as in the case of large-scale enterprises, microenterprise owners still need to pay attention to the relationship between them and their employees, especially in terms of communication. Maintaining regular communication with employees and regularly assessing their satisfaction with their communication with them can be effective in predicting employee turnover behavior and thus intervening in that behavior. Adopting a more positive approach to communication, creating a supportive communication environment, and communicating more frequently through multiple communication channels (e.g., video calls, social media software, streaming media) can provide employees with a stronger sense of belonging, which is also a key focus in communication.

6 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

There are still several limits to this study, even though it completely adhered to the paradigm of quantitative research and correctly analyzed the study's findings. Future studies could look towards overcoming these constraints, among other things.

First, a questionnaire survey was employed for data collection. To examine the hypothesis, researchers utilized a cross-sectional study design in which samples were taken at regular intervals across time. Longitudinal studies may be used in future research to more convincingly show the connection between leadership communication and turnover intent. Furthermore, this study's sample was comprised of microenterprise workers in Sichuan Province, China, suggesting that the results may not be transferable to other cultural settings and geographical locations. It is proposed that the same research conducted in a different geographical and cultural setting could provide similar results. Future research may wish to include other businesses of varying sizes to account for the potential impact of company size on the findings.

There are discrepancies between the results of this quantitative investigation and those of other studies. Some potential causes for these discrepancies are offered in the present work, albeit confirmation of these hypotheses requires additional research. To more persuasively validate or explain the findings in this study, it is proposed that future researchers may want to conduct qualitative studies or mixed-methods studies to address the explanations offered here. Furthermore, all characteristics were measured on a 7-point Likert scale and were based on the subjective opinions of the employees, which could introduce some bias into the results. To avoid bias in self-report surveys, it is recommended that future researchers adopt more objective, data gathering through objective observation approaches.

Moreover, this study implies that future researchers may want to explore building a new research framework to validate the connection between leadership communication and employee turnover intention based on the comparison between the results of this study and those of past studies. This study could include factors like traditionalism to confirm the impact of leadership communication on the relationship between employee turnover intention under varying circumstances; for instance, looking at the correlation between communication frequency and turnover intent in extreme situations could provide evidence that the relationship between the two is not linear but U-shaped. The association between a leader's communication style and employee turnover intention can be further explained by taking trust in the leader into account as a moderating role.

7 Conclusion

This study proposes and assesses an empirical model of employee turnover intention in microenterprises in Sichuan, China. To explain turnover intention in microenterprises, this study establishes the effects of leadership communication competence, communication style, and communication frequency on employee turnover intention by expanding the LMX theory. This study explains the reasons for employee turnover from the perspective of communication in micro-enterprises, and although the importance of superior-subordinate relationships is emphasized in the LMX theory, the specific behaviors specific to superior-subordinate communication have been neglected, and the three independent variables in this study refine the theory.

In addition, the introduction of communication satisfaction, a mediating variable, provides actionable insights into the management process of microenterprises, where managers can assess employees' communication satisfaction in their daily work, thereby determining their turnover intention and exerting influence on them through communication, which in turn reduces their turnover intention. Three communication factors were involved in this study, all of which had a significant negative effect on turnover intention, with communication frequency having the most significant effect on turnover intention. In addition, communication satisfaction also had a very strong effect on turnover intention, and communication satisfaction was most affected by communication style; therefore, although communication style does not have the strongest direct effect on employee turnover intention, it does affect turnover intention by affecting communication satisfaction, and this finding emphasizes the importance of communication style as an influencing factor in this complex mechanism, as well as the importance of communication satisfaction in the process of leadership communication's influence on employees' turnover intention. Therefore, managers of microenterprises should pay attention to communication with their employees, especially the need for high-frequency interactions with their employees, and adopt a positive communication style to meet the challenges of communicating with their employees. In addition, HR professionals can use the findings of this study to develop more effective employee retention strategies and leadership training programs. These strategies and programs can help organizations improve management efficiency, strengthen team cohesion, and increase productivity. The findings also support the promotion of an employee-centered organizational culture, including a more open and supportive communication environment. Such cultural improvements can further increase employee satisfaction and reduce employee turnover.

Conflict of interest: The authors declare that the research was conducted without any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Ethical Consideration: Participation was through informed consent. The participation was protected through anonymity and volunteer and confidentiality was maintained.

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