A Review of Paradoxical Leadership Research

Xiaotun Chen, Bingjie Yang

School of Economics and Management, Shaanxi University of Science and Technology, Xi'an, China
Email: chenxiaotun@sust.edu.cn, YBJ18291807685@163.com

Abstract

In the field of management, "paradox" is "long interdependent and contradictory elements", paradoxical leadership is a leadership style in which managers adopt contradictory but interconnected behaviors to satisfy the needs of organizational structure and the needs of employees' work. This new style of leadership breaks the traditional management perspective of "choosing one of the two", focuses on "both", seeks unity in contradiction, and plays a synergistic effect of contradiction, which is more useful for resolving various frictions and differences in the organization. Through combing the literature, this paper introduces in detail the origin, concept, and measurement of paradoxical leadership, compiles the research framework of antecedent and outcome variables of paradoxical leadership, puts forward the future research direction of paradoxical leadership based on the existing research, suggests suggestions for the further improvement of paradoxical leadership related research, and provides the direction of the future focus of paradoxical leadership research.

Keywords

Paradox, Paradoxical Leadership, Current State of Research

1. Introduction

In the VUCA era, i.e. under the influence of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity, organizations naturally need to face a series of differences of opinion, such as the contradiction between implementing change and maintaining stability, the need for sustainable development or focusing on short-term economic benefits, and the need to give financial support or care for the psychological needs of employees, financial support to employees or caring for their psychological needs, and so on (Zhang et al., 2012). These seemingly contradictory but interdependent phenomena are called "paradoxes" (Smith & Lewis, 2011). In an environment of increasing complexity in the external environment

and intense internal conflict, management practices face many challenges (Zhang, Waldman, Ha, & Li, 2015). Therefore, how leaders can effectively manage these conflicts and tensions during unpredictable management practices has become a central issue for researchers and practitioners to address. How leaders can optimize individual behaviour by fostering positive, adaptive and proactive employee behaviour for personal and business development has become an important factor in sustainable organizational development (Luo, Hu, & Zhong, 2017). Managers in complex environments need to improve their resilience and master how to comfortably cope with the conflicting demands of complex environments, and paradoxical leadership has emerged (Tan, Hao, Yang, & Song, 2020).

Paradoxical leadership has been found to be ambivalent and flexible, and is a behaviour that balances contradictions and close links in dealing with superior-subordinate relationships, work decision-making and execution, power distribution and work climate construction (Xiong, Yu, & Chen, 2022). Under the influence of Eastern culture, researchers have been influenced by the Chinese concept of "yin yang" and believe that paradoxes always occur and everything exists, and every moment and everything are related to the paradox. Traditional Chinese management thinking helps organizations and societies to accept paradox and provides an important cultural background for the emergence of paradoxical leadership in organizations. Zhang et al. (2015), who first proposed "paradoxical leadership", stated that paradoxical leadership is the practice of managers adopting contradictory but interconnected behaviors to satisfy the needs of organizational structures and employees' work. To meet the needs of organizational structure and employee work, the traditional "obedience" approach to leadership is not a good idea. The traditional "all-or-nothing" leadership style cannot meet the dynamic needs of the organization; paradoxical leadership, which focuses on "unity of opposites", is more useful for resolving frictions and disagreements in the organization (He, Liu, & Luan, 2020; Zhu, Zhang, Liao, & Wang, 2019). The paradoxical leadership focusing on "unity of opposites" is more useful for resolving frictions and differences in the organization. In management research and practice, corporate executives are faced with demands that are contrary to normalized development, and the implementation of paradoxical management methods is an effective measure to reconcile and resolve conflicts, as well as to fully mobilize resources and resolve conflicts (Smith & Lewis, 2011), and is also an important means of fully mobilizing resources and improving management. Paradoxical leadership is a combination of paradox theory and leadership style theory to resolve various conflicts that arise in organizational development in a turbulent environment (Chen, 2008), with the aim of enabling companies to think dialectically and respond positively in response to external dynamic and complex changes (Shook, 2003). Different subjects in the organization have different interests and needs, ideas will collide, contradictions and conflicts will arise, in which how to weigh in order to make the interests of all parties to be balanced, to meet the needs of different groups of people, this is an

important test for leaders. Paradoxical leadership examines the situation, based on individual cognition and organizational characteristics, breaks the management idea of "choosing one or the other", and deals with paradoxical issues and organizational problems with the management thinking of "both" (Tierney, 2003). It helps managers to think dialectically, to find a balance between contradictions, and to achieve the result of "both-and" (Mcmanus, 2008). On the one hand, paradoxical leadership is a good way of dealing with paradoxes and organizational problems. On the one hand, although paradoxical leaders are strict in their treatment of subordinates, they will also consider differentiation, understand the flaws and strengths of their employees, and leave room for mistakes. In dealing with the work, give employees full autonomy and appropriate authorization, but also grasp the progress of the work and the right to decide; on the other hand, in dealing with the relationship between subordinates do not express too much superiority and strong hierarchical concept, and employees to maintain an appropriate distance, to achieve equality and respect. Paradoxical leadership emphasizes "both/and", and at the same time takes into account elements that seem to be either/or but are also interdependent, and demonstrates the role of coordination and balance in dealing with conflicts (Zhang & Han, 2019). Paradoxical Leadership Paradoxical leadership is like flying a kite on a string, the leader knows the right distance and scale, sometimes tight and sometimes loose, so that employees can give full play to their strengths under the rules and regulations of the organization, put forward ideas and suggestions, think positively about the work of the difficult problems, and take measures to improve the work of their own initiative, resulting in more proactive prospective behaviour to promote the development of the individual and the organization.

However, as a new type of leadership behaviour influenced by traditional Chinese philosophical thinking, there is a lack of systematic reviews on the topic of paradoxical leadership. In view of this, this paper systematically reviews and evaluates the research on paradoxical leadership, summarizes and analyses the logical system of the current research, constructs the overall framework of the research, and points out the direction of future research.

2. Paradoxical Leadership Connotation and Measurement

1) The meaning of paradoxical leadership

The concept of paradox originated in the field of philosophy and has gradually come into the research landscape of organizational management in the last two decades (Smith & Lewis, 2011). Paradox, denotes contradictory but interrelated elements, elements that seem logical in isolation, but make no sense and are irrational when they occur together (Smith & Lewis, 2011). Paradoxes are considered to be widespread in Tension (Tension) relationships that run in opposite directions and interact with each other, such as Black and White, Positive and Negative, Control and Empowerment, reflecting the degree of contradiction between opposing elements (Smith & Lewis, 2011). In the field of management,

"paradox" is defined as "elements that are permanently interdependent and contradictory". Based on previous research, scholars represented by Lewis and Smith formally proposed paradox theory based on the organizational model system of dynamic equilibrium (Hua et al., 2022). In the Eastern context, scholars drew on the philosophy of yin and yang in traditional Chinese culture as well as the Eastern mode of thinking, arguing that paradox is ubiquitous and that societies and organizations are capable of accepting paradox naturally. This provides a powerful cultural context for the emergence of paradoxical leadership styles in organizations. Zhang et al. (2015) proposed "paradoxical leadership" for the first time by combining Western leadership philosophy and Eastern yin and yang philosophy, which refers to a leader who adopts seemingly contradictory but interrelated behaviors in order to satisfy structural and subordinate work demands in the same or different time periods. Collecting and collating the relevant studies on paradoxical leadership in foreign WOS (Web of Science Core Collection) and Chinese CSSCI database (Chinese social sciences citation index), we found that Zhang et al.'s (2015) study is the first empirical study on paradoxical leadership, pointing out that holistic thinking and integrated leadership are the most important factors for paradoxical leadership. Complexity has an effect on paradoxical leadership, organizational structure has little effect on paradoxical leadership, and paradoxical leadership has a positive effect on motivational and adaptive behaviors. Chinese scholars Liu Shantang and Luo Jinlian began their research on paradoxical leadership's ability to cope in complex environments and the mechanism of influence on team innovation in 2015. After this other scholars in China also began to explore the role of paradoxical leadership style in influencing the positive behaviour of different types of employees.

Unlike the Western analytical approach of "either/or" or the Western dialectical approach that tries to reconcile opposites, paradox theory considers the problem from the perspective of "both/and", i.e., "both and both". Paradoxes are considered from a "both/and" perspective, emphasizing the connection between paradoxical dualities and the possibility of their co-existence and wholeness. While the Western "either/or" analytical approach assumes that strict control and flexible autonomy are compatible and that managers can only choose one or the other, paradoxical thinking based on the yin and yang philosophy can inspire managers to achieve long-term control by continuously granting employees the discretion to change the rules (Zhang et al., 2015). The traditional "choose one and follow the other" leadership approach is difficult to meet the dynamic needs of employees, organizations and the external environment; a leadership approach that emphasizes "dialectical unity", i.e., leadership behaviors that appear to be competitive but are in fact united to meet the competing needs of organizations and employees, is more conducive to coping with various conflicts and contradictions in organizations. The paradoxical leadership is different from the traditional paradoxical leadership. Paradoxical leadership is different from traditional leadership theories, it integrates paradox theory and lea-

dership style theory, and is a supplement and extension of existing leadership styles (Li, 2021). Paradoxical leadership is the ability to break through the "either/or" thinking and turn to the "both/and" approach to solve paradoxical problems based on individual cognition and organizational contextual characteristics (Xiong, Yu, & Chen, 2022). As the complexity and uncertainty of the environment increase, leaders not only need to flexibly shift their leadership style according to the situation, but also need to use integrated thinking to handle and coordinate conflicts within and outside the organization simultaneously with a more open and inclusive mindset.

Zhang et al., based on the Oriental Yin-Yang philosophy, define the meaning of paradoxical leadership as a leadership style that looks at problems from the perspective of the unity of opposites and applies the paradoxical thinking of "both" to satisfy the competing needs of the organization and its employees, and that deals with organizational problems in an integrated and dynamic synergistic way. There are also scholars who have defined the connotation of paradoxical leadership in different ways (Table 1). Although scholars have different views on the connotation of paradoxical leadership, in general, paradoxical leadership has three characteristics: firstly, it can tolerate the existence of paradoxical problems in the organization and see the tension caused by paradox as a way of keeping the organization alive; secondly, the leader will present an apparent contradiction in dealing with problems in the organization; thirdly, it has cognitive and behavioral flexibility, and is capable of Thirdly, they are cognitively and behaviorally flexible and are able to shift their mindset and ways of working according to the needs of the organization.

A review of existing research reveals that of the many leadership styles, Ambidextrous Leadership is the one that has more similar connotations to Paradoxical Leadership and a conceptual distinction is necessary. Ambidextrous Leadership refers to the ability of managers to implement the two types of organizational

Table 1. Summary of paradoxical leadership connotations.

Scholar and year	Paradoxical Leadership Connotation
Kauppila & Tempelaar	A leadership behaviour that combines high performance and high support
Waldman & Bowen	Leaders with self-complexity and emotion regulation traits are more able to identify and integrate contradictions
Luo Jinlian et al.	Simultaneous use of integrative and paradoxical thinking
Zhang Tao (1642-1707), Chinese landscape painter and poet	Demonstrate high performance expectations and strong management support to employees
fig. parental (often maternal) love	Leadership behaviors that pursue high performance while providing adequate support to employees

learning, Exploitation and Exploration, and their ability to flexibly switch between the two. Similar to Paradoxical Leadership, Dual Leadership takes note of the common element of dichotomous competition in organizational management and explores leadership behaviors that rationally respond to the competitive relationship, but there are also significant differences between the two (Table 2).

2) Dimensions and measurement of paradoxical leadership

Zhang et al. investigated two types of paradoxical leadership, in which people management developed a five-dimensional scale of paradoxical leadership by combining Eastern yin and yang philosophies with Western leadership theories, and Zhang et al. (2015) described paradoxical leadership behaviors as five dimensions using "both": combining egocentricity and other-centredness; maintaining both distance and intimacy; treating subordinates equally while allowing for individuality; reinforcing work requirements while allowing for flexibility; and maintaining decision-making control while allowing for autonomy; with a total of 22 question items. While Zhang and Han (2019) classified paradoxical leadership for medium- and long-term corporate development into four dimensions, the scale was developed from the CEO's perspective through interviews with 25 executives of the company from the corporate development context. Jansen et al. (2016) argued that paradoxical leadership consists of a performance dimension and a support dimension, where the performance dimension focuses on the requirement of subordinates' efficiency and behavioral constraints, and the support dimension focuses on subordinates' co-participation and fairness and openness in decision-making (Table 3).

From the existing research results, the measurement about paradoxical leadership has been widely used by scholars, compared with these measurements, with their own characteristics. The more mature scales are Zhang et al.'s

Table 2. Paradoxical leadership vs. dual leadership.

Leadership style	Dualistic character	Theoretical perspective	Spatial and temporal characteristics
Paradoxical leadership	Not necessarily in opposition to each other	Based on Contingency Theory, Organizational Learning Theory and Dynamic Competency Theory, it emphasizes the need for leaders to flexibly balance and switch between different organizational learning modes (e.g. exploratory and exploitative) and different leadership styles (e.g. transformational and transactional leadership).	Time and timing are particularly important for leadership behaviors, and dual leaders need the flexibility to adapt their leadership behaviors to rapidly changing organizational tasks, emphasizing the immediacy and non-linear nature of dual leadership
dual leadership	Clearly opposing elements	Based on the Taoist philosophy of yin and yang and the theory of paradox, the opposing elements are regarded as an organic whole, emphasizing the characteristics of the elements that are both contradictory and interdependent, and exploring how to organically coordinate the opposing elements	Examines normative leadership styles, emphasizing the underlying thinking and logic of leaders in responding to organizational conflict

Table 3. Paradoxical leadership dimensions and measurements.

dimension (math.)	element	academia
five-dimensional (22 items)	Strict requirements for work, but can be flexible; maintain control of decision-making strategy, while allowing employees to enjoy a high degree of autonomy; treat subordinates equally, but allow individuality to be reflected; maintain both distant and close relationships with employees; adhere to the self-centred and other-centred organic integration	Zhang et al. (2015)
two-dimensional (12 items)	Performance, support	Jansen et al. (2016), Kauppila and Tempelaar (2016), Dynasty Hui (2018)
four-dimensional (20 items)	Maintaining organizational stability and flexibility, focusing on shareholders and the interests of all Off subjects, compliance and shaping collective forces in the environment, Maintaining short-term efficiency and long-term development	Zhang and Han (2019)

five-dimensional scale and Jansen et al.'s two-dimensional scale. The two dimensional scale mainly measures the paradoxical leader's performance requirements and support for employees, while the five-dimensional scale mainly measures the paradoxical leader's strategies in transforming conflicts and dealing with competing demands. Compared to measuring the performance and support dimensions separately, the five-dimensional measure better reflects the paradoxical leader's embrace of the opposing ends of the paradox. In addition, the five-dimensional measure was chosen from a Chinese sample, while the two-dimensional was from a foreign sample in a Western context, and the four-dimensional scale was studied on corporate executives. In comparison, the Paradoxical Leadership Behaviour Scale developed by Zhang et al. has been more widely used by scholars at home and abroad in empirical research due to its excellent measurement reliability and validity, and has gradually become the most authoritative scale in empirical research.

3) Characteristics of Paradoxical Leadership

Professor Peng Wei pointed out in his book that paradoxical leadership contains three basic characteristics: first, inclusiveness, meaning that paradoxical leadership can accommodate the intricate and concurrent paradoxes in organizational development with an open and tolerant mindset; second, contradiction, emphasizing that in the process of dealing with paradoxes, it is necessary to use seemingly opposing but interrelated leadership behaviors to satisfy the needs of the organizational structure and the subordinates in different situations; and third, flexibility, requiring that individual cognition can be subjectively transformed between different modes of thinking while at the same time requiring individuals to be able to flexibly change their behaviors in accordance with changes in the social environment. It requires both that individual cognition can be subjectively transformed between different modes of thinking, and at the same time that individuals can flexibly change their behaviour according to

changes in the social environment and objectively adapt to the needs of organizational development.

3. Studies Related to Paradoxical Leadership

By combing through the relevant literature, current research on paradoxical leadership has achieved some results, but academic research on the topic is still in its infancy.

1) Antecedent variables of paradoxical leadership

Paradoxical leadership, as a new type of leadership style, did not mature until Zhang et al. formally proposed it in 2015, after which scholars conducted empirical research on the antecedent and outcome variables of paradoxical leadership. Zhang et al. suggested that holistic thinking, integrative complexity, and organizational structure might act as antecedent variables for. Holistic thinking can integrate concrete things and the external environment together, and view things from a holistic direction, which makes it easier for leaders with holistic thinking to form paradoxical leadership; comprehensive complexity can effectively identify differences and acknowledge the rationality of contradictions, and better balance the relationship between the contradictions, which is conducive to the formation of paradoxical leadership; organic organizations don't have standardized work and rules, which makes it easier to form a communicative and open working atmosphere, which is conducive to the formation of paradoxical leadership. Organic organizations, on the other hand, do not have standardized work and rules, and are more likely to develop a communicative and open working atmosphere, which focuses on the needs of the organization as well as the needs of the employees, and is therefore likely to have paradoxical leadership. In addition, she argues that extraversion and openness in the Big Five personality can also be used as antecedent variables and have a positive influence on paradoxical leadership, while accountability and neuroticism of superiors can negatively influence paradoxical leadership (She & Li, 2017).

2) Outcome variables of paradoxical leadership

Research on paradoxical leadership influencing outcomes has received more attention from scholars than paradoxical leadership influencing factors. The main research involves employee work behaviour, performance, innovation, team and organizational innovation. A review of the literature reveals that the focus on individual employee behaviour and innovation is significantly better than the focus on organizational and team innovation.

a) Individual level

At the individual level, the main focus is to discuss the impact of paradoxical leadership on employees' creativity, proactive behaviour and other variables. First, the impact on work behaviour. Zhang et al. (2015) pointed out that paradoxical leadership significantly affects subordinates' skilled, adaptive and proactive work behaviors by instructing them to learn to embrace the objectively ex-

isting contradictions in the enterprise and to achieve a balance between work requirements and autonomy. It has also been argued that paradoxical leadership can positively influence employees' facilitative and inhibitory constructive behaviors (Li, Yan, & Wang, 2018). On the other hand, Wang (2018) explored the effect of paradoxical leadership on employees' dualistic behaviors using the sense of work prosperity and psychological security as the dual chain mediators to promote both. Sun (2020) used dual mediating variables to explore the relationship between paradoxical leadership and employee constructive behaviour. Research has explored the impact of paradoxical leadership on organizational citizenship behaviors through the chain mediation of followers' perceptions of human feelings and overall sense of fairness and justice, using employees in southern and northern Chinese companies as research subjects. Tao, Wu, & Hu (2022) took a subordinate's response perspective and argued that paradoxical leadership can positively influence employees to work hard and work smart, which can ultimately improve their creativity, illustrating the intrinsic impact of paradoxical leadership on employees. In the study of Peng and Li, (2018), it is stated that paradoxical leadership can promote proactive behaviour of employees. Secondly, the impact on job performance. She & Quan (2017) discuss the impact of paradoxical leadership on employee service performance through the mediating role of leadership identity using hotel employees as the object of study, and concluded that paradoxical leadership positively affects employee service performance Paradoxical leadership positively affects employee service performance. Paradoxical leadership not only directly affects employee performance, but also positively affects job performance through work passion (Chu & Huang, 2020). Thirdly, it has an impact on innovation. Thirdly, it is the impact on innovation. Peng and Ma (2018) constructed a cross-level mediation model to investigate paradoxical leadership further influencing employee creativity through the role of external networks, and explored the moderating role of middle-of-the-road thinking. Paradoxical leadership can be mediated by stimulating employees' innovative self-efficacy and passion for work (Su & Thunder, 2018), promoting employees' job reinvention behaviors, working hard and working smart, and enhancing employees' creativity through the influence of the team's external network. Liu, Xu and Zhang (2021) study states that increased creativity of individuals in an organization will inevitably lead to the development of innovative behavior. Chen, and Yang, (2021) found that paradoxical leadership positively influences employees' innovative behaviors through individual duality and also positively influences employees' transgressive innovative behaviors through employees' sense of psychological security.

b) Team level

From the team level, paradoxical leadership has a facilitating effect on team innovation and creativity. Li et al. (2018) argued that paradoxical leadership can effectively resolve the paradoxical contradiction of "differentiation-integration"

in diversified teams, thus positively affecting team innovation. Luo Hu and Zhong (2017) discussed the facilitating effect of paradoxical leadership on team innovation through the mediating role of team dynamics based on innovation theory, social learning theory, and other theoretical foundations. Mammassis and Schmid (2018) argued that the interaction of power asymmetry and paradoxical leadership is related to team agility and Wang (2019) empirically tested the positive relationship between paradoxical leadership and bimodal innovation. Zhao (2021) explored the effect of paradoxical leadership on team creativity from the cognitive-emotional theory of personality system. Based on social cognitive theory and experiential learning theory, Li (2021) examined the effect of paradoxical leadership on team innovation performance and provided ideas for improving team innovation ability. Li (2021) started from the aspect of how to achieve balance and enhance team efficacy, and explored the effect of paradoxical leadership on team efficacy through the mediating role of team psychological safety. Hua, Luo and Yan (2022) explored paradoxical leadership from the perspective of knowledge-power transformation to promote team innovation through influencing the concentration of power, and then through the process of knowledge creation and integration stage. Peng and Ma (2018) found that paradoxical leadership can influence team creativity through the strength of team network ties Han, Li, and Yang (2023) positively influenced team creativity through the chain mediating effects of team initiative and external knowledge search the study of Luo Jinlian et al. A study by Luo, Hua and Zhong (2015), demonstrated that that paradoxical leadership positively affects team innovation through knowledge integration and knowledge creation (Luo et al., 2015), team dynamics (Luo et al., 2017), and knowledge power concentration (Hua et al., 2022), respectively.

c) Organizational level

At the organizational level, paradoxical leadership can have an effect on organizational performance, organizational innovation, organizational inertia, etc. Paradoxical leadership can effectively integrate contradictory needs and act as a role model, which has a significant impact on organizational binary innovation. Paradoxical leadership affects the degree of leadership admonition through ego depletion; paradoxical leadership also positively promotes corporate innovation performance through incremental and radical innovation capabilities. Zhang and Han (2019) confirmed that paradoxical leadership has an important propulsive effect on the enhancement of organizational research and development investment, market share, and company reputation, etc. Research has examined the direct and indirect effects of paradoxical leadership behaviors on organizational inertia through the mediating role of workplace exclusion. Paradoxical leadership positively influences binary innovation in organizations through binary intellectual capital. Li Gang argues that paradoxical leadership can positively influence organizational performance (Figure 1).
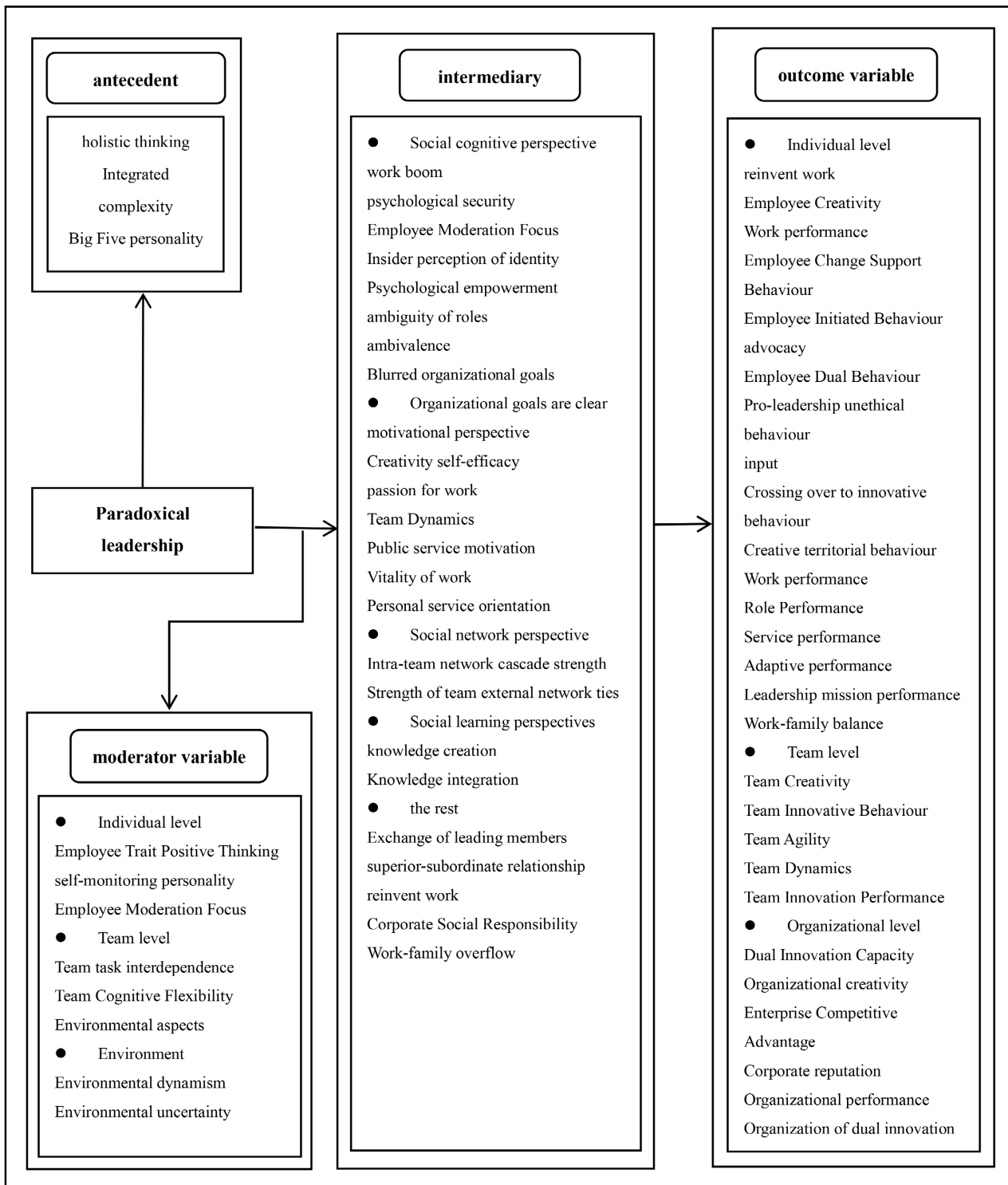
antecedent

holistic thinking
Integrated
complexity
Big Five personality

Paradoxical leadership

moderator variable

- Individual level
Employee Trait Positive Thinking
self-monitoring personality
Employee Moderation Focus
- Team level
Team task interdependence
Team Cognitive Flexibility
Environmental aspects
- Environment
Environmental dynamism
Environmental uncertainty

intermediary

- Social cognitive perspective
work boom
psychological security
Employee Moderation Focus
Insider perception of identity
Psychological empowerment
ambiguity of roles
ambivalence
Blurred organizational goals
- Organizational goals are clear
motivational perspective
Creativity self-efficacy
passion for work
Team Dynamics
Public service motivation
Vitality of work
Personal service orientation
- Social network perspective
Intra-team network cascade strength
Strength of team external network ties
- Social learning perspectives
knowledge creation
Knowledge integration
- the rest
Exchange of leading members
superior-subordinate relationship
reinvent work
Corporate Social Responsibility
Work-family overflow

outcome variable

- Individual level
reinvent work
Employee Creativity
Work performance
Employee Change Support
Behaviour
Employee Initiated Behaviour
advocacy
Employee Dual Behaviour
Pro-leadership unethical
behaviour
input
Crossing over to innovative
behaviour
Creative territorial behaviour
Work performance
Role Performance
Service performance
Adaptive performance
Leadership mission performance
Work-family balance
- Team level
Team Creativity
Team Innovative Behaviour
Team Agility
Team Dynamics
Team Innovation Performance
- Organizational level
Dual Innovation Capacity
Organizational creativity
Enterprise Competitive
Advantage
Corporate reputation
Organizational performance
Organization of dual innovation

Figure 1. A framework for integrating the current state of paradoxical leadership research.

4. Research Outlook

Literature review reveals that paradoxical leadership is based on the traditional Chinese idea of "yin-yang" and guides management practice with the management idea of "both", which is a useful exploration and supplement to the Chi-

nese organizational context. The main contributions of this paper are: trying to sort out the origin of paradoxical leadership research, clarifying its conceptual connotation, and clarifying the object of research in this field through the analysis of similar concepts; constructing a research framework of paradoxical leadership by summarizing the important factors in the formation of paradoxical leadership as well as the role and effect of paradoxical leadership on the employees and other aspects of the organization; and finally proposing the direction of future research in view of the deficiencies of the existing research. This paper attempts to draw the attention of the domestic academic community to the research field of paradoxical leadership, summarize and analyse the logical system of the current research, construct the overall framework of the research in this field, and at the same time provide guiding suggestions for the implementation of paradoxical leadership practice in enterprises and the development of paradoxical leadership research in the Chinese context.

At present, academic research on paradoxical leadership has achieved some results, but there are still some research gaps to be explored.

First, further research is needed to refine the definition and measurement of the concept of paradoxical leadership. Paradoxical leadership is a relatively new type of leadership style that breaks away from the traditional "choose one or the other" management thinking and seeks balance and overall development by taking into account the interests of all parties. Paradoxical thinking emphasizes synergy through combining and coordinating opposing factors. Whether it's "paradoxical leadership in people management" or "paradoxical leadership in long-term corporate development", it adopts the concept of "both A and B" (A and B). Both adopt the unifying structure of "both A and B" (A and B are contradictory and interdependent) to reflect the logic of "both and". However, how does the structure of "both A and B" reflect the difference in intensity of "both"? It is worth pondering and continuing to explore. The most widely used measure of paradoxical leadership is the five-dimensional, 22-item scale developed by Zhang et al. 2015, which was selected from a Chinese organizational context as a research sample, and has relatively more items. In addition to the traditional static scale measurement, future research may consider dynamic measurement based on a process perspective, or adopting methods such as rootedness theory to improve paradoxical leadership measurement.

Secondly, research on the antecedents and effects of paradoxical leadership. A review of the literature reveals that existing studies focus more on the effects of paradoxical leadership and less on the causes and influences of paradoxical leadership, which is not conducive to an in-depth understanding of the conditions and mechanisms of paradoxical leadership. The few studies that have been conducted have demonstrated that some individual cognitive factors (e.g., holistic thinking, integrative complexity, and long-term orientation) contribute to the formation of paradoxical leadership, but that the influence of situational factors is relatively weak (e.g., environmental uncertainty) or even

insignificant (e.g., organizational structure). Since paradox itself reflects a cognitive model, and paradoxical leadership is a new type of leadership behaviour that emerges from environmental uncertainty, future research can explore how leaders interpret environmental uncertainty, make decisions, and transmit and influence their subordinates based on sense-making theory, so as to deepen the internal formation mechanism of paradoxical leadership. In addition, since paradoxical leadership has deep philosophical and cultural connotations (Chen, 2008), the factors that influence paradoxical leadership may also exist outside the organization, so it is necessary to further explore the influence of contextual factors outside the organization on paradoxical leadership by influencing individual perceptions (e.g., the paradoxical state of mind) from a sociocultural perspective in the future. By exploring "why" and "when" leaders display paradoxical leadership behaviors from multiple perspectives and dynamically, the antecedents and mechanisms of paradoxical leadership can be explored in depth.

Third, comparative studies of paradoxical leadership in Chinese and Western contexts. The key theoretical foundation of paradoxical leadership is the Chinese philosophy of yin and yang (Zhang et al., 2015), and the vast majority of existing research also focuses on the Chinese context, with only a very small number of parts demonstrating the effectiveness of paradoxical leadership in Western (European) contexts. Paradoxical management ideas in China and the West have different origins, different theoretical foundations, and different connotations. It becomes important to further test the effectiveness of paradoxical leadership based on Eastern theoretical foundations in Western contexts (Zhang et al., 2015). The negative effects of paradoxical leadership in Western contexts have been demonstrated, and therefore further attention should be paid to the "double-edged sword" effects of paradoxical leadership in the future. Further cross-cultural comparisons and validation of paradoxical leadership conceptualizations can be considered, which will help to reveal the boundary conditions under which paradoxical leadership occurs and strengthen the significance of traditional Chinese cultural and philosophical thinking as a guide to management practice.

Support

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

References

Chen, H., & Yang, N. (2021). The Relationship between Paradoxical Leadership and Employees' Deviant Innovation: The Role of Psychological Security and Leadership Credibility. *Journal of Northeastern University (Social Science Edition), No. 5,* 23-30.

Chen, M. J. (2008). Reconceptualizing the Competition—Cooperation Relationship a Transparadox Perspective. *Journal of Management Inquiry, 17,* 288-304.
https://doi.org/10.1177/1056492607312577

Chu, H., & Huang, N. N. (2020). The Impact of Paradoxical Leadership on Employees' Work Performance: The Role of Dual Work Passion and Role Identity. *Financial Theory and Practice, No. 6,* 133-140.

Han, Y., Yang, L., & Yang, G. (2023). Research on the Chain Mediation Effect of Paradoxical Leadership on Team Creativity. *Soft Science, No. 6,* 138-144.

He, G. M., Liu, Y. C., & Luan, Z. Z. (2020). The High Is Restrained, the Low Is Promoted: A Review and Prospect of Paradoxical Leadership Research. *Leadership Science, No. 8,* 66-69.

Hua, C. H., Luo, J. L., & Yan, L. P. (2022). The Effects of Paradoxical Leadership on R&D Team Innovation from the Perspective of Knowledge Power. *Science and Technology Progress and Countermeasures, No. 2,* 139-149.

Jansen, J. J. P., Kostopoulos, K. C., Mihalache, O. R., & Papalexandris, A. (2016). A Socio-Psychological Perspective on Team Ambidexterity: The Contingency Role of Supportive Leadership Behaviours. *Journal of Management Studies, 53,* 939-965.
https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12183

Li, J. S. (2021). The Impact of Paradoxical Leadership on Team Innovation Performance: The Role of Failure Learning and Technological Volatility. *Technology and Economics, No. 12,* 37-50.

Li, X. Y., Yan, D., & Wang, L. (2018). The Impact of Paradoxical Leadership on Employee Voice Behavior: Psychological Security and the Role of Regulating Focus. *Business Economics, No. 3,* 102-109.

Li, Y. Z. (2021). *Research on the Impact of Paradoxical Leadership on Team Effectiveness.* Master's Thesis, Southwest University of Science and Technology.

Liu, Y. J., Xu, S. Y., & Zhang, H. (2021). Advancing Together: The Impact of Paradoxical Leadership on Employee Innovation Behavior. *Business Economics and Management, No. 9,* 34-44.

Luo, J. L., Hu, W. N., & Zhong, J. (2017). Research on the Influence Mechanism of Paradoxical Leadership and Team Vitality on Team Innovation. *Management Review, No. 7,* 122-134.

Luo, J. L., Hua, C. H., & Zhong, J. (2015). The Influence and Mechanism of Paradoxical Leadership on Knowledge Team Innovation. *Science and Technology Progress and Countermeasures, No. 11,* 121-125.

Mammassis, C. S., & Schmid, P. C. (2018). The Role of Power Asymmetry and Paradoxical Leadership in Software Development Team Agility. In K. J. Sund, R. J. Galavan, & S. Brusoni (Eds.), *Cognition and Innovation* (pp. 125-139). Emerald Publishing Limited.
https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-78769-431-620181006

Mcmanus, S. T. (2008). *Organisational Resilience in New Zealand.* Master's Thesis, University of Canterbury Civil Engineering.

Peng, W., & Li, H. (2018). The Influence Mechanism of Paradoxical Leadership on Employees' Proactive Behavior: The Role of the Internal Network Connection Strength and the Relationship between Superiors and Subordinates. *Foreign Economics and Management, No. 7,* 142-154.

Peng, W., & Ma, Y. (2018). The Influence Mechanism of Paradoxical Leadership on Team Creativity: A Social Network Theory Perspective. *Science and Technology Progress and Countermeasures, No. 22,* 145-152.

She, Z., & Quan, L. (2017). Paradoxical Leader Behaviors and Follower Job Performance: Examining a Moderated Mediation Model. *Academy of Management Annual Meeting Proceedings, 2017,* Article 13558. https://doi.org/10.5465/AMBPP.2017.13558abstract

Shook, C. L. (2003). Venture Creation and the Enterprising Individual: A Review and Synthesis. *Journal of Management, 29,* 379-399. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0149-2063(03)00016-3

Smith, W. K., & Lewis, M. W. (2011). Toward a Theory of Paradox: A Dynamic Equilibrium Model of Organizing. *The Academy of Management Review, 36,* 381-403. https://doi.org/10.5465/AMR.2011.59330958

Su, Y. (2018). The Impact of Paradoxical Leadership on Employee Creativity: The Mediating Role of Work Passion. *Technology and Economics, No. 9,* 10-17.

Sun, Y. (2020). *The Influence of Paradoxical Leadership on Employee Voice Behavior.* Master's Thesis, Chengdu University of Technology.

Tan, L., Hao, P., Yang, X., & Song, H. Y. (2020). Paradoxical Leadership: Review and Prospect. *Foreign Economy and Management, No. 4,* 63-79.

Tao, H. Y., Wu, Q. Q., & Hu, W. F. (2022). The Impact of Paradoxical Leadership Behavior on Employee Creativity. *Management Review, No. 2,* 215-227.

Tierney, K. J. (2003). *Conceptualizing and Measuring Organizational and Community Resilience: Lessons from the Emergency Response following the September 11, 2001 Attack on the World Trade Center.* Disaster Research Center.

Wang, T. (2019). *Research on the Impact of Paradoxical Leadership on the Dual Innovation of R&D Team Members.* Master's Thesis, Wuhan University of Technology.

Wang, Z. H. (2018). How Can Paradoxical Leadership Give Employees the Best of Both Worlds?—The Multiple Mediating Effects of Psychological Security and Job Prosperity. *Foreign Economics and Management, No. 3,* 107-120.

Xiong, M. M., Yu, W. X., & Chen, C. M. (2022). The Influence of Paradoxical Leadership on Employees' Entrepreneurial Behavior. *Journal of Management, No. 3,* 406-413.

Zhang, H., Kwan, H. K., Everett, A. M., & Jian, Z. (2012). Servant Leadership, Organizational Identification, and Work-to-Family Enrichment: The Moderating Role of Work Climate for Sharing Family Concerns. *Human Resource Management, 51,* 747-767. https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.21498

Zhang, Y., & Han, Y. L. (2019). Paradoxical Leader Behavior in Long-Term Corporate Development: Antecedents and Consequences. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 155,* 42-54. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2019.03.007

Zhang, Y., Waldman, D. A., Han, Y. L., & Li, X. B. (2015). Paradoxical Leader Behaviors in People Management: Antecedents and Consequences. *Academy of Management Journal, 58,* 538-566. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2012.0995

Zhao, W. Q. (2021). *The Impact of Paradoxical Leadership on Team Creativity.* Master's Thesis, Shandong University.

Zhu, Y. J., Zhang, W., Liao, J. Q., & Wang, X. T. (2019). Having Your Cake and Eating It too: The Concept, Measurement and Influence Mechanism of Paradoxical Leadership. *Human Resource Development in China, No. 8,* 31-46.