Full Length Article

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Dark Side of Paradoxical Leadership: Social Comparison Theory Perspective

Fatima Bashir¹

¹Lecturer, Air University School of Management, Air University Islamabad Pakistan

ABSTRACT

Considerable research has viewed Paradoxical leadership as a positive style of leadership in different contextual settings. But little is known how paradoxical behavior of a leader can be detrimental for followers. The present study proposed etic view of paradoxical leadership based on social comparison theory explaining how and why people make comparison with similar and dissimilar others, that might lead to interpersonal conflict which may trigger negative outcomes. We have proposed and tested a sequential mediation model between Paradoxical leadership and employee job stress through interpersonal conflict and job insecurity. The study is based on time lagged data (3 intervals apart by one month each) from 285 service sector employees of Pakistan. All measures used were validated before testing mediation model. Structure equation modeling has been used for model testing that provided a good support to the hypothesized model. Results justified that when employees make comparison among each other based on leader's behavior with them and indulge in interpersonal conflicts and feel more job insecurity that ultimately proceeds towards their job stress.

Key words: Paradoxical leadership, Interpersonal conflict, Job Insecurity, Job stress, Social Comparison Theory

1. INTRODUCTION

Organizing workforce raises multiple pressures on leaders (Evans, 2000; Handy, 1994; Smith & Lewis, 2011) such as individual-collective (Murnighan & Conlon, 1991), collaboration-control (Sundaramurthy & Lewis, 2003), flexibility-efficiency (Adler, Goldoftas, & Levine, 1999), profit-social responsibility (Margolis & Walsh, 2003) and exploration-exploitation (Smith & Tushman, 2005). As environment in organizations become faster paced, competitive and global thus, internal process of organization becomes more complex. Leader has to deal with all these complexities and contradictory demands which become increasingly persistent (Lewis, 2000). A Leader's response to

Address of Correspondence

Fatima Bashir
findfatima@gmail.com

Article info

Received Jan 04, 2021
Accepted March 27, 2021
Published March 28, 2021

such tensions is important determinant of organization's fate (Quinn, 1988).

Contingency theory of leadership relies on one response to tension. The basic assumption of contingency theory is to have fit or alignment between internal elements and external environment. Based on this approach leader may explore various conditions for selecting among contradictory and competing demands. Researchers have explored numerous contextual factors that affect the choice of demand i.e., 'either-or' (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Woodward, 1965; Tushman & Romanelli, 1985; Burns & Stalker, 1961; Siggelkow & Levinthal, 2003).

Paradox theory caters an alternative approach to deal with tensions and pressures. The focus of paradox studies is to explore ways through which organizations can show up to deal competing demands simultaneously. A continuous effort is required to deal with divergent and multiple demands to achieve long-term sustainability (Cameron, 1986; Lewis, 2000; She et al., 2020; Le et al., 2020; Zhu et al., 2020). In comparison to contingency theory (either-or perspective) the paradox theory of leadership (both-and perspective) tries to cater individual interrelated and contradictory demands simultaneously which may seem logical in isolation but absurd when put aside. A word 'paradox' refers to change, and 'paradoxical leadership' refers to leader's behavior to manage change in an organization. Smith and Lewis (2011) define paradox as a phenomenon that is interrelated and contradictory; both exist at the same time and remain there for some period. Both the event seems logical and rational when considered in isolation, but it seems irrational and absurd when put together.

A leader who deals with snowball change to meet demands of employees and organization structure, his behavior needs to be flexible. Based on this rational Zhang et. al., (2015) proposed 'Paradoxical leader behavior' in which he introduces the scale and proposes the possible positive antecedents and consequences. Five fundamental behavioral dimensions of paradoxical behavior of a leader in managing workforce are (i) joining self-centeredness with other-centeredness (ii) upholding distance and closeness both (iii) consider subordinates uniformly, while permitting individualization (iv) imposing work requirements while permitting flexibility; and (v) maintaining decision control, while sanctioning autonomy. All these dimensions point towards positive side of

paradoxical leadership. Leaders who engage in paradoxical behavior and succeed to satisfy their followers are most appreciated in integrative settings. The researchers today are still focusing on which pole leader should emphasize and at what time (Clegg, Cuhna, & Cuhna, 2002; Peng & Nisbett, 1999; Zhu et al., 2020). There may be competing and interrelated demands which leader has to manage like stability and change (Farjoun, 2010), autonomy and control (Brown and Eisenhardt, 1997), Routine and innovation (Feldman, 2003), positive and negative (Cameron, 1999), authentic and not portraying true self (Goffee and Jones, 2005; Ibarra, 2015), exercising authority and sharing power (De Vries, Vries, Pathak and Paquin, 2011), controlling and empowering (Warner, 2007). There is scarcity of evidence to justify dark side of paradoxical leadership.

Leader's behavior shape followers' attitude, based on social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) what happen when followers under paradoxical leader start comparing self with others? A leader when catering individual needs of a follower, other team members may take it as favoritism. Jealousy and competition can be strongest reasons to have negative outcomes of paradoxical behavior of a leader. In presence of jealousy and competition, the rate of social comparisons will increase. Although as stated in literature paradoxical behavior of a leader has positive outcomes but based on Social Comparison Theory by Leon Festinger (1954) it may yield negative outcomes. There is an urge to see dark side of paradoxical leadership (Zhang et. al., 2015).

The concept of social comparison theory enjoys' status of most studied topic in social psychology from last 50 years (Festinger, 1954; Gilbert, Giesler, & Morris, 1995; Mussweiler, Rüter, & Epstude, 2004a; Stapel & Blanton, 2004; Zhu et al., 2020). Fersteinger (1954) focused on the realm of abilities and underscored how individuals use knowledge about others to have an understanding about them. The reason behind popularity of social comparison is that it is embedded in human nature; we compare ourselves with others intentionally or unintentionally. Social comparison theory given was laid on the basis that individuals have certain drive to gain precise self-evaluations. According to this theory, individuals evaluate and assess their abilities and opinions by comparing with others. Social comparison is a psychological mechanism inducing people's judgments, behaviours, and experiences. The basic purpose behind comparison

is to reduce uncertainty in their domain and a way to define 'Self'. A leader when managing people with 'both-and' perspective, there is a likelihood that employees indulge in comparing themselves with others. Individuals usually opt for comparisons when they have information about others i.e., what they can or cannot do, what they have achieved or not, what status they are enjoying, etc. And then they relate other's information with their own information (Festinger, 1954; Dunning & Hayes, 1996; Franken et al., 2020; Corcoran, Crusius and Mussweiler, 2011). Employees usually have a bank of knowledge about each other's work and personal affairs. There may be an element of jealousy or unfair treatment which fosters comparisons.

We are proposing that when a leader faces interrelated and contradictory issues (change) and tries to manage it altogether, followers may indulge in comparison complexities. Consider a situation in which employees ask for a day off from a leader. 'Why a leader grants him a holiday, and didn't allow me to take a day off when I asked yesterday'? In such situations he may not consider some very genuine reasons for a holiday but will start comparing. Employees usually take the information of others and start evaluating themselves. An employee may perceive that his abilities are above or under his other fellow that is why he is not adjusted referred to any particular issue. Festinger (1954) based on his hypothesis predicted that incorrect information and appraisal of other's abilities might be fatal and may lead to negative consequences. Based on social comparison theory Festinger (1954) proposed that comparisons may lead to change in behavior, and lack of uniformity becomes unpleasant for employees and everyone else (negative consequences).

The main objective of paradoxical leadership is to manage a balance of equilibrium between paradoxical tension, management strategies, acceptance, salient tensions, and sustainability (Smith and Lewis, 2011). The balance of equilibrium may get trembled when employees start comparing themselves with similar others. It is follower's discretion to take paradoxical behavior of a leader as an element of stress i.e., by including in comparisons. Employees are very quick in evaluating consideration given to others, and they may use the same set of information for self-evaluation. Just in case the self-evaluations are negative it may nurture negative consequences. In social

comparisons, employees have to utilize a little information and can quickly come on the results of self-evaluation based on categorical thinking (Macrae & Bodenhausen, 2000; Tversky and Kahneman, 1974). While comparing there may be numerous goals in employees mind like self-evaluation, self-improvement, self-enhancement, self-visualization, and self-knowledge. (Festinger, 1954; Taylor & Lobel, 1989; Taylor et al., 1996; Wills, 1981; Mussweiler & Epstude, 2009).

Employees when comparing self and others have likelihood to exhibit interpersonal conflicts, which may become a source of job insecurity and thus it may lead to perceived stress. The main effect of paradoxical behavior of a leader on subordinates widely depend on whether the employee themselves endorse ‘both-and’ perspective or not. The employees who endorse both-and perspective are more likely to appreciate behavior of a leader, but followers with ‘either-or’ perspective are likely to be uncomfortable with paradoxical leader (DeRue & Ashford, 2010). Here the abilities of a leader also count in, like at what time and situation he is choosing which pole of behavior.

We are unsure about how paradoxical behavior of a leader manifest in case of Pakistan where challenges are different from West. Leadership is the main domain to be studied in developing countries so that they may not hinder economic development and human progress of a country (She et al., 2020; Bloom, Lemos, Sadun, Scur & Van Reenen, 2014; Kamoche, 1997; Zoogah, Peng & Woldu, 2015; Franken et al., 2020).

Employees may make comparisons under the supervision of Paradoxical Leader which may evoke interpersonal conflict. The conflict which is purely based on leader’s behavior may foster job insecurity. Literature supports positive relationship between job insecurity and job stress (Ashford, Lee, and Bobko 1989; Blau, Tatum, McCoy, Dobria, and Ward-Cook 2004; Lee, Bobko, and Chen 2006; Caplan, Cobb, French, Van Harrison, and Pinneau 1975; Deng et al., 2020; Wu et al., 2021; Schwepker et al., 2021).

The rationale behind conducting this research was to answer three central questions of social comparison theory. The research questions are 1) Does Paradoxical behavior of a leader act as a factor that force people to engage in social comparisons? 2). What is the influence of comparison on self? 3) Does social comparison lead to conflict

and negative outcomes?

Using the theoretical foundations of Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954), we postulate those employees working under leader who exhibit paradoxical behavior are more likely to indulge in comparisons which may increase interpersonal conflict. We thus postulate a sequential mediation framework where higher Paradoxical leadership might invoke interpersonal conflict followed by job insecurity which may lead to mistreatment behaviors like job stress.

1.1. Theory and Hypothesis

▪ Relationship between Paradoxical Leadership, Interpersonal Conflict and Job Insecurity:

The definition of paradox stated by Smith and Lewis (2011) ‘Contradictory yet interrelated elements that exist simultaneously and persist over time’. The definition articulates key characteristics of paradoxical behavior i.e., inconsistency and dynamic, which may lead to tension and conflict (Smith and Lewis, 2015). Leaders enjoy key position in an organization and if has ‘both-and’ perspective, he has to maintain dynamic equilibrium to be effective (Smith, 2011). Leader with such goal will not focus on consistency rather he would purposely embrace paradoxes in front of employees. Leader has a very crucial position in which he has to compose his team well. Consider a situation in which leader has ‘both-and’ perspective but his followers do not share the same line. In such kind of situation there is a possibility that leader’s action and behavior might be taken as favoritism by other employees. A leader’s choice of behavior may force employees to compare self with others. Organization comprises of diverse workforce and all of them have their own mindset. A leader has to satisfy all of them, which at times become problematic.

According to Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954) people when compare themselves with others (upward-downward comparison) may have detrimental effects. According to research conducted by Trampe et al. (2007) women reported that they were unhappy with their body when they compare it with others. They also identified that women who were satisfied from their body reported that they don’t compare themselves with others. This potentially means that comparisons take individuals towards

unhappiness and dissatisfaction. As a result of probably unhappiness, dissatisfaction, favoritism or competition, there are greater chances that employees will coddle in interpersonal conflict. Thus, we are proposing that when a leader is catering ‘both-and’ perspective there are more chances that employees indulge in comparisons. When employees compare self with others, they may endorse negative feelings about one another which act as a promoter of interpersonal conflict. Once individuals start comparing themselves with similar/dissimilar others they are more likely to get into conflict and job stress. A leader displaying paradoxical behavior has to consider all employees, their needs, demands, problems and then he has to select which behavior to choose for whom. In such cases, employees may face difficulty in understanding the decisions of their leader, which give them way to indulge in comparisons which has negative outcomes.

When employee perceives favouritism or is unable to fully understand paradox behavior of a leader, he may utilize his cognitive resources in comparing self with others to understand leader behavior (Dashuai et al., 2020; Li et al., 2020). The comparisons and interpersonal conflicts are just because of leader; thus, it will lead to job insecurity. Understanding leader behavior and leading style may create confusion for employees. This confusion promotes comparison between self and other which may lead to interpersonal conflict and job insecurity. An employee who perceives favoritism, he is more likely to indulge in interpersonal conflict. Interpersonal conflict can be behavioral, cognitive and affective. As the main reason of interpersonal conflict is when one perceives unwanted interference, favoritism, confusion and injustice as a result he may get frustrated. In case of frustration, he may compare for self-evaluations thus, we can predict that paradoxical behavior of a leader may lead to interpersonal conflict and job insecurity.

Thus, we hypothesize that,

H_{1a}: *Paradoxical Behaviour of a leader has positive relationship with interpersonal conflict.*

H_{1(b)}: *Paradoxical behavior of a leader has positive relationship with Job Insecurity.*

▪ **Relationship between Interpersonal Conflict, Job Insecurity and Job Stress:**

Interpersonal conflict refers to conflicting demands of individuals. Interpersonal conflict has three main components i.e., behavioural, cognitive, and affective. Behavioural component comprises of employee's interference in each other's objectives. Cognitive component is the disagreement between two parties whose interests and objectives are contradictory with one another. Lastly, affective component involves negative emotions of individuals in conflict. Interpersonal conflict at workplace is largely seen to incur negative outcomes like stress, depression, and anxiety (Frone, 2000; Spector and Jex, 1998; De Clercq et al., 2020; Yasmeen et al., 2020; Abugre et al., 2020). According to meta-analysis by Spector and Jex (1998) reveals that Interpersonal conflict has positive and significant relationship with stress and turnover intention and negative relationship with satisfaction and commitment.

According to social comparison theory when people are involved in comparisons their job insecurity may increase which may lead to job stress. As job insecurity has positive relationship with job stress. It is incapability of individuals to evaluate their abilities and opinions, for that they take shoulder of others and compare themselves with similar/dissimilar others. Comparison always gives one party an upper hand over the other. We are proposing that individuals may believe that their abilities are not accommodated as others are. Employees may feel insecure about their job and thus level of job stress will rise. Literature proves that interpersonal conflict leads to stress and turnover intention. The first step to turnover intention is job insecurity which may further lead to high level of stress in employees. In state of interpersonal conflict where stress, depression, anxiety, insecurity (Frone, 2000; Vui-Yee et al., 2020; Karatepe et al., 2020) and emotional exhaustion are high an individual may utilize his cognitive resources and compare self with others. Theoretically Social comparison Theory considers comparison as state of art of human nature, which may have negative impact on relationships. We believe that quality of relationship is one of the most important ingredients at workplace.

Based on Social Comparison theory we may predict that due to comparison employees may have interpersonal conflicts, because of which job insecurity will rise.

Due to job insecurity, employee's level of job stress will increase. The relationship between interpersonal conflict and negative outcomes is well established in literature. According to Social Comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) the main reason of stress is comparison between self and others. When an individual is in conflict necessarily, he may feel insecure. The job insecurity will then raise level of job stress.

Thus, we hypothesize that:

H_{2(a)}: *Interpersonal conflict has positive relationship with Job Insecurity.*

H_{2(b)}: *Interpersonal conflict has positive relationship with Job Stress.*

H_{2(c)}: *Job Insecurity has positive relationship with Job Stress.*

▪ **Relationship between Paradoxical behavior of a leader, Job Insecurity and Job Stress**

A leader who can manage paradox in an organization is considered an effective leader. Working environment is taken as central life for some people. When a leader is managing a workforce with 'both-and' perspective, his followers may face difficulty in understanding the decisions and may perceive leader as assertive. Employees don't approach the leader for justification of his decisions. They utilize their mental/cognitive skills and start comparing self with others. In comparison, it's their choice to rate other's abilities and opinion. Under paradoxical leader comparisons may lead to negative outcomes like job stress (Chen et al., 2020; Spielberger et al., 2020; Ryu et al., 2020).

While managing paradox, leader may unintentionally cater needs of specific set of employees most often or he may accommodate them more frequently. Such kind of situations may support employees to make comparisons which will lead to job insecurity and job stress. A leader here is standing on a very crucial position where he has to manage contradictory and interrelated demands, which justify conflicts and thus may lead to negative outcomes.

Thus, we hypothesize that:

H_{3(a)}: *Paradoxical behavior of a leader has positive relationship with Job stress.*

H_{3(b)}: *Paradoxical behavior of a leader has positive relationship with Job Insecurity.*

▪ **The Mediating role of Interpersonal Conflict and Job Insecurity between Paradoxical Leadership and Job Stress:**

Employee's expectations and competing demands at times evoke tensions which leader has to confront (Lewis, 2000). According to both-and' philosophy, a leader is trying to fulfill individual demands by keeping in view set policies and procedures. Here comes the concept of favoritism, in a practical scenario if employees perceive that his leader only cares about the needs and demands of certain individuals, interpersonal conflict arises (Wu et al., 2021; Schwepker et al., 2021; Labrague et al., 2020). A leader may try to focus on every individual, but at times it is not possible, some might be overlooked, and others might be under looked. Perceptions are very strong indicator of behavior, and if employee perceives un-just behavior of a leader, he may start comparing self with others. A strong interpersonal conflict arises in situations where employee believes that his needs are not catered as compared to his peer needs. Interpersonal conflict leads to serious negative outcomes. Leader should pose three main skills i.e., acceptance, differentiation and integration which enable him to meet the challenges of both-and in managing workforce otherwise he may to confront interpersonal conflict (Smith, Besharov, Wessels and Chertok, 2012; De Clercq et al., 2020; Yasmeen et al., 2020; Abugre et al., 2020; Kadir et al., 2020)). Workforce may stay in illusion and believe that paradoxical behavior of a leader is for specific set of individuals and not for us. This kind of comparisons may foster interpersonal conflict which may lead to adverse outcomes like job insecurity and job stress (Akhlaghimofrad et al., 2021; Scanlan et al., 2020; Doroudi et al., 2020; Zhao et al., 2020). The element of favoritism or other negative thoughts may spur conflict among workforce which may hinder their performance.

Thus, we hypothesize that,

H₄: *Interpersonal Conflict mediates the relationship between Paradoxical Leadership and Job Insecurity.*

Job insecurity is one of a very important constructs in case employee is unable to cope with different situations in organization. A lot of research is already done in the field of job insecurity, its antecedents, and consequences. Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt

(1984), takes a lead in giving a comprehensive definition and outcomes of job insecurity construct. Accordingly, job insecurity is a situation in which an employee feels powerless and still he has to continue this job (Mahmoud et al., 2021; Darvishmotevali et al., 2020; Karatepe et al., 2020; Wu et al., 2020; Vui-Yee et al., 2020). Job insecurity is taken as a negative construct in literature. If an employee is high on job insecurity it may lead to negative work outcomes (performance related), attitude and behaviors (Reisel et. al., 2010; Wu et al., 2020; Vui-Yee et al., 2020). Job insecurity is considered as a job threat (Ashford, Lee, and Bobko 1989; Blau, Tatum, McCoy, Dobria, and Ward-Cook 2004; Lee, Bobko, and Chen 2006; Caplan, Cobb, French, Van Harrison, and Pinneau 1975). Employees when compare self with others, there interpersonal conflict may rise. Because of this interpersonal conflict, employee's job insecurity will raise which further leads to high level of job stress.

Thus, we hypothesize:

H₅: *Job insecurity mediates the relationship between Interpersonal conflict and stress.*

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1. Participants and Procedures

We proposed sequential mediation model, for which we utilized a multi-wave design of research. Our variables were temporally segregated for each time interval for about a month. All the variables of this study are self-reported, whereas paradoxical behavior of a leader is leader reported. We conducted a field survey with data separated on three-time intervals. Predominantly, we tapped independent variable at time 1 (i.e., Paradoxical behavior of a leader in managing people). Mediator variable was tapped at time-2 (Interpersonal conflict). And Outcomes (i.e., Perceived Stress) and Mediator 2 (i.e., Job Insecurity) were tapped at time-3. Entire set of variables were tapped with approximately 1 month time lag between each point of measurement through self-reporting and leader reporting.

Field data was gathered from employees working in different organization in the Service Sector of Pakistan. These organizations are positioned in Pakistan located near

twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Purely personal contacts were used to gain access through various departments in organizations. Permission was taken from HR department of respective organizations which authorizes us to collect data over a period of 3-5 months. Questionnaires were distributed randomly with a cover letter clearly pronounce purpose of the study, voluntary participation, and maintenance of confidentiality. Respondents were given full assurance about confidentiality of their responses and results. Personal information is collected to match the record on three-time intervals. To carry out time-lag study we assigned a unique ID number to each respondent which was mentioned on their questionnaire. It became easy for us to identify, enter the data, and avoid data nesting.

At time-1 we distributed about 800 survey questionnaires out of which 600 were completely acceptable which results in a response rate of 75%. After 1 month time period we contacted first wave respondents and requested them to fill out questionnaires for time-2 (mediator). We received 480 usable questionnaires generating response rate of 80%. After 1 month we again contacted the respondents to fill questionnaires for last round of survey i.e., time-3. After completing third round of data collection, we had 285 completed and usable questionnaires resulting in a response rate of 71.3% and overall rate of response was 35.6%.

Participants of our study belonged to various managerial levels and were fluctuated in terms of tenure, age, gender, and other demographical characteristics. Our final sample embraced of 53.9% males and 46.1% females. Utmost respondents belonged to Account/Finance/Audit (27.1%), had qualification up to master's degree or above (90.5%) and were majorly entry level managers (35.6%). Other than frequencies of these demographic characteristics, the bulk participants in our study have Account/Finance and Audit as their key area of specialization (28.1). Participants total working experience was 6 years ($SD=1.47$) and present working experience in current organization was 5 years ($SD=1.7$).

2.2. Measures

Higher education institutions in Pakistan are catering English as primary medium for delivering instructions. English language is taken as an official means of

communication and is extensively understandable by employees working in Service Sector of Pakistan. Cherry on the top is that majority respondents were holding master's degree or above as their present qualification which broadly indicates their aptitude to read and interpret text provided in English Language. Literature clearly depicts that there were no major concerns regarding English language in conducting surveys in Pakistan (Abbas, Raja, Darr & Bouckennooghe, 2014; Naseer, Raja, & Donia, 2016; Naseer, Raja, Syed, Donia & Darr, 2016).

Keeping in view the reasons mentioned above we kept the opted scales in original version which were in English language rather than translating them in Urdu, to rule out hurdles pertaining to language while data collection. All measures (Paradoxical leadership, interpersonal conflict, Job Insecurity and Job Stress) had a 7-point likert scale ranging from 1=Strongly Disagree to 7=Strongly Agree.

Paradoxical Leadership. The scale taken to measure paradoxical leadership is taken from Zhang et.al, (2015) which is a 22 item scale. The Cronbach alpha reliability of this measure in the current study is 0.88. The items are measured on 7-point likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. Sample items includes "Uses a fair approach to treat all subordinates uniformly, but also treats them as individuals"; "Puts all subordinates on an equal footing but considers their individual traits or personalities".

Job Stress. To measure Job, stress a scale is adapted from Parker and DeCotus (1983) which has 13 items. The items are measured on 7-point likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The internal reliability of all items in the scale is 0.81.

Interpersonal Conflict. To measure interpersonal conflict scale was adapted from conflict measures which is 8 items used by Jehn (1998) and Cox (1995). The items are measured in 7-point likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The items are like, "I disagree with people at work because we have different backgrounds, personalities, or political views", "I often get into conflicts with people at work over personal differences". The internal reliability of all items in this scale is 0.83.

Job Insecurity. Job insecurity is tapped in the study using De Witte (2000) Job Insecurity Inventory. The items in the scale measure the level of insecurity an employee feels at work. It has 11 items. The items are like 'I will soon lose my job', 'I fear I will

lose my job'. Cornbach alpha coefficient is 0.92.

3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

3.1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Table 1 show the descriptive statistics, correlation and reliabilities of variables used in this study. Before running the correlation analysis, we conducted one way Analysis of variance (ANOVA) to identify controls for our study. We found significant differences in our study's dependent variables because of educational qualifications. Education had two categories i.e., 1= Bachelors or below and 2= Masters and above. Various tests were run to find significance of sequential mediation. To prove our hypothesis, we run Full measurement model followed by Structural equation modeling (SEM), and we used Process (Hayes, 2013) to further verify indirect effects.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics, Correlation and Reliabilities						
	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
PL T1	3.8	.68	1			
IPC T2	4.5	.65	.42**	1		
JI T3	3.9	.86	.51**	.37**	1	
JS T3	3.8	.51	.37**	.45**	.59**	1
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).N = 285 T1 = time 1; T2 = time 2; T3 = time3 PLT1 = Paradoxical behavior of a Leader; IPCT2 = Interpersonal Conflict; JI3 = JobInsecurity; JST3= Job Stress.						

The direct relationship between PL and IPC ($B=.51, p<.001$), PL and JI ($B=.21, p<.001$), IPC and JI ($B=.37, p<.001$), IPC and JS ($B=.44, p<.001$), JI and JS ($B=.59, P<0.01$), PL and JS ($B=.37, P<0.01$) and PL and JI ($B=.51, p<0.01$) are positive and significant. Based on analysis our direct hypothesis $H_{1(a,b)}$, $H_{2(a,b,c)}$ and $H_{3(a,b)}$ are proved.

Table 2. Standardized direct path coefficients of the hypothesized Model			
	Path	Estimate	SE
H1 (a)	PL→IPC	0.51***	0.04
H1 (b)	PL → JI	0.21***	0.08
H2	IPC→ JI	0.37***	0.07
H3 (a)	IPC→JS	0.44***	0.04
H3 (b)	JI→JS	0.59***	0.28
H4 (a)	PL→JS	0.37***	0.04
H4 (b)	PL→JI	0.51***	0.06

*** $p \leq .001$, ** $p \leq .01$, * $p \leq .05$

N = 285

T1 = time 1; T2 = time 2; T3 = time3

PLT1 = Paradoxical behavior of a Leader; IPCT2 = Interpersonal Conflict; JI3 = Job Insecurity; JST3= Job Stress.

3.2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The present study employed time wave longitudinal research design, for which the data is collected at three different time intervals from two different sources i.e., self and leader. To rule out biasness and ensure the discriminant validity of the variables which were tapped at the same time period and from same source, we conducted Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFAs). Based on the recommendations offered by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), we ran one-to one CFA by pairing of a 2-factor model with a 1 factor model for the variables which were measured at the same time and from the same source. In Pairing three factor and four factor show better results as compared to one factor. To check the validity of our variables we ran Full Measurement model. The model fit indices indicate that proposed model is the most suitable one showing relatively better fit ($\chi^2 = 802.4$, $df = 523$, $p < .000$; CFI = 0.95, NFI = 0.85, GFI = 0.89, TLI = 0.94, IFI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.049).

Model Test TABLE 3. Model Fit Indices for CFAs									
Model Test TABLE 3 Model Fit Indices for CFAs	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	CFI	NFI	GFI	TLI	RMR	RMSEA
<i>For T1</i>									
1 factor PL	232.4	133	1.74	.95	.87	.94	.91	.07	.05
<i>For T2 IV and Mediators</i>									
1 factor (PL,IPC and JI Combined)	3587.4	560	6.4	.39	.36	.53	.35	.18	.13
3 factor (PL,IPC and JI)	832.2	459	1.81	.92	.83	.85	.90	.10	.05
<i>For T3 1 factor JS</i>									
1 factor JS	43.5	14	3.11	.95	.92	.96	.92	.05	.08
All Variables 1 factor (PL, IPC, JI and JS Combined)	5259.4	860	6.11	.35	.32	.48	.32	.17	.13
4 factors (PL, IPC, JI a JS)	802.4	523	1.53	.95	.85	.89	.94	.06	.05
N = 285, T1 = time 1; T2 = time 2; T3 = time3 PLT1 = Paradoxical behavior of a Leader; IPCT2 = Interpersonal Conflict; JI3 = Job Insecurity; JST3= Job Stress., Best model fits are given in bold									

To verify indirect effects, we used Process (Hayes, 2013) technique. Authors provide a SPSS macro to deploy bootstrapping technique for robust test. Paradoxical leadership was found to have a positive and indirect effect on Job Insecurity through Interpersonal Conflict ($B=.193$, $p<.001$). Job insecurity act as a mediator between Interpersonal conflict and Job Stress ($B=.72$, $p<.001$). The formal two tailed significance test assuming a normal distribution showed that the indirect effect of Interpersonal Conflict and Job Insecurity on Paradoxical Leadership and Job Stress was significant and positive (Sobel effect= .104, $z = 3.16$, $p<.001$) and (Sobel effect= .14, $z = 5.62$, $p<.001$) respectively. Bootstrap results confirmed the Sobel Test (see Table 5), with a bootstrapped 95% CI around the indirect effect not containing zero (.067, .38) and (.319, .178). Thus, Hypotheses 4 and 5 are accepted.

We compared alternative structural model with hypothesized model See Table 4. The hypothesized model explained the best model fit out of the rest.

Table 4.Comparison of Alternative Structural Models										
	Model Test	χ^2	Df	χ^2/df	CFI	NFI	GFI	TLI	RMR	RMSEA
1	Hypothesized Model : Indirect paths from PL to outcome (JS) through IPC and JI	990.35	548	1.8	.96	.87	.89	.93	.08	.05
2	Direct and Indirect paths from PL through JI and IPC to outcome (JS).	3607.5	737	4.9	.53	.48	.60	.50	.16	.12
3	Parallel mediation: IPC and JI as parallel mediators.	3534.4	736	4.8	.54	.49	.61	.57	.14	.12
N = 285, T1 = time 1; T2 = time 2; T3 = time3 PLT1 = Paradoxical behavior of a Leader; IPCT2 = Interpersonal Conflict; JI3 = Job Insecurity; JST3= Job Stress. Best model fits are given in bold										

Table.5. Results of Mediation Hypotheses									
Bootstrap Results for Direct and Indirect Effects (Bias Corrected Confidence Interval method)						Indirect Effects using Sobel			
	Paths	Effect	SE	LL 99%CI	UL 99%CI	Effect	SE	Z	p
H4	PL→IPC→JI	.193	.08	.067	.381	.104	.03 3	3.16	.001
H5	IPC→JI→JS	.72	.42	.319	.178	.146	.02 6	5.62	.001
N = 285 T1 = time 1; T2 = time 2; T3 = time3 PLT1 = Paradoxical behavior of a Leader; IPCT2 = Interpersonal Conflict; JI3 = Job Insecurity; JST3= Job Stress. Bootstrap sample size = 5,000. LL = lower limit; CI = confidence interval; UL = upper limit									

4. DISCUSSION

The Paradoxical behavior of a leader in managing people is one of the emerging types of leadership in literature that continues to attract extensive interest from both researchers and practitioners across the globe (Zhang et.al, 2015). The majority of studies in the Paradoxical leadership domains have postulated the favorable effects of enriching jobs and motivating workforce, with an entire absence of research on its negative effects. Recent studies have also suggested the need to investigate the processes through which the dark side of Paradoxical leadership becomes evident on individual and work-related outcomes.

In addition, reviews, and research on Paradoxical behavior of a leader in managing workforce call for taking into account the role of interpersonal conflict and stress in explaining whether paradoxical behavior of a leader leads to negative outcomes (Zhang, 2015; Ishaq et al., 2020; McAdam et al., 2020). The current study contributes to the literature on Paradoxical leadership by unveiling the dark side of Paradoxical leadership by suggesting the mediating role of interpersonal conflict and job insecurity which would spark mistreatment behaviors like Job stress in the workplace. Overall, we found very good support for our sequential mediation framework where interpersonal conflict and job insecurity mediated the negative effects of Paradoxical leadership on Job stress. Our results proved the entire proposed hypothesis by showing significant relationship with each other. Thus, we can now confidently say that paradoxical behavior

of a leader may evoke interpersonal conflicts because employees may start comparing self with others (social comparison theory; Festinger, 1954). The ultimate reason behind interpersonal conflict is leader's behavior which may evoke job insecurity. Job insecurity will raise an employee's stress level on job.

4.1. Practical Implications

Our study provides implications for managers and organizations. the results indicate that increased paradoxical behavior of a leader may increases interpersonal conflict which may prove to be hazardous for employee's performance and growth. Applying 'both-and' perspective in societies where they are reluctant to accept change may lead to stress for employees. Managers must make necessary efforts to reduce uncertainty and ambiguity associated with high Paradoxical behavior of a leader. Trainings should be provided on how to deal with interpersonal conflict and promoting quality ties in organization. Seminars and mentorships should reduce risk and help employees gain more control with paradoxical leader. Managers should also increase quality of relationship with subordinates so that it becomes easy for them to understand their leader. The decisions taking place needs to be communicated to workforce well before time and if possible, then reasons for taking a decision can also be shared so that the concept of favoritism is undermine. Our study also sheds light by showing that employees may perceive paradoxical behavior as a threat and indulge in interpersonal conflict and job insecurity which leads to ill-treatment behaviors like job stress. Managers should equip employees in gaining more confidence to accept paradox.

Trainings on change management and risk-taking initiatives might aid employees on how to initiate changes and how to react under unstructured situations. Performance simulation exercises should be provided as part of on job trainings whereby employees are taught on how to come up with new and creative solutions to problems. Organizational rewards and compensation systems should encourage employees who come with diverse ideas and suggestions. Emotional management and stress management programs should be conducted so that employees express their bottled-up feelings associated with difficult tasks on job and avoid engaging in deviant and uncivil behaviors.

Our study is unique as it utilizes longitudinal temporally separated data collected at three different time periods from employees. Employing multi-wave data lessens the chances of mono method bias particularly when testing complicated sequential mediation models. In addition, we used Process (Hayes, 2013) which utilizes bootstrapped confidence intervals for confirming mediation concurrently, CFA for validation, and SEM for mediation. The findings of the study and the substantiation of all the direct, indirect, and conditional indirect effects signify the importance and methodological advantage of employing this technique for verifying complex sequential mediation models.

4.2. Limitations

Though the current study put forward a new angle of Paradoxical leadership on the basis of Social Comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) to justify when and why Paradoxical leadership might spark undesirable effects in the workplace, still it is not free from limitations. Our study's findings might be interpreted with caution as bulk of the research in this domain has highlighted the beneficial effects of Paradoxical leadership. Secondly, we took the managing people domain of Paradoxical leadership disregarding its organizational setting dimensions. Thirdly, although our study utilized a time lagged research design with data from independent sources, it cannot be classified as a pure longitudinal design as all the study variables were not tapped at all the time periods.

4.3. Future Directions

Future researchers can expand on our current framework and also suggest other mechanisms and conditions under which Paradoxical leadership might lead to unfavorable outcomes. For example, it might be useful to examine dispositional traits such as Negative Affectivity and contextual factors such as POP which might signal which personality traits under which contextual factors might be more likely to perceive high Paradoxical leadership as a way leading to interpersonal conflict. It would also be interesting to look in to all the five cultural dimensions of national culture and see which out of these dimensions play a significant role in making Paradoxical leadership being viewed as a source of interpersonal conflict. Researchers in future can also examine other attitudinal, behavioural, and affective outcomes of Paradoxical leadership such as

workplace deviance, burnout, turnover intentions, job performance etc. and investigate why and how Paradoxical leadership can negatively affect these outcomes. For future research can also theorize and test cross-cultural models by comparing whether Paradoxical leadership leads to favorable or unfavourable effects in different cultures and why this happens. Lastly, future researchers can also employ a full longitudinal research design where all the research model variables are measured at all time periods.

5. CONCLUSION

This study offers a unique opportunity to test how, why, and when Paradoxical leadership might be a burden for employees and create insecurity. Our results provide good support for the dark side of Paradoxical leadership in a new and developing country context.

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