

# Research on the Influence of Paradoxical Leadership on Compulsory Organizational Citizenship Behavior

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**Purpose:** According to attribution theory, the purpose of this paper is to examine the relationship between paradoxical leadership and employees' compulsory organizational citizenship behavior, research the mediating and moderating effects of work pressure perception and leadership member exchange differentiation.

**Participants and Methods:** The data collection work was carried out with 329 employees as the research object, and empirical tests were carried out using confirmatory factor analysis and hierarchical regression analysis methods.

**Results:** The results of the empirical test show that: paradoxical leadership has a significant positive effect on employees' compulsory organizational citizenship behavior; work pressure perception plays a mediating role between paradoxical leadership and employee's compulsory organizational citizenship behavior; leadership member exchange differentiation plays a moderating role between paradoxical leadership and work pressure perception. Paradoxical leadership will lead employees to adopt compulsory organizational citizenship behavior. Moreover, organizations should reduce employees' perception of work pressure and leadership member exchange differentiation.

**Conclusion:** The results of the study provide positive suggestions for reducing the compulsory organizational citizenship behavior of employees by focusing on the behavior of paradoxical leadership, thereby promoting the improvement of corporate performance.

**Innovations:** 1) The research on the influence of paradoxical leadership on compulsory organizational citizenship behavior reveals the "dark side" of the influence of paradoxical leadership on employee behavior. 2) By introducing work pressure perception, this paper reveals the mechanism of action between paradoxical leadership and compulsory organizational citizenship behavior, which provides a new research perspective for understanding the formation mechanism of employees adopting compulsory organizational citizenship behavior. 3) This paper confirms that leadership member exchange differentiation can positively moderate the relationship between paradoxical leadership and work pressure perception.

**Keywords:** attribution theory, paradoxical leadership, compulsory organizational citizenship behavior, work pressure perception, leadership member exchange differentiation

## Introduction

In today's reality of global economic integration, there are more and more management paradox problems in the face of uncertain external environment organizations, such as the need to ensure organizational stability and seek organizational change,<sup>1</sup> the need to ensure the acquisition of short-term benefits and the ability to plan for long-term corporate profitability.<sup>2,3</sup> The paradox theory suggests that the

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organization should be able to simultaneously meet the competing needs of the organization and adopt an appropriate management style to address them.<sup>4</sup> Zhang et al proposed paradoxical leadership based on the traditional Chinese “yin and yang” theory.<sup>4</sup> It is defined as a leadership style that uses the paradoxical integration of “both” to meet organizational needs and employee needs simultaneously, to view problems and solve them from a dialectical perspective, and to take advantage of the synergistic effect of integrating contradictions to help better cope with conflicts in the organization.<sup>4,5</sup> And it has been applied in practice, such as Haier’s people-alone management model and Huawei’s gray scale management. However, some studies have found that positive leadership may also have negative effects on employees.<sup>6</sup> Paradoxical leadership may expect employees to perform well at work, and this expectation may put pressure on employees and make them believe that they need to demonstrate organizational citizenship behaviors in the workplace in order to create a good image, while employees may not perform voluntarily for certain tasks that are outside of their responsibilities. Vigoda-Gadot refers to this involuntary organizational citizenship behavior as compulsory organizational citizenship behavior. Research on compulsory organizational citizenship behavior helps us to understand organizational citizenship behavior more deeply.<sup>7</sup> Compulsory organizational citizenship behavior reflects the contradiction between worker attitudes and behaviors, while employee attitudes and behaviors are deeply influenced by the style of leadership in the organization.<sup>8,9</sup> Podsakoff et al pointed out that whether employees adopt organizational citizenship behavior has a direct impact on leadership style.<sup>10</sup> When the leadership style is positive, employees are happy to adopt organizational citizenship behavior; when the leadership style is negative, employees may adopt compulsory organizational citizenship behavior even stop any positive and effective behavior. Based on the perspectives of social cognition theory and social exchange theory, Wu et al found that destructive leadership positively influences the pressure of superiors, thereby inspiring employees to adopt compulsory organizational citizenship behavior.<sup>11</sup> Paradoxical leadership,<sup>4</sup> as a new leadership style developed from China, needs to be further enriched and improved for its impact on employee attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, based on practical and theoretical needs, this article will focus on the study of the influence of paradoxical leadership on compulsory organizational citizenship behavior, and use attribution theory<sup>12</sup>

as a research framework to help explain why employees adopt compulsory organization citizenship.

Work stress perception is one of the important research objects in psychological research, referring to the subjective feelings of any situation beyond one’s psychological and physiological conditions.<sup>13</sup> As a positive leadership style, paradoxical leadership, its care and expectation for employees, may give employees a greater sense of work pressure. Perception is usually the premise of behavioral arousal.<sup>14,15</sup> When employees perceive the work pressure from the leaders, in order to meet the expectations of superiors and avoid being punished by the organization, they often take compulsory organizational citizenship.<sup>16</sup> Accordingly, this study will explore the mediating role of work pressure perception between paradoxical leadership and compulsory organizational citizenship behavior, with a view to revealing the transmission mechanism of paradoxical leadership affecting compulsory organizational citizenship behavior.

Leader member exchange differentiation is the degree of differentiation of the exchange relationship between members of the team and the leader, which is usually measured by the standard deviation or variance of the leader member exchange.<sup>17</sup> The level of the exchange relationship between the members and the leaders in the team determines how much organizational resources they can obtain,<sup>18</sup> and the differential allocation of resources will lead to an increase in the unfairness of subordinates,<sup>19</sup> which causes employees increased work pressure has increased the negative impact on employees.<sup>18</sup> Based on this, this study takes leadership member exchange differentiation as moderating variables to gain an in-depth understanding of the moderating effects of leadership member exchange differentiation between paradoxical leadership and work pressure perception.

The innovations of this article are as follows: First, the research on the influence of paradoxical leadership on compulsory organizational citizenship behavior reveals the “dark side” of the influence of paradoxical leadership on employee behavior. Second, by introducing work pressure perception, this paper reveals the mechanism of action between paradoxical leadership and compulsory organizational citizenship behavior, which provides a new research perspective for understanding the formation mechanism of employees adopting compulsory organizational citizenship behavior. Third, this paper confirms that leadership member exchange differentiation can

positively moderate the relationship between paradoxical leadership and work pressure perception.

## Theory and Hypothesis Development

### Compulsory Organizational Citizenship

Compulsory organizational citizenship behavior is usually discussed as the opposite of organizational citizenship behavior. It refers to an employee who feels external pressure from a leader, colleague, or his own environment and does not make it voluntarily.<sup>20,21</sup> Spector et al believe that compulsory organizational citizenship behavior goes beyond the responsibilities stipulated by the organization. In order to cater to the leader's intentions and avoid punishment,<sup>22</sup> employees conduct behaviors that are beneficial to organizational performance.<sup>23</sup> Existing studies have shown that compulsory organizational citizenship behavior will bring greater work pressure to employees,<sup>24</sup> thereby reducing employee job satisfaction and job performance,<sup>25</sup> as well as the relationship between organizational members. Cause damage and lead to an increase in employee willingness to leave.<sup>20</sup> The impact of compulsory organizational citizenship behavior on organizations is often negative. The antecedents of compulsory organizational citizenship are mainly focused on negative leadership styles, such as destructive leadership.<sup>11,24,26</sup> The research on the compulsory organizational citizenship behavior of employees caused by the negative effect of positive leadership style has yet to be explored.

### Paradoxical Leadership and Compulsory Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Compulsory organizational citizenship behavior is the opposite of organizational citizenship behavior. Its existence in the organization will have serious adverse consequences for the organization in the long run, and its research can deepen the understanding of organizational citizenship behavior. Compulsory organizational citizenship behavior reflects the contradiction between employee attitudes and behaviors, and employee attitudes and behaviors are deeply influenced by the style of leaders in the organization.<sup>8,9</sup> Studies have shown that destructive leadership is the main factor for employees to adopt compulsory organizational citizenship behavior.<sup>9,24,26</sup> Paradoxical leadership,<sup>4</sup> as a leadership style developed from the local Chinese, from the perspective of paradox, organizational citizenship behavior and compulsory organizational citizenship behavior both exist objectively in the organization.

Eisenbein and Boerner believe that the leadership has not only a positive side, but also a negative side.<sup>27</sup> Paradoxical leadership, which is also one of the positive leadership styles, is no exception. Existing studies have found that paradoxical leadership has positive effects on employee attitudes and behaviors. For example: employee adaptability,<sup>10</sup> employee initiative,<sup>5</sup> employee dualistic behavior,<sup>28,29</sup> and team cognition and innovation.<sup>30</sup> However, there are also literatures that indicate that paradoxical leadership has a negative aspect to employees' attitudes and behaviors. Shao et al believe that paradoxical leadership may be a "double-edged sword", which can not only promote employees to take positive actions, but also bring too much pressure to employees, which will be severely hit in high-stress situations to reduce employee creativity.<sup>31</sup> According to the theory of attribution,<sup>12</sup> people's attitudes towards an event and the actions they take will be affected by attribution. When employees think that the behaviors of paradoxical leadership are all for the benefit of the organization, and employees in order to cater to the behavior of the leader, in order to prevent their promotion path from being hindered or damage their interests, they will also behave against the heart and contribute to the organization, so it looks like a compulsory organizational citizenship behavior to escape possible punishment. Based on this, the article makes the following assumptions:

H1: Paradoxical leadership has a significant positive effect on compulsory organizational citizenship.

### The Mediating Role of Work Pressure Perception

Work pressure perception refers to the subjective feelings of any situation beyond one's own psychological and physiological conditions.<sup>13</sup> In the literature on stress, leadership itself is regarded as a possible source of stress.<sup>32</sup> Stress is a psychological reaction of employees to uncoordinated attitudes and behaviors. Since leaders have absolute power in the organization, Therefore, employees are more susceptible to leadership behavior.<sup>11</sup> In the context of Chinese organizational culture, leadership and employees are not an equal relationship, but there is a high power distance. This unequal relationship is more likely to cause employees to work pressure perception.<sup>33</sup> As a positive leadership style, paradoxical leadership will encourage employees to do better and give them higher expectations, and their care and expectations for employees may give employees a greater sense of work pressure. Attribution theory states that employees will infer the motivations behind others' attitudes and behaviors, and

their cognition of the reasons behind specific behaviors determines their response to that behavior.<sup>12</sup> When employees think that leaders' expectations and love for themselves are for better organizational development, they are not really good for themselves. This basic attribution error will make employees feel great work pressure. Based on this, the article makes the following assumptions:

H2: Paradoxical leadership has a significant positive effect on the perception of work pressure.

When an employee perceives work pressure from the organization, he will reduce work autonomy to cope with this work pressure perception.<sup>34</sup> This is because in order not to violate the tasks assigned by the leaders and to live up to the high expectations given by the leaders, employees will be accepted even if it is difficult to complete the tasks, and this situation often leads to increased work pressure for employees. In order to adjust this uncomfortable state, employees will take actions such as reducing work effort and passive slack.<sup>35</sup> In order to maintain the existing job positions and working environment, employees usually self-regulation using surface play means that employees violate their true feelings to obey the willing of leaders,<sup>36</sup> and exhibit behaviors consistent with organizational expectations. These behaviors will greatly reduce the autonomy of employees. These involuntary work behaviors are mainly to cater to the leaders' intentions and avoid punishment, but not the employees' original intentions, that is, employees will succumb to the status quo when they feel work pressure and will exhibit higher compulsory organizational citizenship.<sup>16</sup> Based on this, the article makes the following assumptions:

H3: Work pressure perception has a significant positive effect on compulsory organizational citizenship behavior.

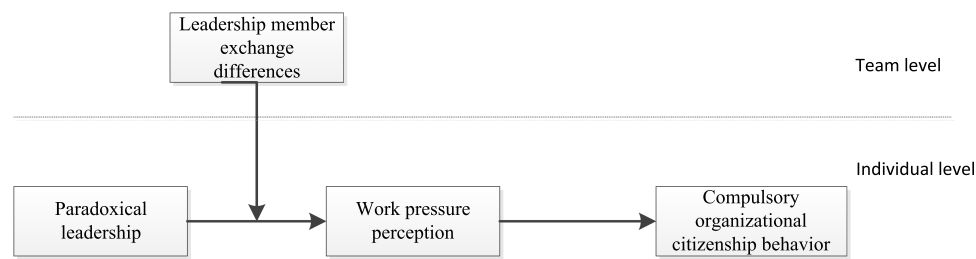
According to H2 and H3, this paper proposes the following assumptions:

H4: Work pressure perception mediates between paradoxical leadership and compulsory organizational citizenship.

## The Moderating Role of Leading Members' Exchange Differentiation

Leader member exchange differentiation is the degree of differentiation of the exchange relationship between members of the team and the leader, which is usually measured by the standard deviation or variance of the leader member

exchange.<sup>17</sup> In the organization, the exchange relationship between leaders and employees is not always the same, that is, the exchange relationship between the leadership members is different, the leader will establish a high quality exchange relationship with some employees, and establish a lower quality with another employee exchange relationship.<sup>19</sup> Under the exchange relationship of high quality leadership members, employees will get more organizational resources; under the differentiation of low leadership-member exchange relationships, leaders treat all employees equally and the distribution of organizational resources is fair and equitable Existing research has empirically tested the role of leadership member exchange differentiation as a moderating variable. Lam et al explored the feedback seeking behavior through leadership-member exchange differential adjustment effect to affect employees' turnover intentions,<sup>37</sup> The adjustment effect of the leadership-member exchange differentiation on the leadership-member exchange social comparison and insider identity cognition is regulated. Attribution theory states that employees will infer the motivations behind other people's attitudes and behaviors, and their cognition of the reasons behind specific behaviors determines their response to this behavior.<sup>12</sup> As the existence of a special relationship in the organization, the exchange of leadership members' differentiation can provide an explanation for the paradoxical leadership's differential allocation of organizational resources, which in turn affects employees' perception of work pressure. In high leadership member exchange difference teams, employees who establish higher quality relationships with their leaders receive more organizational resources and are given higher expectations by their leaders, and in return for their leaders' esteem, employees also believe that they have the responsibility and obligation to do more work, and employees bear more work stress. While employees who establish lower quality relationships with their leaders tend to fear criticism from their leaders and bear. In the context of high leader-member exchange difference, the moderating effect of leader-member exchange difference in the relationship between paradoxical leadership and work pressure perception is higher; in the context of low leader-member exchange difference teams, because the relationship between the leader and all employees in the organization is convergent, employees are not psychologically burdened by doing less work outside of their responsibilities, and their work pressure perception is not too high. In the context of low the moderating effect of leader-member



**Figure 1** Research model.

exchange differences on the relationship between paradoxical leadership and work pressure perception is low in the context of low leader-member exchange differences. Based on this, the article makes the following assumptions:

H5: Leadership member exchange differentiation have a significant positive adjustment effect on the relationship between paradoxical leadership and work pressure perception. That is, the higher leadership member exchange differentiation, the greater the positive impact of paradoxical leadership on work pressure perception.

Based on the above research assumptions, this study constructed a hypothetical model between paradoxical leadership and compulsory organizational citizenship behavior (Figure 1).

## Materials and Methods

### Sample and Data Collection

The research data in this paper comes from 45 private teams of 2 private enterprises and 2 large state-owned enterprises in Jinan and Yantai, which are mainly engaged in internet, natural gas and steel business. Since a researcher in this article is a senior manager of a listed company, we were able to fill in the questionnaire through the human resources department of the company under investigation. The questionnaires were all distributed on site in paper form, and were strictly done during the data collection process. Good confidentiality measures. In order to avoid the influence of homology variance, this study adopted the method of collecting data longitudinally at multiple time points. We set a unique code on the questionnaires issued to facilitate the recovery and reissuance of the questionnaires. The method is as follows: we code the questionnaires to distinguish these questionnaires from different teams and to do the work for the subsequent matching data. For example, the first team of the first company is set to A1, and the employee questionnaire

numbers of this team are set to A1-1, A1-2, A1-3, etc.; the second team of the first company is set to A2, and the employee questionnaire numbers of this team are set to A2-1, A2-2, A2-3, etc.; the first team of the second company is set to B1, and the employee questionnaire numbers of this team are set to B1-1, B1-2, B1-3, etc.; the second team of the first company is set to B1, and the employee questionnaire numbers of this team are set to B1-1, B1-2, B1-3, etc. B1-1, B1-2, B1-3, etc.; the second team of the first company is set to B2, and the employee questionnaire numbers of this team are set to B2-1, B2-2, B2-3, etc. in turn. In the questionnaire, 400 questionnaires were distributed during the T1 period. The data collection of basic employee data, paradoxical leadership, work pressure perception, and leadership member exchange differentiation was collected. 367 valid questionnaires were recovered. One month later, 367 questionnaires effectively recovered from the T1 period were issued during the T2 time period, and data collection of employees' compulsory organizational citizenship behavior was collected. 329 valid questionnaires were recovered, with an effective recovery rate of 82.3%. According to the information filled in the questionnaires obtained, males account for 56.7% and females account for 43.3% in terms of gender; in terms of academic qualifications, colleges and below account for 15.2% and undergraduates account for 57.6%, the proportion of masters and above is 27.2%; in terms of age, the proportion of under 25 is 23.6%, the proportion of 25–35 is 62.5%, and the proportion of over 35 is 13.9%; in terms of working years, less than 2 years The proportion is 26.6%, the proportion in 2–5 years is 52.1%, and the proportion in more than 5 years is 21.3%.

### Variable Measurement

In order to ensure the authority and credibility of the scales used in the research institute, scales that have been validated by numerous studies have been adopted. These scales have been published in top journals. In order to

ensure that the scales in foreign literature adapt to the research of Chinese contextualization, the method of back-translation is adopted to ensure the applicability and rigor of the questionnaire used in this research. This research scale uses Likert's 5-point scoring method, with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being very agree.

### Paradoxical Leadership

We use the scale developed by Zhang et al for measurement.<sup>4</sup> Classic items such as "The ultimate goal that employees need to complete is set by the leader, but the employee can decide the means to achieve the goal", "Even if the leader and the employee have differentiation, they will not arbitrarily practice and will fully listen to and respect the opinions of the employees." In this study, the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  value of the scale was 0.84, and the credibility of the scale was high.

### Leader-Member Exchange

The scale developed by Scandura et al was used for measurement.<sup>38</sup> Classic items such as "My leader is very clear about my work problems and needs". In this study, the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  value of the scale was 0.87, and the credibility of the scale was high. This study draws on the study of Ma et al and uses the standard deviation of leader-member exchange to measure leader-member exchange differentiation.<sup>39</sup>

### Work Pressure Perception

We use a scale developed by Motowidlo et al.<sup>40</sup> Classic items such as "In professional development, I feel huge work pressure." In this study, the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  value of the scale was 0.91, and the credibility of the scale was high.

### Compulsory Organizational Citizenship Behavior

We use the scale developed by Vigoda-Gadot.<sup>7</sup> Classic items such as "Under the pressure of leadership, I need to pay extra efforts to meet the work requirements set by the leaders." In this study, the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  value of the scale was 0.82, and the credibility of the scale was high.

### Control Variables

In order to eliminate the interference of variables such as the employee's age, gender and education level in the research process, these variables are used as the control variables in this article.<sup>41</sup>

## Data Aggregation

Since the adjustment variables of leader-member exchange differentiation in this study belong to team-level variables, while paradoxical leadership, work pressure perception, and compulsory organizational citizenship behavior are individual-level variables, cross-level analysis is required. In this study, Mplus 7.0 was used to conduct empirical tests on the research.

## Data Analysis

### Homology Variance Test

Since homology variance will affect the experimental results, this study requires homology variance test on the collected sample data. Since Harman's one-factor test method is a classic method for testing whether the homology variance problem is serious, this method is also adopted in this study. Put all the items of the studied variables together for factor analysis. In the analysis results, whether the homology variance problem is serious is reflected by the first principal component factor obtained when it is not rotated. Since the first principal component factor obtained when the article is not rotated is 18.24%, which does not account for 50% of the total explanatory variance, it shows that although the homology variance problem in this study exists, it is not serious. The research results will not have an impact, so statistical research can be conducted.

### Confirmatory Factor Analysis

To test the discriminative validity of the variables in this study, a structural factor was used to perform confirmatory factor analysis, and Mplus 7.0 was used to construct paradoxical leadership, work pressure perception, leadership member exchange differentiation, and compulsory organizational citizenship behavior. Differentiated validity test, the specific test results are shown in Table 1. By comparing the fitting indexes of the four models in Table 1, it can be seen that the four-factor model has the best fit ( $\chi^2/df=1.82$ , RMSEA=0.054, CFI=0.927, GFI =0.936), which means that the four variables in this paper have good distinguishing validity.

### Descriptive Statistics

From the descriptive statistical analysis results in Table 2, it can be concluded that paradoxical leadership has a positive correlation with compulsory organizational citizenship behavior ( $r=0.361$ ,  $p<0.01$ ); paradoxical leadership has a positive

**Table 1** Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results

Model	$\chi^2/df$	RMSEA	CFI	GFI
Four-factor model	1.82	0.054	0.927	0.936
Three-factor model	2.45	0.079	0.866	0.871
Two-factor model	3.17	0.091	0.832	0.785
First-factor model	5.36	0.136	0.791	0.716

**Table 2** Descriptive Statistical Results

Variable	PL	WPP	LMXD	COCB
PL	0.761			
WPP	0.319**	0.773		
LMXD	0.264*	0.253*	0.775	
COCB	0.361**	0.327**	0.312*	0.814

**Note:** \*Means  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*Means  $p < 0.01$ , and the value in the diagonal line means the square root of AVE.

correlation with work pressure perception ( $r = 0.319$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ); work pressure perception is positively correlated with compulsory organizational citizenship behavior ( $r = 0.327$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ); leadership member exchange differentiation are positively correlated with compulsory organizational citizenship behavior ( $r = 0.312$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The results of the correlation analysis preliminarily illustrate the relationship between the variables as stated in the hypothesis, which also provides a basis for further data analysis.

## Results

### Paradoxical Leadership’s Main Effect Test on Compulsory Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Hierarchical regression is used to test the relationship between paradoxical leadership and compulsory organizational citizenship behavior. As shown in Table 3, when demographic variables are controlled, there is a significant

positive effect between paradoxical leadership and compulsory organizational citizenship behavior ( $r = 0.426$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ); from this, hypothesis 1 is verified.

### Mediating Effect Test of Work Pressure Perception

The method of hierarchical regression is used to test the mediating role of work pressure perception between paradoxical leadership and compulsory organizational citizenship behavior. The results are shown in Table 3. According to Wen et al on the test of mediating effect,<sup>42</sup> test hypothesis 2. The method mainly includes three equations, and the coefficients in the equations are tested for significance.

$$Y = cX + e_1 \tag{1}$$

$$M = aX + e_2 \tag{2}$$

$$Y = c'X + bM + e_3 \tag{3}$$

In the equation, Y represents the compulsory organizational citizenship behavior of the dependent variable; X represents the paradoxical leadership of the independent variable; M represents the work pressure perception of the mediating variable; c, a, b, c’ represent the regression coefficients; The residual term of the corresponding equation. Among them, Equation (1) is used to verify the relationship between paradoxical leadership and compulsory organizational citizenship behavior, Equation (2) is used to verify the relationship between work pressure perception and compulsory organizational citizenship behavior, Equation (3) is verify the mediating role of the relationship between paradoxical leadership and compulsory organizational citizenship behavior and work pressure perception.

First, the independent variable paradoxical leadership is put into the regression equation where the dependent

**Table 3** Paradoxical Leadership and Job Stress Perception on the Level of Regression Analysis of Compulsory Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Variable	COCB				WPP
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Gender	0.079	0.081	0.077	0.081	0.124
Education	0.101	0.096	0.097	0.095	0.081
Age	0.075	0.077	0.077	0.076	0.135
PL		0.426**		0.385**	0.391**
WPP			0.451**	0.417**	

**Note:** \*\*Means  $p < 0.01$ .

variable is compulsory organizational citizenship behavior, and the regression coefficient  $c$  ( $r=0.426$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) is significant, which further verifies the existence of hypothesis 1 and can be performed the next step is to test the mediating effect. Second, the independent variable paradoxical leadership is put into the regression equation whose dependent variable is work pressure perception, and the regression coefficient  $a$  ( $r=0.391$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) is significant. Hypothesis 2 is verified and the next test can be carried out. Third, the independent variable work pressure perception is put into the regression equation where the dependent variable is compulsory organizational citizenship behavior, and the regression coefficient  $r=0.451$  and  $p<0.01$  are obtained. Hypothesis 3 is verified and the next test can be carried out. Finally, the paradoxical leadership and work pressure perception are put together into the regression equation where the dependent variable is compulsory organizational citizenship behavior, and the regression coefficients  $c'$  ( $r=0.385$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and  $b$  ( $r=0.417$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) were significant, and concluded that work pressure perception played a partial mediating role between paradoxical leadership and compulsory organizational citizenship behavior. Hypothesis 4 was verified.

## Examination of the Moderating Effects of Exchange Differentiation Among Leading Members

Because this research builds a cross-level structure model diagram, it is necessary to perform a zero-model test on work pressure perception to test whether the variance between and within the group of work pressure perception is significant. Through the analysis of the results of Mplus7.0 on the zero-model test of working pressure perception, it can be seen that the within group variance of working pressure perception  $\sigma^2=0.27$ , the between-group variance  $\tau_{00}=0.08$ , the intra group correlation coefficient  $ICC(1)=0.15$ , James et al believed that when  $ICC(1)>0.05$ , it is possible to conduct a cross-level analysis of the dependent variable under study.<sup>6</sup>

Because leader-member exchange differentiation is measured by the standard deviation of leader-member exchange, it is necessary to check whether the data exchanged by individual-level variable leader members meet the aggregate data index before aggregation. This study uses the three indicators of  $ICC(1)$ ,  $ICC(2)$  and  $R_{wg}$  to test. The calculation results show that  $ICC(1)=0.14$ ,  $ICC(2)=0.581$ ,  $R_{wg}=0.925$ . James et al believe that when

$ICC(2)>0.50$  and  $R_{wg}>0.70$ , the study variables have obvious significance.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, the exchange of leadership members has significant differentiation between groups and significant consistency within the group, indicating that the data exchanged by individual-level variable leadership members meets the aggregate data index, and can be aggregated into team-level variable leadership member exchange differentiation.

In order to avoid the problem of collinearity, first exchange the differentiation between paradoxical leadership and leadership members for decentralization. Construct the interactive items between paradoxical leadership and leadership member exchange differentiation. From Model 4 in Table 4, after adding the interaction item of paradoxical leadership and leadership member exchange differentiation. The interaction effect of the interaction item on the work pressure perception is significant ( $r=0.287$   $p<0.01$ ), indicating that leadership member exchange differentiation plays a positive role in regulating between paradoxical leadership and work pressure perception. Hypothesis 5 is verified.

In order to more intuitively observe the moderating effect of leadership member exchange differentiation between paradoxical leadership and work pressure perception, the slope analysis method is used to draw the graph. A standard deviation is added to or subtracted from the average of leadership member exchange differentiation to group them, and the exchange differentiation between the two groups of high and low leaders are obtained. The positive moderating effect between paradoxical leadership and work pressure perception is stronger. Hypothesis 5 is further verified (Figure 2).

## Conclusion Research Results

This study explores the positive influence of paradoxical leadership on compulsory organizational citizenship behavior, and clearly explains the internal mechanism of paradoxical leadership on compulsory organizational citizenship behavior and the boundary conditions of paradoxical leadership on work pressure perception. This research builds a cross-level structural model from the perspective of attribution theory. The empirical analysis results based on the survey data of 329 enterprise employees from 45 teams show that paradoxical leadership has a significant positive impact on compulsory organizational citizenship behavior; work pressure perception has



**Table 4** Cross-Level Regression Analysis Results of Exchange Differentiation Among Leading Members

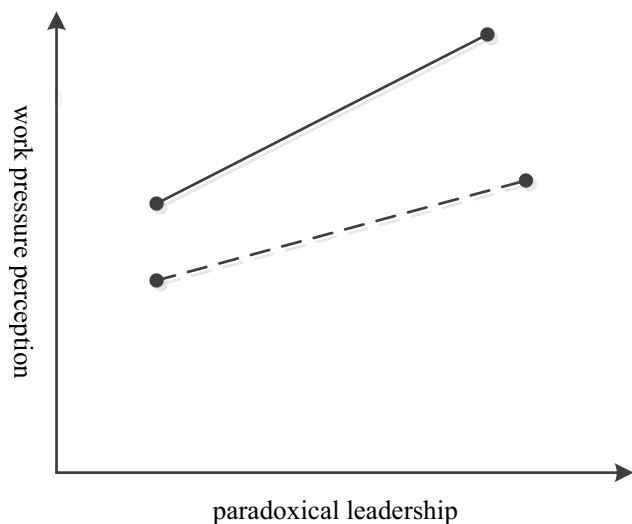
Variable	WPP			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Intercept	3.27**	3.26**	3.27**	3.25**
Gender		0.124	0.125	0.124
Education		0.081	0.081	0.082
Age		0.134	0.135	0.135
PL		0.391**	0.376**	0.416**
LMXD			0.223*	0.196*
PL*LMXD				0.287**
$\tau_{00}$	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.07
$\sigma^2$	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.26

Notes: \*Means  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*Means  $p < 0.01$ .

a mediating role between paradoxical leadership and compulsory organizational citizenship behavior; leadership member exchange differentiation moderate the relationship between paradoxical leadership and work pressure perception, the higher leadership member exchange differentiation, the stronger the impact of paradoxical leadership on work pressure perception; the lower leadership member exchange differentiation, the weaker the impact of paradoxical leadership on work pressure perception.

## Theoretical Significance

Our results not only extend the attribution theory,<sup>11</sup> but also use this theory to explain the relationship between the variables studied, and further emphasize the important role of these variables in the organization's operation.



**Figure 2** The moderating effect of leadership member exchange differentiation on paradoxical leadership and work pressure perception.

Notes: ●—● High leadership member exchange differences; ●---● Low leadership member exchange differences.

First of all, paradoxical leadership, as a positive leadership style developed in China in recent years, has received extensive attention from the theoretical and practical circles. Previous research on paradoxical leadership has been positive side, such as employee initiative research,<sup>27</sup> but less attention is paid to the negative side of paradoxical leadership, and the positive leadership style often also has a negative side.<sup>6</sup> This study is based on the need of theory and reality to confirm that paradoxical leadership does not always promote employees to take positive actions, and it also has a positive role in promoting employees' compulsory organizational citizenship behavior. The research in this paper is carried out in the context of China, and shows the applicability of paradoxical leadership in the context of China, which promotes employees compulsory organizational citizenship. This research is another supplement and verification of the research results of paradoxical leadership, and another useful exploration for the development of paradoxical leadership theory in China.

Second, most of the existing literature studies the influence of paradoxical leadership on employees' attitudes and behaviors from the perspectives of social exchange theory, emotional event theory, and social identity theory. This study attempts to study paradox from the perspective of attribution theory about paradoxical leadership impact on employees compulsory organizational citizenship behavior. The study found that attribution theory can explain the mechanism of paradoxical leadership on employees compulsory organizational citizenship behavior, and confirmed that work pressure perception plays a mediating role between paradoxical leadership and employees compulsory organizational citizenship behavior. The paradoxical leadership high attention and expectations for employees in the process of organization and

operation have invisibly increased the workload of employees. In order to live up to the high expectations given by leaders, employees will do some work outside the scope of their responsibilities, which may employees are not willing to do it, and their work pressure perception will increase. The mediating role of work pressure perception deepens the understanding of the influence of paradoxical leadership on employees compulsory organizational citizenship behavior.

Finally, this study explores the impact of leadership member exchange differentiation as boundary conditions on the relationship between paradoxical leadership and work pressure perception. The study found that leadership member exchange differentiation is one of the important factors that cause employees work pressure. Employees with higher leadership member exchange differentiation can promote employees' perception of work pressure and further strengthen their compulsory organizational citizenship behavior. This article enriches the research on leadership member exchange differentiation, and also provides new ideas for the study of the role of leadership member exchange differentiation in other leadership methods.

## Practical Significance

By establishing the interrelationships between paradoxical leadership, work pressure perception, leadership member exchange differentiation, and compulsory organizational citizenship behavior, we provide some practical significance for the organization of the enterprise.

First, the style characteristics of leaders in the organization have a direct impact on employees' attitudes and behaviors. The empirical test of this study proves that paradoxical leadership can also lead to employees compulsory organizational citizenship behavior, and employees compulsory organizational citizenship behavior is harmful to the long-term development of the organization without benefit. Therefore, leaders in the organization should pay attention to the negative impact that their leadership style may have on employees, achieve timely communication, reduce employee attribution errors, and help the organization maintain its own in an increasingly complex and dynamic environment. Second, work pressure perception is an important driving force for employees to adopt compulsory organizational citizenship behavior. When employees feel huge work pressure, and do not want to live up to the expectations of leaders, they will take compulsory organizational citizenship behavior. Therefore, the organization should pay attention to reduce employees work pressure perception during operation, so that they can circumvent

compulsory organizational citizenship behavior. Third, leadership member exchange differentiation is the quality of employees' relationship with the leadership in the organization, and the existence of such differentiation will reduce employees' perception of fairness and easily lead to conflicts in the relationship between team members, which will cause more employees psychological pressure. Therefore, leaders should minimize the existence of exchange differentiation between leading members, treat them equally, reduce employees' perception of work pressure, and further enhance their work enthusiasm.

## Limitations and Future Research Directions

Although this article has obtained some practical and feasible conclusions, it is still inevitably restricted by the technical and practical difficulties. (1) This study uses the questionnaire form of employee self-reporting method. Although the method of collecting data through different time points is adopted, the deviation of the homology method will inevitably occur. In future research, more abundant questionnaire collection methods can be introduced, for example, the collection of questionnaires is conducted in a way of leading members to reduce the occurrence of homology bias. (2) The research data in this paper are obtained from four companies in Jinan and Yantai, which have great constraints on the universality of the research conclusions. In the future, the source of sample data should be expanded to enhance the external applicability of the research conclusions. (3) This article only studies the individual level and team level of the research variables, and its conclusions may not be applicable to the organizational level. In the future research, a research model of the impact of organizational level paradoxical leadership on compulsory organizational citizenship behavior can be constructed. Thereby expanding the research surface of paradoxical leadership. (4) Although work pressure perception plays a mediating role between paradoxical leadership and compulsory organizational citizenship, it is not completely mediation. Therefore, there are mediating variables that have not been tapped. In the subsequent research, we can continue to explore the mediating role of different variables between paradoxical leadership and compulsory organizational citizenship behavior, such as psychological ownership.

## Statement

The study participants gave consent to have their data published.

## Data Sharing Statement

Data supporting the findings presented in the current study will be available from the corresponding author upon request.

## Ethical Statement

This study was reviewed and approved by the Shandong University of Finance and Economics Ethics Committee. We declare that participants in our research study allow us to use their data for academic research and publication. All the participants were anonymous and their data was protected. All participants provided informed consent and this study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki.

## Disclosure

The authors report no conflicts of interest in this work.

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