

Research on the Relationship between Narcissistic Leadership and Employee Creativity

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Abstract

Narcissistic leadership is a relatively new term in the field of leadership. In the current studies, most scholars are only concerned about the downside or negative side to the organization and members of narcissistic leadership, while ignoring the positive side. This paper sorts out relevant theories of narcissistic leadership, fully explores both positive and negative connotations of narcissistic leadership, and summarizes the influences of narcissistic leadership into three dimensions, which are employee creativity, namely Charisma, Self-interested influence and Deceptive motivation. This article discusses the relationship between the three dimensions of narcissistic leadership and employee creativity respectively. Meanwhile, it investigates the variables that may affect the relationship between narcissistic leadership and employee creativity, and proposes future directions of research.

Keywords

Narcissistic leadership, creative self-efficacy, work involvement, employee creativity.

1. Introduction

In the early theoretical research about leadership, the academic circles mainly focus on the positive behaviors of leaders, which can bring benefits to organizations and members, namely the constructive leadership behavior. In recent decades, the foreign academic circles begin to explore the negative leadership style, namely the destructive leadership behavior. In most scholars' cognition and research, narcissistic leadership is a typical destructive leadership behavior ^[1]. However, throughout the well-known domestic and foreign entrepreneurs and leaders, they are usually vigorous and resolute and self-confidence and have narcissistic personality more or less^[2]. Therefore, narcissistic leadership is not entirely negative and has its positive side from this point of view. In the meantime, with the increasingly close connections of culture and economic between China and the west, western cultural values of individualism have gradually infiltrated into China, and there are more and more narcissistic leaders in Chinese enterprises. Therefore, it is quite necessary to investigate the issue of narcissistic leadership ^[3]. From the perspective of creativity, this paper fully investigates the connotation of narcissistic leadership, explores the relationship between narcissistic leadership and employee creativity, and provide theoretical support for the mechanism of narcissistic leadership.

2. The Influence Mechanism of Narcissistic Leadership on Employee Creativity

2.1 Connotation of Narcissistic Leadership and Related Variables

The term narcissistic leadership was formally coined by Rosenthal and Pittinsky in 2006, who argued that when a leader's behavior is based primarily on his or her own extremely selfish desires and beliefs, rather than on the interests of the team or members under his or her jurisdiction, it can be called as narcissistic leadership^[4]. Ouimet (2010) proposed five components of narcissistic leadership on the basis of a large amount of research. Charisma, narcissistic leaders often have an attractive appearance and superior social skills^[5]. Self-interested influence, narcissistic leadership is driven by

self-interest. Deceptive motivation, narcissistic leaders prefer bold action to reservations. Inhibition of intelligence, narcissistic leadership attacks negative feedback. Pretending to care, narcissistic leaders often give employees unrealistic care in exchange for genuine treatment by employees in order to oppress them^[6]. This paper adopts the three dimensions of narcissistic leadership concluded by Gao Lin (2015), namely the dimensions of charisma, self-interested influence and deceptive motivation, which cover the negative and positive characteristics of narcissistic leadership^[7].

By reviewing literature, this paper introduces the mediator variable of the relationship between narcissistic leadership and employee creativity—the creative self-efficacy and the variable that regulates the relationship between creative self-efficacy and employee creativity—the work involvement^[8]. Creative self-efficacy refers to individuals' belief that whether they can produce creative results. Work involvement is a state of cognition or belief, which is a recognition of work psychology. Meanwhile, employees' psychological recognition of work depends on their main needs and the degree to which they perceive that the current work can meet such needs. Furthermore, this paper proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: The charisma dimension of narcissistic leadership has positive influence on employee creativity.

H2: The self-interested influence dimension of narcissistic leadership has negative influence on employee creativity.

H3: The deceptive motivation dimension of narcissistic leadership has negative influence on employee creativity.

H4: The charisma dimension of narcissistic leadership has positive influence on creative self-efficacy.

H5: The self-interested influence dimension of narcissistic leadership has negative influence on creative self-efficacy.

H6: The deceptive motivation dimension of narcissistic leadership has negative influence on creative self-efficacy.

H7: Creative self-efficacy has positive influence on employee creativity.

H8: Creative self-efficacy has mediating effect on narcissistic leadership's influence on employee creativity.

H9: Work involvement has positive modulatory influence on the relationship between creative self-efficacy and employee creativity. That is, when there is a high degree of employees' work involvement, creative self-efficacy strengthens its influences on employee creativity.

2.2 The Role of Narcissistic Leadership on Employee Creativity

Under the dimension of narcissistic leader's Charisma, the charm appearance, vision and excellent speech skills of the leader can infect employees, bring them confidence and hope, make them love their work from the bottom of their heart, thus facilitating their creativity at work.

Under the dimension of narcissistic leader's Self-interested influence, leaders' behaviors such as self-centeredness, sense of power, superiority and hypersensitivity to criticism will make subordinates feel ignored and neglected, thus reducing their enthusiasm for work and hindering their creativity^[9].

Under the dimensions of narcissistic leader's deceptive motivation, leader's insincere, hypocritical, blind and risk-biased behaviors will cause the resistance and aversion of subordinates, resulting in their inability to give full play to their creativity to better serve their work.

2.3 The Mediating Mechanism of Creative Self-efficacy and the Regulating Mechanism of Work Involvement

2.3.1 The Mediating Mechanism of Creative Self-efficacy

Under the dimension of leader's charisma, the appearance of narcissistic leadership's charisma, confident personality and inspiring words can help employees to build confidence and make them realize that they are qualified for the job, thus enhancing the sense of creative self-efficacy. Under the

dimension of self-interested influence, the narcissistic leader is arrogant, self-centered, and highly sensitive to criticism, which will lead to employees’ strong dislike and even fear. Consequently, these will be reflected in employees’ resistance to work and the questioning of their own ability, which hinders the development of creative self-efficacy[10]. Under the dimension of deceptive motivation, narcissistic leaders will use fraudulent means to pretend to care about subordinates in order to win the trust of employees to achieve the purpose of exploitation, which will reduce subordinates’ interest and motivation in work and weaken their creative self-efficacy.

The sense of creative self-efficacy is the internal driving force for employees to achieve creativity. It guides individuals to firmly believe their ability of achieving innovative results or achievements, and strengthens individuals' confidence and determination to explore new ways to complete tasks, thus promoting the development of creativity[11].

Based on the above analysis, creative self-efficacy plays an intermediary role in the influences of the dimensions of narcissistic leaders’ charisma, self-interested influence and deceptive motivation on employee creativity.

2.3.2 Regulating Mechanism of Work Involvement

When the degree of work involvement is high, the work can better meet the needs of employees, and employees will be more recognized for the work they are engaged in. Under the interactive effect of creative self-efficacy and work involvement, employees will be more motivated to devote themselves to work, thus helping them to find creative solutions to problems. When the degree of work involvement is low, it means that the current work cannot meet the needs of employees, and the degree of recognition and involvement of the work will be reduced. In such cases, employees manifest some negative phenomena such as slack working, which hinder the development of their creativity^[12]. Therefore, work involvement has a significant positive modulatory effect on the relationship between creative self-efficacy and employee creativity.

3. Data and Measurement

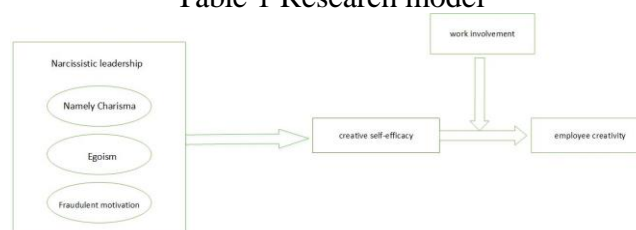
This paper measures the narcissistic leadership, creative self-efficacy, work involvement and employee creativity by questionnaire, the questions of which are derived from reliable items and all adopt the Likert 5-point rating method. Questionnaires were distributed online on the "Questionnaire Star" and 199 valid questionnaires were obtained.

In this paper, spss22.0 software was used for data processing and analysis. The main analysis methods were reliability analysis, validity analysis, correlation analysis and regression analysis.

The results of reliability analysis show that the reliability and quality of the questionnaire are very high. Correlation analysis and regression analysis results show the narcissistic charisma dimension significantly positive influence on employees' creativity and Self-interested influence dimension and Deceptive motivation dimension of narcissistic leadership are both negatively correlated with employee creativity, and confirmed the creative self-efficacy narcissistic charisma dimensions the mediation role of effects on employees' creativity^[13]; However, the mediating role of creative self-efficacy in narcissistic leadership egoism and fraudulent motivation and the positive regulating role of work involvement in the relationship between creative self-efficacy and employee creativity have not been verified.

3.1 Research Model

Table 1 Research model



3.2 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation coefficient was used to test the correlation between the variables. The correlation between variables was judged according to the absolute value of the Pearson correlation coefficient. The closer the absolute value was to 1, the stronger the correlation was. The correlation between variables is shown in Table 2.

Table 2

	1.1	1.2	1.3	2	3	4	4.1	4.2
1.1 Narcissistic leadership	1							
1.2 Self-interested influence	-.254**	1						
1.3 Deceptive motivation	-.157*	.808**	1					
2 Creative self-efficacy	.386**	.009	.027	1				
3 Work involvement	.193**	.102	.116	.365**	1			
4 Employee creativity	.446**	-.137	-.113	.571**	.438**	1		
4.1 Creative Thinking	.423**	-.190**	-.180*	.505**	.346**	.931**	1	
4.2 Creative practice	.409**	-.067	-.034	.560**	.469**	.935**	.741**	1

Note: * means $p < 0.05$, ** means $p < 0.01$ and *** means $p < 0.001$

According to table 2, the charisma dimension of narcissistic leadership is significantly correlated with employee creativity ($r=0.446$, $p < 0.01$), and H1 is preliminarily verified. The charisma dimension of narcissistic leadership is significantly correlated with the self-efficacy of innovation ($r=0.386$, $p < 0.01$), and H4 has been preliminarily verified. Innovation self-efficacy was significantly correlated with employee creativity ($r=0.571$, $p < 0.01$), and H7 was preliminarily verified. In addition, the analysis results in table 2 show that the three dimensions of narcissistic leadership are correlated in two ways, and the two dimensions of creativity are correlated. The self-efficacy of innovation is significantly correlated with work involvement ($r=0.365$, $p < 0.01$), and work involvement is significantly correlated with employee creativity ($r=0.438$, $p < 0.01$). Unverified assumptions will be further tested in regression analysis.

Table 3 Regression analysis of narcissistic leadership self-interested influence dimension and employee creativity

Variate	Employee creativity			
	Model 1		Model 3	
	Standardized coefficient β	Significance	Standardized coefficient β	Significance
Control variable				.000
Gender	-.069	.336	-.082	.249
Age	.038	.638	.037	.638
Education	-.155	.033	-.170	.018
Years of working	-.029	.714	.079	.271
Job category	.085	.239	-.032	.687
Independent Variables				
Self-interested			-.156	.029

influence			
F	1.272		4.864*
R2	.032		.056
ΔR2		.024	

Table 3 is the regression analysis results of narcissistic leadership's self-interested influence dimension on employee creativity. Model 1 is the regression analysis of the control variable on employee creativity, and model 3 is the regression analysis of employee creativity after introducing the independent variable narcissistic leadership's self-interested influence dimension on the basis of model 1. Based on the analysis results, we can find that the regression coefficient of model 3 is negative and significant (appendix =-0.156, p<0.05). Therefore, H2 is verified that narcissistic leadership self-interested influence has a significant negative influence on employee creativity.

Table 4 Regression analysis of the dimensions of narcissistic leadership deceptive motivation and employee creativity

Variate	Employee Creativity			
	Model 1		Model 4	
	Standardized coefficient β	Significance	Standardized coefficient β	Significance
Control variable				
Gender	-.069	.336	-.091	.208
Age	.038	.638	.028	.722
Education	-.155	.033	-.173	.017
Years of working	-.029	.714	-.019	.815
Job category	.085	.239	.082	.255
Independent variables				
Self-interested influence			-.144	.047
F	1.272		3.991*	
R2	.032		.052	
ΔR2		.020		

Table 4 shows the regression analysis results of the dimensions of narcissistic leader deceptive motivation on employee creativity. Model 1 is the regression analysis of the control variable on employee creativity. Model 4 is the regression analysis of employee creativity after introducing the independent variable narcissistic leader deceptive motivation dimension on the basis of model 1. Based on the analysis results, we can find that the regression coefficient of model 4 is negative and significant (appendix =-0.144, p<0.05). Therefore, H3 is verified that the dimensions of narcissistic leadership deceptive motivation have significant negative influence on employee creativity.

Table 5 Regression analysis of narcissistic leadership charisma dimension and creative self-efficacy

Variate	Creative self-efficacy			
	Model 5		Model 6	
	Standardized coefficient β	Significance	Standardized coefficient β	Significance
Control variable				
Gender	-.080	.266	-.073	.272
Age	.000	1.000	.107	.163
Education	.006	.938	.024	.716
Years of working	-.066	.415	-.121	.107
Job category	-.011	.878	-.051	.449
Independent variables				

Charisma			.417	.000
F	.466		6.773***	
R2	.012		.175	
$\Delta R2$		0.163		

Table 5 shows the regression analysis results of narcissistic leadership charisma dimension on innovation self-efficacy. Model 5 is the regression analysis of control variable on innovation self-efficacy, and model 6 is the regression analysis of innovation self-efficacy after introducing independent variable narcissistic leadership charisma dimension on the basis of model 5. Based on the analysis results, we can find that the regression coefficient of model 6 is positive and significant (Dimensionality =0.417, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, H4 is verified that the narcissistic leadership charisma dimension has significant positive influence on innovation self-efficacy.

Table 6 Regression analysis of narcissistic leadership's self-interested influence dimensions and creative self-efficacy

Variate	Creative self-efficacy			
	Model 5		Model 7	
	Standardized coefficient β	significance	Standardized coefficient β	significance
Control variable				
Gender	-.080	.266	-.080	.269
Age	.000	1.000	.000	1.000
Education	.006	.938	.006	.938
Years of working	-.066	.415	-.066	.416
Job category	-.011	.878	-.011	.879
Independent variables				
Self-interested influence			.000	.996

Table 6 is the regression analysis result of narcissistic leader's self-interested influence dimension on innovation self-efficacy. Model 5 is the regression analysis of control variable on innovation self-efficacy, and model 7 is the regression analysis of innovation self-efficacy after introducing independent variable narcissistic leader's self-interested influence dimension on the basis of model 5. According to model 7, we can find that there is no significant relationship between the egoistic dimension of narcissistic leadership and the self-efficacy of innovation (CLS =0.000, $p > 0.05$). Meanwhile, according to the inferences, we can also find that the egoistic dimension of narcissistic leadership has no influence on the self-efficacy of innovation. Therefore, H5 is not established.

Table 7 Regression analysis of the dimensions of narcissistic leadership deceptive motivation and creative self-efficacy

Variate	Creative self-efficacy			
	Model 5		Model 8	
	Standardized coefficient β	significance	Standardized coefficient β	significance
Control variable				
Gender	-.080	.266	-.077	.291
Age	.000	1.000	.001	.987
Education	.006	.938	.008	.912
Years of working	-.066	.415	-.068	.407
Job category	-.011	.878	-.011	.884
Independent variables				
deceptive motivation			.019	.791

Table 7 shows the regression analysis results of the dimensions of narcissistic leadership deceptive motivation on the sense of innovation self-efficacy. Model 5 is the regression analysis of the control variable on the sense of innovation self-efficacy, and model 8 is the basis of model 5. According to model 8, we can find that there is no significant relationship between the dimensions of narcissistic leadership deceptive motivation and the sense of innovation self-efficacy (population =0.019, $p>0.05$), and the ecological value is contrary to our hypothesis. Therefore, H6 is not true.

Table 8 The test of creative self-efficacy's mediating effect

Variate	Employee Creativity			
	Model 1		Model 10	
	Standardized coefficient β	significance	Standardized coefficient β	significance
Control variable				
Gender	-.069	.336	-.026	.639
Age	.038	.638	.107	.098
Education	-.155	.033	-.145	.011
Years of working	-.029	.714	-.034	.592
Job category	.085	.239	.064	.256
Independent variables				
Charisma			.272	.000
Mediator variable				
Creative self-efficacy			.467	.000
F	1.272		62.752***	
R2	.032		.416	
$\Delta R2$.384			

The analytical results are shown in table 8: model 1 is the regression analysis of the controlled variable to the employee creativity, and model 10 is the regression analysis of the employee creativity by introducing the independent variable of narcissistic leadership charisma dimension and adding the intermediary variable of creative self-efficacy on the basis of model 1. According to model 10, we can see that after the addition of intermediary variable of creative self-efficacy, the influence of narcissistic leadership on employee creativity is significantly reduced compared with the previous result (Model 2: $\beta = 0.467$, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, H8 is verified.

Table 9 The test of work involvement's modulatory influence

Variate	Employee Creativity			
	Model 11		Model 12	
	Standardized coefficient β	significance	Standardized coefficient β	significance
Mediator variable				
Creative self-efficacy	.474	.000	.441	.000
Moderator variable				
Work involvement	.265	.000	.304	.000
Product term				
Creative self-efficacy*Work involvement			-.238	.000
F	61.876***		19.293***	
R2	.387		.442	
$\Delta R2$.055			

Table 9 shows the analytical results of the modulatory influence. Model 11 is the analytical result of creative self-efficacy and work involvement on employee creativity. Model 12 introduces the product term "innovation self-efficacy * work involvement" on the basis of model 11. Based on the analytical results, we can see that the regression coefficient of model 12 is negative and significant ($r=-0.238$, $p<0.001$), that is, work involvement has a significant negative modulatory effect on the relationship between creative self-efficacy and employee creativity, which is opposite from H9. Therefore, H9 is not true.

4. Conclusions and Future Research Recommendations

Based on the results of the research, this paper analyzes the reasons for the hypothesis which do not pass the tests: First, in organizations, employees tend to manifest a high degree of enthusiasm for positive remarks, thus increasing the confidence to their work and enhancing their creative self-efficacy. For negative remarks, although employees will manifest the disappointment, the creative self-efficacy may not easy to be reduced. Because the creative self-efficacy is an assessment of people themselves' capability of completing creative work, employees still want to try their best to finish their tasks, keeping their self-efficacy to cope with their work even if they have been treated unfairly. Therefore, leaders' indifference and deceptive motivation have no significant impacts on employees' creative self-efficacy. As a result, creative self-efficacy does not play a mediating role in the impacts of narcissistic leaders' self-interest dimension and deceptive motivation dimension on employees' creativity.

Second, in the perspective of the reverse modulatory effects of work involvement in the conclusion part, by analyzing the relevant reasons, this paper argues that when there is a high degree of employees' work involvement, which means that the work they engage in can meet their needs or interest, creative self-efficacy abates its influences on employee creativity. At this point, work involvement is the main source of driving power, stimulating the creativity of staffs. When there is a lower level of employees' work involvement, which means that the current work they engage in can not better satisfy their needs or interests, the creative self-efficacy have a stronger influences on employee creativity. In other words, employee creativity is mainly influenced by the impacts of creative self-efficacy, that is, creative self-efficacy and work involvement have a reciprocal relationship.

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