

## Research on the Influence of Patriarchal Leadership on Employee's Creative Behavior

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### Abstract

In the context of the continuous progress of the scientific management reform, in order to further reveal the internal mechanism of paternalistic leadership influencing employees' innovation behavior in the Chinese context, this study has constructed "Parental Leadership—Self-Efficacy/Autonomy-Exploration/Exploitative Innovation" research framework, using the structural equation model to analyze the data of 2,533 questionnaires of a state-owned enterprise, finds that benevolent leadership has a positive effect on employee exploration/exploitative innovation, and self-efficacy/autonomy has a partial mediating role; Authoritarian leadership has no significant impact on employees' exploration innovation, but has a positive impact on employees' exploitative innovation, there is no obvious mediating role among self-efficacy/autonomy.

### Keywords

Paternalistic leadership; self-efficacy; autonomy; exploratory innovation; exploitative innovation.

### 1. Introduction

In the face of rapid changes in market demand, companies are keeping pace with market developments, constantly developing products and services that meet consumer needs, and often use innovation as their main means for internal corporate reforms and product development. As the basic unit of team, organization and enterprise, employees are the starting point of all innovations. Therefore, how to stimulate their enthusiasm for innovation and improve their ability to innovate has become a hot topic of common concern in the industry and academia. At present, many scholars have studied this from different perspectives and pointed out that "leadership behavior" is an important antecedent variable that affects employee innovation[1,2]. As result variable of this kind of research, scholars divided the exploratory innovation and exploitative innovation according to the degree of innovation. At present, scholars have explored many about exploratory / exploitative innovation, but their research always focus on the impact of transformational / transactional leadership on innovation[3], and focus more on the impact of leadership style on innovation at the level of corporate, team, and organization[4]. Few scholars start from the individual level to explore the influence mechanism of paternalistic leadership on employees' exploration/explorative innovation.

Actually, because of the influence of traditional culture, transformational, transactional, charismatic leadership based on Western management theory may not be fully applicable to Chinese companies [5]. In contrast, paternalistic leadership is more widespread in Chinese enterprises[6]. Therefore, studying the influence of paternalistic leadership on exploration/ exploitative innovation of corporate employees is more practical for Chinese enterprise management.

In view of employees' innovations are belong to out-of-role behaviors, previous research often used the perspective of social exchanges such as psychological security and organizational support to discuss the mechanism of employee innovation which believed reciprocity is a necessary premise for employee innovation. However, even if employees are given a kind easy work environment, harmonious work atmosphere and benevolent management, many people still choose to remain

mediocre at work instead of increasing their work commitment to enhance work efficiency, improve working methods and innovate work results to give back to their organization[7].

It is not difficult to find out that social exchange theory has certain limitations in explaining the mechanism of employees' creative behavior. As a supplement, social cognitive theory believes that self-cognition is the primary factor of individual innovation. Then from the perspective of self-cognition, it could analyze the change of individual's internal psychological perception and deeply analyze how the leadership style influence employees' different degrees of innovative behavior choice. thus, based on the theory of social exchange, this study attempts to open the "black box" of psychological empowerment from the perspective of self-cognition, by building the "patriarchal leadership—self-efficacy/autonomy—exploratory/explorative innovation" research framework, to explain how psychological perceptions such as self-efficacy and work autonomy perception work on employees' innovation. then, theoretically enriching the research between paternalistic leadership and employees' innovation behavior, providing reference for companies under different innovation needs.

## **2. Theoretical basis**

### **2.1 Paternal leadership**

Compared with Western societies, Chinese organizations have distinctive teaching and centralized leadership characteristics[8]. Therefore, in the context of China, paternalistic leaders have unique explanatory powers. Based on previous research results, Zheng and other scholars explored the division and measurement of the structure of paternalistic leadership, then put forward the paternalistic leadership dualism and ternary theory[9]. In addition, they also point out the three dimensions of paternalistic leadership: benevolence, morality and authoritarianism could be separated for independent research[10]. Some scholars only adopted two dimensions of benevolence and authoritarian in subsequent studies[11,12]. Some scholars only use the two dimensions of morality and authoritarianism [13], and some scholars adopted all[14,15]. This study refers to the research of Fu[4] and Yu[12], adopts the dualism theory of paternalistic, examining only two dimensions of authoritarian leadership and benevolent leadership. Among them, authoritarian leadership prefers to control and instigate others, emphasizing absolute power. Team members must strictly abide by their arrangements. Benevolent leadership prefers generous humanity, emphasizing mutual respect, and often protecting employee welfare and providing comprehensive and lasting care. [9]. According to the theory of social cognition, leaders' "authoritarianism" and "benevolent" behaviors will inspire cognitive psychological reflections such as "fear and obedience" and "gratitude and endeavor".

### **2.2 The influence of paternalistic leadership on employees' innovative behavior**

(1) Authoritarian leadership Emphasizing on absolute authority often manifests as absolute control of the leader and absolute obedience of employees[10]. Under the authoritative leadership style, employees can only strictly follow the leadership arrangements. They can neither participate in the decision-making nor question the current plan [9]. According to the theory of social exchange, this will lead to a decline in employee's loyalty, trust and satisfaction to the leader[24], thus they will reduced their organizational citizenship behavior and extra-role behavior, such as advice, innovation, etc. In addition, under the authoritarian leadership environment, employees will become more fearful to innovation, due to their thoughts and behaviors being controlled. Even if there are occasional ideas, they will choose to be conservative because they fear to be punished for mistakes.

(2) Benevolent Leadership Emphasis on reciprocal forgiveness often manifests as leader's care and guidance for employees [10]. Based on the theory of social exchange, leader's benevolence will cause employees to feel more grateful, and expect to reward the leaders with more and better hardworking, it will be easier to generate pro-organizational behavior and extra-role behavior[25]. In addition, employees have a relatively relaxed working environment to explore new methods and knowledge in such leadership environment[26]. Even if mistakes is inevitable, because they are more likely to

receive understanding and guidance from leaders, thus they still willing to improve the status quo and make bold innovations.

Therefore, we propose the following assumptions:

H1a: Authoritarian leadership negative influence exploratory innovation;

H1b: Authoritarian leadership negative influence exploitative innovation.

H2a: Benevolent leadership positively influences exploratory innovation;

H2b: Benevolent leadership positively influences exploitative innovation.

### **2.3 Exploratory innovation and exploitative innovation**

The innovative behavior of employees could be divided into exploratory and exploitative innovation according to the breadth and depth of their innovation[3,16]。 Among them, exploratory innovation has a deeper and greater degree of innovation, more emphasis on using new knowledge or new methods to form a new output; In contrast, exploitative innovation is relatively modest, its degree of innovation is relatively small, and more emphasis improving and optimizing existing work skill or methods through learning and experimentation. According to situational cognition theory, the choice of different degree innovation of employees at work will be affected by the motivations, innovation capabilities, and opportunities.

### **2.4 Self-efficacy and autonomy**

Conger et al., based on social cognitive theory, studied empowerment from the psychological level, and believed that authorization is an act of intrinsic motivation to employees. Individuals could improve self-efficacy by empowering [17]. Later, Thomas on the basis of Conger's intrinsic incentive point of view, further clarified the concept of psychological authorization and four-dimensional cognitive model[18]. Afterwards, Spreitzer developed a psychological empowerment scale based on the authorization model proposed by Thomas and pointed out that psychological empowerment is the extent to which employees feel that they are authorized[19]。

Employee`s perception of psychological empowerment not only directly affects their work commitment and enthusiasm[20], but also subtle changes their innovative behaviors and innovation choices. Although studies have proved that paternalistic leadership can directly affect the employee's perception of psychological empowerment, among them, benevolent leadership and moral leadership positive influence the employee's psychological empowerment, authoritarian leadership have negatively affects[14], but existing studies mostly use psychological authorization as an integrated variable[14,21], does not take into account the differences in the influence of paternalistic leadership on its internal dimensions, and the differences in the influence of different internal psychological perceptions and innovation behavior. As employees' innovative choices are not only influenced by leadership style, also affected by their ability, time and space[22]. Therefore, this study opened the integration concept of psychological empowerment and chose self-efficacy and Autonomy to conduct in-depth analysis. Self-efficacy is employees perceiving their ability to successfully complete a job; autonomy is the perception of their power to arrange his own working hours and methods at work[23].

## **3. Research hypothesis**

### **3.1 The Effect of Paternalistic Leadership on Perceived Self-efficacy and Autonomy of Employees**

According to the social impact theory, employees' autonomy and self-efficacy will change with changes in the working environment and leadership style. Therefore, different leadership styles at work will have an impact on employees' psychological perception and innovation behavior choices.

When the leaders in the work place too much emphasis on their own power, control other people's behavior, and despise the value of others, they will cause employees to lose autonomy, reduce self-esteem[27], weaken their enthusiasm[28], and increase their sense of frustration. Therefore, when managers use authoritarian leadership, employees will feel restrained, controlled, and neglected,

resulting perceived a reduction in autonomy and self-efficacy. Conversely, when managers adopt kindness leadership, employees will feel supported, cared and accepted, enhancing their perception of autonomy and self-efficacy.

Therefore, we propose the following assumptions:

H3a: Authoritarian leadership negatively affects self-efficacy;

H3b: Authoritarian leadership negatively affects autonomy.

H4a: Benevolent leadership positively affects self-efficacy;

H4b: Benevolent leadership positively affects autonomy.

### 3.2 The Mediating Role of Self-efficacy and Autonomy

Innovation is an iterative process full of frustrations. During this period, employees are easily to generate high negative emotions such as anxiety and frustration[29]. Self-efficacy as an individual's perception of one's ability to complete a job, its change could regulate employees innovative psychological beliefs [30]. Studies have proven that employees' self-efficacy has a positive effect on their work dynamism, work dedication, work focus, and work commitment[31]. Therefore, when employees encounter difficulties and setbacks in the process of innovation, who is high self-efficacy will have more confidence in their own choices[32]. In addition, the generation of employee innovation behavior also requires time and space[23]. Therefore, giving employees proper right to make decisions autonomously, so that they can more flexibly arrange their own work, could not only provide opportunities for their innovation, also improve their positive emotion perception in work[33]. Making employees promote more investment, stimulate more dynamic, finally generate more innovation output.

Therefore, we propose the following assumptions:

H5a: Self-efficacy positively affects exploratory innovation;

H5b: Self-efficacy positively affects exploitative innovation;

H6a: Autonomy positively affects exploratory innovation;

H6b: Autonomy positively affects exploitative innovation;

Based on the above analysis, we propose the following assumptions:

H7a: Authoritarian leadership indirectly influences employees' exploratory and exploitative innovation through self-efficacy;

H7b: Authoritarian leadership indirectly influences employees' exploratory and exploitative innovation through autonomy;

H8a: Benevolent leadership indirectly influences employees' exploratory and exploitative innovation through self-efficacy;

H8b: Benevolent leadership indirectly influences employees' exploratory and exploitative innovation through autonomy.

### 3.3 The Influence of Autonomy on Employees' Self-efficacy

Studies have shown that in a research team with a paternalistic leadership style, when the tutor gives students more autonomy support could improve their ability and self-confidence, increasing their desire for high performance[34], and further strengthen its scientific innovation motives; When the tutor reduces support for student autonomy, students are more likely to suspect their own abilities and reduce innovation[35]. It is speculated that in a business-oriented work environment with similar leadership characteristics, giving employees appropriate right of work autonomy could similarly improve their self-efficacy and promote innovation.

Therefore, we propose the following assumptions:

H9: Perceived work autonomy of employees could improve their self-efficacy.

The research framework of this study is shown in Figure 1:

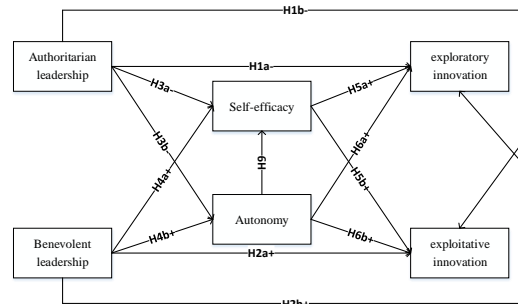


Figure 1 Research framework

**4. Research methods and procedures**

**4.1 Research sample**

This study uses 20 subsidiaries of a state-owned enterprise as the research unit. Due to the existence of management consulting cooperation with the company, we learned the company is undergoing innovative reforms. According to the innovation plan, exploratory / exploitative innovation will take place within the company at the same time. In addition, we also learned that there is a distinctive paternalistic leadership feature in their management. In summary, the state-owned company meets the needs of our study.

With the consent of the company’s top management, the online questionnaire for this study was distributed to the staff of each branch company with the assistance of the corporate human resources department. During the period, 2976 questionnaires were returned, and 2553 questionnaires is valid. The effective rate of the questionnaire is 85.8%. See Table 1.

Table 1 Demographic characteristics

Category		Ratio
Gender	Girl	46.7%
	Boy	53.3%
Education	High school and below	6.8%
	Specialist qualifications	47.7%
	Bachelor's degree	43.0%
	Master degree and above	2.5%
Age	22 years old and below	0.2%
	22~25 years old	6.5%
	26~30 years old	21.7%
	31~40 years old	37.8%
	41~50 years old	28.2%
	55 years old and above	5.6%

**4.2 Conceptual measurement**

**1. Data analysis method**

In this study, 2533 sample data are randomly divided into two parts. The first part is 1233 data, which is used for the exploratory factor analysis of the concepts. The second part is 1300 data, which is used for the Confirmatory factor analysis of the concepts, and all 2533 data is used to hypothesize model test.

In order to ensure the reliability of results, our research used many mature domestic and international scales which have been proved high reliability and validity. All items use Likert's 6-point scale, and from 1 to 6 it means "very disagree" ~ " Very agree".

**1. Exploratory factor analysis (N=1233)**

(1) Paternalistic leadership Adopting paternalistic leadership scale based on Chinese context developed by Zheng[6]. Benevolent leadership and authoritarian leadership are respectively 4 items,

altogether 8 items. The load factor of all items is above 0.697, and the internal consistency coefficient Cronbach's  $\alpha$  value of each dimension is 0.940 and 0.854 respectively.

(2) Self-efficacy and autonomy Adopting Li psychological empowerment scale developed by Spiritzer's based on the Chinese context[28]. self-efficacy and autonomy are respectively 3 items, a total of 6 items. The load factor of all items is above 0.735, and the internal consistency coefficient Cronbach's  $\alpha$  value of each dimension is 0.893 and 0.849 respectively.

(3) exploratory innovation and exploitative innovation Adopting Ma[39] innovation scale developed by Mom[40] and Jansen[3] based on the Chinese context. exploratory innovation and exploitative innovation are respectively 3 items, along together 6 items. The load factor of all items is above 0.793, and the internal consistency coefficient Cronbach's  $\alpha$  value of each dimension is 0.902 and 0.847 respectively.

## 2. Confirmatory factor analysis (N=1300)

To further examine the aggregate validity and discriminant validity of each variable, we adopted Lisrel 8.7 software to perform confirmatory factor analysis. The data showed that the load of the standardized factors of all items was higher than 0.6, and all reached a significant level ( $P < 0.001$ ), showing good convergence validity, see Table 2.

Table 2 Confirmatory factor analysis and reliability analysis (N=1300)

Variables	Items	Confirmatory Factor Analysis		Reliability Analysis
		Standardized factor loading	t value	Cronbach's $\alpha$ value
Exploratory innovation	I often make minor adjustments to my working methods to suit current needs.	0.83	35.83	0.898
	I often summarize my work experience and apply it.	0.87	38.52	
	I often improve my original job skills to suit current needs.	0.89	39.99	
Exploitative innovation	I often try new, unfamiliar methods of work.	0.84	36.09	0.876
	I often learn new job skills that I have never learned before.	0.87	38.37	
	I often generate new business ideas that other colleagues did not think about it.	0.80	33.84	
Self-efficacy	I am very confident in my ability to complete my work.	0.89	39.89	0.900
	I am confident in my ability to do all things well at work.	0.94	43.55	
	I mastered all the skills which I need in my work.	0.79	33.69	
Autonomy	I have a lot of autonomy in deciding how to complete my work.	0.86	36.54	0.839
	I can decide how to do my work.	0.88	37.69	
	I have great independence and autonomy in how to complete my work.	0.69	27.05	
Benevolent leadership	He (she) cares about the personal life of subordinates.	0.92	42.93	0.944

	He (she) always chats with and cares about subordinates.	0.97	47.28	
	When a subordinate encounters difficulty, he (she) will give timely help.	0.91	42.17	
	He(she) will give meticulous care to subordinates who are getting along longer.	0.81	35.09	
Authoritarian leadership	He (she) never reveals information to subordinates.	0.61	23.59	0.873
	Everything in this department is decided by him (her) alone	0.90	40.03	
	Every meeting the final decision making is according to his (her) ideas.	0.87	38.30	
	When working together, he (she) brings great pressure to subordinates.	0.81	34.33	

re, the data needs to be "Harman's single factor test." As can be seen from Table 3, there is a significant difference between the fitting result of the single factor model and the six factor model( $\Delta\chi^2(df)=13096.13 (170)$  ,  $P<0.001$ ). it's clear we can't explain all the factors with one latent variable. The six-factor model fits much better than the single-factor model, indicating that the variables have good discriminant validity, and the homology error of the data is not serious.

Table 3 Conceptual discriminant validity of confirmatory factor analysis(N=1300)

Model	Factors	$\chi^2$	df	$\Delta\chi^2$	RMSEA	GFI	CFI	TLI
Six factors	II; RI; SE; AU; BL; AL	896.75	155	-	0.061	0.94	0.98	0.98
Single factor	II+RI+SE+AU+BL+AL	13992.88	170	13096.13**	0.250	0.48	0.74	0.71

Note: II represents exploratory innovation; RI represents exploitative innovation; SE represents Self-efficacy; AU represents autonomy; BL represents benevolent leadership; AL represents authoritarian leadership; "+" represents two factors combined into one factor.

### 5. Structural Models and Hypothesis Testing

Based on the research hypothesis, we construct the structural model. The model fitting results are shown as model 1 in Table 4,  $\chi^2=2335.45$ ,  $df=156$ ,  $RMSEA=0.074$ ,  $GFI=0.92$ ,  $CFI=0.97$ ,  $IFI=0.96$ ,  $TLI=0.96$ , The hypothetical model fits data well. And the path result of it is shown in Figure 2.

Hypothesis 1a and 1b suggest that authoritarian leadership have a negative effect on exploratory/exploitative innovation. But the path result shows that authoritarian leadership has no significant effect on exploratory innovation ( $\beta=0.01$ ,  $p<0.1$ ), and has a positive effect on exploitative innovation ( $\beta=0.11$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Hypotheses 1a and 1b are not supported. In similar studies, Fu found that authoritarian leadership has no significant effect on exploratory innovation[4]; Jin found that authoritarian leadership has a positive effect on both subjective and objective innovation performance of team [15]. From this, we speculate that the cultural background has adjusted the influence of authoritarian leadership on employee innovation behavior. It follows that authoritarian leadership in Chinese companies does not always have a negative impact on employees' organizational citizenship behaviors or extra-role behaviors.

Hypothesis 2a and 2b suggest that benevolent leadership has a positive impact on exploratory/exploitative innovation. The path result shows that benevolent leadership has a significant effect on exploratory innovation ( $\beta=0.15$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) and exploitative innovation ( $\beta=0.18$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Hypothesis 2a and 2b are supported.

Hypothesis 3a and 3b suggest that authoritarian leadership has a negative effect on self-efficacy and autonomy. The path result shows that authoritarian leadership has no significant effect on self-efficacy ( $\beta = -0.02$ ,  $p < 0.1$ ) and autonomy ( $\beta = 0.02$ ,  $p < 0.1$ ). Hypotheses 3a and 3b were not supported. In a similar study, Lei discovered that the task-oriented management style had no significant effect on employee perception of autonomy [38]. Influenced by the history of “Monarch-Mind Culture” in our country, employees and leaders often have relatively large power distance. Therefore, most employees choose to accept internal grade differences, even to a certain extent, they expect leaders to tell them how to complete their work clearly. Thus, we suspect that historical culture has weakened the negative relationship between authoritarian leadership and employee sense of self-efficacy and autonomy, in a large extent, as a result the path coefficient is not significant.

Hypothesis 4a and 4b believe that benevolent leadership has a positive effect on self-efficacy and autonomy. The path result shows that benevolent leadership significantly promote self-efficacy ( $\beta=0.09$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) and autonomy ( $\beta=0.53$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Hypotheses 4a and 4b are supported.

Hypotheses 5a and 5b believe that self-efficacy has a positive effect on employee exploratory/exploitative innovation. The path result shows that self-efficacy has a significant effect on exploratory innovation ( $\beta=0.55$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) and exploitative innovation ( $\beta=0.34$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Hypothesis 5a and 5b are supported, the findings are in line with expectations.

Hypotheses 6a and 6b believe that autonomy has a positive effect on employee exploratory/exploitative innovation. The path result shows that autonomy could significantly promote exploitative innovation ( $\beta = 0.11$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and exploratory innovation ( $\beta = 0.22$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), hypotheses 6a and 6b are supported. In addition, Hypothesis 9 believes that employees’ perceptions of autonomy will increase their self-efficacy. The path result shows that the perception of autonomy had a significant positive effect on self-efficacy ( $\beta=0.56$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Hypothesis 9 was supported and the study findings were in line with expectations.

Hypothesis 7a believes that authoritarian leadership indirectly influences employee exploratory/exploitative innovation through self-efficacy. Because 3a is not supported, that’s why hypothesis 7a is not supported. Hypothesis 7a believes that authoritarian leadership indirectly influences employee exploratory/exploitative innovation through autonomy. Because 3b is not supported, that’s why hypothesis 7b is not supported.

Hypothesis 8a believes that benevolent leadership indirectly influences employee exploratory/exploitative innovation through self-efficacy. Because hypothesis 4a, 5a, and 5b are supported, hypothesis 8a is supported. Similarly, hypothesis 8b is supported too.

Based on the hypothesis model, the other three competing models are tested. Model 2, on the base of the hypothetical model, eliminates the path of autonomy to self-efficacy which cancels the relationship between the internal dimensions of psychological empowerment. Model fitting parameters are shown in Table 4,  $\chi^2=2764.63$ ,  $df=157$ ,  $RMSEA=0.081$ ,  $GFI=0.90$ ,  $CFI=0.96$ ,  $IFI=0.95$ ,  $TLI=0.96$ . Model 3 removes the path of authoritarian leadership and benevolent leadership to exploratory/exploitative innovation on the base of the hypothetical model, making self-efficacy and autonomy become complete mediator variable. Model fitting parameters are shown in Table 4,  $\chi^2=2571.16$ ,  $df=160$ ,  $RMSEA=0.077$ ,  $GFI=0.91$ ,  $CFI=0.97$ ,  $IFI=0.96$ ,  $TLI=0.96$ . Model 4 on the base of Model 2 removes both the path of authoritarian leadership and benevolent leadership to self-efficacy and autonomy, removes the path of self-efficacy and autonomy to exploratory/exploitative innovation, therefore this model with no mediation, Model fitting parameters are shown in Table 4,  $\chi^2=4522.12$ ,  $df=161$ ,  $RMSEA=0.103$ ,  $GFI=0.85$ ,  $CFI=0.95$ ,  $IFI=0.94$ ,  $TLI=0.95$ . The data shows that the fitting parameters of each competition model are worse than the hypothesis model.



Table 4 Comparison of structural equation models (N=2533)

Measurement model	$\chi^2$	df	$\Delta\chi^2$	RMSEA	GFI	CFI	TLI	IFI
1. Hypothetical model	2335.45	156		0.074	0.92	0.97	0.96	0.96
2. Delete the autonomy path to self-efficacy in model 1	2764.63	157	429.18**	0.081	0.90	0.96	0.95	0.96
3. Complete mediation model	2571.16	160	235.71**	0.077	0.91	0.97	0.96	0.96
4. No mediation model	4522.12	161	2186.67**	0.103	0.85	0.95	0.94	0.95

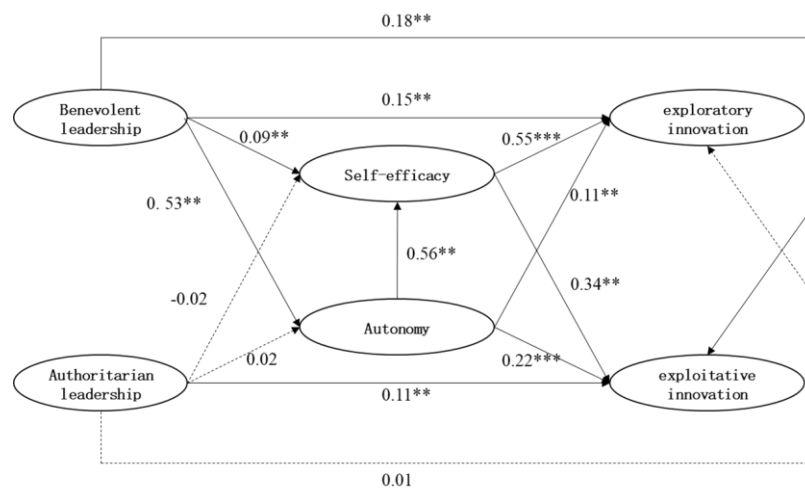


Figure 2 Model test result diagram

### 6. Conclusion and discussion

Based on the social exchange theory, this study from the perspective of self-cognition, further analyzes the intrinsic mechanism of how the dualistic paternalistic leadership influence on employee`s innovation behavior. Through data analysis, we find that benevolent leadership has a positive impact on exploratory/ exploitative innovation, sense of self-efficacy and autonomy partially mediates the relationship between them. Authoritarian leadership has a significant positive effect on employees` exploitative innovation, and there is no significant mediating effect of self-efficacy and autonomy.

The above result shows: First, the influence of dual paternalistic leadership style on employees' innovative behavior is different. On the one hand such differences have not been fully discussed in previous studies on employee innovation behavior, on the other hand the difference in the impact of different paternalistic leadership styles on employee innovation behavior has not yet formed a unified conclusion, in the related researches. This study complements the existing research on paternalistic leadership and employee innovation through empirical analysis. Second, this research further explores the potential relationship between self-efficacy and autonomy in the psychological empowerment of employees and how they impact on employee`s innovation behavior. Many scholars have conducted research on the relationship between paternalistic leadership and employee`s innovation. However, the design of comprehensive research model which contains self-efficiency, autonomy and different type of innovation, at the same time, is rarely seen. Therefore, this study provides a reference for subsequent study design.

For management practices, the research results show that, in the context of different innovation needs (exploratory/ exploitative innovation), companies should adjust the leadership style (benevolent leadership/ authoritarian leadership) to fit it. Otherwise, it will inhibit the innovation and development of company, instead of helping companies keep abreast of market trend, which will lead to loss the

competitive advantages. For example, in a fierce competitive environment, companies urgently need radical innovations to improve the efficiency of enterprise management and new product development. If leaders at this time adopt unmatched authoritarian leadership, they will severely inhibit employee innovation enthusiasm, further hindering the development of enterprises.

The limitations of this study include: First, this study uses a cross-sectional study design, but innovation is a process that takes time to think and explore, so subsequent studies will use vertical data to further verify this. Second, the sample of this study comes from 20 subsidiaries of a state-owned enterprise, which limits the universality and generalizability of the research conclusion to some extent. The following research will further enrich the source of research object.

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