



The Role of Thriving at Work in the Relationship between Paradoxical Leadership and Employee Voice: Evidence from Communication and Information Technology Companies in Egypt

Research extracted from a PHD. thesis of Business Administration

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Abstract:

Purpose: This research investigates the relationship between paradoxical leadership (PL) and employee voice behaviour, with thriving at work as a mediator.

Methodology: Data was collected from a sample of 377 employees working in information technology and communication (ICT) companies in the Smart Village, Egypt. The study used partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) to test the hypotheses.

Findings: The results revealed that paradoxical leadership positively relates to employees' promotive and prohibitive voice behaviors. Furthermore, employees' thriving at work partially mediates the relationship between paradoxical leadership and employees' promotive and prohibitive voice behaviors.

Practical implications: The findings suggested that paradoxical leadership effectively manages employees. Managers' ability to lead paradoxically is the foundation for enhancing employees' thriving at work and voice behavior. Thus, managers should aim to balance organizational goals with employee needs to ensure that employees feel appreciated and motivated to perform better and actively contribute ideas for the company's development.

Keywords: Paradoxical leadership, Thriving at work, Promoting voice behavior, Prohibitive voice behavior.

Introduction:

The business world keeps shifting all the time. New technologies pop up almost daily. Additionally, the emergence of artificial intelligence is changing how things work. Thus, organizational leaders need to think widely and keep the whole in sight to survive in the long run. Importantly, all employees are expected to apply their knowledge, wisdom, and intelligence to offer well-reasoned suggestions. Thereby, voice behavior has been empirically proven to be crucial for driving innovation and maintaining the sustainable development of organizations (Li et al.,2020).

Employees may hesitate to share ideas. It is difficult to speak up, as they fear potential problems or adverse reactions. That is why they may keep quiet, thinking twice before saying anything. So, many researchers focus on exploring ways to promote voice behavior among employees (Walumbwa et al., 2018). Previous research has explored the underlying antecedents of employee voice, such as psychological safety, proactive personality, organizational sustainability, and leadership styles. Several studies have found a positive relationship between leadership styles and employees' voices (Doshi & Nigam, 2023).

Effective leadership requires authority, prestige, and a combination of intellectual, emotional, and spiritual abilities. A leadership style that can bring these elements together is paradoxical leadership. As described by Zhang et al. (2015), paradoxical leadership involves managing apparent contradictions to balance organizational goals with employees' needs. When leaders successfully achieve this balance, they create a supportive, autonomous, and responsible environment for employees that motivates them to voice ideas and suggest improvements (Silva et al., 2024).

Moreover, previous studies have primarily concentrated on employees thriving within traditional environments, emphasizing the impact of different leadership styles and perceived organizational support (Kleine et al., 2019).

Thriving at work enables employees to learn new things and feel more energized. This is consistent with the Self-Determination Theory, which posits that individuals are more likely to support their development when the basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are satisfied. Paradoxical leadership can enhance employees' self-determination, thus fulfilling their psychological needs and fostering both learning and vitality (Yang et al., 2021).

Building on this, this research incorporates the concept of paradoxical leadership to explore how it helps employees thrive and engage in voice behavior for the organization's benefit. Employees who thrive in their work may be more likely to speak up about their opinions. Moreover, sharing ideas is suitable for the company and helps the individual too, especially when thinking about their growth (Sheng & Zhou, 2021).

The communications and information technology (ICT) companies in Egypt, particularly in the Smart Village, have a pivotal role in advancing the country's digital transformation and economic development. It provides approximately 20,000 job opportunities, and the volume of business of the investing companies in the Smart Village is estimated at about 50 billion Egyptian pounds. Moreover, it is considered the largest integrated technology business hub in Egypt, supporting growth and

sustainability across all sectors of companies in Egypt. It also aims to provide an interactive community that offers communication opportunities for the growth and success of companies across all fields¹. Therefore, this study seeks to identify the role of thriving at work in the relationship between paradoxical leadership and employee voice within ICT companies in the smart village.

Conceptual background:

Paradoxical leadership (PL):

Organizational structures are built with paradoxes. The concept of paradox refers to two opinions that appear contradictory to one another. Paradoxes consist of contradicting but interrelated elements that occur concurrently and endure across time. Leaders' behavioral response to paradoxical tensions is critical to organizational performance (Chen et al., 2021).

To deal with paradoxes, leaders must be capable of maintaining a balance between conflicting demands rather than focusing on one dimension. Moreover, they should encourage followers to view contradictions as opportunities for growth rather than threats (Sparr et al., 2022).

So, paradoxical leader behavior (PLB) is based on paradox theory. Paradox theory is "a meta-theoretical framework that provides insights into the sources, nature, and outcomes of organizational tensions" (Shao et al., 2019). The core assumption of paradox theory is that paradoxical tensions may be brought to the forefront by situational circumstances such as limited resources and organizational change. These tensions can be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, they have the potential to foster a constructive cycle that enhances creativity and long-term sustainability; on the other hand, they may induce anxiety and defensive responses among individuals (Miron-Spektor et al., 2018).

Paradoxical leader behavior (PLB) is defined as "seemingly competing, yet interrelated, behaviors to meet structural and followers' demands simultaneously and over time" (Zhang et al., 2015). Moreover, Aggestam and Hyde-Price (2019) identified paradoxical leadership as "a set of informal practices employed by leaders to manage organizational affairs against traditional procedures and practices" (Sulphey & Jasim, 2022).

¹ Ministry of Communications and Information Technology. (2023). *ICT indicators report*.

So, leaders who can combine participative and directive behaviors are often characterized as paradoxical leaders. Participative behaviors allow them to be flexible and responsive to unexpected challenges. However, relying only on this approach can confuse employees' roles. Consequently, the other side of paradoxical leadership includes directive behaviors such as providing stability and helping the team stay focused and aligned with organizational goals. (Klonek et al., 2021).

Zhang et al. (2015) characterized the two sides of leadership behaviors with "both-and" terminology to posit five dimensions of paradoxical leadership. The first dimension is ***uniformity and individualization (UI)***, which refers to integrating both traits when treating subordinates. Uniformity may be achieved by ensuring that subordinates are given the same rights and responsibilities without bias. At the same time, individualization means leaders appreciate subordinates' unique characteristics. So, while the leader should treat all of his followers equally, he should also consider the distinctive features unique to each (KIM,2021). The second dimension is ***self- and other-centeredness (SO)***, which implies that while leaders retain authority as a fundamental aspect of their role, they also accept suggestions from subordinates and actively share leadership responsibilities through empowerment. The third dimension is ***decision control and autonomy (CA)***, which denotes balancing decision-making power and giving subordinates the freedom to act. So, paradoxical leaders reconcile conflicts by maintaining decision-making authority while granting employees autonomy. Leaders may, for example, delegate authority to employees to make decisions on less important issues while making decisions on more critical ones. The fourth dimension is ***work requirements and flexibility (RF)***, which relates to the existing paradoxes in organizations, such as empowerment and control. Leaders may force employees to complete job requirements while allowing them a degree of flexibility to make mistakes. Finally, the fifth dimension is ***Distance and closeness (DC)***, which is the balance between leader-follower proximity and distance. To oversee and manage positive organizational behaviors, both distance and intimate relationships with workers are required (KIM,2021).

Thriving at work:

Spreitzer et al. (2005) defined thriving at work as "the psychological state in which individuals experience both a sense of vitality and learning at work". Thriving at work has been recognized as a crucial psychological driver of individual growth and development and a requirement for long-term organizational performance (Di Milia& Jiang,2024).

Porath et al. (2012) defined thriving at work as having two domains: vitality and learning. Vitality is the feeling of being energized, while learning is experiencing personal growth via knowledge acquisition and utilization. Porath et al. (2012) described the domain of vitality as experienced through engaging in task focus; task focus is gained through exploration and decision-making discretion. Learning entails employees' feeling that they are acquiring and can apply valuable knowledge (Kleine et al., 2019).

Spreitzer et al. (2005) proposed the socially embedded model of thriving (SEMT), explaining how employees are more likely to thrive in specific work environments. It is based on two fundamental assumptions. First, it emphasizes that most employees do not work in isolation; they are part of teams and departments. Moreover, workplaces that promote trust, respect, and decision-making help employees feel empowered and thrive. Second, the model suggested that when employees engage in Agentic work behaviors (task focus, exploration, and heedful relating), they generate valuable resources, such as knowledge, positive meaning, positive affect, and relational resources. These resources, in turn, drive even more Agentic behaviors. So, thriving is a self-sustaining mechanism (Goh et al., 2022).

Employee Voice:

Employee voice is one of the essential methods for employees to exhibit their proactivity in the workplace and to improve procedures, discover faults, and promote innovation in the organization (Knoll & Redman, 2016).

The term "voice behavior" was first introduced by Hirschman in 1970 in his classic model of exit-voice-loyalty. He pointed out that when employees are dissatisfied with the organization, three sorts of behaviors will manifest: exit (E), loyalty (L), and voice (V), which is known as the ELV model. The author defined voice as "Any attempt at all to change, rather than to escape from, an objectionable state of affairs, whether through individual or collective petition to the management directly in charge, through appeal to a higher authority to force a change in management, or through various types of actions and protests, including those that are meant to mobilize public opinion." (Shanggao, 2020).

Van Dyne and LePine's (1998) definition of voice is "non-required behavior that emphasizes the expression of constructive challenge with the intent to improve rather than merely criticize.". Van Dyne et al. (2003) also created a list of requirements to examine when considering behavior as voice. First, it must be freely expressed. Second, it should contain details that are important to the organization. Third, the work environment must be directly influenced. Finally, the information must be received by someone within the organization (Diaz, 2019).

Liang et al. (2012) defined voice as "a means to talk about either what can be done better or what is harmful. Indeed, voice behavior can be challenging to organizations as it is perceived as having both favorable and unfavorable consequences".

According to Tedone and Bruk-Lee (2022), employee voice behavior has three key characteristics. First, it is a verbal action performed by employees. Second, it is constructive, meaning employees speak up to find solutions and drive change. Third, it is a voluntary choice, as individuals must consciously decide to express their ideas or concerns. In essence, employee voice behavior is improvement-oriented and proactive and involves upward organizational communication. Thus, it appears that there are many definitions of employee voice. The researcher depends on Liang et al. (2012) because of its significance in leadership.

Liang et al. (2012) first proposed two voice types: promotive and prohibitive. Promotive voice is more focused on the ideal state of the future and includes challenges to the present quo, ideas, and solutions for reform. It involves individuals' concerns about improving work processes, which aids in achieving organizational goals. On the other hand, a prohibitive voice describes employees' expressions of issues about work practices or behavior that is harmful to their organization.

The promotive voice is constructive and inspiring, but the prohibitive voice serves a protective function. Despite these differences, both types of voice behavior are considered proactive. The promotive voice emphasizes long-term benefits and Innovation, whereas the prohibitive voice emphasizes efforts to avoid or prevent harm (Qin et al., 2014).

Hypotheses Development:

Building on the extant literature on paradoxical leadership, thriving at work, and voice behavior, the following relationships have been examined:

The relationship between paradoxical leadership and voice behavior:

Following the social learning theory, this study proposes that paradoxical leadership positively affects employee voice behavior. Employees develop their behaviors by observing and imitating their role models. When leaders have a paradox mindset and serve as role models by addressing contradictions constructively, employees can see and learn effective strategies for managing such paradoxes. Consequently, they can develop a similar paradox mindset, potentially enabling them to find new ways to handle these paradoxes and make them more likely to speak up (Kundi et al., 2023).

In this context, Li et al. (2020) found that employees engage in extra-role performance, including voice behavior, when they feel their managers are concerned about their benefits and interests. Paradoxical leadership supports this by balancing the organization's demands with the employees' needs, creating a sense of support, independence, and accountability, and ultimately encouraging employees to speak up.

Xue et al. (2020) proposed that paradoxical leadership influences employees' voice behavior through psychological safety and self-efficacy. When their leaders engage in paradoxical behavior, employees are more likely to participate in promotive voice behavior. Moreover, Silva et al. (2024) stated that paradoxical leadership should encourage employees to be more open to sharing ideas for enhancements and other suggestions.

Additionally, Sulphey and Jasim (2022) predicted that PL could provide both flexibility and stability to organizations, allowing members to express themselves and contribute to a more open work environment. So, PL is a practical choice for dealing with unsupportive and adverse work environments, such as employee silence.

More importantly, Chen et al. (2022) added that Leaders with paradoxical thinking can effectively balance conflicting organizational needs. They tend to be open-minded, tolerant, and adaptable, which helps establish an environment where employees feel supported and encouraged to share their ideas. So, leaders with a paradoxical mindset show their employees how to deal with contradictory work in a complex environment. So, employees start weighing the pros and cons of speaking up and decide for themselves when it is the right moment to share suggestions. Thus, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between paradoxical leadership and voice behavior.

This hypothesis is divided into the following sub-hypotheses:

H1a: There is a positive relationship between paradoxical leadership and promotive voice behavior.

H1b: There is a positive relationship between paradoxical leadership and prohibitive voice behavior.

The relationship between paradoxical leadership and thriving at work:

According to self-determination theory, all individuals have three basic needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Satisfying these needs enhances employees' thriving at work. Paradoxical leadership implements a "dual management approach," which involves acknowledging employees' abilities, encouraging independent work, fostering their initiative, and offering constructive feedback. Thus, it fosters psychological freedom, boosts motivation, and fulfills their autonomy needs. Moreover, paradoxical leaders adapt their management style to suit individual differences through "personalized care," inspiring employees to learn, develop new skills, overcome challenges, and satisfy their competence needs (Huang et al., 2022).

Miron-Spektor et al. (2018) suggested that people with a paradoxical mindset believe they can resolve the conflicts generated by several contradictory aspects. A paradoxical mindset enhances their willingness and capacity to integrate diverse ideas by fostering new connections. Furthermore, adopting a paradoxical mindset promotes the development of a general capacity to examine conflicting concepts and cognitive flexibility to learn or seek new solutions.

In the same context, Spreitzer and Porath (2014) found that employees with a paradox mindset have a sense of autonomy. Individuals who strive to eradicate paradoxical tensions feel emotionally fatigued. However, those who embrace and respect conflicts are more likely to acquire energy from them and increase their available resources to participate in unique activities. The satisfaction of people's psychological requirements for autonomy and competence, as two nutrients of autonomous motivation, might facilitate thriving at work.

Walumbwa et al. (2018) also revealed that PL enhances employee confidence based on some degree of individualization. So, it allows employees to feel secure in their workplace and generates good energy, both of which are beneficial for learning.

Niessen et al. (2012) added that PL may both offer learning opportunities and boost the likelihood of employee learning. This is consistent with many studies indicating that 'learning' and 'vitality' are prerequisites for employees thriving in the workplace. Thus, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: There is a positive relationship between paradoxical leadership and thriving at work.

The relationship between thriving at work and voice behavior :

According to the build hypothesis within the broaden-and-build theory, broadened states caused by positive feelings can assist individuals in building consequential personal resources. These long-term resources include optimism, problem-solving skills, and the quality of a closer relationship. Employees' voice behavior may be a good way to build personal resources, as it is considered Constructive behavior (Fredrickson et al., 2008).

Carmeli and Spreitzer (2009) concluded that employees who thrive at work will speak up and work to improve the organization. Every organization requires the best ideas from its employees to survive in a highly competitive environment. So, they raise their voice, improve functioning, and provide opportunities. Furthermore, they feel momentum and thrust at work when constantly learning and energized. Whatever they learn at work, they try to put into practice to bring about constructive change.

Deci and Ryan (2008) suggested that the learning factor can foster both promotive and prohibitive voices. The vitality factor represents people's feelings of energy and is linked to self-determination and self-actualization. Employees with high vitality have greater energy to deal with problems and hazards related to voice. As a result, the vitality element can boost confidence and bravery to engage in both promotive and prohibitive voices.

Additionally, Porath et al. (2012) found that employees with a high level of the learning factor have an active attitude toward obtaining information, often learning and developing themselves. Employees with a broad vision may have more ideas regarding the organization's current difficulties and opportunities for future progress. As a result, the learning component can encourage both promotive and prohibitive voices.

KOÇAK and Hazel (2019) also demonstrated that thriving at work motivates employees to work for the organization's greater good rather than their own. When they learn, it may excite them to express their constructive opinions. Furthermore, thriving employees are endowed with aliveness, which might give them the energy to commit emotionally to their workplace. As a result, they may be more eager to share their new ideas.

Sheng and Zhou (2021) revealed that thriving at work is a broader state that integrates short-term emotions with long-term resources from a theoretical viewpoint. So, employees are driven to execute actions that can result in long-term personal resources in this state. Learning and vitality elements provide employees with a broader perspective. Employees are more open to behavioral alternatives, knowledge, and their ability to speak up. Furthermore, both promotional and prohibitive voices may be used to build personal resources for future development. This cognition, in turn, raises voice intention.

Thus, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: There is a positive relationship between thriving at work and voice behavior.

This hypothesis is divided into the following sub-hypotheses:

H3a: There is a positive relationship between thriving at work and promotive voice behavior.

H3b: There is a positive relationship between thriving at work and prohibitive voice behavior.

The mediating role of thriving at work:

Previous studies revealed a positive relationship between paradoxical leadership and thriving at work (Hancox et al., 2018; Spreitzer & Porath, 2014; Yang et al., 2021). Also, prior studies confirmed that thriving at work significantly impacts employee voice (Deci & Ryan, 2008; KOÇAK & Hazel, 2019; Sheng & Zhou, 2021). Additionally, previous research showed a positive association between paradoxical leadership and employee voice (Li et al., 2020; Xue et al., 2020).

Thus, combining the debates of H1, H2, and H3, the researcher proposes that thriving at work mediates the relationship between paradoxical leadership and employee voice. This hypothesis is based on the notion that paradoxical leadership significantly affects thriving at work, and in turn, thriving at work is positively associated with employee voice. To investigate how thriving at work mediates the relationship between paradoxical leadership and voice behavior, the study suggests the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 4: Thriving at work mediates the relationship between paradoxical leadership and employee voice.

This hypothesis is divided into the following sub-hypotheses:

H4a: Thriving at work mediates the relationship between paradoxical leadership and promotive voice.

H4b: Thriving at work mediates the relationship between paradoxical leadership and prohibitive voice.

Based on the previous hypotheses, the researcher concludes the following theoretical framework in figure (1).

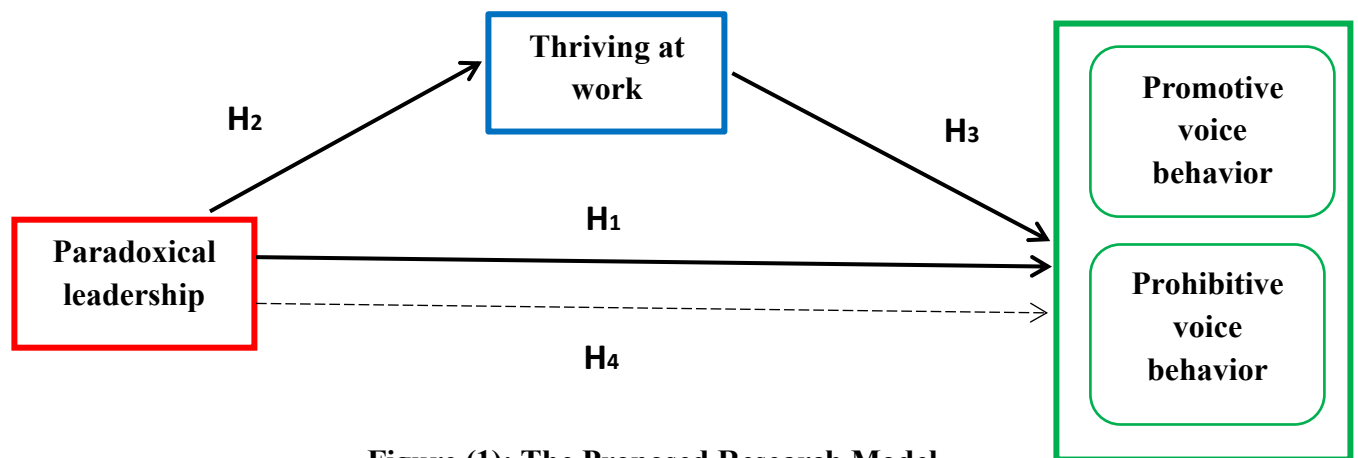


Figure (1): The Proposed Research Model

Research methodology:

Sample and Procedure:

The study population consisted of employees in communication and information technology companies located in the Smart Village in Egypt. According to Saunders et al. (2016), if the margin of error is 5% with a confidence level of 95% and the population size is 8772, then the required sample size should be 370. From January 2024 to April 2024, 420 questionnaires were delivered to employees. A total of 386 questionnaires were returned, of which nine were eliminated. Finally, 377 questionnaires with a response rate of 90% were valid for statistical analysis.

Measures:

Paradoxical leadership was measured using the 22-item scale developed by Zhang et al. (2015). The respondents were asked to evaluate how frequently the statement of each item fits their team leader using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = not at all to 5 = a lot). Higher scores indicate that supervisors frequently exhibited both sides of the behavior; lower scores indicate an infrequent display of at least one side. This measure, characterized as 'dual-side', is particularly suitable for measuring paradox management approaches such as paradoxical leader behavior because the management of paradox must consider and address both sides of competing elements simultaneously and over time (Smith & Lewis, 2011). This scale is reliable and valid in several studies (e.g., Lin et al., 2024; Obied & ELsaeed, 2023; Sulphay & Jasim, 2022; Yang et al., 2021).

Thriving at work was measured by the scale developed by Porath et al. (2012). This scale is appropriate as it measures both subdimensions of thriving: learning and vitality. This instrument has been acknowledged in several literature reviews (e.g., Huang & Zhou, 2024; Okros & Virga, 2023; Shen et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2023).

Employee voice behavior was measured using the VBS scale, a ten-item instrument developed by Liang et al. (2012) to measure employee voice and its two dimensions. The tool consists of two domains: promotive voice behavior (PRVB) and Prohibitive voice behavior (PHVB). The scale was used in many empirical studies (Dua et al., 2023; Guo et al., 2022; Li et al., 2020; Sheng & Zhou, 2021).

Data analysis and results:

Characteristics of respondents:

As shown in Table 1, the sample comprised of 79.7 % males and 28.3% females. The analysis also shows that more than half (52.9%) of respondents were below 30 years old. 41.7 % were from 30 to 40 years old, 9.18 % were from 40 to 50 years old, 2.27 % were from 50 to 60 years old, and 1.49% were above 60 years old. Most respondents (91.6%) have a Bachelor's degree, 14.8 % have a Master's or PhD degree, and only 1.5 % have secondary education. 58 % of the respondents have at least five years of experience in their current job. 20.6 % of the respondents have experience from five to ten years, 17.36 % have experience from ten to fifteen years, and 11.9% have more than fifteen years of experience in their current job.

Table (1): Characteristics of respondents

Demographic characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	321	79.7
Female	114	28.3
Age		
Less than 30	213	52.9
30–40	168	41.7
40–50	37	9.18
50–60	11	2.27
Above 60	6	1.49
Education		
Secondary	6	1.5
Bachelor's degree	369	91.6
Master's or PhD degree	60	14.8
Organizational tenure		
Less than five years	234	58
5 – 10	83	20.6
10 - 15	70	17.36
Above 15	48	11.9

The researcher used SPSS V.22 for the descriptive statistics in the current research. In addition, Warp-PLS software V.8, a (PLS-SEM) approach, was used to (a) evaluate the outer model, (b) measure the inner model, and (c) test the research hypotheses. The nature of the data primarily justifies the adoption of PLS-SEM in this study. Preliminary statistical analyses revealed that the dataset does not meet the assumption of multivariate normality. Given that PLS-SEM is a variance-based technique that does not require the data to be normally distributed, it is particularly suitable for this context (Hair et al., 2017).

Measurement Model Assessment:

In order to pre-test the questionnaire, its validity and reliability should be evaluated. The researcher used Warp-PLS V.8 to evaluate the measurement model. Construct validity was assessed by examining both convergent and discriminant validity. Convergent validity was first tested using factor loadings, in which the loadings value should be at least 0.7 to be acceptable. Furthermore, convergent validity was assessed using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), where the value can be accepted if higher than 0.5. The reliability of the measurement model was evaluated using both Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) (Sarstedt et al., 2021).

The findings in tables 2, 3, and 4 confirm that the measurement items of paradoxical leadership were fulfilled based on the criteria, except for the items UI1 and UI3, which have a factor loading of 0.557 and 0.603, respectively. So, these items were excluded. However, no statements were deleted for thriving at work, and employee voice behavior as their outer loading was more than 0.7.

To assess the reliability of the measurement scales, the researcher relied on both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values, as presented in Tables 2, 3, and 4. Cronbach's alpha is particularly valuable as it provides an estimate of reliability based on the intercorrelations among the items within each construct. Alpha coefficient values greater than 0.70 are considered acceptable. Furthermore, the closer the alpha coefficient is to 1.0, the higher the internal consistency of the items. In addition to Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability was also used to provide a more robust measure of construct reliability (Sarstedt et al., 2021). As all alpha and composite reliability values exceeded 0.7, it is clear that all scales have good internal consistency. Therefore, the instruments used for this study were considered reliable.

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Convergent validity is adequate when constructs have an average variance extracted (AVE) value of at least 0.5. Tables 2, 3, and 4 show that all constructs have AVE ranging from 0.560 to 0.751, which exceeded the suggested value of 0.5.

Table (2): Factor loadings, α , CR, and AVE for paradoxical leadership

Items	Code	Factor Loading
Paradoxical leadership (α = 0.962, CR = 0.965, AVE = 0.560)		
	UI1	0.557
	UI2	0.788
	UI3	0.603
	UI4	0.813
	UI5	0.700
	SO1	0.726
	SO2	0.723
	SO3	0.774
	SO4	0.813
	SO5	0.745
	CA1	0.769
	CA2	0.797
	CA3	0.775
	CA4	0.799
	RF1	0.763
	RF2	0.796
	RF3	0.761
	RF4	0.774
	DC1	0.726
	DC2	0.776
	DC3	0.739
	DC4	0.753

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Table (3): Factor loadings, α , CR, and AVE for thriving at work

Constructs and Items	Code	Factor Loading
Vitality (α= 0.844, CR = 0.895, AVE = 0.682)		
	V1	0.775
	V2	0.809
	V3	0.855
	V4	0.862
Learning (α= 0.889, CR = 0.923, AVE = 0.751)		
	L1	0.860
	L2	0.867
	L3	0.865
	L4	0.871

Table (4): Factor loadings, α , CR, and AVE for employee voice

Constructs and Items	Code	Factor Loading
Promotive voice behavior (α= 0.821, CR = 0.875, AVE = 0.584)		
	PR1	0.753
	PR2	0.742
	PR3	0.752
	PR4	0.812
	PR5	0.757
Prohibitive voice behavior (α= 0.871, CR 0.907, AVE = 0.661)		
	PH1	0.868
	PH2	0.747
	PH3	0.808
	PH4	0.763
	PH5	0.872

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To determine the measurement model's discriminant validity, the AVE value of each construct is generated using the Warp PLS algorithm function. Then, the square roots of AVE are calculated. Based on the results, all square roots of AVE exceeded the off-diagonal elements in their corresponding row and column. The bolded elements in table 5 represent the square roots of the AVE, and the non-bolded values represent the intercorrelation value between constructs. So, all off-diagonal elements are lower than the square roots of AVE (bolded on the diagonal). Hence, the result confirmed that Fornell and Larker's criterion is met. The logic of the Fornell-Larcker method is based on the idea that a variable shares more variance with its associated measures than any other variable.

Table (5)

Fornell-Larcker criterion

	PL	Vitality	Learning	Promotive voice	Prohibitive voice
PL	0.748				
Vitality	0.525	0.826			
Learning	0.482	0.678	0.866		
Promotive voice	0.494	0.475	0.447	0.764	
Prohibitive voice	0.483	0.356	0.383	0.550	0.813

Overall, the reliability and validity tests conducted on the measurement model are satisfactory. All reliability and validity tests are confirmed, indicating that this study's measurement model is valid and suitable for estimating parameters in the structural model.

Structural Model Assessment:

The structural model can be defined by causal relationships between latent variables. To evaluate the model fit, three key measures were applied: Average Path Coefficient (APC), Average R-squared (ARS), and Average Variance Inflation Factor (AVIF). According to Kock (2013), APC and ARS are considered significant if ($P < 0.05$), while AVIF should be lower than 5. As shown in table (6), the (APC) value of 0.362 indicates a moderately strong positive relationship on average. The P-value < 0.001 means this result is highly statistically significant. The (ARS) value of 0.309 means the model explains about 30.9% of the variation in the dependent variables. This is considered acceptable. The P-value < 0.001 confirms this is statistically significant. So the model demonstrates a good fit based on these criteria.

Table (6)

Model fit and quality indices

Fit Measure	Actual values	P-values	Accepted Fit
Average Path coefficient (APC)	0.415	P<0.001	P<0.05
Average R-squared (ARS)	0.372	P<0.001	P<0.05
Average block VIF (AVIF)	1.439		acceptable if ≤ 5 ideally ≤ 3.3
Goodness of Fit (GoF)	0.437		small ≥ 0.1 medium ≥ 0.25 large ≥ 0.36

To investigate the causal relationships between latent variables, some metrics such as beta (β), P-value (P), R^2 and effect sizes (f^2) were used to analyze the structural model. The researcher used effect sizes (f^2) for assessing the independent latent variable's impact on the dependent variable. So, f^2 clarifies the effect size of each independent variable separately on the dependent variable. It shows the value of the change in the coefficient of determination (R^2) when one or more of the independent variables are deleted (El-Hilali et al.,2020). The values of effect sizes might be 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35, which show that, respectively, the predictor latent variable's effect on an endogenous variable is small, medium, or large. So, figure (2) shows the research structural model.

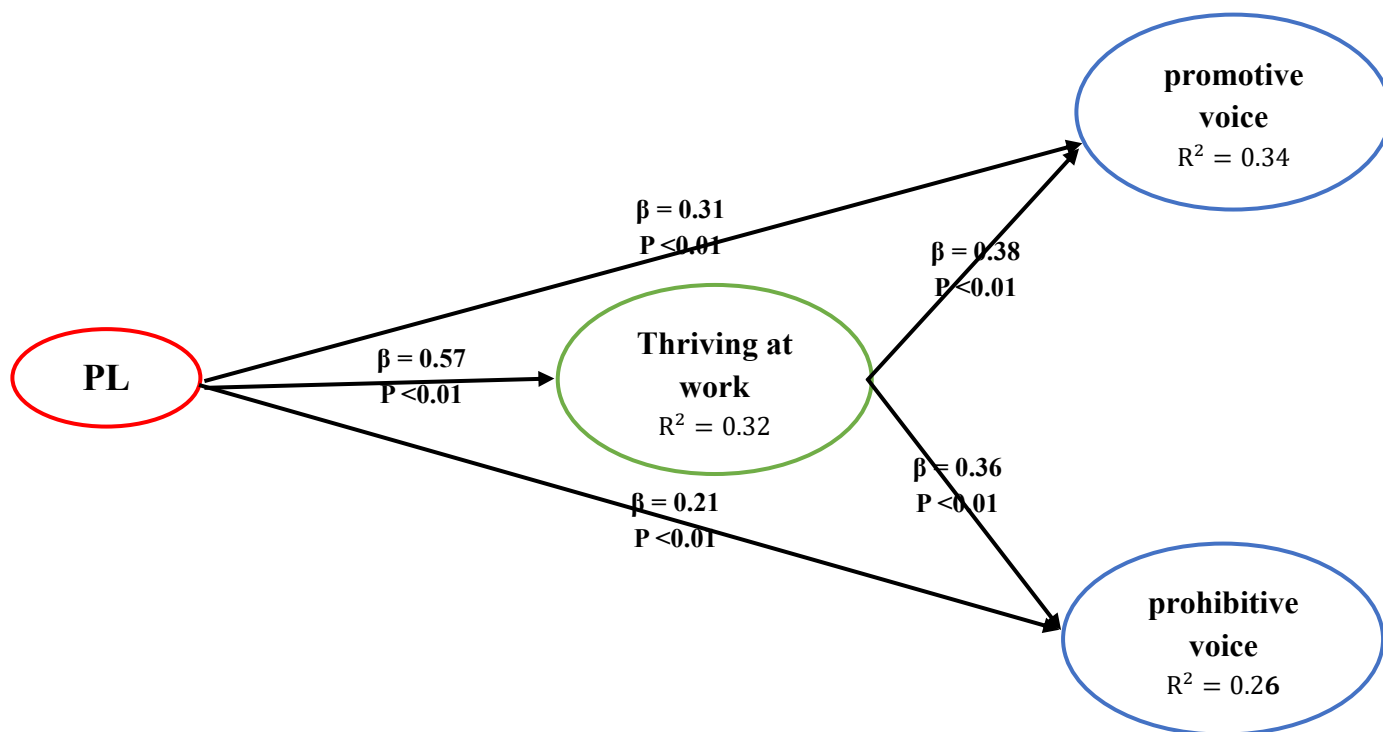


figure (2)

The research structural model

Hypothesis Testing Results:

The results in table (7) showed that paradoxical leadership significantly, positively, and directly impacts Promotive voice ($\beta = 0.31$, $P < 0.001$), and its effect size was ($f^2 = 0.155$), indicating a relatively moderate effect size between Paradoxical leadership and promotive voice, as shown. **Therefore, H1a was accepted.** Likewise, Paradoxical leadership significantly, positively, and directly impacts prohibitive voice ($\beta = 0.21$, $P < 0.001$), and its effect size was ($f^2 = 0.082$). **Therefore, H1b was accepted.**

Overall, it is clear that Paradoxical leadership positively affects employee voice behavior, **supporting H1**. The results also indicated that Paradoxical leadership differs in the degree of its impact on the dimensions of employee voice behavior. The most significant effect is justified by promotive voice, where the path coefficient value is 0.31 with an effect size of 0.155, followed by prohibitive voice with a path coefficient of 0.21 and an effect size of 0.082.

Additionally, the results showed that paradoxical leadership significantly, positively, and directly impacts thriving at work ($\beta = 0.57$, $P < 0.001$), and its effect size was ($f^2 = 0.320$), indicating a relatively significant effect size between Paradoxical leadership and thriving at work. **Therefore, H2 was accepted.**

Moreover, the results showed that thriving at work significantly, positively, and directly impacts promotive voice ($\beta = 0.38$, $P < 0.001$), and its effect size was ($f^2 = 0.189$), indicating a relatively moderate effect size between thriving at work and promotive voice. **Therefore, H3a was accepted.** Likewise, thriving at work significantly, positively, and directly impacts prohibitive voice ($\beta = 0.36$, $P < 0.001$), and its effect size was ($f^2 = 0.182$). **Therefore, H3b was accepted.** Overall, it is clear that thriving at work positively affects employee voice behavior, **supporting H3.**

Table (7)
direct effects between variables

Effects	β	P-value	f^2
PL \longrightarrow Promotive voice	0.31	0.000	0.155
PL \longrightarrow prohibitive voice	0.21	0.000	0.082
PL \longrightarrow thriving	0.57	0.000	0.320
thriving \longrightarrow promotive voice	0.38	0.000	0.189
thriving \longrightarrow prohibitive voice	0.36	0.000	0.182

The results in table (8) showed that thriving at work partially mediated the relationship between paradoxical leadership and Promotive voice ($\beta = 0.22$, $P < 0.001$), and its effect size was ($f^2 = 0.102$). **Therefore, H4a was accepted,** proving that paradoxical leadership had a significant positive indirect effect on promotive employee voice through thriving at work. Additionally, thriving at work partially mediated the relationship between paradoxical leadership and prohibitive voice ($\beta = 0.20$, $P < 0.001$), and its effect size was ($f^2 = 0.086$). **Therefore, H4b was accepted,** proving that paradoxical leadership had a significant positive indirect effect on prohibitive employee voice through thriving at work.

Table (8)
Mediation Analysis

Effects	β	P-value	f^2
PL→ Thriving → promotive voice	0.22	0.000	0.102
PL→Thriving →prohibitive voice	0.20	0.000	0.086

Discussion:

The results indicate a significant, direct, positive relationship between Paradoxical leadership and employee voice behavior, **supporting H1**. Specifically, an additional analysis was conducted to examine the effect of paradoxical leadership on the two dimensions of voice behavior: promotive and prohibitive voice. The results indicate that PL has a greater influence on promotive voice behavior than on prohibitive voice behavior, **supporting H1a and H1b**, respectively. This could be due to the risks associated with engaging in voice behavior.

Liang et al. (2012) stated that leadership behavior is key for employees to assess the potential benefits and risks of speaking up at work. So, employees who share constructive ideas can gain advantages such as positive performance evaluations or even opportunities for career advancement. However, sharing ideas that challenge the status quo may result in misunderstandings. Because of these potential benefits and risks, employees think carefully before deciding whether or not to speak up. In this context, many employees apply a promotive voice rather than a prohibitive one.

This result can be explained through the leader-member exchange theory, which suggests that close relationships between leaders and their followers foster a positive work attitude. Paradoxical leaders can build strong relationships with their employees through motivation and inviting employees to express their opinions for organizational growth. Furthermore, paradoxical leadership enhances flexibility in work, encouraging employees to speak up, stimulating their sense of responsibility, and enhancing their intrinsic motivation to express their opinions.

In addition, the social exchange theory can be used to provide another explanation for the positive relationship between paradoxical leadership and employee voice behavior. Li et al. (2020) stated that leaders who practice paradoxical leadership tend to be role models, demonstrating flexibility while adjusting traditional methods to solve problems at work. So, employees will learn to be open to challenges by

expanding their knowledge of work requirements and recognizing emerging demands to respond effectively to dynamic environments. As a result, employees become more proactive in solving problems, motivating them to speak up and share their ideas.

These results are in line with several prior studies (i.e., Imtinan & Widiasih, 2024; Kundi et al., 2023; Rescalvo-Martin et al., 2021; Silva et al., 2024), which demonstrated that when leaders adopt paradoxical behavior, employees tend to engage in promotive voice behavior and prohibitive voice behavior.

This research demonstrated that Paradoxical leadership significantly, directly, and positively affects thriving at work, **supporting H2**. Several factors help explain this finding. First, PL fulfills employees' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which are key components of self-determination theory. When these needs are met, employees experience greater vitality. Additionally, PL creates an environment that supports employee learning while ensuring alignment with organizational objectives.

Second, paradoxical leaders maintain a balance between keeping a distance from employees to preserve their prestige and staying connected with them. Instead of treating employees as mere subordinates, they assign tasks that align with employees' interests and strengths and treat them fairly. In such an environment, employees feel secure from punishment or threatened by new challenges, creating an ideal learning atmosphere. When both learning and vitality are present, employees can thrive at work (Boyd, 2016).

These results agreed with the findings of research by Huang et al., 2022, Liu et al., 2020 and Yang et al., 2021, who similarly found that supportive behaviors of paradoxical leaders have a positive effect on employees' thriving at work.

This research demonstrated that thriving at work significantly, directly, and positively affects employee voice behavior, **supporting H3**. This aligns with Koçak & Agun's (2019) findings, which assert that thriving at work motivates individuals to act in favor of the company rather than concentrating on their individualistic interests. When employees thrive at work, they rely on a sense of internal motivation rather than external rewards. So, the knowledge and skills they acquire can inspire them to express their constructive thoughts. Additionally, thriving employees often feel a sense of vitality that strengthens their emotional attachment to the workplace. So, they are more likely to go beyond their formal duties and contribute through supportive voice behavior.

Additionally, this result was confirmed by Yousaf et al. (2019), who reported that when employees feel they are thriving, they are more confident in their abilities, making them more likely to identify problems and suggest constructive changes. Liu & Zhou (2024) stated that the association between thriving at work and employee voice behavior aligns with theories (Conservation of Resources (COR), the Broaden and Build Theory of Positive Emotions (BBT)). So, employees who are energized and continuously learning tend to be more motivated to share their opinions, concerns, and ideas.

Drawing on the BBT theory, Positive emotions broaden individuals' perspectives, which help in the long-term development of important personal resources. While promotive voice (suggesting improvements) and prohibitive voice (raising concerns) focus on different aspects of communication, both are important for constructing personal resources. Employees can construct these resources by practicing promotive and prohibitive voices.

So, engaging in both types of voice behavior requires content and energy. Broadened perspectives (thriving at work) lead to changes that support voice behavior. The learning factor provides employees with more content for voice behavior, as it reflects an individual's motivation to learn, so that employees with a high level of learning actively seek knowledge and self-improvement, expanding their vision and enabling them to identify organizational problems and opportunities. Thus, the learning factor can enhance both promotive and prohibitive voices (Sheng & Zhou,2021).

At the same time, the vitality factor reflects an individual's sense of energy and is tied to self-determination and self-actualization. Employees with a high level of vitality have more energy to face the challenges and risks associated with voice behavior, boosting their confidence to engage in both promotive and prohibitive voice. So, the learning factor provides the content and ideas needed for voice behavior, while the vitality factor supplies the energy and motivation required to act, **supporting H3a and H3b**. This awareness of resource development, in turn, strengthens employees' intention to engage in voice behavior.

These results align with several prior studies (i.e., Liu & Zhou,2024; Son et al.,2022; and Sugiono et al.,2023), which similarly found that employees thriving at work have a positive effect on their voice behavior.

Relating to the mediating role of thriving at work, the findings revealed that paradoxical leadership has a significant positive indirect effect on employee voice behavior through thriving at work, **supporting H4**. This reveals that when employees perceive the resources (i.e., flexibility, freedom, empowerment) provided by their paradoxical leaders, they tend to be more energetic and have the desire to learn, and that will give them more courage to voice their opinions and thoughts with their colleagues or their leaders and talk about problems.

Recent studies have linked paradoxical leadership to increased thriving at work (Huang et al.,2022; Liu et al.,2020; and Yang et al.,2021), and thriving has been connected to employee voice behavior in other studies (Liu & Zhou,2024; Son et al.,2022; and Sugiono et al.,2023). Hence, paradoxical leadership was expected to encourage employees to feel more energetic and motivated to learn and to speak up about improvement opportunities and suggestions.

Previously, thriving at work has been confirmed to mediate the relationship between various contextual factors and employee voice (Koçak & Agun, 2019; Fan et al., 2022; Liu& Zhou, 2023; and Sheng & Zhou,2022), including intragroup relationship quality, supervisor-helping behavior, self-leadership, and decent work relationships.

Moreover, drawing on the SET and BBT, this study supports a theoretical model where paradoxical leadership positively impacts thriving at work and further promotes employee voice behavior.

Theoretical and Practical Implications:

This research aims to enhance the existing knowledge on paradoxical leadership, thriving at work, and employee voice by linking together three previously unconnected areas of research. To the best of the author's knowledge, this is the first academic work to investigate how paradoxical leadership affects employee voice behavior through thriving at work in ICT companies.

The research's results have various theoretical implications. First, it adds to the existing knowledge of the ICT sector by developing and empirically testing a comprehensive conceptual model to explain how paradoxical leaders interact with employees and whether that affects their voice behavior. This model also explains the role of thriving in addressing this issue. Few prior studies have highlighted the antecedents of voice behavior, especially in this context.

Second, the research contributes to the current literature on paradoxical leadership. It provides important evidence that employees can perform better under paradoxical leaders. Paradoxical leadership differs from other leadership styles in that it focuses on managing tensions, especially in a dynamic and complex business environment. Since Zhang et al. (2015) introduced this concept, it has attracted considerable attention from leadership researchers.

Third, this study contributes to the literature on voice behavior. Recently, scholars have called for more attention to the predictors of employee voice behavior. While prior studies have shown that traditional leadership styles promote such behaviors, few studies have specifically examined the role of paradoxical leadership in this context. The findings demonstrate that when leaders adopt paradoxical behaviors, employees are more likely to share their ideas and concerns. This insight advances an understanding of how paradoxical leadership affects voice behavior, particularly in the ICT sector, which faces an unpredictable business environment.

Finally, this study also enriches the literature by highlighting the mediating role of thriving at work in the relationship between paradoxical leadership and employee voice behavior. It is an important individual antecedent of employee voice. Consistent with the broaden-and-build theory, the results show that employee voice behavior is encouraged by individual factors. So, when employees thrive at work, they develop creative solutions and insights, which enhances their willingness to speak up and share their perspectives. So, this insight offers a new perspective for examining the psychological mechanism linking paradoxical leadership to employees' voice behavior in ICT companies.

The study also provides helpful management and practical implications. This research provides ICT companies' managers with several recommendations that, if applied, can enhance the employees' voice behavior. The results demonstrate that paradoxical leadership is effective in managing employees. The ability of managers to lead paradoxically is the foundation for creating the conditions for employees to thrive and feel encouraged to speak up. Thus, managers should aim to balance organizational goals with employee needs. When people feel valued and supported, they are more motivated, engaged, and willing to share ideas to help move the company forward. Moreover, managers may offer constructive feedback when employees make mistakes.

The ICT sector has experienced rapid technological advancements and innovative operational frameworks, creating new job roles. These changes have significantly reshaped work environments. These challenging conditions made it more difficult for employees to stay consistently motivated and productive. So, managers must support employees and encourage behaviors that help them cope with personnel and organizational competition. By adopting a paradoxical leadership approach, managers in ICT companies can successfully energize employees and inspire them to stay resilient and innovative. This approach keeps employees motivated and ensures that companies continue to meet their goals for creativity and efficiency in this fast-paced industry.

Managers should apply paradoxical thinking by acting as role models and offering opportunities for employees to understand their paradoxical strategies. This approach can reduce any confusion among employees by explaining how they balance paradoxes. Moreover, Companies can establish supportive systems for paradoxical leaders. This might include training sessions where leaders discuss paradoxical situations and learn from one another, performance, and compensation systems that reward managers who practice paradoxical leadership.

As a further step, human resources departments can help foster paradoxical leadership within ICT companies. HR managers must ensure that candidates from managers or supervisors possess the characteristics of paradoxical leadership. This involves assessing candidates for PL competencies and selecting those who excel in these traits. HR managers can also implement special training to develop managers' paradoxical leadership competencies. They can evaluate the current leadership level capabilities to identify gaps in their ability to practice balanced leadership. This can help identify the priorities and difficulties of training for adopting a paradoxical approach. Additionally, HR managers can design interactive training programs, such as role-playing activities and simulated paradoxical scenarios, to enhance the managers' adaptive thinking skills.

HR managers should train managers to embrace tensions instead of choosing one-sided solutions. One effective way to achieve this could be to implement polarity mapping (Emerson, 2013), a strategic planning tool that helps managers visualize conflicting tensions and identify strategies for managing these tensions. Polarity mapping is a visual problem-solving tool used to analyze interdependent pairs of

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opposing values that need to be balanced for long-term success. Unlike traditional "either/or" problem-solving, it recognizes that some challenges require a "both/and" approach. So, polarity mapping and paradoxical leadership are deeply connected.

This research reveals that paradoxical leadership enhances employees' thriving and encourages them to engage in voice behavior, generating practical ideas and perspectives. Thriving at work reflects a positive psychological state in which employees are eager to acquire knowledge and feel energetic. Learning and vitality have been identified as key factors closely linked to both promotive and prohibitive voice behaviors. To encourage employees to speak up, companies can prioritize strategies that foster employee thriving.

First, HR managers should offer a variety of career development opportunities tailored to employees' professional growth to enhance their sense of thriving at work. Drawing on the three fundamental psychological needs (competence, autonomy, and relatedness), HR managers can actively support employees' state of thriving through job rotation. This practice cannot only create opportunities for employees to find meaning in their work but also allow them to develop new skills and gain autonomy. Supportive and constructive feedback from managers further fosters thriving, leading to more open communication and increased voice behavior in the workplace.

Second, companies should integrate thriving at work into employees' recruitment, assessment, and promotion processes. To enhance work vitality and commitment to learning, ICT companies should emphasize ongoing education, provide work resources support, and encourage a culture of self-improvement. Thus, they will enhance their thriving at work.

As an additional strategy, ICT companies can use the thriving at work scale to screen out highly learning and energetic candidates. If none are found, companies can arrange training programs where high-performing managers act as mentors, providing experiential guidance to trainees to help them develop these qualities. Moreover, companies should invest in current employees' learning by offering training programs and opportunities for skill development. Equally important is fostering workplace vitality by creating a healthy environment that promotes physical and mental well-being, including providing healthy meals, exercise facilities, and stress-relief activities.

Third, employees themselves can take steps to foster their sense of thriving. They can challenge themselves for days by openly sharing both positive and negative emotions with colleagues. This exercise allows them to learn from others' perspectives. Also, they can actively build their social job resources by seeking feedback and support from supervisors or peers. These initiatives would improve the employees' ability to thrive in a complex and competitive environment. These actions create opportunities for positive interactions, promoting both vitality and learning.

Finally, Managers can share more information with their employees to create a more trusting, transparent, and communicative work environment. Furthermore, managers can foster a caring atmosphere where employees feel comfortable expressing ideas without fear of negative consequences.

Limitations and Future Research

Although the research has achieved some valuable conclusions, it has some limitations that can be addressed by future researchers. One of these limitations is that the research primarily examined the influence of PL from an individual perspective. However, conducting a group-level or multilevel analysis of PL might yield valuable insights. Future studies could explore how PL affects group voice or team improvement behaviors and evaluate whether the impact of PL differs depending on the level of analysis (individual vs. group).

Current research has only examined a single mediation mechanism for the relationship between PL and voice behavior. Future studies will need to explore more mediators to explain this relationship, such as harmonious work Passion, employee resilience, and job crafting.

The current research was based on the dual conceptualization of voice behavior regarding promotive and prohibitive voice behavior. However, recent studies in voice research have expanded this framework to include additional forms of voice behavior, including defensive, constructive, and supportive voice behavior. Future researchers should examine the potential effects of paradoxical leadership with these voice behaviors.

This research also examined the effects of paradoxical leadership on only two outcomes: thriving at work and voice behavior. Future research may uncover the relationship between paradoxical leadership and other outcomes such as transformative learning, workplace anxiety, intrinsic motivation, and organizational attractiveness. Additionally, the impact of the negative side of paradoxical leadership on employees' voice behavior will be further investigated in the future, as some scholars have called for exploring the "dark side" of paradoxical leadership.

Lastly, the study did not collect longitudinal data; it depended only on cross-sectional data to observe changes in PL, thriving at work, and employee voice. Thus, future studies can develop a longitudinal study to investigate how PL and thriving at work influence employee voice behavior. Subsequent research could compare our findings using longitudinal studies to analyze variable changes over time and determine causal links.

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دور الإزدهار في العمل في العلاقة بين القيادة بالتناقضات وصوت الموظف: دليل من شركات الاتصالات وتكنولوجيا المعلومات في مصر

الملخص:

الهدف : سعت هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف العلاقة بين القيادة بالتناقضات و صوت الموظف من خلال التعرف علي الدور الوسيط للازدهار في العمل.

المنهجية : تم جمع البيانات من عينة مكونة من ٣٧٧ موظفًا من العاملين في شركات تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصالات (ICT) في القرية الذكية في مصر، وتم الاعتماد علي نمذجة المعادلة الهيكلية للمربعات الصغرى (PLS- SEM) لاختبار فروض الدراسة.

النتائج : أظهرت النتائج أن القيادة بالتناقضات ترتبط بشكل إيجابي بسلوكيات صوت الموظف الداعمة والمانعة ، وأن ازدهار الموظف في العمل يتوسط جزئيا العلاقة بين القيادة بالتناقضات صوت الموظف.

الدلالات العملية : تشير النتائج إلى أن القيادة بالتناقضات فعالة في إدارة الموظفين. إذ تُعد أساسًا لتعزيز ازدهار الموظفين في العمل و بالتالي صوتهم الوظيفي.

الكلمات المفتاحية : القيادة بالتناقضات ، الازدهار في العمل، صوت الموظف الداعم، صوت الموظف المانع.