



Vol. 3 No. 7 (July) (2025)

Impact of Paradoxical Leadership on Employee Creativity: Moderating Role of Employee Mindfulness and Mediating Role of Absorptive Capacity

Saba Idrees

PhD Scholar, Foundation University Islamabad

Asim Raza Bhatti*

PhD Scholar, Foundation University Islamabad (Corresponding Author)

Madiha

PhD Scholar, Foundation University Islamabad

Abstract

Paradoxical Leadership Behavior (PLB) provides a promising venue to face the organizational challenges as the traditional styles of leadership need to be changed. Paradoxical leadership behavior may seem inconsistent and contradictory, but it achieves a balance by equally paying attention to the individual needs of employees and taking care of organizational growth and development. This study examined the relationship between paradoxical leadership and employee creativity taking in to account the moderating role of employee mindfulness and mediating role of absorptive capacity. The study is grounded on Componential theory of creativity which is a comprehensive model of the social and psychological components necessary for an individual to produce creative work. **Design/methodology/approach-** Data was collected from the managers of different companies operating in Oil and Gas sector of Pakistan using questionnaires. **Findings-** This study provides evidence for a predictive relationship between paradoxical leader and employee creativity under the mediating role of absorptive capacity. Additionally, the moderating role of employee mindfulness is not established in this context of the Oil and Gas Sector of Pakistan. **Practical implication-** Leadership working in organizations of Oil and Gas sector must give opportunities to their employees so that they can demonstrate creative behavior and find new ways of working. **Originality/value-** This study offers new theoretical and practical insights by empirically investigating the mediating role of absorptive capacity between Paradoxical leadership and employee creativity through the application of Componential theory of creativity in the existing literature. Furthermore, this study will help managers and leaders to allow employees to be more creative in this complex and dynamic environment.

Keywords: Paradoxical Leadership, Employee Creativity, Employee Mindfulness, Absorptive Capacity

Introduction

The survival of an organization in a continuous changing environment is dependent on the creativity exhibited by its employees which then promotes continuous innovation in an organization (Zhou & Hoever, 2014). Studies focused upon creativity have gained a lot of importance over the past 30 years because it has become increasingly pressing concern for the organizations (Liu et



Vol. 3 No. 7 (July) (2025)

al. 2016). According to (George & Zhou 2007; Hughes et al. 2018) the role of leadership has been acknowledged in promoting creativity in the organization. Keeping in mind the context, academic attention have been shifted to new style of leadership in which paradoxical leadership behavior and its relationship with the employee behavior has gained a lot of popularity. Leaders will certainly face challenges and tensions when managing employees. They will need to engage in holistic thinking in order to meet employee and organizational needs. Zhang et al. (2015) mixed the Western leadership theory with Chinese Yin–Yang philosophy and then put forward the concept of “paradoxical leader behavior” (PLB), which explains leadership behaviors that are seemingly contradictory but are inter linked with each other in reality and at the same time meet the work place requirements.

By examining the mediating function of absorptive ability and the moderating role of employee mindfulness, this study seeks to understand how paradoxical leadership affects employee creativity. Although contradictory leadership could foster an atmosphere that encourages innovation, this link might be mediated by how well workers are able to assimilate and apply new information. Additionally, the impact of paradoxical leadership on creativity may be moderated by employee mindfulness, which is the capacity to remain alert and focused in the present. This could either increase or decrease the impacts of paradoxical leadership.

The Oil and Gas sector of Pakistan often encounters severe problems related to environmental concerns, safety regulations and inefficiency in operations. Moreover, the sector is integrating advanced technologies, so the usage of technologies has become the issue for the organizations. Some of the companies are adopting them but still few are away from its adaptation. Employee creativity can develop unique and different solutions to counter these problems. Additionally, it enables employees to use these new technologies like data analytics, AI for better decision making. As different sectors are moving towards more sustainable practices, innovative ideas are required for creating alternative energy sources, reducing carbon footprints, and implementing green technologies.

Lots of studies have been conducted on the fact that some organizational challenges need different styles of leadership other than conventional methods (Berti & Simpson, 2019). This means according to (Shao et al., 2019). Research studies should shift their attention to explore new leadership behaviors specifically designed and modified to deal with the organizational paradoxes. Paradoxical leadership behavior has provided an avenue to deal with such challenges. The term Paradoxical leadership was developed by (Zhang et al, 2015) after getting impressed by the philosophy of unity of opposites by Yin–Yang.

Zhang et al,(2015) explained Paradoxical leadership as a combination of opposing yet interlinked behaviors aimed at simultaneously fulfilling organizational demands and employee demands. Another study conducted by (Lewis, Andriopoulos, & Smith, 2014; Zhang, Waldman, Han, & Li, 2015) defined Paradoxical style of leadership as a competing but interrelated behavior shown by the leader to meet the demands of the employees and then organization. This leadership increases the employee’s sweeping creativity by enhancing their creative role identity and creative work engagement (Zhang, W., Chen, L., Yajuan, L., & Liao, 2024).



Vol. 3 No. 7 (July) (2025)

Many researchers have undertaken their studies on this paradoxical leadership behavior as it is an emerging style of leadership. The work accomplished by Shumaila et al (2023) has provided future direction to study the impact of paradoxical leadership and employee creativity under the moderating role of employee mindfulness. The present study is examining the said relationship by adding absorptive capacity of employee as a mediating variable. Absorptive capacity has been taken as mediating variable in many researches but the mediating relationship between paradoxical leadership and employee creativity is still under explored. The present study is undertaken to explore the impact of paradoxical leadership and employee creativity by taking employee mindfulness as a moderator and absorptive capacity as a mediator to fill the gap in the existing literature.

The study is grounded on Componential theory of creativity which is a comprehensive model of the social and psychological components necessary for an individual to produce creative work. The Componential Theory of Creativity (CTC) proposed by Amabile (1996) suggests that creativity is produced by the interactions between three components: Domain relevant skills, creativity relevant processes and task motivation. Creativity and innovation helps companies to develop new methods and processes that will improve the existing products or service to enhance the productivity. With the help of componential theory of creativity this research intends to address the following research questions:

RQ1: How paradoxical leaders impact the creativity of employees?

RQ2: Does the absorptive capacity of employees affect their creativity?

This study offers new theoretical and practical insights by empirically investigating the mediating role of absorptive capacity between Paradoxical leadership and employee creativity through the application of Componential theory of creativity in the existing literature. Furthermore, this study will help managers and leaders to allow employees to be more creative in this complex and dynamic environment. Moreover, the oil and gas sector of Pakistan is being chosen for this study which itself is a uniqueness. The oil and gas sector of Pakistan has substantial contribution in the country's economy. Development of oil and gas sector is the key to boost up a country's economy. Government is trying to propose a better and competitive policy that should meet to the international standards to attract the foreign investments in the country. The internal operations and business processes of the companies need to be re-engineered in order to remain competitive in the global environment. Therefore, this study tries to shed light on employee creativity and paradoxical leaders which will help companies to effectively utilize the existing resources using latest tools and technologies.

Literature Review

Componential Theory of Creativity

Various theories of creativity, such as the Componential Theory of Creativity (Amabile, 1996), suggests that creativity is influenced by individual characteristics, environmental factors, and social dynamics. Paradoxical leadership can provide the necessary environmental support by promoting autonomy, encouraging risk-taking, and reducing fear of failure, which are crucial for fostering creativity. The componential theory of creativity is a



Vol. 3 No. 7 (July) (2025)

comprehensive model of the social and psychological components necessary for an individual to produce creative work. The theory is grounded in a definition of creativity as the production of ideas or outcomes that are both novel and appropriate to some goal.

Employees are considered as the backbone of the organization because they are the ones who ensure the sustainability of the organization. They come with the fresh, novel and innovative ideas that are important for creating and maintaining the competitive edge (Amabile, 1988; Liu et al., 2023; Nguyen et al., 2023; Schmidt-Keilich et al., 2023; Shalley, 1995). Gilbert et al, (1996) highlighted in their study that employees especially the creative employees are very much important for the organization as they adapt themselves to the value of diversity, innovation and flexibility. Many researches have shed light on the importance of employee creativity for the success and efficiency of a business (Ouakouak and Ouedraogo, 2017; Liu et al., 2012; Yoshida et al., 2014). Creative and innovative work is the result of Knowledge combined with creative effort and motivation (Amabile and Mueller, 2008). Creativity and novelty come in the employees when they are truly motivated otherwise employees do not come with unique solutions to the problems.

Paradoxical Leadership and Employee Creativity

Leadership has been considered as the most important reason that influences employee creativity (Herrmann and Felfe, 2013; Gilson and Shalley, 2004; Shalley and Gilson, 2004; Qu et al., 2015). Different leadership philosophies, including empowering leadership, transformational leadership and transactional leadership, have been used to implement the managers' authority and position power, which has largely had a favorable impact on employee creativity (Gong et al., 2009; Zhang and Bartol, 2010). The periodic nature of employee behavior within an organization has made the research to analyze the relationships between leadership philosophies and creativity. A leader who can handle both extremes of employees can motivate and bring an environment that encourages creativity. According to Denison et al, (1995) leaders must be engaged in different contradictory roles and hold paradoxical conduct to effectively respond to paradoxical situations (Lewis et al., 2014; Zhu et al., 2020). Paradoxical leaders recognize the continuing disagreement between paradoxical situations and work to synergize and integrate them into a bigger system, as opposed to making calculated decisions or compromising (Zhang et al., 2015). Paradoxical leadership, on the other hand makes vertical structural relationships between status and authority and exerts standardized treatment of employees for control, while simultaneously maintaining personalized consideration, and autonomy, and trying to reduce differences in status to employees' needs. Thus a positive relationship between paradoxical leadership and employee proactivity, proficiency and adaptability has been found when compared with conventional leadership strategies such as transformational and transactional leadership (Zhang et al., 2015). Paradoxical leaders help and support their employees in many ways which include assigning them tasks, listening to their needs and encouraging them so that they can do more efforts. Papachroni et al., (2015) suggested that paradoxical leadership plays a role of a catalyst that enhances the innovation and skills in the employees that helps in integrating creativity. A paradoxical leader is a leader of initiating two complementary mechanisms that



Vol. 3 No. 7 (July) (2025)

motivate employees to perform better than expected outcome and stimulates employees to be proactive to reach the level of outcome expected in an organization. which improves employees' creativity (Houyong et al., 2023).

This notion is also supported by Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964; Homans, 1958). According to this theory there is an exchange relationship between employees and the leaders, which means that if the leader is showing positive behavior with the employees, then employees will show good performance and positive behavior in return. So, when a Paradoxical leader gives autonomy and flexibility to the employees, they will definitely return this by showing creativity. Therefore, based on the above arguments, the following hypothesis is analyzed in this study:

H1: Paradoxical Leadership is positively associated with Employee Creativity.

Paradoxical Leadership and Absorptive Capacity

Absorptive Capacity refers to “the ability of a firm to recognize the value of new, external information, assimilate it, and apply it to commercial ends” (Cohen and Levinthal, 1990, p. 128). It is important as it helps firms to get new knowledge from external sources to adapt to dynamic business environments (Zahra and George, 2002). Many researches envisage absorptive capacity as consisting of four sets of organizational routines and processes that allow firms to acquire, assimilate, transform and exploit new external knowledge (Volberda et al., 2010). As Absorptive capacity is taken as a mediator between paradoxical leadership and Absorptive capacity, the following hypothesis is tested:

H2: Paradoxical Leadership is positively associated with Absorptive capacity.

Employee Creativity and Absorptive Capacity

De Vasconcellos et al. (2019) highlighted that creativity is the key to innovation and competitive advantage for an organization. Furthermore, according to Hon and Lui (2016), new ways to solve problems are the results of creativity, means that if employees are creative then they can create new and innovative ways of problem solving. Absorptive capacity increases employee creativity by making connections between dissimilar ideas, perspectives and knowledge held by them (Tiwana and Mclean, 2005). Thus, absorptive capacity is vital in facilitating the amalgamation of acquired, assimilating, transforming and exploiting external knowledge with existing knowledge, which then improves employee creativity (Wu et al., 2021).

The Knowledge based theory provides a solid theoretical foundation for Absorptive Capacity as it accepts that knowledge is a main resource for an organization and becomes a bases for innovation (Chen and Nonaka, 2022). The knowledge grows when individuals understand and use information in relation to their own experiences (Akhavan and Hosseini, 2016). So the following hypothesis are analyzed in the study:

H3: Absorptive Capacity is positively associated with Employee Creativity

H4: Absorptive Capacity mediates the relationship between paradoxical Leadership and Employee Creativity.



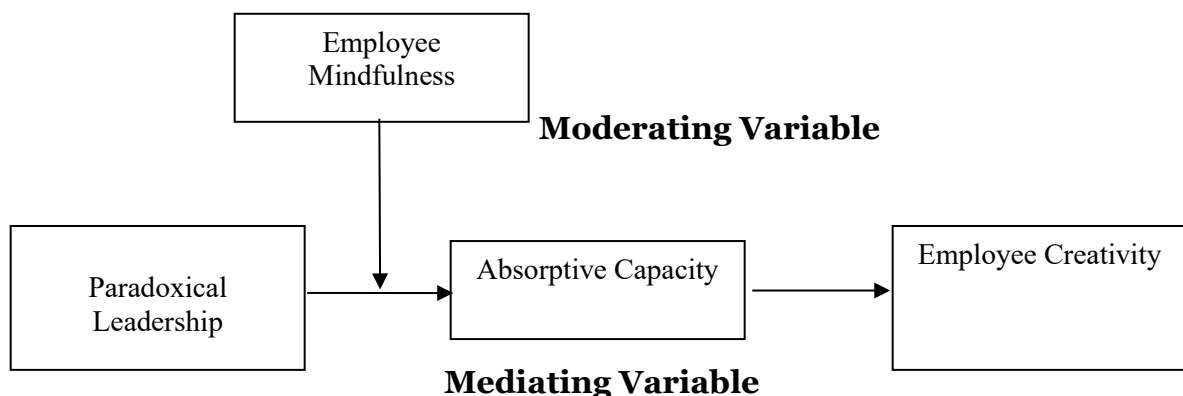
Moderating Role of Employee Mindfulness

Sutcliffe et al (2016) explained Mindfulness as a force that helps keep employees focused, controlled and alert during their work and is linked with positive outcomes at organizational and individual levels. Mindful employees are the people who understand the causes behind the opposing behavior of Paradoxical leader (Zhaohui, 2018), which encourages them to engage in exploitative and explorative behavior. Mindful employees focus on the present and avoid biases and judgment (Raza et al., 2018), enabling them to view the Paradoxical leadership Behavior as beneficial. This helps in reconstructing of environment. Also, unique and creative distinctions can be drawn and mind can be diverted so that the situation can be controlled and tilted consciously (Carson & Langer, 2006; Langer, 1989). Mindfulness enables employees to think differently and creatively so that they can handle different perspectives carefully (Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000).

Employee mindfulness involves cost-benefit analysis as it allows employees to focus on the current events, learn from others, and remain non-judgmental. It makes employees realize that the leader's paradoxical behavior is for the benefit of employees as these leaders equally give importance to their employees as well. Thus on the basis of above argument, the following hypothesis is tested:

H5: Employee Mindfulness moderates' relationship between Paradoxical Leadership and Absorptive capacity in such a way that increase in Employee Mindfulness strengthen the said relationship than weakening it.

Research Model



Methodology

The proposed study used Quantitative method. Data was collected from managers and directors as leaders and their subordinates, so the unit of analysis was a dyad as the data would show the interaction between two groups. The top middle management and employees from the different companies of Oil and Gas sector located across major cities of Pakistan were selected for the data collection purpose.

The reason for choosing Oil and Gas sector was that oil and Gas sector of Pakistan must enhance the operational efficiency as the costs and competition is increasing day by day. For this they need to adopt some creative approaches in technologies, management practices, and workflows that can help them to



Vol. 3 No. 7 (July) (2025)

optimize production, reduce wastage, and lower the operational costs. Moreover, creative methods to combine digital tools like AI, machine learning, big data analytics, and automation can improve predictive maintenance, safety, and reservoir management. Creative thinking enables companies to have competitive advantage in terms of technological adoption as well as the effective and efficient utilization of resources.

A sample size of 200 employees from various companies operating in Oil and Gas sector of Pakistan was selected as the sample represents the true reflection of the population. The sample size was selected using Sample to Item ratio Technique. Out of targeted respondents 188 replied. The convenient sampling under non-probability sampling technique was applied as authors had clear direction of the target audience which is employees from Oil and Gas sector of Pakistan.

Procedure

Cross sectional Data was collected from the respondents through two methods; paper pencil survey as well as through Google forms sent via Email and WhatsApp. Permission was taken to fill out the questionnaires, also the respondents were ensured of data confidentiality and anonymity. The variables were defined in the questionnaire so that respondents did not find any confusion in the questions. Moreover, validated questionnaires were adapted to test the hypothesized relationships between the variables under this investigation. The items of the questionnaire were based on a five-point Likert scale ranged from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5).

Measures/Instrumentation

Paradoxical leadership behavior (PLB): was measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree). We have used 22 items scale developed by Zhang et al. (2015) (study 1) to measure PLB, Sample Items were: “Uses a fair approach to treat all subordinates uniformly, but also treats them as individuals.” “Put all subordinates on an equal footing, but considers their individual traits or personalities.” “Manages subordinates uniformly, but considers their individualized needs.”

Employee Creativity (EC) : A 9-item scale was used to measure employee creativity developed by Tierney et al. (1999)

Absorptive Capacity (AC): To assess, scale developed by Cohen and Levinthal (1990), Janson et al (2005) was used.

Employee Mindfulness (EM) was measured with the 15 items instrument called mindful Attention Awareness Scale developed by (MAAS; Brown & Ryan, 2003) using a 6-point Likert scale.

Research Analysis

SPSS version 30 was employed to test the initial analysis of the responses collected through questionnaires. For example, demographic analysis, Control Variables Analysis, Reliability and Correlation Analysis. PROCESS developed by Hayes, was used for moderation and mediation Analysis.



Vol. 3 No. 7 (July) (2025)

Demographic Analysis

Following tables summarizes the gender, age, marital status, level of education and working experience wise breakdown of the participating employees belonging to sampled organizations working in Oil and Gas sector of Pakistan.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The Demographic information reveals that out of 188 respondents 124 were male and 64 were female who participated in the survey. Their age varies between 25 and 47 years. Majority of the respondents lie between 25 to 32 years old and 28 were falling between 41-47 years old. 76 were single and 112 were married. Most of the respondents had working experience of 5 -10 years. There were 20 respondents who had a working experience of 15 years or more.

Control Variables Analysis

Since the p value of all demographic variables are greater than 0.05, 0.01 and 0.001, which means that they are non-significant. This shows that there is no effect of Demographics variables on DV, thus they don't need to be controlled.

Correlation Analysis

Correlation coefficient can be any number between +1 and -1 and strength of relationship increases as the number is close to +1. It shows the linearity and direction of relationship.

Table 4.1: Reliability and Correlation Analysis

	1	2	3	4
1. <i>PLB</i>	1(.969)			
2. <i>EM</i>	.218	1(.937)		
3. <i>EC</i>	.775	.405	1(.878)	
4. <i>AC</i>	.700	.138	.768	1(.897)

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$,

The internal consistencies (i-e., coefficient α) of the four constructs under study and from the results, it is seen that all the variables have good reliability estimates. The results indicate that all the variables reflect acceptable reliability. Value 0.7 is considered as a benchmark for the conduct of successful research and it can be seen from the table that all have the value of Cronbach's Alpha greater than 0.7.

The table 4.1 shows that there exists weak correlation between PLB and EM as the figure is 0.218 however there exists a positive and statistically significant relationship between PLB and EC and PLB and AC. A relatively weak but statistically significant relationship exists between EM and EC but a weak and non-significant relationship exists between EM and AC. EC and AC have positively and statistically significant relationship, thus multicollinearity exists



Vol. 3 No. 7 (July) (2025)

between both variables.

PROCESS Analysis

PROCESS is a freely downloadable SPSS tool for estimating regression models with mediation and/or moderation effects. The above model is based on one moderator and mediator therefore the following analysis is done and shown in the table below:

**Table 4.2: Mediation effect of mediator between IV and DV
Moderation effect of moderator between IV and DV**

	B	SE	t	P
1. PLB → EC	0.4045	0.1005	4.0259	0.0002
2. PLB → AC	0.3840	0.2469		0.1272
3. AC → EC	0.4455	0.1164	3.8275	0.0004
4. PLB → AC → EC	0.2692	0.0897		
5. PLB → EM → EC	0.0924	0.0942	0.9803	0.3324

In Step 1 of the mediation model, the regression of Paradoxical leadership Behavior on employee's creativity ignoring the mediator, was significant, as p value is 0.0002 which is less than 0.05. Step 2 showed that the regression of the Paradoxical leadership Behavior on the mediator (Absorptive Capacity), was insignificant, as the p value is 0.1272 which is greater than 0.05. Step 3 of the mediation process showed that the relationship between mediator (Absorptive Capacity), on Employee creativity, was significant since the p value is 0.004 which is less than 0.05. Step 4 of the analysis revealed that, controlling for the mediator (Absorptive capacity), Paradoxical leadership behavior score was a significant predictor of Employee Creativity as p is 0.0002. Therefore, the indirect effect is 0.2692 which lies between 0.0869 and 0.4343 which shows that partial mediation exists in the model. The table also shows that there is no moderating effect of the moderator (Employee Mindfulness) on the relationship between IV and Med as it is insignificant because of the value of p which is 0.3342

Discussion

Hypothesis **H1**, the results establish that Paradoxical leadership directly influence employee creativity. With the support of Componential theory of creativity (Amabile, 1980), creativity depends on domain-relevant skills (expertise and knowledge) and creativity-relevant processes (the ability to think divergently and push boundaries). Paradoxical leaders help and support their employees in many ways which includes assigning them tasks, listening to their needs and encouraging them so that they can do more efforts. Papachroni et al., (2015) suggested that paradoxical leadership plays a role of a catalyst that



Vol. 3 No. 7 (July) (2025)

enhances the innovation and skills in the employees that helps in integrating creativity. The findings of the study also support this relationship. Thus, a paradoxical leader would encourage flexibility and autonomy for employees to experiment and explore new ideas, while also ensuring that certain boundaries are in place to guide the application of knowledge and prevent chaos.

The results also support the **H2** which states that paradoxical leadership is positively associated with Absorptive capacity. Absorptive capacity involves acquiring external knowledge, which requires openness to new ideas and information as Cohen and Levinthal suggest. However, a stable environment that supports expertise and knowledge retention is also necessary. Paradoxical leaders strike a balance between stability (preserving existing knowledge and practices) and change (embracing new ideas). They ensure that employees can both retain valuable knowledge (stability) and explore new learning opportunities (change). This balance allows employees to both absorb and integrate new knowledge effectively without being overwhelmed by constant change according to Paradox Theory. A paradoxical leader might encourage both learning through traditional methods (stability) while simultaneously urging employees to embrace cutting-edge practices or new technologies (change), enhancing their absorptive capacity.

H3 and **H4** is also confirmed by the results. There exists a positive relationship between absorptive capacity and employee creativity and AC partially mediates the relationship between IV and DV. This also coincides with the findings of Tiwana and Mclean, 2005. Thus Employees with a high absorptive capacity are better at acquiring external knowledge. This acquisition is essential for creativity because exposure to diverse sources of knowledge can inspire new ideas and perspectives. Thus employees should be exposed to external opportunities so that they can act creatively in the organization and learn new ways of doing things. Absorptive capacity is rooted in **organizational learning theory**, which highlights the importance of continuous learning, knowledge sharing, and adaptation in driving organizational success and innovation

H5 however, is not proved by the results. Employee Mindfulness does not moderate the relationship between IV and Mediator. Mindfulness helps employees to remain alert which helps them to understand the reason behind the opposing behavior of paradoxical leader (Zhaohui, 2018) higher level of mindfulness guides employees to monitor the situation. Since mindfulness signifies the presence of mind (Bodhi, 2000, 2011), attentiveness to present, thoughtful action, and awareness (Langer et al., 1978), we feel that contrary to expectations, employee mindfulness will not strengthen or weaken the relationship between PLB and its outcomes and thus wont moderate the relationship.

Conclusion

By examining how an organization's capacity to absorb, integrate, and use outside knowledge might encourage innovation and creative problem-solving among its employees, this study investigated the connection between paradoxical leadership and employee creativity which was found to be significant. This study emphasizes the critical role that individual and organizational processes play in fostering creativity through theoretical insights from Amabile's componential



Vol. 3 No. 7 (July) (2025)

theory of creativity and Cohen and Levinthal's model of absorptive capacity. According to the findings, workers with a high capacity for absorption are better able to learn a variety of topics, combine them with their current knowledge, and use them creatively, which leads to creative solutions and better organizational results. Additionally, the study highlights how crucial it is to create an atmosphere that promotes learning, knowledge exchange, and cognitive flexibility because these elements improve a person's ability to absorb and utilize new information creatively. The study addresses the research gap by empirically investigating the role of absorptive capacity as a mediator on employee creativity by selecting the sample size of 300 respondents from different companies of Oil and Gas Sector of Pakistan.

Implications and Recommendations

This study expanded the PLB literature and its link with employee creativity by introducing a new mediation mechanism where managers can encourage Employee Creativity. This work provides a practical basis for how leaders' consistent yet flexible behavior can involve employees in parallel creative tasks, taking help from existing routines and processes. Leaders can encourage creativity in their organizations.

This study provides a deep insight into how leaders practicing PLB can encourage creative behavior by engaging in the exchange relationship. Organizations should also focus on launching such programs that promote PLB in leaders and be prepared to accept such behaviors that can only be possible in exchange relationships, as employees feel an obligation to respond to their leaders. Policies should be made on top levels like OGRA and other Oil and Gas sector companies where leaders use their interrelated behaviors to encourage creativity among employees and allows them to take new and different steps that promote creativity in the organization to remain competitive in this dynamic environment. Authorities should work on Enhancing absorptive capacity through knowledge-sharing platforms and continuous learning opportunities which in turn enable employees to better utilize the paradoxical leadership they encounter and drive more effective innovation.

Companies can introduce mindfulness training to enhance employee focus and creativity, especially in high-pressure environments like oil exploration or refinery operations.

Limitations and Future Research

Several Limitations are also associated with the findings. First, this study may have generalizability issues as sample data were obtained from the Oil and Gas sector in Pakistan. Future researchers can resolve this issue by getting data from different sectors. Large sample size should be used for getting better results. Absorptive capacity was taken as a mediator in the said relationship. More variables can be taken as a mediator to study the impact of Paradoxical Leadership on Employee creativity. The highly regulated and structured nature of the oil and gas industry may limit the freedom employees have to express creativity. This could be a limitation in the research, requiring careful interpretation of findings. There was a time constraint for the researcher in this study, Future researchers should collect and analyze data on long term basis. Future studies may further collect data of leaders who have gone through certain



developmental programs to practice PLB.

Bibliography

- Amabile, T. M., Conti, R., Coon, H., Lazenby, J., & Herron, M. (1996). Assessing the work environment for creativity. *Academy of Management Journal*, 39(5), 1154–1184.
- Amabile, T. M. (1988). A model of creativity and innovation in organizations. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 10(1), 123–167.
- Amabile, T. M., & Khaire, M. (2008). Your organization could use a bigger dose of creativity. *Harvard Business Review*, 86(10), 101–109.
- Al-Husseini, S. (2024). Examining the impact of top management support on employee creativity through the mediating role of knowledge management and absorptive capacity. *International Journal of Innovation Science*, 16(4), 658–682.
- Akhavan, P., & Hosseini, S. M. (2016). Social capital, knowledge sharing, and innovation capability: An empirical study of R&D teams in Iran. *Technology Analysis and Strategic Management*, 28(1), 96–113.
- Berti, M., & Simpson, A. (2019). The dark side of organizational paradoxes: The dynamics of disempowerment. *Academy of Management Review*, 46(2). <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2017.0208>
- Cohen, W. M. (1990). Absorptive capacity: A new perspective on learning and innovation. *Administrative Science Quarterly*.
- Carson, S. H., & Langer, E. J. (2006). Mindfulness and self-acceptance. *Journal of Rational-Emotive and Cognitive-Behavior Therapy*, 24, 29–43.
- Chen, J., & Nonaka, I. (2022). *The Routledge companion to knowledge management*. Routledge.
- Devi, N. C. (2024). Paradoxical leadership and employee creativity: Knowledge sharing and hiding as mediators. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 28(2), 312–340.
- Denison, D. R., Hooijberg, R., & Quinn, R. E. (1995). Paradox and performance: Toward a theory of behavioral complexity in managerial leadership. *Organization Science*, 6(5), 524–540.
- De Vasconcellos, S. L., Garrido, I. L., & Parente, R. C. (2019). Organizational creativity as a crucial resource for building international business competence. *International Business Review*, 28(3), 438–449.
- George, J. M., & Zhou, J. (2007). Dual tuning in a supportive context: Joint contributions of positive mood, negative mood, and supervisory behaviors to employee creativity. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(3), 605–622.
- Gilbert, F. W., Prenshaw, P. J., & Ivy, T. T. (1996). A preliminary assessment of the effectiveness of creativity training in marketing. *Journal of Marketing Education*, 18(3), 46–56.
- Gilson, L. L., & Shalley, C. E. (2004). A little creativity goes a long way: An examination of teams' engagement in creative processes. *Journal of Management*, 30(4), 453–470.
- Gong, Y., Huang, J.-C., & Farh, J.-L. (2009). Employee learning orientation, transformational leadership, and employee creativity: The mediating role of employee creative self-efficacy. *Academy of Management Journal*, 52(4), 765–778.
- Herrmann, D., & Felfe, J. (2013). Moderators of the relationship between



Vol. 3 No. 7 (July) (2025)

- leadership style and employee creativity: The role of task novelty and personal initiative. *Creativity Research Journal*, 25(2), 172–181.
- Hon, A. H. A., & Lui, S. S. (2016). Employee creativity and innovation in organizations: Review, integration, and future directions for hospitality research. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 28(5), 862–885.
- Hughes, D. J., Lee, A., Tian, A. W., Newman, A., & Legood, A. (2018). Leadership, creativity, and innovation: A critical review and practical recommendations. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 29, 549–569.
- Houyong, T., Qianqian, W., & Wenfang, H. (2023). Impacts of paradoxical leadership behavior on employee creativity. *Management Review*, 34(2), 215.
- Lewis, M. W., Andriopoulos, C., & Smith, W. K. (2014). Paradoxical leadership to enable strategic agility. *California Management Review*, 56(3), 58–77.
- Liu, D., Jiang, K., Shalley, C. E., Keem, S., & Zhou, J. (2016). Motivational mechanisms of employee creativity: A meta-analytic examination and theoretical extension of the creativity literature. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 137, 236–263.
- Liu, X., Huang, Y., Kim, J., & Na, S. (2023). How ethical leadership cultivates innovative work behaviors in employees? Psychological safety, work engagement and openness to experience. *Sustainability*, 15(4), 3452.
- Liu, D., Liao, H., & Loi, R. (2012). The dark side of leadership: A three-level investigation of the cascading effect of abusive supervision on employee creativity. *Academy of Management Journal*, 55(5), 1187–1212.
- Langer, E. J. (1989). Minding matters: The consequences of mindlessness–mindfulness. In *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* (Vol. 22, pp. 137–173). Academic Press.
- Langer, E. J., & Moldoveanu, M. (2000). Mindfulness research and the future. *Journal of Social Issues*, 56(1), 129–139.
- Majhi, S. G., Snehvrat, S., & Chaudhary, S. (2024). The paradoxical impact of CEOs' humility and narcissism on absorptive capacity: Evidence from small firms. *Measuring Business Excellence*, 28(3/4), 532–549.
- Vo, N., & Tuan, L. T. (2023). Fostering public sector employees' innovative behavior: The roles of servant leadership, public service motivation, and learning goal orientation. *Administration & Society*, 55(1), 30–63.
- Ouakouak, M. L., & Ouedraogo, N. (2017). Antecedents of employee creativity and organisational innovation: An empirical study. *International Journal of Innovation Management*, 21(7), 1750060.
- Papachroni, A., Heracleous, L., & Paroutis, S. (2015). Organizational ambidexterity through the lens of paradox theory: Building a novel research agenda. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 51(1), 71–93.
- Qu, R., Janssen, O., & Shi, K. (2015). Transformational leadership and follower creativity: The mediating role of follower relational identification and the moderating role of leader creativity expectations. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 26(2), 286–299.
- Raza, B., Ali, M., Naseem, K., Moeed, A., Ahmed, J., & Hamid, M. (2018). Impact of trait mindfulness on job satisfaction and turnover intentions: Mediating role of work–family balance and moderating role of work–family conflict. *Cogent Business & Management*, 5(1), 1542943.
- Sutcliffe, K. M., Vogus, T. J., & Dane, E. (2016). Mindfulness in organizations: A



Vol. 3 No. 7 (July) (2025)

- cross-level review. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 3, 55–81.
- Schmidt-Keilich, M., Buhl, A., & Süßbauer, E. (2023). Innovative green employees: The drivers of corporate eco-innovation? *International Journal of Innovation and Sustainable Development*, 17(1/2), 182–204.
- Shalley, C. E. (1995). Effects of coaction, expected evaluation, and goal setting on creativity and productivity. *Academy of Management Journal*, 38(2), 483–503.
- Shao, Y., Nijstad, B. A., & Taüber, S. (2019). Creativity under workload pressure and integrative complexity: The double-edged sword of paradoxical leadership. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 155, 7–19.
- Tiwana, A., & Mclean, E. R. (2005). Expertise integration and creativity in information systems development. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 22(1), 13–43.
- Volberda, H., Foss, N., & Lyles, M. (2010). Absorbing the concept of absorbing capacity: How to realize its potential in the organizational field. *Organization Science*, 21(4), 931–951.
- Wu, S., Ding, X., Liu, R., & Gao, H. (2021). How does IT capability affect open innovation performance? The mediating effect of absorptive capacity. *European Journal of Innovation Management*, 24(1), 43–65.
- Yoshida, D. T., Sendjaya, S., Hirst, G., & Cooper, B. (2014). Does servant leadership foster creativity and innovation? A multi-level mediation study of identification and prototypicality. *Journal of Business Research*, 67(7), 1395–1404.
- Yang, Y., Li, Z., Liang, L., & Zhang, X. (2021). Why and when paradoxical leader behavior impact employee creativity: Thriving at work and psychological safety. *Current Psychology*, 40(4), 1911–1922.
- Younis, S., Bashir, S., Irshad, M., & Javed, B. (2023). Impact of the paradoxical leadership on employee creativity: Testing a moderated mediation model. *SAGE Open*, 13(2), 21582440231182615.
- Zhou, J., & Hoever, I. J. (2014). Research on workplace creativity: A review and redirection. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 1, 333–359.
- Zhang, Y., Waldman, D. A., Han, Y. L., & Li, X. B. (2015). Paradoxical leader behaviors in people management: Antecedents and consequences. *Academy of Management Journal*, 58(2), 538–566.
- Zhang, W., Chen, L., Yajuan, L., & Liao, J. (2024). The role of paradoxical leadership in stimulating employees' radical creativity. In *Academy of Management Proceedings* (Vol. 2024, No. 1, p. 17576). Academy of Management.
- Zhang, Y., Fang, Y., Wei, K.-K., & Chen, H. (2010). Exploring the role of psychological safety in promoting the intention to continue sharing knowledge in virtual communities. *International Journal of Information Management*, 30(5), 425–436.
- Zhu, J., Xu, S., & Zhang, B. (2020). The paradoxical effect of inclusive leadership on subordinates' creativity. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, 2960.
- Zahra, S. A., & George, G. (2002). Absorptive capacity: A review, reconceptualization, and extension. *Academy of Management Review*, 27(2),



Vol. 3 No. 7 (July) (2025)

185–203.

Zhaohui, W. (2018). How does paradoxical leadership enhance individual ambidexterity? The composite multiple mediating role of psychological safety and thriving at work. *Foreign Economics & Management*, 40(03), 107–120.