

The Impact of Paradoxical Leadership Behavior on Employee Task Performance and the Mediating Roles of Employee Creativity and Job Satisfaction within Egypt's Telecommunications Sector

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Abstract

Purpose – *The study investigates the impact of paradoxical leadership behavior on employee task performance through the mediating role of employee creativity and job satisfaction. The study also explores the moderating effect of task complexity in the relationship between paradoxical leadership behavior and employee creativity.*

Design/methodology/approach – *The positivist philosophy and associated methods as the quantitative technique and deductive approach, were employed. The research population consists of employees working in telecommunication organizations in Egypt, with a sample size of 465 employees.*

Findings – *The study showed through its analysis that there is a significant positive effect of paradoxical leadership behavior on employee task performance, employee creativity, and job satisfaction. There is also a positive effect of task complexity on employee creativity, but it negatively affects the relationship between paradoxical leadership behavior and employee creativity. The study also found that employee creativity does not mediate the relationship between paradoxical leadership behavior and employee task performance, while job satisfaction partially mediates this relationship.*

Keywords – *Paradoxical Leadership Behavior - Employee Task Performance - Employee Creativity - Job Satisfaction - Telecommunications Sector.*

1. Introduction

Organizations face the difficulty of fostering both innovation and employee success in a fast-evolving business environment, notably in Egypt and the Middle East's telecommunications industry. The notion of Paradoxical Leadership, which entails reconciling conflicting requirements like freedom and control, has gained popularity for its potential to improve employee job performance. However, the influence of this leadership style on employee performance in the area remains underexplored, particularly in terms of cultural and organizational difficulties.

Accordingly, leadership is an essential aspect in navigating the complexities of fostering innovation and employee success in the fast-changing business environment of the telecoms industry in Egypt and the Middle East. Effective leadership can help address cultural and organizational challenges, ultimately driving improved performance and success within the organization (Rashid and Hassan, 2024).

Egypt has long been at the forefront of telecommunications growth in the Middle East, but the industry is presently facing considerable problems as companies must fulfill rising customer service demands while still catering to the requirements of their staff. Empowering leadership strategies that encourage creativity and motivation are critical to overcoming these challenges. However, how leadership promotes employee creativity and job satisfaction as mediators of performance outcomes has not been sufficiently researched, particularly in high-pressure and complicated work contexts like telecommunications (El-Borsaly and Hassan, 2020).

Job satisfaction and employee creativity are tightly related. Employees who are content with their roles are more likely to be motivated and engaged at work. This expectant attitude may offer better visions and creativity due to employees are more motivated to improve their work in the association. Moreover, employees who acquired satisfaction in their jobs are more

willing to unite with their coworkers, which provides an active and inventive office setting. Job satisfaction is a vital issue regarding having a culture of creativity inside a business. Accordingly, companies should underline emerging an adequate work environment which supports employee satisfaction that helps the success of every organization (Spanjol et al., 2015).

Besides, task complexity plays a critical role as a moderator in the connection between leadership behaviors and employee success in their tasks. As stated by investigations regarding this topic, paradoxical leadership aids employees in setting their adaptability moods in their daily task managing. Accordingly, investigating the moderating effect may improve leadership techniques, particularly in high-demand schemes including telecommunication systems. Administrations may improve employee performance and task management through the excellence of the role of job complexity in determining the effect of leadership actions. This detailed knowledge may lead to positive leadership development plans, which will help the organizational effectiveness in all the required tasks (Afsar and Umrani, 2020).

Accordingly, this inquiry aims to inspect the effect of paradoxical leadership behavior on employee task performance within Egypt's telecommunications sector. The analysis is focused on the mediating function of employee creativity and the concept of job satisfaction, along with the moderating effects of task

complexity, offering a decisive image of leadership strategies in both local and international schemes.

2. Research Problem

In the evolving scope of Egypt and the Middle East's economic circumstances, the telecommunications business is facing a variety of challenges in order to guarantee high levels of employee performance and creativity in addition to competing with having leadership changing aspects. Paradoxical Leadership Behavior, in which leaders manage contrasting requirements including control and flexibility, has established consideration owing to its ability to influence critical organizational conclusions. However, little is known about how this leadership style affects employee task performance in the area, where cultural, economic, and organizational issues might influence the efficacy of leadership techniques (Kamal, 2023).

Egypt has long been one of the first countries in the Middle East to create a well-designed telecommunications infrastructure. However, telecommunications businesses are currently confronting two primary issues. The first is to fulfill consumer demand for service quality and the requirement to minimize the time it takes to offer this service, while the second is to suit the demands of staff. To achieve the revolutionary change required,

leadership empowerment must be introduced and entrenched positively and steadily (Soliman, 2020).

Furthermore, employee creativity and job satisfaction are critical mediating elements that may either enhance or diminish the influence of leadership actions on performance. Despite the recognition of these links as a fundamental feature of the apparent success of organizations, we know little about the precise mechanisms by which paradoxical leadership affects employee creativity and job satisfaction in organizations, especially in the Egyptian side, which has a special governance. For companies hoping to improve their leadership practices in general, and ultimately their overall performance, exploration in this area is essential. Companies may design their leadership strategies to better support employee creativity and job satisfaction by supporting the elimination of cultural barriers by investigating these elements in more detail to reach clear results (Wang et al., 2021).

A significant knowledge gap can be observed regarding how leadership strategies can enhance performance outcomes in complex, high-pressure scenarios such as telecommunications, as there is still little recognition of the importance of task complexity as a potential mediator in these interactions that are essential to supporting and succeeding organizations. Accordingly, the impact of task complexity on the effectiveness

of different leadership techniques in telecommunications contexts requires further research to understand the nature of the relationship and how it controls the extent to which organizations succeed. By recognizing this connection, companies may adjust their leadership styles to improve productivity and performance under challenging conditions (Afsar and Umrani, 2020).

Accordingly, this inquiry seeks to address the following questions:

1. How does paradoxical leadership behavior affect employee task performance in Egypt's telecommunications sector?
2. What are the mediating roles of employee creativity and job satisfaction in the relationship between paradoxical leadership behavior and employee Task Performance?
3. How does task complexity moderate the relationship between paradoxical leadership behavior and employee creativity?

Addressing these questions provides critical perceptions for organizational leaders looking to enhance employee performance and foster innovation in the telecommunications industry in Egypt.

3. Theoretical Background

Paradox Theory

Leaders being able to manage contradictory demands all at the same time is becoming an increasingly significant component in organizational success. Researchers have used paradox theory to better comprehend these conflicting demands and how to respond to them. In the context of organizational life, the conflicting demands on persons and teams are a constant in our society, which is becoming more complicated, global, and fast-moving. These are people who must balance work-life, education-performance, teamwork-competition. There are teams that must balance individual and team performance, coordination-specialization, and efficiency-creative goals. There are leaders who must give equal treatment to all followers while allowing individuality, intimacy-distance, and decision-making authority while granting autonomy. In fact, today's leaders and individuals need to behave internationally with regards to attending to local subtleties or needs in this increasingly globalized world (Waldman et al., 2019).

"Paradox" is described in the context of management as "elements that are permanently interdependent and contradictory." Scholars Lewis and Smith formally introduced paradox theory based on the organizational model system of

dynamic equilibrium, drawing from prior research. Their work highlighted the importance of recognizing and managing paradoxes within organizations to promote innovation and adaptability. By embracing paradoxes, organizations can navigate complex environments and achieve sustainable success (Chen and Yang, 2023).

The concept of paradox entered managerial scholarship in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when it was advanced as an appropriate lens through which to frame organizational phenomena. Smith and Lewis (2000, 2011) have more recently integrated a few disparate traditions and created a far more detailed conceptualization of this concept of paradox. Three basic characteristics define this concept of paradox, defined as oppositional yet interrelated elements that coexist and persist over time:

- a) The organizational components, though as an individual entity being rational, when combined turn out to be illogical and incomprehensible opposition paradoxes.
- b) Interdependence means these diametrically opposite elements should be inseparable from their opposite; they should be the other side of the same coin.
- c) Persistence: It is tension that does not disappear over time but will, instead, persist.

Since paradox theory is a theoretical framework that can provide valuable insights into a range of organizational phenomena, researchers have employed the concept of paradox to examine several topics (Carmin and De Marchi, 2023). Accordingly, the current study applies Paradox Theory to explore how paradoxical leadership impacts employee creativity and task performance.

Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory constitutes a comprehensive conceptual framework that encompasses a variety of social science disciplines, including management, social psychology, and anthropology. Despite its name, it is not a single theory, but rather a set of conceptual models. In this sense, all social exchange theories have a number of common characteristics. All social exchange theories view social existence as a sequence of successive transactions between two or more parties. Resources are shared through a reciprocal process in which one party seeks to repay another party's good (or occasionally negative) conduct. The quality of these conversations can be altered by the actor's connection with the target. Economic interactions are often quid pro quo, requiring less trust and more active monitoring, whereas social exchanges are more open-ended, requiring greater trust and flexibility. Based on these simple principles, social exchange theory is one of the most durable and extensively utilized conceptual frameworks. Many of the most important themes in organizational behavior have been examined at

some point via the perspective of the concept of social exchange (Cropanzano et al., 2017).

Although workplace connections may be viewed like any other sort of interpersonal contact, they are important for both the individual and the company. Workplace connections, in particular, are part of the socialization process in organizations, a source of knowledge necessary for effective performance and happiness, and a foundation for social support and communication. Employees are encouraged to build strong working relationships. However, they must survive the dynamic and unpredictable demands of today's workplace. Establishing powerful workplace connections not only promotes collaboration and productivity, but also encourages a sense of belonging and satisfaction among employees. Nurturing these relationships demands adaptability, effective communication, and a willingness to navigate through challenges together (Chernyak-Hai and Rabenu, 2018).

Previous research has supported the applicability of social exchange theory and reciprocity norms to companies. For example, workers' impressions of organizational support and investment in them generate a duty to provide favorable treatment to the business in return. In other words, employees respond to how they believe their firm treats them. Social Exchange Theory can shed light on the links between paradoxical

leadership, work satisfaction, and productivity among workers. According to this idea, relationships are based on reciprocal exchanges, and workers respond positively to leaders who meet their needs and provide an equitable working atmosphere (Huang et al., 2016).

Complexity Leadership Theory

Complexity Leadership Theory outlines a leadership style that promotes flexibility, which improves performance and creativity via everyday interactions between personnel reacting to local constraints and opportunities. These discrete activities combine to create significant emergent effects. However, in many businesses, the potential for such emergence is inhibited by bureaucracy and siloed structures that impede interconnectedness. The key challenge addressed by Complexity Leadership Theory is how leaders can promote the emergence of innovative ideas and innovations while adhering to bureaucratic organizational systems. The key is to recognize that companies have two basic, dynamically conflicting systems: operational and entrepreneurial. The operational system controls the formality, routine processes, and organizational performance, while innovative changes, learning, and development come from the entrepreneurial framework. The Complexity Leadership Theory pinpoints that companies must balance these systems in order to survive and grow in today's chaotic world (Arena and Uhl-Bien, 2016).

Leadership is a multilayered feature that has been the focus of studies for a long period of time and is recently gaining importance in the management of an innovative economy. Important though it is, the process of leading can be intriguing often due to its intrinsic complexity. It is possible to argue that leadership is the most researched and least understood issue in the social sciences, and researchers have studied many aspects and introduced only a few interpretations. Effective leadership is regarded as critical to an organization's success, and there has been a major movement toward emphasizing the importance of human capital and organizational management in attaining long-term development and competitive advantage (Benmira and Agboola, 2021).

In the complexity strategy, "leadership" does not refer to one individual. Instead, it is a distinguishable structure of social and relational organization among autonomous, varied individuals as they build a system of activity. Complexity methods do not dismiss individual leaders, but rather emphasize the significance of larger organizational effects that encompass both human practices and complex system impacts. Many research on organizational behavior and management uses the Complexity Leadership paradigm, which emphasizes the connectivity and interdependence of individuals within a system. This approach stresses the dynamic and evolving character of leadership, acknowledging that effective leadership is based not just on

individual attributes or acts, but also on the interactions and linkages within a multifaceted framework (Hazy, 2015).

4. Literature Review

The relationships between the study variables are shown in this section through previous literature, where the following sub-sections show this literature.

The Relationship between Paradoxical Leadership Behavior and Employee Task Performance

The linkage between paradoxical leadership behavior and employee task performance was the main topic of the studies by Chen et al. (2021) and Zhang et al. (2021) which provided useful insights into the relationship between paradoxical leadership and task performance. However, their focus diverged slightly from the current research objective. Chen et al. (2021) emphasized the impact on leaders, while Zhang et al. (2021) examined adaptability and organizational identification without considering the mediating roles of creativity and job satisfaction. On the other hand, Hiller et al. (2019) contributed different aspects regarding how paradoxical leadership behaviors such as benevolence can positively influence creativity.

Moreover, Kundi et al. (2023) explored paradoxical leadership in the hospitality industry, demonstrating its significant impact on

both in-role (task performance) and extra-role performance through the mediating role of work engagement. In this regard, it was investigated how paradoxical leadership improves employee performance in organizations, but because it focused on hotels, it was not applicable to industries such as telecommunications and their specific nature. While the study highlighted the importance of leadership style in influencing task performance, it also highlighted different contexts and mediators, which indicates the need for further research in diverse sectors and leadership styles to determine the underlying position of the relationship and the extent of the impact.

The Relationship between Paradoxical Leadership Behavior and Employee Creativity

It can be noted that in recent years, the concept of paradoxical leadership has attracted much consideration from various inquiries seeking to recognize how leadership influences organizational success, mostly due to its impact on employee creativity. For instance, Zhang et al. (2022) highlighted how paradoxical leadership encourages workers to think holistically and experience self-contradiction, which in turn stimulates innovation. This contrasts with the current study's focus on task difficulty as a mediator and job satisfaction as a mediator. Devi (2024) inspected the mediating functions of information hiding and sharing, and the results showed that only knowledge sharing

had a positive effect on creativity. On the other hand, the current research treats the idea of creativity and job satisfaction as mediators rather than knowledge management approaches.

Other investigations, counting Shao et al. (2019), Younis et al. (2023), and Lin et al. (2024), assessed different psychological and personality features influencing the paradoxical leadership-creativity association. For example, Shao et al. (2019) underlined creative self-efficacy through high workload pressure, which is consistent with the current investigation's revolving around task complexity being a moderator. However, Younis et al. (2023) observed exploration and exploitation behaviors with mindfulness as a moderator, while Lin et al. (2024) investigated harmonious work passion and initiative-taking personality as crucial factors. While all studies affirm the positive impact of paradoxical leadership on creativity, they employed distinct mediators and moderators, highlighting both the flexibility and complexity of this leadership style in different organizational contexts. The current study contributes uniquely by focusing on job satisfaction as an additional mediator and telecommunication organizations in Egypt as its setting.

The Effect of Task Complexity in the Relationship between Paradoxical Leadership Behavior and Employee Creativity

The impact of task complexity in the relationship between paradoxical leadership behavior and employee creativity was not examined by many previous studies, which is evidenced by scattered research involving the variables within different scopes. Zhang and Kwan (2018) investigated the link between empowering leadership and team creativity, mediated by team learning behavior and team creative efficacy. The study concluded that task complexity strengthened the connection between empowering leadership and team learning behavior, team creative efficacy, and team creativity. In another context, Li and Yue (2019) addressed the linkage between leader creativity and team creativity, finding that task complexity strengthened the positive relationship between these two variables. However, Men and Jia (2021) evaluated the different effects of knowledge-oriented leadership on team creativity, which was mediated by team learning. The study concluded that task complexity strengthens the relationship between team learning and team creativity.

The current study builds on existing research by examining how paradoxical leadership behavior influences employee task performance, with employee creativity and job satisfaction acting as mediators. While previous studies have typically focused on team dynamics, this research shifts the focus to the individual

performance of employees. Additionally, it extends earlier work by investigating how task complexity moderates the relationship between paradoxical leadership and employee creativity. This is consistent with the findings of Zhang and Kwan (2018) and Li and Yue (2019), who demonstrated that task complexity strengthens the connection between leadership style and team creativity. However, this study uniquely centers on paradoxical leadership behavior, providing new views about how it affects individual task performance, rather than team creativity. Like earlier studies, the current study employs a questionnaire-based approach, though previous work often combined questionnaires with other data collection methods.

The Relationship between Paradoxical Leadership Behavior and Job Satisfaction

The relationship between paradoxical leadership behavior and job satisfaction was also the main topic of previous studies. Kamil et al. (2024) addressed paradoxical leadership in the context of psychosocial safety climate and its effect on employee job crafting and voice behavior. Although their study focuses more on employee voice than job satisfaction, it highlights how paradoxical leadership contributes to enhanced productivity and satisfaction. While Kamil et al. (2024) focused on job crafting and productivity, Liu and Pak (2023) evaluated the comparative effectiveness of paradoxical leadership versus servant leadership

in predicting employee psychological need satisfaction, including autonomy, which ties closely to job satisfaction. The study concluded that paradoxical leadership outperforms servant leadership only in fostering autonomy need satisfaction, which supports the current research's premise that paradoxical leadership affects job satisfaction.

Moreover, Stynen and Semeijn (2023) concluded that paradoxical leadership positively impacts job satisfaction, partly through reducing job insecurity. Accordingly, the study of Stynen and Semeijn (2023) introduced the closest parallel to the current study by showing that paradoxical leadership directly enhances job satisfaction through reduced job insecurity. However, the current research extends these findings by incorporating task complexity as a moderator and focusing on the relationship between paradoxical leadership, job satisfaction, and employee task performance.

The Relationship between Employee Creativity and Employee Task Performance

The relationship between employee creativity and employee task performance was introduced by Martini et al. (2023) who found a direct link between employee competency and creativity, leading to improved performance and product competitiveness in the weaving industry. Ngo et al. (2024) discovered that tension can

enhance employee performance through creativity, particularly for individuals with a high paradox mindset. Moreover, Amalia et al. (2024) concluded that mindfulness positively impacts employee performance, both directly and indirectly, through the mediating effect of employee creativity in the financial sector. Khaliq et al. (2024) also stated the mediating role of work engagement, finding that perceived organizational support fosters employee creativity in media houses.

The previous studies regarding the relationship between employee creativity and employee task performance emphasized the significance of employee creativity in driving task performance, emphasizing both direct and indirect pathways. While studies by Martini et al. (2023) and Ngo et al. (2024) demonstrated the direct positive impact of creativity on performance, Amalia et al. (2024) and Khaliq et al. (2024) explored mediating variables. Amalia et al. (2024) showed that mindfulness positively affects performance through creativity, while Khaliq et al. (2024) demonstrated the mediating role of work engagement in the relationship between perceived organizational support and employee creativity.

Contrasting previous investigations in the same topic, the current inquiry addresses the different effects of paradoxical leadership behavior on employee task performance, donating this exceptional leadership style as a possible factor to be affecting the creativity of

employees and their leaders. This notion surpasses outstanding literature through providing the concept of job satisfaction in the form of a mediating key element, stressing the intricate connections between leadership, employee responses, and performance. Besides, the study offers how task complexity moderates the association between paradoxical leadership and the employee creativity notion, acknowledging that leadership's different influences have the ability to change depending on the nature of the tasks required in the organizations.

The Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Employee Task Performance

There is no doubt that the relationship between job satisfaction and employee task performance has a special nature due to the multiplicity of work fields in the modern economy, which indicates the need to resort to studies that clarify the details of this relationship. In this context, Nasir et al. (2011) addressed the existence of a positive relationship between job satisfaction and task performance among Iranian employees, where gender and education act as assistants to strengthen this relationship. Nemteanu and Dabija (2021) also investigated the effect of internal marketing and job satisfaction on task performance and counterproductive job behavior, and the study came in a Romanian context different from the current study. The analysis showed that the concept of job satisfaction introduced a strong

effect regarding task performance while reducing counterproductive behavior. Additionally, the investigation of Boakye-Dankwa et al. (2017) addressed investigating work surroundings in the health care scope and the extent of employee satisfaction and the quality of care in long-term care facilities, where they found a group of facilities with higher employee satisfaction, better patient care outcomes, and lower workers' reward rights, representing the existence of a basic association.

Thus, after examining previous studies and the variables they addressed, we find that the current study has a different approach from previous research in that it has a different starting point regarding the impact of paradoxical leadership on employees' performance of the tasks they are assigned. In this context, the study is distinguished by presenting employee creativity as a main mediating factor and examining the moderating role of the complexity of the tasks that employees undertake in the organizations in which they work. While previous studies have focused on the direct effect of employee job satisfaction on task performance or looked at other mediators such as internal marketing and emotional labor, this research provides an innovative perspective by exploring how paradoxical leadership affects performance through both employee creativity and job satisfaction. In the same context, the current study relied on telecommunications organizations in Egypt as the study population, and used a questionnaire-based methodology, as in

previous studies. This scheme not only offers a direct contrast with previous findings, but also promises to provide a different perspective on the effects of paradoxical leadership within this industry and recommends many successes in this field.

5. Research Methodology

The research methodology introduces the techniques accustomed in completing the designated empirical evaluation for the current inquiry. The current investigation seeks to understand the different effects of paradoxical leadership behavior on employee task performance through the mediating role of employee creativity and job satisfaction. The inquiry also addresses the moderating impact of task complexity in the association between paradoxical leadership behavior and employee creativity.

Consequently, the current research chose the positivist philosophy to improve the evaluation plan of the associations investigated through the research variables and dimensions. The positivist philosophy is used in the plan of this research because it delivers a controlled, impartial outline for inspecting the studied variables and dimensions. The notion of Positivism offers the research to include observable events that can be assessed in a statistical manner. Moreover, the aspect of positivism is appropriate for the current inquiry due to the existence of the linkages between leadership behavior, employee creativity, job

satisfaction, and task performance are empirically observed and statistically examined (Park et al., 2020).

Positivism enhances the efficiency of the research by ensuring that only quantifiable data is used, which helps to draw generalizable conclusions based on the collected data. This approach is compatible with the investigation's focus on illumination and predicting behavior within telecommunication organizations in Egypt, making it an effective approach for evaluating leadership's effect on performance outcomes (Aliyu et al., 2014). Additionally, positivism allows for the replication of the study's findings in similar contexts, contributing to the overall validity and reliability of the research. By adopting this approach, the inquiry seeks the full understanding of how leadership behaviors can affect various spectra of organizational performance in the telecommunication field in Egypt.

In the same context, the concept of positivism improves research efficiency by relying on data to derive generale outcomes from the collected information. This approach is, in line with the study's seek regarding understanding and forecasting behavior within telecommunications companies in Egypt; thus, proving to be a method for assessing the impact of leadership on performance results (Aliyu et al., 2014). Furthermore, positivism permits the replication of the study's results in settings demonstrating its contribution to the research's credibility and

trustworthiness. By the acceptance of this position, the research seeks to offer understandings on how leadership actions may influence different facets of organizational effectiveness within the telecommunication industry.

Additionally, the current inquiry uses a deductive approach, beginning with established theories on leadership behavior, creativity, job satisfaction, and task performance, and testing them through empirical observation. Through expressing hypotheses based on existing literature, the study systematically evaluates associations between variables using data from the Egyptian telecommunications sector (Hall et al., 2023). The quantitative research design improves the study's objectivity, enabling precise statistical analysis of large contexts of research. This method rises the efficiency and reliability of the research, allowing for generalizable outcomes and the demanding testing of hypotheses through structured, data-driven approaches (Tabron and Thomas, 2023). Therefore, the targeted variables in the current study are the independent variable; Paradoxical Leadership Behavior, mediating variable: Employee Creativity and Job Satisfaction, moderator variable: Task Complexity, dependent variables: Employee Task Performance.

Therefore, the current research framework could be expressed using the following figure:

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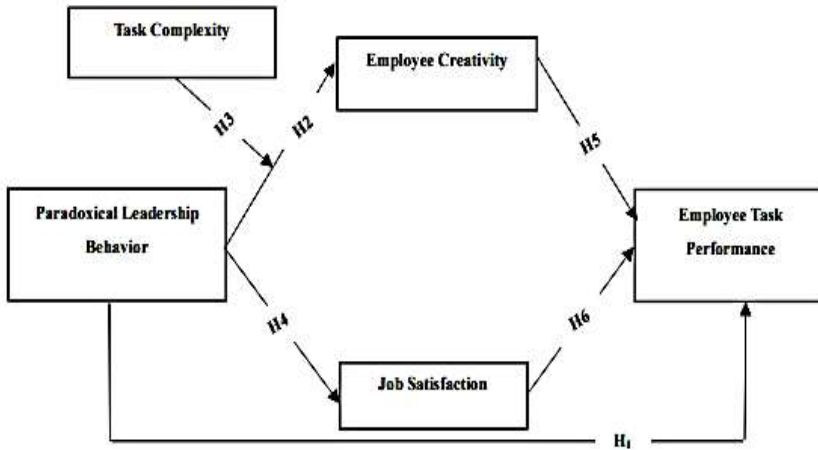


Figure 1: Research Framework

According to the previous framework, the study hypotheses can be determined as follows:

H₁: There is a significant relationship between Paradoxical Leadership Behavior and Employee Task Performance

H₂: There is a significant relationship between Paradoxical Leadership Behavior and Employee Creativity

H₃: Task Complexity moderates the relationship between Paradoxical Leadership Behavior and Employee Creativity

H₄: There is a significant relationship between Paradoxical Leadership Behavior and Job Satisfaction

H₅: There is a significant relationship between Employee Creativity and Employee Task Performance

H₆: There is a significant relationship between Job Satisfaction and Employee Task Performance

To reach clear results about the study, primary data were collected using a questionnaire distributed to a study community related to the applications on which the study variables depend, and the results were used to examine the factors associated with the relationship between the factors addressed by the analyses. Therefore, it should be emphasized that the study questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale. As a result, each necessary item has five alternative responses: one for “strongly disagree,” three for neutral, and five for strongly agree, as the Likert scale represents a systematic and quantitative method for assessing the ideas and opinions of participants in systematic studies. Moreover, by giving participants a range of options to indicate the extent of their agreement or disagreement, the five-point scale increases the accuracy and reliability of the data collected (Taherdoost, 2019).

Based on what was mentioned above regarding the variables and framework of the study, the study variables are measured by

conducting a questionnaire, which can be explained through the following.

Table 1: Research Variables Measurement

Variable	Statements	Reference
Paradoxical Leadership Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - My leaders treat everyone consistently while also recognizing individual needs. - My leaders balance focusing on their own needs with considering the needs of others. - My leaders maintain control over decisions while still giving us autonomy. - My leaders enforce work expectations but allow for some flexibility. - My leaders manage to keep both a professional distance and a sense of closeness with us. 	Akeel and Abd Elfattah (2023)
Employee Creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I complete my routine tasks in innovative and efficient ways. - I create new ideas to better meet customer needs. - I come up with and assess different solutions for unique customer challenges. - I bring new insights to familiar issues in my job. - I find creative ways to solve problems when the solution isn't obvious. - I think of resourceful ideas to improve how services are delivered to our customers. 	Soliman et al. (2024)
Job Satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I have a positive feeling about working at this company. - I feel secure in my job. - I believe that management cares about my well-being. - Overall, I think this job benefits my physical health. - My salary is satisfactory. - My talents and skills are mostly utilized at work. - I have a good relationship with my supervisors. - I feel satisfied with my job. 	Mostafa and Bisheer (2023)
Employee Task Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I complete my assigned duties effectively. - I meet the responsibilities outlined in my job description. - I perform the tasks that are expected of me. - I sometimes miss performing essential duties. - I assist absent colleagues. 	Bacha (2014)
Task Complexity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I found tasks to be simple. - I felt calm while working on my tasks. - I performed well on my tasks. - The tasks captured my interest. - I would like to do more tasks similar to the ones appointed to me. 	Shangyan et al. (2023)

To reach a comprehensive picture of the variables addressed in the current study, questionnaires were distributed to a group of 560 employees working in telecommunications institutions in Egypt. During the study, a total of 470 questionnaires were retrieved, and we find that only 465 questionnaires were valid for the next stage of analysis. The research population consists of employees working in telecommunications institutions in Egypt, with a sample size of 465 employees. Therefore, choosing this population is necessary to ensure that the research results are specific to the concerned industry, which represents a level in need of study that previous studies have not adequately addressed. The relatively large sample size enhances the statistical power of the analysis, making the results more reliable and generalizable to other fields in which the same variables can be used. Additionally, focusing on employees within a specific sector ensures that the results are contextually relevant, enhancing the overall applicability of the research conclusions (Hossan et al., 2023).

Table 2 shows the distribution of a sample of 465 participants according to gender, age, education, and experience. The percentage of male participants is 52.5% (244 participants), while female participants are 47.5% (221 participants). The largest percentage of participants fall into the 20-29 age group (26.7%), followed by the 40-49 age group (26.5%). 35.9% of participants hold a bachelor's degree, 32.5% hold a doctorate, and 31.6% are

distributed in other educational categories. 27.1% have 1-3 years of experience, and 25.6% have more than 10 years of experience.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics

Item	Frequency (Total sample = 465)	percent
Gender	Male	244
	Female	221
Age	20-29	124
	30-39	116
	40-49	123
	More than 50	102
Education	Bachelors	167
	Doctoral	151
	Other	147
Experience	1-3	126
	4-6	106
	7-9	114
	More than 10	119

Source: SPSS Output by the Researcher

Several complex statistical approaches were used to improve the rigor of the study. The reliability analysis guaranteed that variables were measured consistently, and the validity analysis proved that the instruments properly captured the desired constructs. Correlation analysis determined the degree and direction of the correlations between variables. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), a crucial tool in the study, enabled the investigation of complicated interactions, including direct and indirect impacts, as well as moderation and mediation effects. SEM's comprehensive approach makes it perfect for studying the complicated relationships between leadership behavior,

creativity, job satisfaction, task complexity, and performance (Purwanto, 2021).

6. Research Results

In the current study, data was collected using a questionnaire, with the responses measuring variables related to the study's focus. The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale to assess participants' views on the relevant variables, offering a systematic and quantitative approach to evaluating their opinions. The sample consisted of 465 employees from telecommunication organizations in Egypt.

Model Fit

The study conducted a reliability and validity mechanism for the study questionnaire to ensure the quality of the data used, Table 2 shows the results. Validity in research is determined by two key methods: the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and factor loadings. AVE should exceed 0.5 for adequate validity, while factor loadings must be at least 0.4 for each item or statement. Factor loading of all measures in Table 3 ranges from .470 to .810, confirming alignment with their respective factors, and the AVE of each construct above 0.560, indicating high variance captured by each factor. The test of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) was used to check the suitability of the data for factor analysis, with values ranging from 0 to 1. Here all values of KMO are

greater than 0.5, indicating good sampling adequacy. Cronbach's alpha was used to assess reliability, which is a measure used to assess internal reliability. The value of the alpha coefficient ranges from 0 to 1, but when it is 0.7 or higher, this indicates a high level of reliability. It is clear in Table 3 that Cronbach's α values are above 0.9, indicating excellent internal consistency. Based on the above, the data used is valid for further analysis.

Table 3: Reliability and Validity of Research Variables

Variables	KMO	AVE %	Cronbach's α	Statements	Factor Loading
Paradoxical Leadership Behavior	.911	79.574	.936	PLB1	.805
				PLB2	.796
				PLB3	.798
				PLB4	.789
				PLB5	.790
Employee Creativity	.892	74.651	.932	EC1	.810
				EC2	.768
				EC3	.738
				EC4	.769
				EC5	.705
				EC6	.689
Job Satisfaction	.935	71.513	.943	JS1	.722
				JS2	.730
				JS3	.713
				JS4	.710
				JS5	.702
				JS6	.719
				JS7	.710
				JS8	.715
Employee Task Performance	.910	80.499	.939	ETP1	.798
				ETP2	.792
				ETP3	.807
				ETP4	.802
				ETP5	.825
Task Complexity	.840	57.295	.813	TC1	.481
				TC2	.601
				TC3	.553
				TC4	.650
				TC5	.579

Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix

After verifying the validity of the data used and its suitability for analysis and hypothesis testing, a correlation analysis was conducted between the study variables as shown in Table 3, which shows that employee task performance is strongly correlated with paradoxical leadership behavior (.708), job creativity (.739), and job satisfaction (.740). No statistically significant correlation is found between employee task performance and task complexity (.069), which indicates that task complexity is not a major factor in determining employee performance. Looking at the mean of the variables, where the mean of the variables ranges from 2.76 to 2.87, this indicates that the employees' opinions tend towards the average. As for the standard deviation, it ranges between 1.034 and 1.128d, reflecting a moderate variation in the employees' opinions.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix

	Mean	Std		1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1. Paradoxical Leadership Behavior	2.8387	1.09161	r	1.000				
			Sig.	.				
			N	465				
2. Employee Creativity	2.8817	1.05096	r	.854**	1.000			
			Sig.	.000	.			
			N	465	465			
3. Job Satisfaction	2.7613	1.03443	r	.740**	.774**	1.000		
			Sig.	.000	.000	.		
			N	465	465	465	465	
4. Task Complexity	2.7613	1.03443	r	-.060-	-.069-	.033	1.000	
			Sig.	.198	.135	.476	.	
			N	465	465	465	465	
5. Employee Task Performance	2.8753	1.12836	r	.708**	.739**	.740**	.069	1.000
			Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.138	.
			N	465	465	465	465	465

Hypotheses Testing

The current study relied on the structure equation modeling through Amos to test the study hypotheses, as Figure 1 shows the measured model with $p = 0.000$, $CMIN/df = 1.534$, $RMR = 0.055$, $GFI = 0.924$, $AGFI = 0.908$, $NFI = 0.956$, $TLI = 0.982$, $RMSEA = 0.034$, and $CFI = 0.984$, the model fits the data rather well. While Table 4 shows the results of the hypothesis tests.

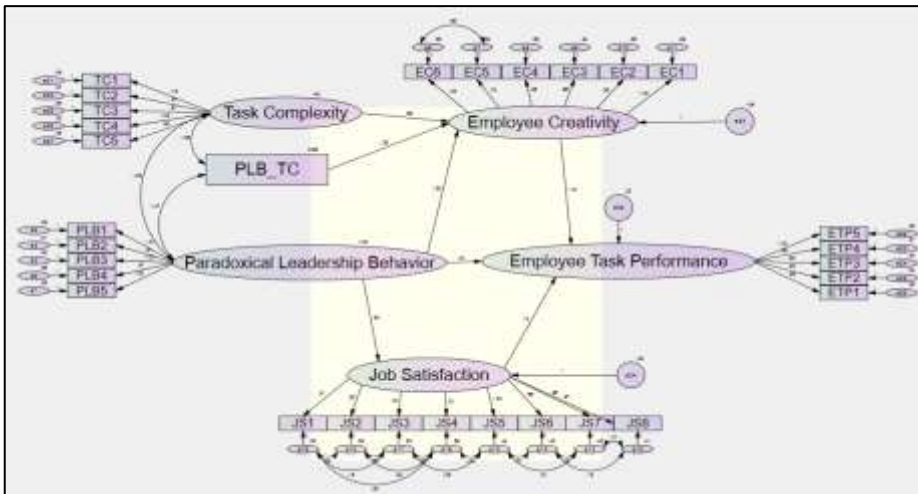


Figure 1: (SEM) Path Analysis of the Research Variables

Table 4 revealed that paradoxical leadership behavior positively impacts employee task performance as $P = .049 (<.05)$, and estimate = .396, thus supporting hypothesis 1. Also, paradoxical leadership behavior positively affects employee creativity and job satisfaction with p-values less than .05 and estimates equal to 1.525, and .844 respectively. Therefore, hypotheses 2, and 4,

are fully supported. As for the third hypothesis that tests the effect of the controlling variable task complexity on the relationship between paradoxical leadership behavior and employee creativity, it is clear that task complexity (estimate = .685, $p < .05$) has a direct and significant positive effect on employee creativity, and the combined effect of task complexity with paradoxical leadership behavior (estimate = -.294, $p < .05$) has a significant but negative effect on employee creativity. Accordingly, it is concluded that task complexity significantly moderates the effect of paradoxical leadership behavior on employee creativity. Thus, the fourth hypothesis is fully supported.

The fifth hypothesis assumes a significant relationship between employee satisfaction and employee task performance, but the hypothesis was not statistically supported because the results showed that employee creativity has no significant effect on employee task performance. While job satisfaction has a significant positive effect on employee task performance with $p < .05$, and an estimate of 0.731, these results support the sixth hypothesis. Thus, the fourth and sixth hypotheses confirm that job satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between paradoxical leadership behavior and employee task performance. In contrast, employee creativity had no mediating effect on the relationship.

Table 4: Structure Equation Modeling Results

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Hypothesis	Result
Employee Task Performance	<---	Paradoxical Leadership Behavior	.396	.201	1.967	.049	H ₁	Sig
Employee Creativity	<---	Paradoxical Leadership Behavior	1.525	.131	11.613	***	H ₂	Sig
Employee Creativity	<---	Task Complexity	.685	.204	3.362	***	H ₃	Sig
Employee Creativity	<---	PLB_TC	-.294	.070	-4.216	***		
Job Satisfaction	<---	Paradoxical Leadership Behavior	.844	.043	19.702	***	H ₄	Sig
Employee Task Performance	<---	Employee Creativity	-.188	.197	-.957	.339	H ₅	In-Sig
Employee Task Performance	<---	Job Satisfaction	.731	.094	7.783	***	H ₆	Sig

7. Discussion

This study sought to examine, using employee creativity, job satisfaction as a mediating variable, the effect of paradoxical leadership behavior on employee task performance in Egypt's telecommunications sector. Based on the analysis, it appears that there is a positive significant effect of paradoxical leadership on employee task performance. Previous studies, including Chen et al. (2021), Zhang et al. (2021), Hiller et al. (2019), and Kundi et al. (2023), agree that there is a positive relationship between

paradoxical leadership behavior and employee performance. Chen et al. (2021) focused on the effects on leaders themselves, rather than directly focusing on the impact of paradoxical leadership on employees. While Zhang et al. (2021) address organizational adaptation and identification, Hiller et al. (2019) explore how some aspects of paradoxical leadership, such as giving, can contribute to creativity, opening the way for a better understanding of the role of creativity as a mediator.

The results also suggest that paradoxical leadership behavior positively influenced employee creativity. These results are consistent with the findings of previous literature. Zhang et al. (2022) highlight that paradoxical leadership enhances creativity by evoking self-contradiction and holistic thinking. Devi (2024) also explores creativity through knowledge management practices, especially knowledge sharing, although the current research does not delve into this area. Instead, it emphasizes job satisfaction and creativity as pivotal mediators. Other studies, such as Shao et al. (2019), Younis et al. (2023), and Lin et al. (2024), explored additional psychological factors like creative self-efficacy and mindfulness. The common thread across all these works is the confirmation of a positive relationship between paradoxical leadership and creativity, though they employ different mediators and moderators. Thus, the current research adds a deeper understanding of this relationship in the field of communication organizations in

Egypt. This expands the circle of knowledge to understand how paradoxical leadership enhances creativity in specific organizational and cultural environments.

The study examined task complexity as a moderating variable in the relationship between paradoxical leadership behavior and employee creativity. It was found that task complexity has a direct positive effect on employee creativity. However, its interaction with paradoxical leadership behavior revealed a negative effect on employee creativity. Thus, the study was the first to introduce task complexity as a controlling variable in the relationship between paradoxical leadership behavior and employee creativity. While Zhang and Kwan (2018) found that task complexity enhanced the association between empowering leadership and team creativity through team learning behavior and creative effectiveness. Li and Yue (2019) showed that task complexity enhanced the positive relationship between leader and team creativity. While Men and Jia (2021) also confirmed the enhancing role of task complexity between team learning and creativity under knowledge-oriented leadership, noting that all these studies focused on team performance, while the study focused on the performance of each employee individually, which provides new insights into how paradoxical leadership behavior affects individual creativity and task performance in environments exposed to complexity, paradoxical thinking, and difficult tasks.

The study also highlighted the importance and role of paradoxical leadership behavior and its positive impact on job satisfaction, which is consistent with previous studies that explored this relationship. In the context of a climate of psychological safety, Kamil et al. (2024) examined paradoxical leadership, emphasizing its role in enhancing job crafting and expressive behavior among employees, which would lead to improved productivity and job satisfaction. While their focus was more on employee voice and productivity, the study is consistent with existing research by highlighting the positive effects of paradoxical leadership on satisfaction.

Similarly, Liu and Pak (2023) compared paradoxical leadership with servant leadership in predicting employees' psychological needs satisfaction, especially autonomy, which is closely related to job satisfaction. They found that paradoxical leadership was more effective than servant leadership in promoting autonomy needs satisfaction, supporting the current study's hypothesis that paradoxical leadership significantly affects job satisfaction. Also, Stynen and Semeijn (2023) concluded that paradoxical leadership positively impacts job satisfaction by reducing job insecurity. This finding closely parallels the current study, which also highlights the direct role of paradoxical leadership in enhancing job satisfaction.

The current study did not find any significant relationship between employee creativity and task performance, thus deviating from the results of previous studies by indicating that creativity alone does not affect task performance. This finding contradicts previous research that highlighted a positive link between employee creativity and task performance. In the weaving industry, Martini et al. (2023) found a direct link between employee competence, creativity, and improved performance. Also, Ngo et al. (2024) revealed that stress enhances performance through creativity for individuals with a high ambivalent mindset. In the same line, Amalia et al. (2024) showed that mindfulness improves performance directly and through creativity. In the role of media, Khaliq et al. (2024) found that work engagement mediates the relationship between organizational support and creativity. Thus, previous studies, regardless of the fields in which they were applied, agreed on the important role of creativity in improving task performance.

The direct relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance has been widely studied, confirming its positive effect. Nasir et al. (2011) showed that job satisfaction significantly improves task performance among Iranian employees, with gender and education being moderating factors. Nemteanu and Dabija (2021) found that job satisfaction positively affects task performance and reduces counterproductive behaviors in the Romanian workforce. In the

healthcare field, Boakye-Dankwa et al. (2017) showed that higher job satisfaction led to better patient care and fewer workers' compensation claims. Therefore, the results of the current study are consistent with previous studies, which support its hypothesis by confirming that job satisfaction has a significant positive effect on employee task performance.

Based on the results of the study, a set of theoretical and practical implications can be drawn that help improve job performance:

Theoretical Implications

The study has important theoretical constructive significance for a deeper understanding of the relationship between paradoxical leaders and employee task performance by contributing to the growing literature by highlighting the positive impact of paradoxical leadership behavior on employee task performance. It also expands on traditional leadership theories, by supporting that leaders can leverage paradoxical behaviors to enhance employee outcomes. The results also support the theoretical relationship between paradoxical leadership behavior and employee task performance, especially in the areas of creativity and job satisfaction. By demonstrating how paradoxical leadership can facilitate employee creativity and make them more satisfied, it expands the knowledge circle provided by previous studies to include the field of communication.

The study provides an understanding of the mediating role of job satisfaction and employee creativity in the relationship between paradoxical leadership behavior and task performance, and in particular, by examining how paradoxical leadership behavior increases employee creativity and job satisfaction, and thus enhances employee performance outcomes inside the job (job performance) and outside the job (employee satisfaction and creativity), the study contributes to the literature on employee satisfaction and creativity, where the majority of previous studies focused on direct effects only, and these variables were not examined together with paradoxical leadership at the organizational level.

By integrating variables such as paradoxical leadership behavior, employee creativity, job satisfaction, and task performance, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of workplace dynamics. Additionally, few studies have used task complexity as a moderator of the effect of paradoxical leadership behaviors on employee creativity. Therefore, this study addresses this shortcoming and finds that task complexity is an important moderator of employee creativity. This theoretical integration encourages researchers to consider multiple variables and their interactions when studying leadership and employee outcomes. The current study opens up avenues for further theoretical exploration of paradoxical leadership. Researchers can build on it by exploring additional frameworks and models to expand their

understanding of the impact of paradoxical leadership on organizational performance.

Practical Implications

The research results provide several practical implications that benefit organizations and leaders to improve task performance. First, organizations and work institutions need to recognize the extent of the impact of paradoxical leadership behavior as well as the constraints it imposes to confront the paradoxical demands in the work environment. Organizations are also encouraged to disseminate the positive effects of paradoxical behaviors and train leaders on them to enhance their ability to solve the problem of paradoxes effectively, as the results have shown that they lead to improved employee performance, which enhances overall work results.

The results also indicate that paradoxical leadership behavior has a positive effect on employee creativity. Therefore, organizations can use scales and tests to assess the paradoxical traits of potential leadership candidates and select appropriate supervisors accordingly. In addition, organizations can create their own leadership training programs by incorporating and disseminating instruction on paradoxical thinking. Therefore, it is important for supervisors to have the skills to apply the principles and practices of paradoxical behavior to create a work environment that is easy

and uncomplicated. This approach thus enhances employee creativity and innovation.

Given the negative role that task complexity plays on employee creativity in the presence of paradoxical leadership behavior, managers should give employees tasks that are not complex and give them the freedom to act flexibly and independently. Furthermore, instead of focusing on avoiding contradictions in the workplace, organizations should facilitate the work of tasks, whether complex, and work on explaining them smoothly, which makes complex tasks easy and allows employees to be creative and think about performing them.

Leaders should work to create a work environment that has motivating features. There are also studies that have indicated the importance of maintaining the psychological factors of the employee and creating opportunities for excellence and encouragement, which makes employees feel satisfied with their work, which motivates them to perform their tasks better.

8. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The study used employees in telecommunications institutions in Egypt to conduct the study analyses, which makes the process of generalizing the results to other sectors and industries limited. Therefore, future research and researchers should use a diverse sample to qualify it for generalization without limits or obstacles,

which provides a broader understanding of the studied relationships. Given that the study relies on the field of communications, future research can explore the impact of paradoxical leadership behavior across different sectors and industries to enhance the possibility of generalizing the results. The study relied on a questionnaire in collecting data that collects responses at a specific point in time, thus subject to a cross-sectional design. This makes it lack the ability to track and study causal relationships or observe changes over time. Researchers should conduct longitudinal studies, which helps in understanding the relationships between variables in a more comprehensive way. The study was also limited to exploring dimensions such as paradoxical leadership behavior, employee creativity, job satisfaction, and task performance. Future studies can include studying other dimensions, additional mediators and moderators. Through the results reached by the study, it is moving towards studying the positive effects of these dimensions on task performance. Future research can investigate the potential negative effects, providing a more balanced view of their implications.

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