

# Research on Paternalistic Leadership and its Influence

Yuwei Jia <sup>a</sup>, Qingquan Pan <sup>b</sup>

School of Economics and Management, Guangxi University of Science and Technology, Liuzhou  
545006, China

<sup>a</sup>1007653220@qq.com, <sup>b</sup>471192309@qq.com

**Abstract.** Through a review of the literature on paternalistic leadership, it is found that as a localized leadership style in China, the research of academic circles is still in its development stage. Based on the previous empirical research, this paper summarizes the connotation of paternalism and the effect at the individual, team and organizational levels is to enable it to maximize the effectiveness of our actual work, enable corporate leaders to give full play to the effectiveness of leadership, and continuously improve the performance and creativity of corporate employees.

**Keywords:** Paternalistic leadership; individual behavior; team creativity; organizational effectiveness.

## 1. Introduction

For more than forty years of reform and opening up, China has made world-renowned achievements in the economic field, which is closely related to the vigorous development of Chinese companies. Among them, corporate leaders have contributed to the company's survival and development in the fierce and complex market competition. They must give full play to the creativity of their employees to obtain and maintain the competitive advantage of the company. Based on the practice of Chinese organizational leadership, scholars have found that paternalistic leadership styles that are different from western leadership theories are specifically manifested in encouraging and imparting morals, and effectiveness is rooted in traditional Chinese culture. At present, scholars have done a lot of rigorous empirical research on the connotation and influence of paternalistic leadership. By grasping and researching the overall concept of paternalistic leadership and its various dimensions, this article sorts out the effect mechanism of paternalistic leadership, and enriches the localization research results of paternalistic leadership to a certain extent, which helps to broaden China's current leadership theory the study.

## 2. The Connotation of Paternalistic Leadership

Exploratory research on paternalistic leadership began in the 1960s, but its theoretical research flourished in Taiwan and overseas Chinese residences in the late 1980s. The most in-depth, widely accepted and used among them is Taiwan University scholars. The ternary theory of paternalistic leadership proposed by Boxun Zheng and others. Jingli Fan and Boxun Zheng (2000) believe that paternalistic leadership is a leadership style that reflects strict discipline and authority, fatherly benevolence, and moral integrity under the atmosphere of human rule [1]. According to Boxun Zheng et al. (2003), Authoritarian Leadership emphasizes that its authority is absolute and unacceptable, and subordinates are closely controlled, requiring subordinates to obey without reservation; Benevolent Leadership mainly refers to graceful behaviors of "individual care" and "consideration and tolerance" of subordinates, and individual comprehensive and long-term care for the well-being of subordinates; Moral Leadership emphasizes leading by example, usually showing superb personal conduct and cultivation, and can distinguish between public and private [2].

## 3. The Influence Mechanism of Paternalistic Leadership

Scholars have studied western leadership behaviors for many years, but the paternalistic leadership rooted in the development of Chinese companies is essentially different from western leadership methods in the impact on subordinates and organizations. Other leadership behaviors can

more effectively predict the effectiveness of enterprises [3] (Chaoping Li, 2007). The influence of paternalistic leadership on enterprises has been mainly empirical research from the individual, team and organizational levels.

### **3.1 The Influence Mechanism of Paternalistic Leadership on Individual Level**

Shengzhu Lin and Baiyin Yang (2013) and other surveys of Korean companies in China show that kind and moral leaders increase employee satisfaction, while authoritative leaders weaken employee satisfaction. Lirong Long et al. (2014) studied the impact of paternalistic leadership on employees' sense of alienation at work, and found that kindness and moral leadership would reduce this sense of alienation, so that employees have a higher sense of belonging to the organization, while authoritative leaders. On the contrary, the study also verified the mediating role of organizational support [4]. Hao Zhou (2014) collected 442 pairs of supervisor-subordinate duality data and refined research on the parental leadership of supervisors will have an impact on employee suggestions. He believes that in addition to communication at work, the relationship between supervisors and employees outside work will also. The effect of intermediary on paternalistic leadership on employee suggestions, the results show that the dimensions of benevolence and virtue will obviously increase the employees' suggestions, while authoritarian leadership will reduce the suggestions, and test the supervisor-employer relationship in the three styles to the behavior have played a significant mediating effect [5].

### **3.2 The Influence Mechanism of Paternalistic Leadership on Team Level**

Zhang et al. (2011) validated the effectiveness of authoritarian leadership through two variables, collective effectiveness and knowledge sharing. The study found that authoritative leadership negatively affects team creativity through these two variables, that is, they play a full mediating role [6]. Ang Gao et al. (2014) surveyed more than one hundred management teams in state-owned enterprises to explore the role of paternalistic leadership on team performance, as well as the impact of team effectiveness and leadership talents on this role. After summing up, a certain degree of kindness and moral leadership It will improve the overall performance level of the team, authoritarian leadership will hinder team performance, team effectiveness has a significant mediating effect in these three types of impact processes, and leadership will play a moderating role in this impact [7] .

### **3.3 The Influence Mechanism of Paternalistic Leadership on Organizational Level**

Xiaofeng Yin (2015) conducted two questionnaires on a total of 432 participants in machinery manufacturing enterprises in Sichuan, Chongqing and Yunnan to study the impact of paternalistic leadership on the organizational atmosphere. He proposed that to improve the effectiveness of the organization, it is necessary to improve it. The atmosphere begins, and leadership style plays a very important role in it. For example, benevolent leaders will show a positive role. Leaders will deepen the organizational culture by improving the atmosphere in the entire enterprise, which will affect the motivation and behavior of employees. Role to promote the effective operation of the entire enterprise [8]. Guoliang Yang and Haiying Wei (2012) studied the influence of paternalistic leadership on organizational innovation performance and added the moderating variable of social responsibility orientation. The results show that under normal circumstances, benevolent and moral leaders show concern for employees and high moral standing. It can have a positive effect on the psychology of employees, and the innovation of the organization can promote the innovation of the organization. Authoritarian leaders will weaken such awareness of innovation[9]. Zhengang Zhang et al. (2015) thought that knowledge sharing would have an important impact on organizational effectiveness, so they explored the influence path of knowledge sharing willingness on paternalistic leadership to organizational effectiveness. The conclusion shows that kindness and virtue leadership will increase employees' knowledge sharing willingness, thereby the enthusiasm of employees promotes organizational effectiveness, while authoritarian leadership reduces organizational effectiveness, but does not pass the path of knowledge sharing will.

## 4. Summary and Prospect

In the field of organizational behavior research, scholars have increasingly emphasized contextualization of leadership styles and cultural adaptability. Paternalistic leadership is a leader in the study of local organizational behavior in China, and has made great contributions to the accumulation of local research results. Based on the context of Chinese organization, paternalistic leadership is promoted by scholars such as Zheng Boxun. Based on previous research, this article also combs the connotation and influential effects of paternalistic leadership in order to provide reference for Chinese management practice.

Based on the current problems of local paternalistic leadership, this article proposes the following research directions: explore the relationship between benevolent leadership, moral leadership and authoritarian leadership. In the future, the relationship between the three leadership modes of benevolent leadership, moral leadership and authoritarian leadership, team performance and organizational performance can be further examined, and possible differences between the three leadership approaches. For example, whether benevolent leadership affects employee and organization performance more effectively than authoritative leadership. In addition, the interaction between benevolent, moral and authoritarian leaders needs to be further explored.

## Acknowledgements

This research has been supported by National Natural Science Foundation of China(Project Number:71862004).

## References

- [1]. Jingli Fan, Boxun Zheng. Paternalistic leadership in Chinese organizations: An analysis of cultural perspectives [J]. *Psychology Research*, 2000, 13 (1): 127-180.
- [2]. Boxun Zheng et al.. The Ternary Model of Paternalistic Leadership: Evidence from Chinese Mainland Organizations [J]. *Research in Local Psychology*, 2003, 20: 209-252.
- [3]. Chaoping Li et al.. A Comparative Study of the Relationship between Transformational Leadership, Paternalistic Leadership, PM Theory and Leader Effectiveness [J]. *Psychological Science*, 2007, 30 (6): 1477-1481.
- [4]. Lirong Long et al.. The impact of paternalistic leadership on employee job alienation under the role of sense of organizational support [J]. *Chinese Journal of Management*, 2014, (8): 1150-1157.
- [5]. Hao Zhou. The influence of paternalistic leadership on subordinates' advancement behavior: a perspective based on relationship [J]. *Journal of Sichuan University*, 2014, (4): 139 -143.
- [6]. Zhang A Y et al.. Leadership behaviors and group creativity in Chinese organizations: The role of group processes [J]. *Leadership Quarterly*, 2011, 22 (5): 851-862.
- [7]. Ang Gao et al.. Research on the Impact of Paternalistic Leadership on Team Work Performance: The Potential Moderating Role of Leadership [J]. *Science of Science and Technology Management*, 2014, 35 (1): 100-108 .
- [8]. Xiaofeng Yin. Research on the influence of paternalistic leadership style on corporate organizational atmosphere [J]. *Chongqing and World*, 2015, (4): 1-5.
- [9]. Guoliang Yang, Haiying Wei. The Impact of Paternalistic Leadership on Organizational Innovation Performance [J]. *Economic and Management Research*, 2012, (7): 91-100.