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The Mediating Effect of Occupational Stress between Paradoxical Leader and Compulsory Citizenship Behaviour

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Abstract: The study aims to develop a thorough understanding how paradoxical leadership influences compulsory organizational citizenship behaviour. By delving into the potential effects of leaders demonstrating paradoxical behaviours on employees' engagement in compulsory organizational citizenship behaviour. The study aims to uncover whether paradoxical leadership has a direct influence on employee's behaviour. The data were collected by a survey passed to 300 working staff at two Petroleum Refineries located in Homs and Baniyas, Syria. A random sampling technique was applied. 275 questionnaires were analysed, yielding a response rate of 92%. The hypotheses were tested using a statistical technique called partial least squares structural equation modelling. The results indicated that paradoxical leaders' behaviour can influence employees' compulsory organizational citizenship behaviour. The study also found that occupational stress acts as a bridge between paradoxical leadership and compulsory organizational citizenship behaviour. In other words, paradoxical leadership can lead to increased occupational stress, which in turn, can compel employees to engage in compulsory organizational citizenship behaviour. The results of this study can provide useful information for organizational leaders, human resource professionals and scholars seeking to optimize leadership practices and cultivate a more productive and harmonious work environment.

Keywords: *Paradoxical leadership, Compulsory behaviour, Occupational stress, Organizational citizenship, Compulsory organizational citizenship behaviour.*

Introduction

Contemporary business environment places productivity as an essential issue in its operations. Therefore, for executives to accomplish an utmost job performance, it is required of them to concentrate on two linked characteristics of the worker's job span. The customary job description, that describes the employee's official relationship with his firm. In addition to a new aspect to the job that comprises of informal voluntary behaviours related to worker's own choice and judgment (Xu et al., 2020).

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Occupational life came to be the topic of abundant studies in the field of management in organizations. Mainly, studies have designated that organizations benefit when their personnel willingly contribute to their jobs beyond the formal requirements of their jobs (Al Balushi et al., 2022; Jufrizen & Sari, 2023; Khusanovam et al., 2021). This unrestricted conduct, neither officially recognized nor compensated, is known as organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB).

At the present times, the topic of OCB has produced an extensive concern in the academic and organization fields. OCB is the voluntarily engaging behaviour that encourage the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization nonetheless not openly rewarded by the organization (Kang & Hwang, 2023; Massoudi et al., 2020). OCB relays on the effort of employees' engagement in additional work for their organization`s interest. According to Alshaabani et al. (2021) employees show this type of behaviour, as it is noted by social exchange theory as an individual courtesy for satisfaction at work. Thus, more satisfied people tend to accomplish OCB.

OCB has a considerable value in enhancing the interpersonal relationships between organizations, advancing performance and structural consistency (He et al., 2020) . Nevertheless, Cheema et al. (2020) indicated that these expectations might pressure the workforces to establish compulsory organizational citizenship behaviour (COCB) in their organizations to produce a respectable image. Therefore, personnel may not willingly do some organizational actions. Hung et al. (2022) calls this involuntary OCB as compulsory OCB. Studying COCB aids us to appreciate OCB more profoundly. COCB reveals the paradox between employees' behaviours and attitudes, although worker's behaviour and attitudes are intensely affected by the organizational leadership style (Graves & Sarkis, 2018). Asgari et al. (2020) questioned whether staff's adoption of COCB has any influence on leadership style.

A study by Jabeen & Ali (2022) concluded that positive leadership style leads to the adoption of OCB; and negative leadership style leads employees to adopting COCB. Chénard-Poirier et al. (2021) indicated that destructive leadership is a major indicator of subordinates' stress, thus forcing personnel to adopt COCB. Zhang et al. (2021) introduced a new leadership topic, they called it contradictive or more commonly known as Paradoxical leadership (PL) style. PL is characterized by an apparently competing, yet consistent behaviours to encounter organizational and staff demands instantaneously (Zhang et al., 2021). This new and interesting topic motivated the researcher to inspect the effect of PL on COCB by applying Attribution Theory (Fritz Heider 1958). In addition to designed framework used to support and clarify why organizational personnel adopt COCB.

Occupational stress (OS) is known as the damaging response that employees have to tolerate because of the continuous demands placed on them while working (Nappo, 2020). According to Ornek & Esin (2020) job-related stress may cause physical and mental illness. The anxiety created at the job is the outcome of an exposure to a variety of occupational stressors that seem to appear when individuals try to accomplish their tasks or other practices of stress linked to their work, and encountering anxiety and concerns in this effort.

Occupational stress is referred to the particular emotional state of any condition beyond individual mental and physical capacity (Peng & Potipiroon, 2022). According to Meng et al. (2021) contradictory leadership focus on worker expectation that leads to a greater work stress. Wang et al. (2019) stated that once workers observe job pressure from their leaders, with the intention to meet their expectations, they adopt COCB to evade being reprimanded by the organization.

Consequently, the author will examine the impact of PL on COCB with occupational stress as a mediator.

This article aims to investigate the effect of PL behaviour in relation to employees COCB. In addition, this article will examine the potential mediating effect of occupational stress on PL and COCB.

The importance of this study stems from the following notions: Understanding leadership complexity by navigating contradictory elements such as stability and change, control and empowerment. Also, enhancing the understanding of the complex nature of leadership in contemporary organizations. Similarly, identifying whether and how this style influences organizational outcomes, including performance, innovation, and employee satisfaction. In addition to organizational effectiveness by recognising whether this style influences organizational outcomes, employees' engagement, and distinguishing between voluntary and obligatory behaviours, providing a nuanced perspective on employee contributions. Finally, the mediating role of occupational stress adds depth to the understanding of the relationships between leadership styles, employee stress, and behaviour. This knowledge can inform interventions to manage occupational stress in the workplace.

In a briefing by Syria's petroleum minister on February 2022 showed that since the onset of the civil war over a decade ago, Syria has suffered losses exceeding $100 billion. (Argus, 2022), and since oil and gas are the main public revenue for the Syrian government, the author was motivated by the need to address industry-specific challenges, optimize resource management, enhance safety and compliance, and foster resilient and adaptive leadership practices in the face of dynamic environments. Also, providing valuable insights for organizational leaders and policymakers striving to ensure the sustainable and ethical operation of the oil industry in Syria.

This article contributes to expose the unwanted treatment of PL on employee behaviour. This new approach is beyond what is provided in prior literature. Also, the introduction of occupational stress, reveals the instrument of action of the topic studied, which delivers a new view for considering the instruments applied for workers embracing COCB.

The results of this article contribute to both theory and practice. The author applied a contradictory point of view to inspect leader behaviour. Few researchers have tried to define the area of leader's behaviour in regard to contradictions, especially in managing public sector employees in Syria. In this article, the author introduces a conceptualization of contradictory or PL style that might create new tips in leadership studies. In addition, the author used a practical approach to study the impact of PL on COCB.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Compulsory Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

According to Yan et al. (2020) COCB is often argued as contrary to organizational citizenship behaviour. Employees perceive compulsory citizenship behaviour as a form of concessionary action performed under pressure imposed by their organizations. It is the unintentional feeling of employee's external stress caused by a manager, co-worker, or the environment (Loi et al., 2020). Therefore, employees exhibit COCB rather than organizational citizen behaviour to satisfy informal assignments beyond the formal work duties (Xue et al., 2022). LaPonsie & Adam (2023) believe that COCB drives beyond the responsibilities specified by the firm when the employee aims to satisfy his boss's intentions and evade reprimand. Once workers observe kindness from the leaders, they reply by improving their performance (Khan et al., 2020). Pak et al. (2022)

showed that COCB will carry more occupational weight and pressure on firm's personnel. Consequently, decrease contentment and performance and encourage employees to quit the organization (Hung & Huy, 2023). The influence of COCB on organizations is often negative. The majority of previous studies of COCB were dedicated to undesirable leadership styles, such as destructive leadership (Chénard-Poirier et al., 2021; Dolce et al., 2020). On the other hand, positive leadership style impact on COCB has yet to be examined.

Paradoxical Leadership and Compulsory Behaviour

Compulsory behaviour is often compared with organizational citizenship behaviour. The presence of this behaviour in the organization can have dire consequences for the firm and employees alike (He et al., 2022). He et al. (2020) proposed that the voluntary nature of behaviours is unconnected to the official requirement of the job and lack any relation to the reward system. On the other hand, COCB echoes the inconsistency between worker's behaviours, and employees' behaviours are severely affected by the style of leadership they follow (Onestiet 2023). Previous articles have indicated that destructive leadership is considered the key feature for workers to espouse COCB (He et al., 2020).

According to Zhang et al. (2021) PL is defined by the capacity to demonstrate seemingly opposing but interrelated behaviours, effectively balancing structural requirements with follower needs consistently over time. The core concept of paradoxical leadership centre around leaders adopting a combination of behaviours that are both accepted and in competition with each other, with the aim of reconciling the inherent contradictions and aligning the overarching purpose (Zhang et al., 2021). As a result, the author suggests that paradoxical leaders do have an admiration to his subordinates' opinion and inspire them to speak their opinion. According to Massoudi & Hamdi (2019) Leadership has a positive as well as a negative sides. Paradoxical leadership is no exception, these leaders do have both the negative and positive style of leadership. Previous research by Yang et al. (2021) confirmed that PL can enhance work performance. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2021) found that paradoxical leadership positively impacts employees' innovative work performance, highlighting its beneficial influence on employees' work behaviour. Additionally, a study conducted by Zang et al. in 2021, which surveyed employees and their supervisors in 10 Chinese companies, including a petroleum corporation, demonstrated an encouraging relationship between PL and workers' job performance. Furthermore, Massoudi (2022) investigated managers and employees across various enterprises in China and concluded that paradoxical leadership positively affects employees' innovative behaviour.

Yet, other researches have revealed that this type of leader has a negative influence on worker's behaviour (Li et al., 2020; Meng et al., 2021; Xue et al., 2020). Li et al. (2020) showed PL is related with employees' prohibitive voice. Chughtai (2023) stated that employees prohibitive voice terminates some responsibilities and organizational procedures, it eventually questions the existing state of affairs of paradoxical leaders. A study by Shao et al. (2019) concluded that PL convey pressure to personnel, sever stress can decrease worker productivity. In a study by Graham & Chen (2020) about attribution theory they indicated that individuals' approaches towards an action are impacted by attribution. When workers believe that paradoxical leadership behaviour is contrary to their benefit and harm their interests, they will adopt COCB. Finally, A study of natural gas industry in China by Meng et al. (2021) concluded a significant effect of PL on employee's COCB. Based on the above, the author postulates the following hypothesis:

H_1: The paradoxical leadership style has a significant impact on employees' adoption of COCB

Occupational Stress as a Mediator

Occupational stress is the exposure to a variety of job stressors, it arises when workers try to accomplish their tasks, responsibilities or other types of situations, experiencing trouble, tension, anxiety when faced with these issues (Maksymenko et al., 2021). Occupational stress signifies the individual emotional state of any condition beyond the worker's psychological and physiological ability (Yi et al., 2022). Scientific research has confirmed that occupational stress is widespread problem at work, causing negative effect in individual's morale, health, and output (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2020). A persistent reason is incompetent leadership. Leadership itself is viewed as a likely basis of stress (Meng et al., 2021). Since organizational leadership has unconditional authority in their firms, the workforces are likely to be affected by the leader's behaviour (Choi et al., 2020). According to Hofstede value dimensions, Syrian people are ranked high in power distance (Hofstede Insight, 2020). With a high score of 80, Syria is a hierarchical society. This indicates that Syrians consent to organizational hierarchy. Hierarchy in an organization is characterized by inequalities, centralization, and autocratic leadership (Almutairi et al., 2020). Wang et al. (2019) indicated These inequality treatments in business may lead to occupational stress.

In comparison to other leadership styles, paradoxical leaders will inspire staff work hard and reach maximum potential. Consequently, leaders' expectations of staff may generate an increase sense of occupational stress. According to Attribution theory, Fritz Heider stressed that apparent factors, rather than actual ones, inspire such behaviour. Henceforth, if employees recognize that their success results from their skills and hard work, their behaviour is likely to differ from how they would act if they thought their achievements were a matter of luck (Nagy et al., 2023). When workers acknowledge that leaders' expectations and care for workers come from the leadership skill not from workers' achievement, this creates attribution error which leads to bigger occupational stress. A study by Akeel & ElFattah (2023) showed a highly significant statistically negative correlation between paradoxical leadership perception and total burnout among staff. Also, a study by Fürstenberg et al. (2023) showed a positive influence between PL and employees' emotional exhaustion, sleep disorder, and psychological withdrawal. Other study by Volk et al. (2022) included that psychological factors such as occupational stress and burnout can be affected by PL behaviour. However, the debate of positive versus negative outcomes of paradoxical behaviour remains scarce (Boemelburg et al., 2023). Based on the above discussion, the author postulates the following hypotheses:

H_2: Applying a Paradoxical leadership style generates a notable and significant impact on increasing occupational stress by employees.

When employees experience occupational stress within their organization, they tend to reduce their work independence as a coping mechanism to manage the stress (Jukic et al., 2020). Additionally, in order to avoid disrupting the tasks assigned by their superiors and meet their expectations, employees may accept challenging assignments despite the difficulties involved, which often leads to increased work stress. Consequently, employees adapt to such an environment by becoming passive and exhibiting a lack of motivation in fulfilling their work duties (Yi et al., 2022). In an effort to preserve their job security, employees typically regulate their emotions and feelings to align with the preferences of their leaders (Hirschi & Koen, 2021). Additionally, exhibiting consistent conduct in accordance with organizational requirements is important. These behaviours significantly undermine employees' autonomy. These inadvertent occupational behaviours are

performed to align with the intentions of leaders and evade punishment, rather than reflecting the original intentions of the employees, who tend to conform to the existing state when experiencing work-related stress and demonstrate increased obligatory organizational compliance (Zheng et al., 2020). Given the above, the author proposes the following hypothesis.:

H_3: Employees experiencing occupational stress plays a significant role in the adoption of COCB.

A study conducted by Niu et al. (2022) revealed that leaders' expectations of their staff may contribute to an increased sense of occupational stress. This heightened stress may make employees feel disrespected and perceive themselves as "outsiders," ultimately dampening their enthusiasm for work. Consequently, employees may reduce or cease engaging in out-of-role behaviours that are beneficial to the organization's development, potentially leading to compulsive behaviour. Literature studies indicate that different leadership styles significantly impact employees' well-being. Inclusive, benevolent, dual, humble, and authentic leadership have all been recognized for their roles in promoting employee well-being (Chen et al., 2020; Huang, 2022; Li et al., 2020).

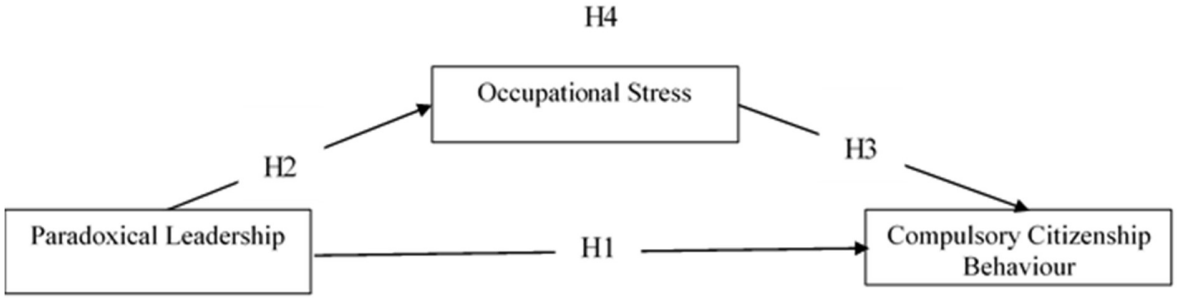
Julmi (2021) argues that paradoxical leadership, which treats subordinates equally and considers individual characteristics, fosters a sense of respect and care among employees. This approach creates a positive working atmosphere and stimulates employees' cooperative behaviours. Conversely, Bashir (2021) highlights the negative aspects of paradoxical leadership, suggesting that it may lead to interpersonal conflict and negative outcomes, including occupational stress and Counterproductive Organizational Citizenship Behaviours (COCB).

Occupational stress emerges as a core indicator of the relationship between employees and the organization, reflecting employees' cognitive processes and motivational tendencies in engaging in COCB (Li et al., 2020). Given those arguments, the author propose that occupational stress could function as sequential mediators between PL and COCB.

H_4 Occupational stress mediates the relation between PL and COCB.

Accordingly, in Figure 1, this study outlines a proposed model that explores the relationship between PL and COCB.

Figure 1: Conceptual Model



Methodology

This study explored the mediating role of of occupational stress between PL and employees' COCB. The author utilized a quantitative research method and administered a questionnaire to employees at two Petroleum Refineries in Homs and Baniyas, Syria. The sampling technique employed was random, resulting in 275 valid questionnaires being analysed, representing a response rate of 92%. Ensuring a high response rate for a questionnaire was crucial to obtaining reliable and representative data for research purposes and to increases the validity and generalizability of the study's findings.

The questionnaire applied basic Arabic language which was easy to understand and engaging by respondents, with clear instructions, relevant and interesting to the target audience. A Pilot test of the questionnaire was performed with a group of 15 employees to identify any issues with clarity, wording, or functionality. This helped the author to refine the questionnaire before sending it to the larger audience.

The questionnaire consisted of four sections, namely demographics information, paradoxical leadership, occupational stress, and organizational citizenship behavior. With the intention of ensuring the credibility of the scales, the author utilized Likert's 5-point to permit respondents to express the degree of agreement or disagreement with a specific statement. To ensur the appropriateness of the questionnaire, back-translation methods were applied (all questionnaires were translated to Arabic) to safeguard the accuracy of the survey.

The variable PL was measured by 6 items adapted and modified from Yuan et al. (2023). To assess OS, the author borrowed a scale developed by Jukic et al. (2020). For the COCB, the author used a modified scale by Meng et al. (2021).

In order to verify the hypothesis, the author adopted Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) as the research methodology. As noted by Hair et al. (2019), PLS-SEM has emerged as a widely recognized technique for examining intricate relationships between observed and latent variables. The academic and scholarly communities acknowledge several benefits associated with PLS-SEM, including its capacity to estimate intricate models and its adaptability in terms of data requirements and measurement specifications. In this study, the author chose PLS-SEM's because of its ability to handle complex models with many variables makes it suitable for capturing these intricate relationships. Another motive is, the relatively small sample size, as PLS-SEM requires fewer observations compared to other SEM techniques, making it ideal for situations where collecting a large dataset might be challenging. Finally, the capability of PLS-SEM in conducting mediation analysis. In this study, PLS-SEM helped the author to assess the direct and indirect effects of PL on COCB through OS mediation. This aligns with the research objective of understanding the mediating role of work stress.

Demographic Variables

Table 1: Sample demographics.

Items	Frequency (N=275)	(%)
Gender		
Male	143	52.0
Female	132	48.0
Age		
20-29	81	29.5
30-39	112	70.7
40-49	66	24.0

Over 50 years	16	2.2
Marital Status		
Single	97	35.3
Married	178	64.7
Education		
Primary School	47	17.1
High School	79	28.7
Associate Degree	121	44.0
Bachelor Degree	24	8.8
Master Degree	4	1.4
Experience		
1-5 years	75	27.2
6-10 years	99	36.0
11-20 years	68	24.7
More than 20 years	33	12.1

Table 1 exemplifies the characteristics of the respondents. The survey results showed that out of 275 respondents, 143 were males and 132 were females. In regard to age groups. The demographics showed that 29.5% population belonged to the 20-29 age group, 70.7% were of 30-39 age, 24.0% belonged to the 40-49 age and the remaining 2.2% for respondents over 50 years of age. Likewise, the study also recorded the marital and educational status of the respondents. For the marital status 64.7% of respondents were married including while the remaining 35.3% were single. The results revealed that out of 275 responses, the majority 44.0% had an associate degree in petroleum, 28.7% had a high school diploma, 17.1% had a primary school education. Only 9% had bachelor degree and only 1.4% had a master degree. Finally, work experience showed that 36% have experience between 6-10 years, 27.2 have less than 6 years of experience, 24.7% of respondents have 11-20 of work experience and 12.1% have more than 20 years of work experience. Altogether, it is to be noted that this study used the data for academic purposes only. Throughout the analysis process, strict measures were taken to safeguard the confidentiality of the candidates, guaranteeing that no personal information was shared with any third party.

Results and Discussion

Measurement Model

The initial phase of the analysis involved inspecting the outer loadings. As per Hair et al. (2019), each item loading should ideally be 0.70 or higher. Table 2 demonstrates that all item loadings surpassed 0.70, ranging from 0.919 for OS to 0.806 for COCB, and 0.856 for PL. The subsequent phase focused on testing internal consistency and reliability. Typically, reliability is assessed through Cronbach's alpha (CA) and composite reliability (CR). According to Sarstedt et al. (2022), both CR and CA ought to exceed 0.70. As obtained in Table 2, the CR and CA score indicated high internal consistency, surpassing the 0.70 threshold.

Table 2: Reliability and Validity

Constructs	Items	Outer Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Occupational Stress (OS)	OS1	0.921	0.903	0.938	0.839
	OS2	0.932			
	OS3	0.898			
	OS4	0.894			
	OS5	0.921			
	OS6	0.949			
Organizational Citizen Behavior (OCB)	OCB7	0.795	0.889	0.914	0.649
	OCB8	0.795			
	OCB9	0.721			
	OCB10	0.822			
	OCB11	0.814			
	OCB12	0.892			
Paradoxical Leadership (PL)	PL13	0.834	0.913	0.945	0.756
	PL14	0.876			
	PL15	0.845			
	PL16	0.798			
	PL17	0.872			
	PL18	0.912			

The third phase of the analysis involved measuring the convergent validity for each construct. Convergent validity is assessed by the average variance extracted (AVE). Hair et al. (2019) suggest that the AVE score should be 0.5 or higher. The results in Table 2 indicated that all AVE scores surpassed 0.5, suggesting no irregularities in the convergent validity model. The fourth phase of the study focused on assessing discriminant validity. Discriminant validity, as defined by Hair et al. (2019), refers to the extent to which a variable in the structural model is distinct from other variables. This step can be measured using two criteria: the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio and the Fornell-Larcker criterion.

Discriminant validity was assessed using the correlations (HTMT) criterion. All HTMT values were below 0.90, indicating that the constructs were sufficiently distinct from each other. (Hair et al., 2019), confirming no discriminant validity issues. The model exhibited satisfactory validity, reliability, and convergent validity, allowing for the analysis of the structural model.

Table 3: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	Op	COCB	PL
Occupational Stress			
Organizational Behavior	0.737		
Paradoxical Leadership	0.624	0.698	

The Structural Model

According to Hair et al. (2019), bootstrapping with 5000 subsamples was employed to compute the standard errors of the estimations and test the hypotheses of the proposed model. To assess the model's predictive power, the coefficient of determination (R^2) was evaluated. R^2 measures the variance explained in the endogenous variable by the exogenous variables. Purwanto (2021) suggested that R^2 values below 0.19 indicate a weak effect, values between 0.19 and 0.33 indicate a moderate effect, and values above 0.67 indicate a strong effect. As indicated in Table 4, the OS and OCB R^2 values were 0.348 and 0.569, respectively, indicating a moderate effect size. Subsequently, the predictive relevance of the structural model was assessed through the Q^2 value. The blindfolding procedure was used to calculate the Q^2 value, which was found to be 0.335, exceeding the zero threshold (Hair and Alamer, 2022).

Table 4: Evaluation of R^2 and Q^2

	R^2	R^2 Adjusted	Q^2
Occupational Stress	0.348	0.343	0.272
Organizational Behavior	0.569	0.544	0.335

To empirically test the hypothesis of this study, the author measured the direct and indirect effects of the proposed model. The results of this empirical analysis are presented in Table 5. The findings reveal that paradoxical leadership (PL) exerts a significantly positive influence on employees' occupational stress (OS), as evidenced by a *p*-value of $0.00 < 0.05$ and *t*-values of $9.612 > 1.96$. Consequently, H_1 is confirmed. Additionally, the results presented in Table 5 demonstrate that paradoxical leadership (PL) significantly affects compulsory organizational citizen behaviour (COCB), with a p-value of $0.00 < 0.05$ and *t*-values of $10.749 > 1.96$. Hence, H_2 is affirmed. Similarly, the outcomes displayed in Table 5 indicate that occupational stress (OS) has a significant impact on COCB among employees in refineries. Since the p-value is less than 0.05 and the t-value exceeds 1.96, hypothesis H3 is supported. Additionally, the indirect effect analysis confirms a significant relationship between PL and COCB mediated by OS. Therefore, H_4 was confirmed.

Table 5: Total Effects

Proposed Path	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	*T* Statistics	*P* Values	Decision

PL → OS	0.589	0.588	0.061	9.612	0.000	Supported
PL → COCB	0.647	0.649	0.062	10.749	0.000	Supported
OS → COCB	0.451	0.451	0.081	5.821	0.000	Supported
Specific Indirect Effects						
PL → OS → COCB	0.266	0.265	0.055	4.921	0.000	Supported

Discussion

The analysis phase of this study has been concluded, and as a result, the objectives of this study have been achieved. Occupational stress does mediate the relation between paradoxical leadership and compulsory citizenship behaviour. The primary hypothesis tested the influence PL on COCB was supported. PL might create a work environment where employees experience high levels of stress due to the conflicting expectations and behaviours exhibited by their leaders. Thus, PL behaviour could then lead employees to engage in COCB as a way to cope with the stress or as a response to the demands placed on them. The finding is similar to Meng et al. (2021) who found that paradoxical leaders positively impact COCB. This indicates a potentially serious long-term negative impact on the organization. On the other hand, a previous literature by Yang et al. (2021) presented a contrasts result suggesting a positive association between PL and employee/team performance.

The second hypothesis also has been supported, indicating that PL has a significant influence on OS. When employees sense organizational pressure, they tend to diminish their work autonomy as a coping mechanism for dealing with perceived stress in the workplace. This adjustment is driven by a desire to adhere to assigned tasks and meet the elevated expectations set by leaders. Consequently, employees may find themselves accepting tasks even when challenging, resulting in heightened work pressure. To cope with this challenging situation, employees may respond by reducing their work effort or engaging in passive resistance. This result was aligned with previous research by (Meng et al., 2021; Potipiroon & Faerman, 2020). The findings suggest that the behaviour of a paradoxical leader can potentially result in emotional exhaustion among employees, thereby increasing the turnover rate within companies. Hypothesis three considered the impact of OS on COCB. The finding presented a significant effect between the two variables. Certainly, employees experiencing OS can play a significant role in the adoption of COCB. COCB can be complex and context-dependent. Employees experiencing high levels of occupational stress may be more inclined to conform to organizational expectations and rules. OS, particularly stress related to job insecurity, can motivate employees to engage in COCB to secure their positions within the organization. This result corresponds with (He et al., 2022; Liang, 2022; Meng et al., 2021). It's worth noting that while OS may play a role in the adoption of COCB, there are other factors at play, including organizational culture, leadership, and individual motivations.

Hypothesis 4 was supported, confirming the mediating role of OS in the relationship between PL and COCB. However, this relationship is complex and influenced by various factors. The findings of this hypothesis align with (Meng et al., 2021; Shao et al., 2019). Since PL is characterized by heightened attention and elevated expectations during organizational processes, it has inadvertently escalated the workload for employees. To meet the lofty expectations set by leaders,

employees often undertake tasks beyond their designated responsibilities, even if they are unwilling to do so. Consequently, this willingness to go beyond their assigned duties may lead to an increased perception of work pressure among employees. This shows that paradoxical leadership may promote corporate social responsibility and employee creativity but on the other hand, it may create a hostile environment of employees also.

Conclusions

This article investigates the impact of PL on COCB in two Syrian enterprises. The objective is to understand how PL influences COCB and explore the contextual factors that mediate this relationship, specifically focusing on occupational stress. A cross-level structural model, informed by attribution theory, was developed to analyze these dynamics. The empirical analysis involved 275 employees from two governmental institutions in Syria, and the findings demonstrated a substantial relationship between PL and COCB. Additionally, the study found that occupational stress mediates the relationship between PL and COCB.

Limitations and Future Directions

While this study provides practical and meaningful conclusions, it is important to acknowledge several technical and practical limitations. Firstly, the reliance on self-reporting through questionnaires may introduce bias and potential homogeneity in responses. To enhance future research, alternative methods for collecting more diverse and comprehensive questionnaire data could be considered. Secondly, the sample data was obtained from only two public companies in Syria, which may restrict the generalizability of the study findings. Increasing the diversity of the sample sources in future research would enhance the external validity of the study results. Thirdly, this article solely focuses on individual-level research variables. To expand the scope of paradoxical leadership research, future articles could explore the impact of organizational-level PL on COCB by constructing a research model. Lastly, although occupational stress is identified as a mediating factor between PL and COCB, there could be other unexplored mediating variables. Future research can delve into the mediating role of various factors, such as psychological ownership, to further understand the relationship between PL and COCB.

Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the broader understanding of Weiner's attribution theory (1986) and its application in elucidating the relationship between the variables under investigation. The outcomes underscore the significance of these variables in organizational functioning. Paradoxical leadership, as a positive leadership style, has emerged as a novel and compelling topic of interest for both theoretical and practical circles within the business sector. This article affirms that PL does not always lead to positive employee actions but plays a crucial role in promoting employees' COCB. The study, conducted within the Middle Eastern context, demonstrates the applicability of fostering compulsory organizational citizenship. Moreover, this article adds another valuable contribution to the existing body of research on paradoxical leadership and offers a meaningful exploration for advancing the theory of PL in the Arab world.

Practical Implications

This study underscores the significance of leadership style within organizations and its influence on employees' attitudes and behaviors. The empirical testing reveals that paradoxical leadership can motivate employees to engage in COCB, which ultimately has a detrimental effect on organizational growth and development. Consequently, leaders must be mindful of the potential negative consequences associated with their leadership style. Through effective communication,

minimizing attribution errors among employees, and supporting the smooth functioning of the organization, leaders can mitigate the adverse effects of paradoxical leadership. Additionally, occupational stress serves as an indicator for staffs to exhibit COCB. Therefore, by reducing employees' occupational stress levels during their work, organizations can proactively prevent the occurrence of COCB.

Finally, for the petroleum industry the author recommends the following points: Implementing a leadership training programs that focus on equipping leaders in the petroleum industry with skills to manage paradoxes effectively. This includes strategies for setting realistic expectations and maintaining a balance between high standards and employee well-being. Also, Development and promotion of stress management initiatives within the organization. Such as counseling services, workshops, and wellness programs to help employees cope with occupational stress. In addition to Fostering an open and transparent communication channels between leaders and employees. By ensuring that expectations are communicated clearly, and there is a platform for employees to express concerns or negotiate workload when necessary. This can help in reducing ambiguity and stress associated with paradoxical leadership. Lastly, fostering a culture that values employee well-being and recognizes the importance of balancing high expectations with a supportive work environment. A positive organizational culture can contribute to reducing stress and enhancing employee commitment to organizational citizenship behaviors.

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