

## **Leaders' Personality and Group Effectiveness: The Role of Paradoxical Leadership and Trait Activation of Groups' Psychological Capital**

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### **Abstract**

The current study attempts to integrate recent theories on leaders' personality and effectiveness with paradoxical leader behavior (PLB) theory in people management. More specifically, we examined the role of PLB as an underlying explanatory mechanism between personality traits and leaders' group effectiveness relationship. For this purpose, data were collected from organizations in Pakistan comprising 356 employees working in 84 teams and their respective leaders. Multilevel path analyses provided reasonably good support for our hypotheses. More specifically, the results of the current study showed that extraversion and openness to experience positively affect leaders' group effectiveness via PLB. On the other hand, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism harm leaders' group effectiveness via PLB. Moreover, groups' psychological capital was found to play a key role in activating leaders' personality traits such that the positive relationship between openness to experience and group effectiveness via PLB is stronger. In contrast, the negative relationship between agreeableness, conscientiousness, and group effectiveness via PLB is weaker when groups' psychological capital is high than when it is low. Both practical and theoretical implications of this perspective are discussed.

**Keywords:** Paradoxical Leader Behavior, Personality, Group effectiveness, Groups Psychological Capital

## Introduction

Research on leadership started with the trait paradigm (Derue et al., 2011), where traits are defined as habitual patterns of behaviors, emotions, and thoughts (Allport, 1927). Several researchers have demonstrated that differences in managers' personality traits reflect leaders' effectiveness in group performance (Judge et al., 2002; Aronson et al., 2006). However, considering that leadership is a complex pattern of behaviors, most recently, there has been greater emphasis on integrating leader traits and behaviors into a single framework while assessing leadership effectiveness (Zaccaro, 2007; Tett et al., 2013). This idea is under Kanfer's (1990) distal-proximal motivation framework, which suggests that leaders' personality traits influence group performance distally through more proximal motivational behaviors (Cavazotte et al., 2012; Ng et al., 2008).

The current study's primary motivation is to extend the existing literature by exploring paradoxical leader behaviors (PLB) as a proximal mechanism and group PsyCap as a boundary condition about leaders' personality and group effectiveness relationship. Many task- versus people-oriented leadership behaviors have been identified in literature (McCleskey, 2014); more recently, paradoxical approaches towards managing people have been stressed that refers to leaders' role in maintaining balance and deploying "both-and" strategy towards task and relational orientation instead of "either-or" strategy while managing people. PLB has extensively been linked with favorable individual-level outcomes in literature (Yang et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2015); however, not many studies have considered the role of PLB in explaining group effectiveness. Thus, theorizing based on social identity theory, we consider the role of PLB to explain the link between leader personality and group effectiveness, thus extending the line of multilevel research to the field of paradoxical leaders' behaviors. This may have critical implications for organizational interventions concerning ensuring group effectiveness.

Other than examining PLB as the link between trait-leadership effectiveness at the group level, the current study also attempts to advance a contingency framework to study such a relationship. This is consistent with past literature that has asserted the importance of identifying those situations that may either activate or suppress the expression of a leader's personality traits into respective leadership behaviors and related effectiveness, yet surprisingly, this premise has received little attention (Day, 2014; De Hoogh et al., 2005). Thus, theorizing based on trait activation theory, which suggests that personality traits need trait-relevant situations for their activation (Tett et al., 2013), we consider the role of groups' PsyCap in constraining or eliciting leader trait-relevant behaviors. Considering that paradoxical leadership involves apparently complex, conflicting, or inconsistent behaviors (Shao et al., 2019) and leaders may be

able to express their trait-relevant behaviors only when they are compatible with their followers' behavioral orientations (de Jong & Curseu, 2016; Bono et al., 2012), thus, theorizing on trait activation theory, it is suggested that leaders' group members shared PsyCap that characterizes group members collective ability to deal with paradoxical or conflicting situations at work (Dawkins et al., 2018), could be critical for accentuating leaders' paradoxical orientations. Such consideration also aligns with recent research suggestions about considering the interactionist perspective of leader-group characteristics for activating leaders' trait-relevant behaviors (Luria et al., 2019). Such an approach to studying leaders' traits and paradoxical leader behavior in combination with group members' shared characteristics may help us identify the type of group most suitable for PLB emergence and thus have implications for organizations' succession and selection practices.

### ***Paradoxical Leader Behaviors (PLB)***

PLB in people management represents “seemingly competing, yet interrelated, behaviors to meet structural and follower demands simultaneously and over time.” (Zhang et al., 2015, p. 538). Paradoxical leaders can simultaneously conceive and cope with competing organizational and follower needs. In other words, to capture the spirit of paradox that opposites coexist and thus be dealt with simultaneously, paradoxical leaders adopt “both–and” strategy and not “either–or” strategy while managing people. Based on such premise, five behavioral dimensions are identified to PLB in people management involve (1) combining self-centeredness and other-centeredness; (2) maintaining both distance and closeness; (3) handling subordinates uniformly while at the same time allowing individualization; (4) implementing work requirements, while also allowing for flexibility; and (5) keeping decision control, while also allowing autonomy.

Paradoxical leaders are believed to enhance followers' work behaviors in two ways. First, by acting as role models and showing followers to embrace challenges in a complex work environment, and second, by creating a conjoined discretionary and bounded work environment. Creating a bounded environment enables leaders to maintain decisional control over implementing formal work role requirements or standards and helps followers understand their roles and responsibilities. On the other hand, a discretionary environment allows flexibility and autonomy, which reduces the fear of being micro-managed and adds further to a follower's dignity, confidence, and feeling of being empowered. Thus, by creating such a balanced environment, leaders ensure followers' adherence to in-role job requirements and maintain their level of motivation to be proficient and proactive in their jobs (Zhang et al., 2015).

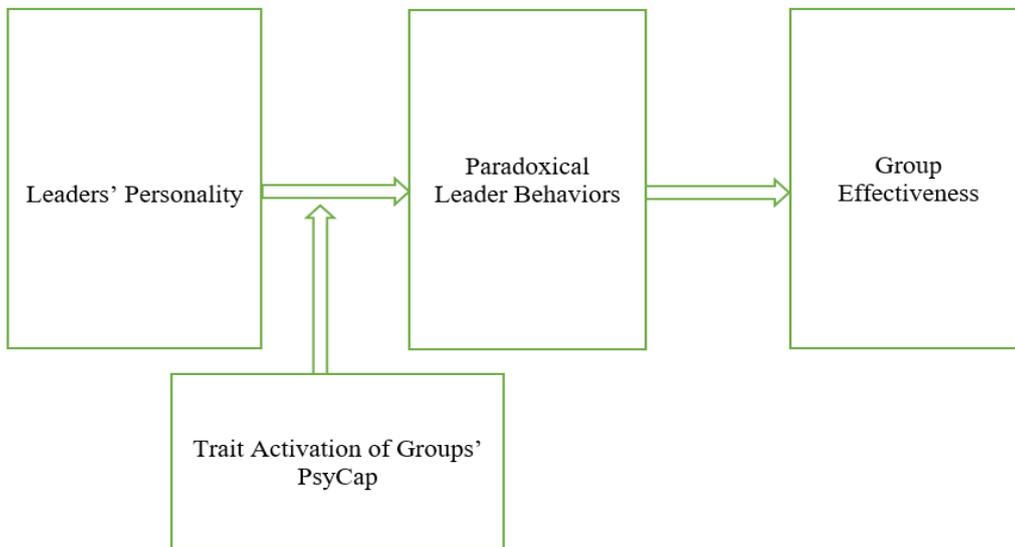


Figure 1. *Theoretical Framework*

### ***PLB and Group Effectiveness***

There is ample support for PLB to be effective regarding followers' outcomes. However, leadership is a multilevel phenomenon characteristically (Yammarino & Dansereau, 2008), so our comprehension of leadership effectiveness is overly static or limited if we barely limit it to the individual level (Wang & Howell, 2012). Considering the critical role of social identity in establishing theoretical reasoning for relating different leadership traits and behaviors with group outcomes (Ellemers et al., 2004; Wang & Howell, 2012), we rely on the notion of social identity to conceptualize the link between PLB and group effectiveness (Özaralli, 2003).

As per the social identity perspective of leadership, leaders' pro-group behaviors, such as striving to enhance the group's status and ensuring sustainable success, also inspire followers to identify with their group, who thus likewise contribute towards the group's success (Van Dick & Schuh, 2010). Leaders' pro-group behaviors are perceived by their followers as evidence of the value of the group that they belong to and thus elevates their identification with their group, which ultimately reflects in followers pro group behaviors (Ishaq et al., 2023; Van Dick et al., 2007). Regarding people management, leaders who create a supportive work environment that considers followers' needs and helps them face workplace challenges boost followers' self-esteem and elevate their attachment to their group. Similarly, on the more structural side of leadership, a leader who emphasizes standards for compliance or performance as a condition for rewards and takes swift corrective actions for any deviances not only

clarifies follower's expectations regarding the organization's norms and values but also creates consistency between personal and group values thus promoting their identification with the group. (Zhu, Sosik, Riggio & Yang, 2012). Individuals who identify with their group are intrinsically motivated to exert themselves on behalf of their group and show pro-group behaviors. More specifically, when team members share a great level of group identity, they are more committed to group goals, dedicate more efforts toward group tasks and deliver a high level of group performance (Wang & Howell, 2012).

Considering that paradoxical leaders are also characterized by exerting themselves to explore coexisting possibilities for the sake of more effective organizational functioning and long-term development, it is expected that such behaviors may establish the value of group amongst group members and thus likewise inspire their group-level efforts. Similarly, the behavioral approach of paradoxical leaders to maintain a balance of meeting followers' relational and organizational demands simultaneously may not only conserve followers' self-esteem but also develop consistency between follower-group values, thus elevating followers' group-level attachment and adding to their group-level effectiveness. Based on the arguments mentioned earlier, the following is suggested.

H1: PLB is positively related to group effectiveness.

#### ***Mediation of PLB between Leaders' Personality and Group Effectiveness***

Recent developments in trait-leadership research have emphasized developing models that integrate traits and behaviors to explain the motivational impact of a leader's personality over performance outcomes (Cavazotte et al., 2012; Ng et al., 2008; Zaccaro, 2007). The current theoretical model attempts to link the distal effect of leaders' personalities over group effectiveness through a more proximal effect of PLB. This study relies upon the "Five Factor Model" of personality traits-agreeableness, extraversion, neuroticism, conscientiousness, and openness to experience (Goldberg, 1990)- to elaborate further on the proposed link.

To start with leaders' extraversion, extroverted leaders are active, resilient, and exert themselves while dealing with workplace issues (Judge & Bono, 2000). Such a work approach of extroverted leaders characterizes PLB as one that inspires followers to recognize the value of the group and thus exert themselves to contribute towards group effectiveness. In terms of interpersonal relationships, extrovert leaders can maintain a good balance of being warm, friendly, and open to interaction while being assertive, dominant, and forceful at the same time in their interactions with people (Ishaq et al., 2021; Bono & Judge, 2004). Such paradoxical behaviors on part of extrovert leaders may not only boost followers self-esteem and confidence to deal with

workplace challenges but also develop clarity of norms and value congruency between followers and their group through clear performance standards in place. Such an impact may be reflected in followers' elevated identity with their group and favorable group-level outcomes. Based on the above-mentioned arguments, the following is suggested:

H2a: PLB mediates the relationships between leaders' extraversion and group effectiveness.

Agreeable leaders are believed to strongly desire to maintain followers' relational demands over structural demands (Aronson et al., 2006). This limits their ability to exhibit paradoxical behaviors. Agreeable leaders tend to be submissive and confirming to the extent that, at times, they seem to be less confident in their vision and put communion before the agency (Colbert et al., 2012). Thus, we propose that due to the excessive tilt of such leaders over meeting group members' relational over groups' structural demands, they may fail to establish the value of the group amongst their members. Similarly, lack of authority, decisiveness, and inability to enforce performance standards by agreeable leaders may create ambiguity among group members, leading to reduced identity with the group and unfavorable group outcomes. Also, the ability of such leaders to adopt a paradoxical approach while dealing with workplace challenges and create an environment to withstand paradoxical situations at work may likewise deter followers' ability to work through role challenges with confidence and move beyond the status quo (Yesil & Sozbilir, 2013), leading to followers' detachment with their group and reduced efforts towards group effectiveness. Based on the above-mentioned arguments, the following is suggested:

H2b: PLB mediates the relationships between leaders' agreeableness and group effectiveness.

As for leaders' conscientiousness, there has been consistent support in the literature for this trait to be effective in terms of work outcomes (Judge et al., 2002; Li et al., 2015) until recently, when the dark side of consciousness was explored (Camps et al., 2016; Ishaq et al., 2021). The literature suggests that a strong desire to ensure performance and achieve goals through strict scrutiny of followers may cause a loss of the relational touch of such leaders with their followers. Thus, we suggest that the inability to balance relational and structural demands in the form of paradoxical behaviors may negatively impact group effectiveness. A highly structured approach of conscious leaders may bring about clarity regarding performance standards; however, excessive scrutiny on behalf of such leaders (Camps et al., 2016) may also demotivate followers, reduce their self-esteem or confidence to take the initiative on behalf of the group and exert themselves to contribute towards group effectiveness. Also, the cautious, methodical, and rule-bound approach of such individuals towards dealing with paradoxical workplace challenges (Judge et al., 2013) may likewise restrict their

followers to thinking out-of-box while dealing with workplace challenges and moving beyond the status quo for the sake of elevating their group effectiveness. Based on the above-mentioned arguments, the following is suggested:

H2c: PLB mediates the relationships between leaders' conscientiousness and group effectiveness.

Neurotic leaders who are characterized by emotional instability, hostility, anxiousness, and lack of self-efficacy (Judge et al., 2002; Bono & Judge, 2004) may also be unsuccessful in managing and motivating followers' efforts toward collective self through clarifying and maintaining structural demands of roles and relational demands of followers simultaneously in the form of paradoxical behaviors. Due to the negativity, vulnerability, and lack of self-confidence of neurotic leaders, for which they are unable to resolve workplace issues and rather avoid taking on work role challenges, such leaders may not be able to develop a conducive environment for their followers that elevates their identity with their group and thus reduce their contribution towards group effectiveness. Based on the above-mentioned arguments, the following is suggested:

H2d: PLB mediates the relationships between leaders' neuroticism and group effectiveness.

Leaders' openness to experience is depicted by intelligence, curiosity, and inclination to exert themselves to come up with innovative solutions to successfully address paradoxical work demands (Bono & Judge, 2004; Ishaq et al., 2021). Such behavioral orientations of leaders may inspire followers to move beyond their comfort level and contribute towards the group's success. Similarly, the ability of such leaders to enforce structural role requirements and maintain decisional control (De Hoogh et al., 2005) while at the same time encouraging followers to use their discretion and come up with innovative thoughts and solutions to deal with work role challenges (Moss & Ngu, 2006; Colbert et al., 2012), may not only create follower-group value congruency but also preserve followers' self-esteem while working through workplace challenges. Such an impact may add to followers' attachment to their group, thus driving their pro-group behaviors and contribution towards group effectiveness. Based on the above-mentioned arguments, the following is suggested:

H2e: PLB mediates the relationships between leaders' openness to experience leaders and group effectiveness.

### ***Leaders' Trait Activating Role of Groups' PsyCap***

As per the trait activation notion, the expression of personality into trait-relevant behaviors varies with variation in trait-related situations (Tett & Guterman,

2000; Tett & Burnett, 2003). Personality traits are seen as latent capacities that reside in a person and can only be activated in actions by situational signals relevant to the traits' features. Likewise, a situation can suppress the trait-relevant responses through confining signals for the trait expression as a constraint (Ng et al., 2008).

Literature suggests that the type of people a leader is dealing with may serve as part of Tett and Burnett's (2003) context that can constrain or elicit leaders' behavior (Bono et al., 2012). People may approve or disapprove of different leadership behaviors depending on their ability, traits, and other characteristics (Dvir & Shamir, 2003; Bono et al., 2012). Through observing peoples' behavioral cues, leaders can anticipate their preferences and responses to different leadership behaviors (Dvir & Shamir, 2003). Based on such observations and judgments, leaders may interact with people as a function of people's characteristics, or their characteristics may serve as a part of the context that can constrain or facilitate leaders' specific behaviors (Bono et al., 2012; Kamdar & Van Dyne, 2007; Burns, 1978). It is suggested in the literature that the type of people who hold orientations compatible with their leaders' are the most suitable to work with and be effective as a leader. (Dvir & Shamir, 2003). Thus, in the context of PLB, we expect that employees who endorse the coexistence concept as their leaders do and have enough psychological ability to deal with complexities or ambiguities at work without getting anxious (Zhang et al., 2015) may elicit more paradoxical behaviors on the part of leaders than others.

PsyCap is one such set of positive psychological resources that enable employees to show behavioral tendencies in line with paradoxical leadership. Individuals with high PsyCap put more effort with extra confidence and effectively utilize their cognitive resources for the sake of executing a specific task (efficacy), have the greater determination and more energy to develop several solutions to different problems (hope), expect better things to happen to them and thus dealing with issues and coping with adversity positively (optimism), deal with a variety of conditions, i.e., both favourable and adverse but still be successful (resilience) (Luthans et al., 2006; Woolley et al., 2011). Jointly, four psychological resources are believed to synergize together to enhance individuals' behavioral ability to deal with paradoxical, ambiguous, and conflicting situations by showing resilience, perseverance, and combating stress or anxiety (Luthans et al., 2010; Avey et al., 2011). Initially, PsyCap was theorized at the individual level; however, following the criticality of research on team-level processes and effectiveness, researchers have moved their focus to the group-level concept (Tho, 2020).

At the group level, PsyCap denotes the group's collective psychological state of development, identified by four individual-level characteristics of PsyCap (Rebelo et al., 2018; Vanno et al., 2015). Group members with a greater level of shared PsyCap

are believed to appraise their circumstances favorably and have more favorable expectations for their team's probability of successful goal achievement based on collective effort and perseverance. (Dawkins, Martin, Scott, Sanderson, & Schüz, 2018). They can deal with complex and challenging situations with greater confidence and generate multiple solutions in overcoming obstacles towards goal attainment (Tho, 2020). Groups with higher PsyCap may rather seek challenges as an opportunity to contribute towards group success (Dawkins et al., 2018).

Such behavioral tendencies and abilities of group members with higher levels of shared PsyCap may provide cues of what is valued and expected of leadership behaviors. As per trait activation theory, the relationship between trait and trait-relevant behaviors is stronger in a situation that provides signals that are relevant to those traits than in a situation with limited relevant signals (Tett & Guterman, 2000). Considering the critical role of leader and group members' compatibility in eliciting or constraining trait-relevant behaviors, we suggest that groups with high levels of shared PsyCap provide behavioral cues consistent with paradoxical orientations of extraverted leaders, thus enabling the expression of such behaviors on the part of such leaders. As mentioned earlier, extroverted leaders are adventurous, confident, and open to new challenges and show tendencies to not only embrace paradoxes but also address complexities and ambiguities in the workplace with much resilience (Judge & Bono, 2000; De Hoogh et al., 2005) Such individuals are also known to experience and express positive emotions such as optimism, energy, and high spirit (Judge et al., 2013; Watson & Clark, 1997). Keeping in view that enactment of leaders trait related behaviors is subject to how compatible their tendencies are with people they are dealing with, we may suggest that behavioral cues provided by members of the group with a greater level of shared PsyCap are much more relevant to paradoxical behavioral tendencies of extroverted leaders thus eliciting more paradoxical behaviors on the part of such leaders than when they are dealing with groups having low levels of shared PsyCap.

Building further on trait activation theory, we suggest that behavioral cues provided by group members with high levels of shared PsyCap may not be consistent or compatible with the behavioral tendencies of agreeable, conscientious, and neurotic leaders, thus not only constraining their trait-relevant behaviors but also motivating them to evolve out of their comfort zone and behave the way it is expected and valued by members of the group they are dealing with. (Tarantino, 2019; Kamdar and Van Dyne, 2007). Unlike group members of teams with high PsyCap, Agreeable leaders lack efficacy and resiliency when dealing with complexities and tough situations. More specifically, they are inclined to avoid situations identified by paradoxical demands or opposing goals.

Similarly, conscientious individuals are too cautious and deliberate (Judge et al., 2013) to benefit from the prospects posed by an uncertain or complex environment and develop unique ways to address paradoxical work matters (De Hoogh et al., 2005). Interacting with group members having a high level of shared PsyCap, leaders may receive cues inconsistent with their trait-relevant paradoxical orientations towards managing people. Such cues restrict the expression of trait-related behaviors and motivate them to try and modify their behaviors in line with their members' preferences. Similarly, neurotic leaders who are highly vulnerable, lack efficacy and experience negative feelings such as guilt, sadness, and fear when dealing with challenging and complex workplace issues (Bono & Judge, 2004; Costa et al., 1991; Liao et al., 2008). We suggest that when dealing with members of a group having a high level of shared PsyCap, such leaders may also feel motivated to break away from their comfort zone and act in line with the paradoxical orientations of their group members if such group members value them.

On the contrary, leaders' openness to experience is related to leaders' tendencies to use unconventional means and methods to maintain paradoxical work demands and attain organizational goals (De Hoogh et al., 2005; Colbert et al., 2012). Such individuals can adapt their decision-making concerning divergent perspectives and the ever-evolving work environment (Colbert et al., 2012; Judge & Bono, 2000; Thoresen et al., 2004). Such behavioral tendencies and abilities align with the tendencies of group members to have a high level of shared PsyCap. Consistent with trait activation theory, such leader-follower compatibility in behavioral tendencies may elicit more trait-relevant paradoxical behaviors of leaders who are open to experience. Such activation may otherwise get constrained in case leaders lack the openness to experience dealing with followers with low PsyCap. Based on the above-mentioned arguments, the following hypothesis is formulated.

Hypothesis 3: Groups' PsyCap moderates the relationship between leaders' personality and group effectiveness via PLB in a way that the positive relationship between leaders' extraversion and group effectiveness via PLB is stronger when groups' PsyCap is high than when is low (Hypothesis 3a), negative relationship between leaders' agreeableness (Hypothesis 3b) leaders' conscientiousness (Hypothesis 3c) leaders' neuroticism and group effectiveness via PLB is weaker when teams' PsyCap is high than when is low. (Hypothesis 3d) and positive relationship between leaders' openness to experience and group effectiveness via PLB is stronger when teams' PsyCap is high than when is low (Hypothesis 3e).

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Data Collection and Sample***

Organizations were selected through convenience sampling using personal and professional contacts of the research group members. Before data collection, the purpose of the study and its requirements were communicated to the participants. Data were collected from 96 teams and their respective leaders. After the screening of questionnaires, the final sample comprised 84 teams from 51 companies. Out of these, 62 percent of organizations are from the services sector, whereas the remaining 38 percent are from the industry sector. Team size had a range of 3 to 12 members. Most team leaders were male (72 out of 84), with more than 50 percent between the ages of 35 and 40. Many team leaders held a master's degree (99%), and 37% had 6-10 years of experience in the current organization. Of the team members ( $N = 356$ ), 274 respondents were male (versus 82 female) and between 31-34 years of age (51%). As for the educational level, 94% of the subordinates had a master's degree. Finally, most of the subordinates had work experience of fewer than five years with the current organization (61%), and 69% had an experience of 3-5 years with the same supervisor.

### ***Measures***

#### ***Supervisor's Personality***

The supervisor's personality was assessed using a 44-item scale (Supervisor Reported) developed by (John et al., 1999) on a 5-point Likert scale, which ranged from 1(disagree strongly) to 5(strongly agree). Sample items are: I see Myself as someone who "Is Talkative," "Has a forgiving nature," "Forgiving" "Is original, comes up with new ideas," and "Makes plans and follows through with them," and "Worriers a lot." Cronbach's alpha was 0.89 for Agreeableness, 0.91 for Extraversion, 0.90 for Conscientiousness, 0.91 for Openness to Experience, 0.89 for Neuroticism.

#### ***Paradoxical Leaders Behavior***

A scale comprising 22 items (Subordinate Reported), developed by Zhang (2015), was used to measure paradoxical Leaders' Behaviors on 5 5-point Likert scale, which ranged from 1 (not at all) to 5 (a lot). Sample items are "Manages their subordinates uniformly but considers their individualized needs. " and "Put all the subordinates on an equal footing, but considers their individual traits or personalities". Cronbach's alpha for the measure was 0.92.

#### ***Group Effectiveness***

Group performance (supervisor reported) was measured using a five-items by Jung and Sosik (2002) on a 5-point Likert scale that ranged from 1(Disagree strongly) to 5(Agree Strongly). Sample items were "My group is effective in getting things done." and "My group does a great job in getting things done". Cronbach's alpha for this measure was 0.80.

### *Team PsyCap*

Items from the PCQ (Luthans, Youssef et al., 2007) were adapted with team referent (Chan, 1998) to measure team PsyCap through a 5-point Likert scale (1 = lowest agree to 5 = highest agree). The scores of the group members of each group were then averaged to yield group-level PsyCap for each group. Sample items of the group-referent scale are as follows: In our team, “we feel confident analyzing a long-term problem to find a solution,” and “we can get through difficult times because we have experienced difficulty before.” Cronbach’s alpha for the measure was 0.81.

### **Analysis and Results**

The unit of analysis for the current study was the group. Thus, participants’ responses concerning PLB, and teams’ PsyCap were aggregated at the team level. The within-group interrater agreement, i.e.,  $r_{wg}$  (James et al., 1993) and the intraclass coefficients ICC (1) and ICC (2) (Bliese, 2000), were utilized to measure the desired reliability of the process. Concerning  $r_{wg}$ , a value of 0.70 or more is suggested as a standard of within-group interrater agreement (James et al., 1993). All measures exceeded this standard: the attained average values for the group-referent PsyCap were 0.92 (SD = 0.11) and 0.91 (SD = 0.12) for PLB. For intraclass coefficients, ICC (1) for the PLB was 0.37, and ICC(2) was 0.71. Whereas ICC (1) values for PsyCap were .21, and ICC(2) was .54. Generally, the values attained were per the values considered to be acceptable in the literature (Bliese, 2000) and supported the aggregation of the team members scores to continue with the data analysis at the level of the team. SEM and AMOS software were used to analyze the relationship in the proposed model.

Descriptive statistics, Cronbach’s alpha, and correlations of observed variables are mentioned in Table 1. Before testing the hypotheses, alternative CFA models were run to validate the measurement structure. The full model was the best fit: [ $\chi^2/df = 2.33$ , CFI = 0.935, SRMR = .062, RMSEA = 0.05].

Table 1  
*Mean, Standard deviations, and Correlations*

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Extraversion	3.73	0.58	1						
2. Agreeableness	3.84	0.69	-.412**	1					
3. Conscientiousness	3.98	0.69	.097*	-.031	1				
4. Neuroticism	3.86	0.71	.074	-.101*	.296**	1			
5. Openness to Experience	3.78	0.61	.101*	-.171**	-.543**	-.198**	1		
6. PLB	3.92	0.63	.189**	-.241**	-.311**	-.254**	.267**	1	
7. Team PsyCap	4.87	0.41	.111*	-.093*	-.101*	-.098*	.089*	.189**	1
8. Group Effectiveness	4.22	0.53	.108*	-.092*	-.196**	-.212**	.294**	.335**	.136**

Note: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ ; PLB = Paradoxical Leader Behaviors

Table 2  
*Direct and Indirect Effects*

Predictors	$\beta$	S.E	t
Paradoxical Leader Behaviors (PLB)	0.328**	0.152	2.86
Indirect Effects	Group Effectiveness		
	$\beta$	LLCI	ULCI
Extraversion (via PLB)	0.121*	0.053	0.184
Agreeableness (via PLB)	-0.102*	-0.171	-0.053
Conscientiousness (via PLB)	-0.127**	-0.213	-0.107
Neuroticism (via PLB)	-0.136**	-0.217	-0.073
Openness To Experience (via PLB)	0.117**	0.083	0.213

Notes: LLCI = lower level of 95% confidence interval. UCLI = upper level of 95% confidence interval

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

Table 3  
*Conditional Indirect Effects*

	Group Effectiveness			
	$\beta$	S.E	LLCI	ULCI
Extraversion (via PLB)				
-1 SD	0.114*	0.016	0.064	0.161
+1 SD	0.124*	0.025	0.071	0.173
Agreeableness (via PLB)				
-1 SD	-0.174*	0.023	-0.234	-0.114
+1 SD	-0.051	0.031	-0.112	0.008
Conscientiousness (via PLB)				
-1 SD	-0.203*	0.028	-0.266	-0.137
+1 SD	-0.065	0.037	-0.137	0.012
Neuroticism (via PLB)				
-1 SD	-0.137*	0.021	-0.216	-0.078
+1 SD	-0.121*	0.017	-0.192	-0.051
Openness To Experience (via PLB)				
-1 SD	0.036	0.028	-0.037	0.108
+1 SD	0.213**	0.023	0.164	0.296

Notes: LLCI = lower level of 95% confidence interval. UCLI = upper level of 95% confidence interval

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

Table 1 demonstrates the correlation analysis, and Table 2 shows the direct and indirect effects results. In line with our expectations, PLB positively predicted group effectiveness ( $\beta=0.328$ ,  $p < .01$ ), thus *supporting hypothesis 1*.

Indirect effects were assessed through the statistical significance of the indirect effect and related confidence interval and thus reported accordingly. Table 2 shows the results of indirect effects. As per the results, extraversion was found to have a significant indirect effect over group effectiveness ( $\beta=0.123$ ,  $p < .05$ ; 95%CI [0.053., 0.184]); thus, *hypothesis 2a was supported*. Agreeableness also had a significant indirect relationship with group effectiveness ( $\beta=-0.102$ ,  $p < .05$ ; 95%CI [-0.171., -0.053]), and thus *hypothesis 2b was supported*. Similarly, conscientiousness was also

found to have a significant indirect relationship with group effectiveness ( $\beta=-0.127$ ,  $p < .01$ ; 95%CI [-0.213., -0.107]); thus, *hypothesis 2c was supported*. Neuroticism was also found to have a significant indirect relationship with group effectiveness ( $\beta=-0.136$ ,  $p < .01$ ; 95%CI [-0.217., -0.073]); thus, *hypothesis 2d was supported*. As hypothesized, openness to experience was also found to have a significant indirect effect on group effectiveness ( $\beta=0.117$ ,  $p < .01$ ; 95%CI [0.083., 0.213]); hence *hypothesis 2e was also supported*.

Table 3 shows the conditional indirect effect of team PsyCap. Conditional indirect effects were analyzed through the differences in the strength of indirect effects across the low and high levels of the moderator (Preacher et al., 2007; Ng et al., 2008). Results demonstrate that the conditional indirect effect of the extraversion for group effectiveness was significant at both low and high levels of team PsyCap and were not much different from each other ( $\beta=0.114$ ,  $p < .05$  &  $\beta =0.124$ ,  $p < .05$ , respectively) hence, *hypothesis 3a, is not supported*. However, conditional indirect effects of agreeableness for group effectiveness were significant at low levels of team PsyCap ( $\beta=-0.174$ ,  $p < .05$ ) but were nonsignificant at high levels of team PsyCap ( $\beta =-0.051$ ,  $p=ns$ ); hence, *hypothesis 3b, is supported*. Similarly, conditional indirect effects of Conscientiousness for group effectiveness were significant at low levels of Team PsyCap ( $\beta=-0.203$ ,  $p < .05$ ) but nonsignificant at high levels of team PsyCap ( $\beta=-0.065$ ,  $p =ns$ ); hence, *hypothesis 3c is supported*. Conditional indirect effects of neuroticism for the group effectiveness were significant at both high and low levels of team PsyCap and were not much different from each other ( $\beta=0.137$ ,  $p < .05$  &  $\beta=0.121$ ,  $p < .05$ , respectively); hence, *hypothesis 3d, is not supported*. As expected, the conditional indirect effect of openness to experience for group effectiveness was significant at high levels of Team PsyCap ( $\beta =0.219$ ,  $p < .01$ ) but was nonsignificant at low high levels of Team PsyCap ( $\beta =0.031$ ,  $p=ns$ ); hence, *hypothesis 3e, is supported*.

## Discussion

Current research proposes a theoretical framework that attempts to add to our existing knowledge with respect to personality-leaders group effectiveness by exploring the role of paradoxical leadership orientations as an underlying mechanism for such a relationship. This is consistent with the recent research suggestions over developing process models that link leaders' traits more proximally with leaders' effectiveness (Peterson et al., 2009; Zaccaro et al., 2018). Past literature suggests that leaders' personality impacts performance outcomes distally and thus need to be explained through more proximal factors such as motivational or inspiring leadership behaviors (Ng et al., 2008; Cavazotte et al., 2012). By considering paradoxical leader behavior as an underlying mechanism to explain leader personality group-level effectiveness, we attempted to extend the multilevel line of research to the domain of

paradoxical leaders' behaviors. Past literature has associated both transactional and transformational leadership with group-level performance outcomes (Wofford et al., 1998; Bass et al., 2003). However, since today's dynamic work environment calls for paradoxical orientation amongst leaders for sustainable performance and growth, current research further asserts that such behaviors are effective at the individual and group levels.

Keeping in view the consistent but modest relationship between a leader's personality and leadership behaviors in past literature and call for identifying trait-relevant situations together with a leader's personality traits that could activate the expression of a leader's personality into respective leader's behaviors (Tett & Burnett, 2003; De Hoogh et al., 2005). The current study contributes to the literature by considering teams' PsyCap as a trait-activating factor for paradoxical behaviors. Bearing in mind that leader-follower compatibility in terms of behavioural is essential for activating trait-relevant behaviors which otherwise be constrained or suppressed (de Jong & Curseu, 2016; Dvir & Shamir, 2003), thus it is suggested in the current study that teams having members with high levels of shared PsyCap to be most suitable for leaders with a tendency to show paradoxical behavioural orientations. Though groups' PsyCap has mostly been studied in relation to group performance outcomes (Vanno et al., 2015), the current study contributes to the literature by suggesting that groups' PsyCap can play a pivotal role in activating paradoxical behavioral tendencies of leaders. More specifically, in accordance with our expectations, the results of the current study suggest that groups' PsyCap influence over the relationship between leaders' conscientiousness, agreeableness, and group effectiveness via PLB in a way that a negative relationship is much weaker when leaders are dealing with a group having high collective PsyCap than when their PsyCap is low. Similarly, in line with our hypothesis, groups' PsyCap was found to have an activating effect on leaders' openness to experience and group effectiveness via PLB in a way that a positive relationship between leaders' openness to experience group effectiveness via PLB is stronger when leaders are dealing with a group having high PsyCap than low.

Contrary to our expectations, though, groups' PsyCap was not found to have any effect in activating leaders' extraversion into PLB and thus over the relationship between leaders' extraversion and group effectiveness via PLB. One possible reason for such a finding is that extraversion is among the strongest predictors of leadership emergence and effectiveness in literature (Parmer et al., 2013). Thus, the role of groups' characteristics may become irrelevant for them to activate their trait-relevant behaviors.

Similarly, contrary to our expectations, groups' PsyCap was not found to have any effect over suppressing the negative effect of leaders' neuroticism over group effectiveness via PLB. One possible explanation for such a finding can be that due to

the psychological inability of neurotics to cope with demanding or complex workplace situations and maintain long-lasting interpersonal relationships, neurotic leaders may not find it easier to adapt to much more resilient and challenge-seeking groups with high PsyCap. Neurotic leaders, thus, may rather find it overwhelming when dealing with such groups. Such research findings may also imply that leaders' different personality traits may have a differential impact on group effectiveness depending upon the group's characteristics they are dealing with; at the same time, there can be a case where some of the leaders' traits outweigh the role of groups' characteristics that they are leading.

### ***Practical Implications***

Current research findings have few significant practical implications. By identifying paradoxical behaviors to be an explaining mechanism between leaders' personalities and group effectiveness, we propose that organizations focus on devising such training programs that could enable the development of paradoxical orientations amongst leaders to enhance groups' effectiveness. Considering that organizations are always on the look for those heads who can ensure effectiveness at the group level by directing group members' efforts towards collective interest, thus current study endorses that any strategy adopted by leaders to treat employees paradoxically through role modelling and creating conjoined discretionary and bounded environment may ultimately be reflected in group level outcomes thus adding to overall organizational effectiveness. The current study also identifies the pivotal role of group characteristics in enabling certain leadership behaviors consistent with groups' own behavioral tendencies. For instance, in a highly competitive work environment that may critically require paradoxical thinking amongst the workforce, both leader and group characteristics have a combined role in inspiring such behavioral approaches for each other. Moreover, considering the behavioral complexity of PLB, organizations also need to pay attention to person–environment fit when selecting and hiring leaders with paradoxical orientations. More specifically, paradoxical leaders may work well in an organization where HRM practices inspire paradoxical thinking amongst its workforce, thus enabling them to accept such behaviors more flexibly.

### ***Future Research Directions***

It is suggested that future researchers consider traits other than the Big Five, such as optimism or tough-mindedness, work drive, achievement motivation, etc., to understand better the relationship between personality traits and leaders' group effectiveness through PLB. Another possible research area can be to consider and test different leadership behaviors, such as transformational, transactional, etc, together with paradoxical orientations in relation to leaders' personalities and group outcomes simultaneously. Leaders' core self-evaluation may also be an interesting antecedent or

a boundary condition in this stream of knowledge (Arshad et al., 2021). This will enable us to assess the impact of different traits over group outcomes through different behaviors in relative terms.

Similarly, considering the behavioral complexity of PLB, it is recommended for future researchers to identify further those group factors such as group identity, group cohesiveness, voice climate, etc., which make the workforce receptive to paradoxical behaviors and thus enable such behaviors on the part of their leaders. Similarly, considering the pivotal role of individuals' cultural orientations over approval or disapproval of certain leadership behaviors that ultimately impact its effectiveness (Kirkman et al., 2009), it is further recommended for future researchers to consider cultural orientations at both individuals as well as organizational level in relation to activation and effectiveness of PLB.

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