

A Double-Edged Sword: A Meta-Analysis of the Dual Effects of Narcissistic Leadership on Subordinate Effectiveness

Authors: Su Tao, Zeng Haowen, Zhong Xiaolin, Ma Wencong, Chen Xiude, Ma Wencong

Date: 2024-05-19T00:00:00+00:00

Abstract

The effectiveness of controversial narcissistic leadership remains inconclusive. Based on Conservation of Resources theory, this study conducts a meta-analysis of 73 independent empirical studies from 67 articles (total sample $N=30,493$) to explore and verify whether, when, and how narcissistic leadership constitutes a “mixed blessing.” The findings reveal that: (1) although the overall effect of narcissistic leadership is negative, it exhibits a dual-sided effect, wherein this leadership style increases subordinates’ stress, inhibits their work attitudes, behaviors, and performance, yet promotes their innovation; (2) industry type, organizational attributes, employee category, employee education level, and measurement instruments exert moderating effects. Specifically, narcissistic leadership is more detrimental in manufacturing (vs. service), for-profit organizations (vs. non-profit organizations), for non-knowledge workers (vs. knowledge workers), and for employees with lower education levels. Moreover, when measured using the Hochwarter and Thompson scale (vs. the NPI-16 scale), its negative effects are stronger; and (3) the dual-sided effects of narcissistic leadership are stably realized through employees’ psychological safety (negative effect) and innovative self-efficacy (positive effect), respectively. This study provides a basis for leveraging the strengths and avoiding the weaknesses of narcissistic leadership effectiveness.

Full Text

Preamble

Woe-fortune interdependence: A meta-analysis of the two-sided effect of narcissistic leadership on subordinate effectiveness

SU Tao, ZENG Haowen, ZHONG Xiaolin, MA Wencong, CHEN Xiude

(School of Management, Guangdong University of Technology, Guangzhou 510520, China)

Abstract

The effectiveness of controversial narcissistic leadership has not yet reached a consensus. Based on the conservation of resources theory, this study conducted a meta-analysis of 73 independent empirical studies from 67 articles (total sample $N = 30,493$) to explore and verify whether, when, and how narcissistic leadership represents “woe-fortune interdependence.” The findings show that: (1) Although the overall effect of narcissistic leadership is negative, it exhibits a two-sided effect—this leadership style increases subordinate stress, inhibits their work attitudes, behaviors, and performance, yet promotes their innovation. (2) Industry type, organizational attributes, employee category, employee education level, and measurement tools have moderating effects. Specifically, narcissistic leadership is more harmful in manufacturing (vs. services), for-profit organizations (vs. non-profit organizations), non-knowledge workers (vs. knowledge workers), and low-education employees, and its negative impact is stronger when measured using the Hochwarter and Thompson scale (vs. NPI-16 scale). (3) The two-sided effects of narcissistic leadership are stably realized through employees’ psychological safety (negative effect) and creative self-efficacy (positive effect). This research provides a basis for leveraging the advantages and avoiding the disadvantages of narcissistic leadership effectiveness.

Keywords: narcissistic leadership, meta-analysis, conservation of resources theory, innovation, structural equation modeling

Introduction

As narcissistic personality leaders continue to emerge in enterprises, scholars have gradually turned their research attention to the role that narcissism plays in leadership. Narcissistic leadership refers to leadership behavior primarily driven by extreme selfish personal needs and beliefs rather than by the interests of the organization they lead (Rosenthal & Pitinsky, 2006). Huang and Li (2014) argue that narcissistic leadership includes four key traits: charisma, egoism, deceptive motivation, and knowledge suppression. Currently, narcissistic leadership is increasingly emerging in management practice both domestically and internationally. A typical representative is Elon Musk, known as the “Iron Man of Silicon Valley” (Liu & Zhang, 2019), who has won like-minded followers with his great vision of “saving humanity” and strong charisma, and these loyal followers have created enormous wealth for the enterprise. However, Musk’s narcissistic statements have also caused frequent executive turnover. In Chinese management practice, Gree’s President Dong Mingzhu is a typical representative of narcissistic personality (Cao et al., 2019). With her narcissistic

leadership style, she successfully led Gree to establish a foothold in the air conditioning industry and become a market leader during its early development stage. However, after Gree entered a mature and stable development period, Dong Mingzhu's narcissistic personality (preference for high risk and stubbornness) hindered Gree's diversified business development. Thus, the effectiveness of narcissistic leadership is mixed, and its two-sided effects need to be clarified.

Existing research holds divergent views on the effectiveness of narcissistic leadership, with no consistent conclusion reached regarding its negative, positive, or two-sided effects. One perspective suggests that narcissistic leadership is primarily negative. For instance, Rosenthal and Pitinsky (2006) argue that narcissistic leaders place personal interests above organizational interests, prioritizing selfish personal needs and beliefs. Additionally, narcissistic leaders are more likely to paint themselves into a corner (Rhodewalt et al., 2006), and their decisions during major crises can be harmful (Post, 1993). Their overconfidence and risk-taking often lead to reduced organizational performance (Campbell et al., 2004). Social exchange theory is commonly used to explore the negative effects of narcissistic leadership, positing that under the principle of reciprocity, leader behavior influences employee behavioral choices (Cropanzano & Marie, 2005). However, the interaction between narcissistic leaders and subordinates is not based on reciprocity. This leadership style is often accompanied by resource plundering and psychological damage to employees, thereby destroying reciprocity in the relationship. This imbalanced power dynamic and resource distribution ultimately leads to a series of negative behaviors among subordinates.

Another perspective argues that narcissistic leadership has positive effects. For example, Laird et al. (2009) believe that leaders with narcissistic traits not only hold confident attitudes toward their own abilities but can also engage in higher-level self-speculation and judgment, possessing good self-insight abilities. Regulatory focus theory is often used to explore the positive effects of narcissistic leadership. This theory suggests that individuals exhibit different self-regulatory orientations during goal-seeking self-regulation processes based on different needs. Developmental needs bring about a promotion focus in individuals, primarily concerned with positive outcomes. The charismatic traits and adventurous spirit of narcissistic leaders can make employees more inclined to adopt a promotion-focused self-regulation style, favoring risk-taking and demonstrating more positive behaviors (Neubert et al., 2016; Higgins & Cornwell, 2016).

With in-depth research, a few scholars have proposed a third perspective: narcissistic leadership has a two-sided effect. For example, Kraft (2022) found that leaders with narcissistic traits represent a "woe-fortune interdependence" for enterprises, with their two-sided effects influencing enterprise performance in unique ways. From the perspective of Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, although current research on the positive and negative effects of narcissistic leadership is primarily based on regulatory focus theory and social exchange the-

ory, these two theories have contradictory relationships—the former focuses on individual intrinsic motivation while the latter focuses on individual external social exchange relationships, making it difficult to jointly explain the two-sided effects of narcissistic leadership. However, both social exchange relationships and intrinsic motivation can be viewed as different manifestations of resources, which can be encompassed by the concept of resources. Therefore, COR theory can integrate these two theories and effectively explain why narcissistic leadership is “woe-fortune interdependence.” COR theory emphasizes that individuals have a tendency to acquire, conserve, and protect resources. On the one hand, individuals use existing resources to protect themselves and avoid resource loss; on the other hand, they actively construct and maintain resources to cope with potential future resource loss (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Since this theoretical framework includes both tendencies, it is particularly suitable for explaining two-sided effects. Based on this theory, the negative traits of narcissistic leaders tend to deprive subordinates of resources, increasing the difficulty of obtaining resources at work. Leaders’ resources continue to accumulate while subordinates’ resources are continuously depleted, leading to a sense of resource imbalance. To protect their own resources, subordinates adopt defensive behaviors, which trigger negative emotions that affect work effectiveness. However, narcissistic leaders also have a charismatic side that can attract followers, master more resources, and transmit positive psychological resources to subordinates through their grand vision and obsession with success, ultimately producing positive effects. In summary, current research has not yet reached a consensus on the effectiveness of narcissistic leadership. The specific distribution of its two-sided effects needs to be clarified, and the mechanisms underlying these effects require further exploration.

Three areas require further improvement regarding whether, how, and when narcissistic leadership is “woe-fortune interdependence” for subordinate effectiveness: (1) Is narcissistic leadership truly woe-fortune interdependent? As previously discussed, theoretical evidence suggests the possibility of two-sided effects, and relevant empirical studies have reached similar conclusions. For example, Burger et al. (2023) found that narcissism is a double-edged sword for entrepreneurs. In the early stages of a company, many tasks of founders can benefit from narcissistic tendencies, but in later stages, narcissism brings overwhelming negative effects. Zhang et al. (2017) also believe that narcissistic leadership has two-sided traits, with dual influences on employees’ psychological empowerment and organizational citizenship behavior. However, these research findings are relatively scattered and require a more comprehensive and systematic summary. Whether narcissistic leadership is truly “woe-fortune interdependent” still needs further verification, and the specific distribution of its two-sided effects remains unknown. Additionally, the differences in the strength of narcissistic leadership’s impact on various subordinate work effectiveness indicators have not been clarified. While it is known that narcissistic leadership has negative impacts on many aspects of subordinate work effectiveness, the relative strength of these impacts on different effectiveness indicators is un-

known. (2) When is narcissistic leadership woe-fortune interdependent? The boundary conditions for the effectiveness of narcissistic leadership need comprehensive investigation. For example, Eastern and Western cultural backgrounds have significant differences—Western culture pursues freedom and individuality, while Eastern culture emphasizes “restraint” and collectivism. The tolerance for narcissism may differ between these two cultural contexts. Manufacturing and service industries have different work content and priorities, which may affect the effectiveness of narcissistic leadership. For-profit and non-profit organizations differ greatly in work systems, arrangements, and benefits. Knowledge and non-knowledge workers differ in many aspects such as personal traits, psychological needs, and personal resources, and may have different abilities when dealing with narcissistic leadership. Most existing empirical studies measure narcissistic leadership using either the Hochwarter and Thompson scale or the NPI-16 scale. These different scales differ in development logic, reliability, and validity levels, and what impact differences these two scales may cause is currently unknown. Additionally, employees of different genders, ages, and education levels differ in mindset, cognition, and problem-solving approaches, and narcissistic leadership may have different impacts on them. All these factors influence the effectiveness of narcissistic leadership, but their effects have not yet been clarified. (3) How is narcissistic leadership woe-fortune interdependent? The stable process mechanisms through which narcissistic leadership produces two-sided effects on subordinate effectiveness remain unknown. Although existing empirical research has explored the process mechanisms of narcissistic leadership’s impact on subordinate effectiveness (Chen et al., 2018; Den et al., 2020), most have focused on a single effect—either negative or positive—and these mechanisms are relatively scattered. While these mechanisms are significantly established in ordinary empirical studies, there is no direct evidence of whether they hold in meta-analysis research. The stable mediating mechanisms through which narcissistic leadership produces two-sided effects need to be identified.

Narcissistic leadership easily affects subordinates’ psychological resources, and much existing empirical research on narcissistic leadership focuses on its impact on subordinate effectiveness at the psychological resource level (Zhang et al., 2017; Zhang et al., 2018). Therefore, explaining the effectiveness of narcissistic leadership from the perspective of psychological resources is appropriate. Based on COR theory (referred to as COR throughout this paper) as the theoretical foundation, which can well explain the psychological mechanisms of narcissistic leadership, we can explore possible process mechanisms of its two-sided effects from perspectives such as psychological cognition and intrinsic motivation.

In view of this, this study focuses on the two-sided effects of narcissistic leadership, conducts a meta-analysis of 73 existing empirical studies from the perspective of COR theory, and aims to achieve the following advancements and innovations: (1) Systematically clarify the specific impacts of narcissistic leadership’s woe-fortune interdependence, obtain stage conclusions, and find strong evidence for its two-sided effects. Explore the differential impacts of narcissistic leadership on five categories of subordinate effectiveness: work attitudes,

workplace behaviors, work performance, work stress, and innovation, as well as their specific indicators, to identify “consistent patterns” in its effects. (2) Identify the boundary conditions for when narcissistic leadership is woe-fortune interdependent. Test the moderating effects of eight potential factors: cultural background, industry type, organizational attributes, employee category, measurement tools, employee gender, age, and education level, to comprehensively and completely explain the boundary mechanisms of narcissistic leadership’s two-sided effects on subordinate effectiveness. (3) Explore the internal mechanisms of narcissistic leadership’s woe-fortune interdependence, opening the process “black box” through which narcissistic leadership produces two-sided effects.

2.1 Variable Definitions

Narcissism research originated in psychology and is often referred to as one of the Dark Triad of personality, alongside Machiavellianism and psychopathy (Liao et al., 2016). Since narcissism research has been linked to leadership, studies on narcissistic leadership have emerged and made considerable progress. When defining the concept of narcissistic leadership, researchers mainly adopt two perspectives: trait perspective and behavioral perspective. The trait perspective emphasizes personal personality characteristics, while the behavioral perspective emphasizes personal behavior, but no unified conclusion has been reached on which perspective to adopt. Most of the literature included in this study’s data analysis uses the measurement scale developed by Hochwarter et al. (2012), which is based on the personality trait perspective and is a mainstream scale in this field. Therefore, this study also adopts the trait perspective, combined with the research of Huang and Li (2014), which systematically integrates previous research on the connotation of narcissistic leadership, more completely explains the external characteristics of narcissistic leadership, and includes both positive and negative traits of narcissistic leadership, making it suitable for explaining its two-sided effects. Additionally, many studies have cited this definition (Li et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2021). Therefore, this study comprehensively explains the connotation of narcissistic leadership as the following four points: (1) Charisma: Narcissistic leaders have extraordinary proficiency and experience in social interaction and interpersonal communication, have forward-looking plans for the long-term development of the enterprise, and focus on shaping a charismatic appearance. (2) Egoism: Narcissistic leaders are often self-centered, ensure their own superiority, attribute success to themselves, and blame failure on others. (3) Deceptive motivation: Narcissistic leaders are motivated by the pursuit of power and praise, therefore requiring followers’ flattery and sycophancy, and showing false concern for sycophants around them. (4) Suppression of others: Narcissistic leaders cannot bear when the focus of attention is not on themselves, and when their authority is threatened, they will emotionally suppress and intellectually inhibit subordinates.

This study explores the impact of narcissistic leadership on subordinate effectiveness. First, following the logic of meta-analysis induction, the study includes five outcome variables to evaluate subordinate work effectiveness: work attitudes, workplace behaviors, work stress, work performance, and innovation. Second, referring to existing relevant toolbooks (Chen et al., 2018), “in meta-analysis, grouping variables with similar meanings into a broad category to analyze the relationship between two more broadly defined variables will yield higher predictive validity (Harrison et al., 2006).” This meta-analysis also adopts this modular approach, grouping scattered outcome variables into categories, such as categorizing knowledge sharing behavior, silence behavior, and organizational citizenship behavior as workplace behaviors. Finally, through multi-dimensional subordinate effectiveness, the study explores the impact of narcissistic leadership on subordinate effectiveness from multiple perspectives inside and out. These five categories of effectiveness indicators include nine specific indicators: (1) Work attitudes: Job satisfaction reflects an individual’s satisfaction with work-related factors, including both physical and psychological aspects, and relates to overall psychological state (Hoppock, 1935). Turnover intention refers to the subconscious desire to escape and a “retreat” mentality that emerges when people experience setbacks at work (Porter & Steers, 1973). Organizational cynicism can be defined as “responding to the organization with negative attitudes,” mainly manifested in three aspects: distrust of the organization, perceiving the organization as having a negative image, and correspondingly criticizing and denigrating the organization (Dean et al., 1998). (2) Workplace behaviors: Knowledge sharing behavior is the interaction between knowledge owners and knowledge demanders, where knowledge owners undertake the task of knowledge transfer and knowledge demanders absorb and utilize this knowledge (Ardichvili et al., 2003). Employee silence behavior refers to employees concealing personal viewpoints, information, and opinions when problems arise in the organizational work and environment. Organizational citizenship behavior refers to behaviors made by individuals in an organization that maintain and improve the organization’s psychological and social environment and are beneficial to work performance and overall organizational effectiveness. These behaviors are not part of an individual’s formal job requirements and are not included in the organization’s formal performance and compensation system (Porter & Steers, 1973). (3) Work stress: Under environmental influences, when an individual’s abilities and resources cannot meet environmental demands, threatening the coordination and integrity of life, work, and psychology, this adverse interaction produces stress symptoms. (4) Work performance: Work performance includes behaviors, abilities, and results, representing the completion degree of work accepted by individuals, organizations, and teams under specific circumstances. This is a concept that directly reflects the degree of goal achievement (Woodruffe, 1993) and is one of the most important indicators for measuring subordinates. (5) Innovation: Refers to employees’ behaviors of proposing new ideas or applying new technologies in the organization, including the proposal and introduction of new ideas and comprehensive actions related to innovation practice (West & Anderson, 1996). Additionally, through induction and screening combined

with theoretical feasibility, this study explores the process mechanisms through which narcissistic leadership produces two-sided effects from the psychological resource level. The mediating variables include: (1) Psychological safety: Belongs to employees' psychological cognition, referring to an individual's perception that they can freely express themselves at work without worrying about negative impacts or punishment on their image, status, or career even when participating in risky actions (Kahn, 1990). (2) Creative self-efficacy: Self-efficacy is an individual's confidence in their ability to use existing knowledge and skills to complete a certain work task (Bandura, 1977), and creative self-efficacy is the manifestation of self-efficacy in the innovation domain.

2.2 Theoretical Foundation

Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory excellently explains how individuals in organizations deal with resources when facing damage and stress. The theory posits that individuals have a tendency to retain, nurture, and protect their important resources, as well as the motivation to strive to acquire new resources, and will use opportunities to create resource surplus to resist potential future resource loss (Hobfoll, 2001). Its basic principle is that resource protection is primary and resource acquisition is secondary (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Based on this, the theory can well explain the two-sided effects of narcissistic leadership. First, resources play a key role in the relationship between narcissistic leaders and subordinates. According to the negative traits of narcissistic leadership, its extreme egoism, deceptive motivation, and suppression of others all cause damage to subordinate resources. Based on COR theory, when subordinates' own resources are threatened and lost, they naturally produce defensive behaviors to protect their resources. Therefore, when subordinates face the negative trait behaviors of narcissistic leaders, they will take action to protect their own resources and reduce their own interest losses, manifested as negative work attitudes and workplace behaviors, and even harming work performance. However, narcissistic leaders also have charismatic traits that can help them positively influence subordinate work effectiveness. For example, Maccoby (2004) believes that narcissistic leaders are visionaries with brave, confident, and charismatic traits that can attract followers. From the perspective of resource transmission, the charismatic traits of narcissistic leaders are manifested as being skilled in interpersonal communication and having forward-looking planning, which can transmit psychological resources such as encouragement and motivation to subordinates. Hobfoll et al. (2018) believe that resource input is very important for individuals to achieve resource replenishment and prevent resource loss. Therefore, the charismatic traits of leaders can help subordinates supplement and transmit psychological resources, enabling subordinates to have full confidence and firm belief to explore unknown fields and promote innovation (Li et al., 2020). Finally, most existing studies have used COR theory to explain the impact of narcissistic leadership on subordinate work effectiveness, such as Huang

et al. (2020) on the impact of narcissistic leadership on employee voice behavior, and Wang et al. (2022) on the impact of narcissistic leadership on employee job embeddedness, both of which applied COR theory. In summary, based on theoretical matching, this study uses COR theory for hypothesis deduction and result interpretation.

2.3.1 Negative Effects of Narcissistic Leadership

(1) Narcissistic Leadership and Subordinate Work Attitudes

As a type of dark leadership, the negative traits of narcissistic leadership may have a negative impact on employees' work attitudes. According to its connotation, narcissistic leaders usually exhibit individual characteristics such as egoism, deceptive motivation, and suppression of others in the workplace and daily life. The egoism tendency they exhibit will attribute organizational benefits to themselves, causing significant damage to employees' interests. The deceptive motivation will make narcissistic leaders need sycophants around them, prompting employees to spend more energy catering to the narcissistic leader's ideas. According to COR theory, these negative traits of narcissistic leaders lead to problems such as decreased work resources for employees and imbalance between resource input and output, and greatly increase the difficulty for employees to acquire new resources. This will reduce employees' job satisfaction and even lead to their dissatisfaction and resentment toward the organization. Ultimately, employees will choose to reduce job embeddedness or even leave the organization to protect their resources from loss (Wang, 2022).

First, narcissistic leaders are self-centered and will ignore or even emotionally suppress subordinates when their own authority is threatened (Liao et al., 2016). These behaviors belittle employees' efforts. The belittling behavior shown in the interaction process with subordinates and the neglect of subordinates' need for attention can be regarded as damage to subordinates' psychological resources. When employees' hard work not only fails to receive corresponding attention and appreciation but is instead suppressed and belittled by the leader, this sense of resource deprivation will cause subordinates to feel strong injustice, thereby reducing their job satisfaction.

Second, according to previous research, when leaders' narcissistic behaviors in the workplace increase, subordinate employees' lack of commitment, lack of motivation, deterioration of employee behavior and attitudes, and lack of ownership are also amplified (Sabir et al., 2020). Narcissistic leaders' disregard for subordinates' needs and values, and the resulting lack of commitment and loss of integrity, easily cause subordinates to develop organizational cynicism emotions such as distrust, disappointment, and resentment toward the leader.

Finally, to ensure their own superiority, narcissistic leaders will show exclusive hostile behavior toward employees (Liao et al., 2016). This poor management behavior often leads to subordinates' dissatisfaction and distrust of the leader,

thereby reducing subordinates' identification with the leader. The hostility of narcissistic leaders toward subordinates and subordinates' low identification with narcissistic leaders not only create a distrustful interpersonal relationship but also easily create a work atmosphere lacking fairness, which may cause subordinates' dissatisfaction. When dissatisfaction accumulates to a certain level, subordinates will show higher turnover intention.

Compared with employees' turnover intention, the impact of narcissistic leadership on employees' organizational cynicism is more direct. The negative traits of narcissistic leaders cause employees' due resources to be deprived. Subsequently, the first negative emotions subordinates will have toward the organization's unfair environment will be distrust and resentment. Turnover intention has temporal delay; it only emerges after sufficient disappointment and resentment have accumulated.

Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Narcissistic leadership is significantly negatively correlated with subordinate work attitudes.

H1a: Narcissistic leadership is significantly negatively correlated with subordinate job satisfaction (positive work attitude), and significantly positively correlated with organizational cynicism and turnover intention (negative work attitudes).

H1b: Compared with turnover intention, the positive correlation between narcissistic leadership and organizational cynicism is stronger.

(2) Narcissistic Leadership and Subordinate Workplace Behaviors

According to COR theory, when the input and output of personal resources are unbalanced, it usually leads to negative behaviors in the workplace (Hobfoll, 2011). Since narcissistic leaders must ensure their own superiority and require the focus of attention to be on themselves, the effect of "the nail that sticks up gets hammered down" is deeper in employees. COR theory prioritizes resource protection and considers resource acquisition as secondary (Hobfoll et al., 2018). In stressful and threatening situations, individuals tend to first take defensive measures to conserve resources to avoid further resource loss (Hobfoll, 2011). To maintain their own resources and avoid loss of existing resources, employees will tend to adopt withdrawal or defensive behaviors to stay away from stressors, thus choosing to comply with the leader's wishes, hide their own edge, and give up many opportunities for proactive behavior and knowledge sharing in the organization, using silence to protect themselves.

First, because narcissistic leaders will ignore and emotionally suppress subordinates when their own authority is threatened, subordinates will become selfish and indifferent after experiencing these inappropriate management behaviors, and will retaliate against the leader by responding to work with negative attitudes (Zhang et al., 2017). In this unhealthy environment, subordinates lack the initiative to make efforts to help others and do things beneficial to the organization (Howard, 2019), thereby inhibiting organizational citizenship behavior.

Second, knowledge sharing behavior is a voluntary behavior of knowledge owners. Since narcissistic leaders plunder credit, this knowledge sharing behavior cannot receive positive resource returns, which reduces employees' voluntariness in knowledge sharing. The lack of communication and exchange within the organization creates a poor organizational communication atmosphere, reducing employees' willingness to share knowledge.

Finally, although objectively speaking, employees raising problems and suggestions is beneficial to enterprise development, for individuals, this faces huge risks and costs, requiring the expenditure of large amounts of time, energy, and emotional resources (Ma et al., 2014). Especially under the management of narcissistic leaders, subordinates' positive suggestions may be misunderstood as challenging the leader's authority. The anxiety brought by narcissistic leaders weakens employees' autonomous motivation. They may become conservative and unwilling to take risks by making promotive suggestions beneficial to organizational innovation and change (Chen et al., 2021). Combined with COR theory, subordinates will not "speak up" at the risk of resource loss but will instead adopt silence behavior to alleviate this pressure.

Compared with organizational citizenship behavior, the impact of narcissistic leadership on knowledge sharing behavior is stronger. Because knowledge itself is a resource, and the egoism of narcissistic leaders easily leads to this resource being plundered, making employees unwilling to engage in knowledge sharing behavior. Organizational citizenship behavior is employees' proactive behavior; after realizing that resources will be damaged, they will adopt defensive behaviors, thereby reducing proactivity. Additionally, based on COR theory, employees' choice not to share knowledge is a way to maintain their own resources, while employees' choice not to engage in organizational citizenship behavior is due to considering the difficulty of resource acquisition. COR theory prioritizes protection and considers acquisition as secondary (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Therefore, narcissistic leadership has a greater impact on subordinate knowledge sharing behavior.

Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H2: Narcissistic leadership is significantly negatively correlated with subordinate workplace behaviors.

H2a: Narcissistic leadership is significantly negatively correlated with subordinate organizational citizenship behavior and knowledge sharing behavior (positive workplace behaviors), and significantly positively correlated with silence behavior (negative workplace behavior).

H2b: Compared with organizational citizenship behavior, the negative correlation between narcissistic leadership and knowledge sharing behavior is stronger.

(3) Narcissistic Leadership and Subordinate Work Stress

Work stress refers to a series of physiological, psychological, and behavioral response processes that explain the damage and threat to work behavior when individuals face stress. Based on COR theory, for individuals, the more valuable the resources, the more challenging it is to obtain them, and the more sensitive

they are to resource loss. Therefore, individuals' awareness of protecting their own resources is stronger than their awareness of acquiring redundant resources. When facing resource loss, individuals often first take action to inhibit continuous resource loss.

Howard et al. (2019) believe that due to the lack of help from leaders, narcissistic leaders may inhibit employees' knowledge sharing, making it difficult for employees to achieve resource "appreciation," making it difficult to complete work on time, thereby increasing employees' work stress. Campbell et al. (2010) found that because employees are executors of wills, they can only invest a large amount of resources to complete unrealistic goals or plans, which leads to serious loss of employee resources. Employees ultimately do not have enough resources to handle work tasks. When employees face work difficulties, the resources they possess cannot cope, leading to increased work stress (Liao et al., 2016). Additionally, when narcissistic leaders' authority is threatened, they often ignore and suppress subordinates, ultimately causing great work stress for subordinates.

Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H3: Narcissistic leadership is significantly positively correlated with subordinate work stress.

(4) Narcissistic Leadership and Subordinate Work Performance

According to COR theory, employees' work requires corresponding resource investment. When resource support cannot cope with work demands, employees will develop a sense of resource imbalance and feel that their due resources have been plundered, leading to negative work attitudes (Yao et al., 2019). The poor management behaviors caused by the negative traits of narcissistic leaders easily trigger resource imbalance between leaders and employees. First, the egoism trait of narcissistic leaders leads to excessive demands on subordinates, disregard for employee interests, and even stealing employees' achievements for their own benefit, plundering subordinates' work resources (Liao et al., 2016). Second, to maintain themselves as the focus of attention and emphasize their own superiority and authority, narcissistic leaders belittle subordinates and shift responsibility for failures to subordinates (Huang & Li, 2014), making subordinates' work resources potentially subject to deprivation at any time. Finally, the poor management behaviors of narcissistic leaders destroy the reciprocal relationship between superiors and subordinates, hindering subordinates' acquisition of work resources and making them perceive that leaders cannot provide sufficient resources and support. Thus, narcissistic leaders lack support for subordinate resources. When subordinates realize the scarcity of resources, they develop a sense of resource imbalance, which negatively affects work and subsequently impacts work performance. Based on the above analysis, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H4: Narcissistic leadership is significantly negatively correlated with subordinate work performance.

2.3.2 Positive Effects of Narcissistic Leadership

Narcissistic Leadership and Subordinate Innovation

Employee innovation is influenced by various factors, including leadership style and leader characteristics (Norouzinik et al., 2022). From the perspective of COR theory, first, from the perspective of resource transmission, Rosenthal et al. (2006) found that narcissists are often extremely adventurous, intelligent leaders who show full charisma and strong social interaction skills. It is precisely this adventurous spirit of narcissistic leaders that makes them unafraid of difficulties, exploring unknown fields with full confidence, and it is this transmission of psychological resources that enhances employees' courage and firm belief to overcome difficulties. Narcissistic leaders have visionary foresight and are enthusiastic about unconventional behaviors that can bring surprises (Maccoby, 2004). Innovation is a risky investment that cannot be separated from obsession, and narcissistic leaders' obsession with innovation also drives employees to persist in innovation. Second, from the perspective of resource accessibility, narcissistic leaders are good at focusing attention on themselves, thus being better able to integrate various resources and obtain more attention and support from company or group senior leaders, which brings faster improvement to teams, departments, or enterprises, and provides development opportunities and a better work and innovation environment for knowledge subordinates. Individuals will take positive actions to actively construct resources (Zhang & Luo, 2022). Therefore, subordinates under narcissistic leadership trigger their innovation through the acquisition of psychological resources and the improvement of the innovation environment. Additionally, the charismatic traits of narcissistic leaders give them strong impression management functions, making them willing to show their charismatic appearance, having a grand sense of self-importance, high confidence, and charisma, thereby attracting followers. Furthermore, the grand vision and innovative strategies created and displayed by narcissistic leaders attract innovative talents and motivate them to achieve this vision. Finally, from the perspective of subordinate evaluation and perception, the unique attractiveness of narcissistic leaders and their multi-faceted improvement of the organization and environment subtly influence subordinates' innovation willingness (Du & Li, 2018), and the enhancement of innovation willingness also promotes overall innovation performance. In summary, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H5: Narcissistic leadership is significantly positively correlated with subordinate innovation.

2.4.1 Situational Moderating Factors

(1) Cultural Background

Culture is a consciousness system formed by humans in the long historical process based on shared historical experiences and problem-solving processes. People in different cultural backgrounds have different ways of thinking and behaving, and thus the impact of leadership styles also differs (Zhang et al., 2020). Eastern and Western countries have many cultural differences, and these differences also affect the relationship between employees and leaders. For example, China, as a typical Eastern country, has characteristics of high power distance and high collectivism (Bao & Liao, 2019). Influenced by traditional culture, in organizational contexts, high power distance-oriented values play a more prominent role. In Chinese traditional culture that advocates “superiority of superiors and inferiority of subordinates,” respect for and obedience to leader authority are emphasized, which enables narcissistic leaders to have more absolute power, thus having a greater negative impact on employees’ work effectiveness. For Western culture, which emphasizes freedom and individualism, employees have fewer personal relationship constraints with leaders, pay more attention to protecting their own rights and interests, and can seek ways to protect their rights through systems and laws. Additionally, Eastern and Western cultures have different attitudes toward narcissism. The East emphasizes humility, and excessive flamboyance and exaggeration conflict with traditional culture. Western culture has a strong sense of heroism, encourages individuals to actively express themselves in organizations to stand out, and has a higher acceptance of narcissistic leadership. Based on this, this study believes that employees in different cultural backgrounds respond differently to narcissistic leadership, and due to the prevalence of Western individualism, compared with Eastern collectivism, the West is more tolerant of narcissistic leadership and finds it more charismatic.

H6: Cultural background can moderate the negative relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate overall effectiveness, and compared with Western cultural background, this relationship is stronger in Eastern cultural background.

(2) Industry Type

Capital intensity moderates the relationship between organizational policy and organizational performance, and capital intensity is closely related to industry type (Guthrie & Datta, 2008). This study divides sample industries into manufacturing and services. The basis for this division is: First, according to the distribution characteristics of sample data, industries in the sample are mainly these two categories and both meet the meta-analysis effect size quantity requirements; second, in many meta-analysis studies (Lu & Miao, 2018; Barari et al., 2021), industries are divided into these two categories; finally, by reviewing the empirical studies included in this meta-analysis, the sample characteristics of existing empirical studies can basically be classified according to this standard. For example, Weaver and Yancey (2010) studied “employees of a medium-sized manufacturing company in the Midwest,” classifying their sam-

ple industry as manufacturing, while Ghislieri et al. (2019) studied “602 nurses working in two hospitals in different towns in northwestern Italy,” classifying their sample industry as services. Manufacturing is an industry that transforms production resources into large tools, industrial products, and consumer products for people’s use according to market requirements. The service industry mainly provides service products, including information, logistics, transportation, consulting, education, culture, and other industries. The effectiveness of narcissistic leadership on employees differs across industries. In manufacturing, production requires stable planning and strict quality control. The adventurous spirit and unconventional investment of narcissistic leaders may not be conducive to production, leading to supply and demand disruption. In the service industry, which emphasizes the “customer first” concept, the negative traits of narcissistic leaders such as deception and egoism may provide employees with a bad role model. At the same time, employees in this industry mostly deal with people and are more sensitive to the egoism and deception behaviors exhibited by narcissistic leaders, producing stronger negative effects and potentially causing greater harm to the service industry. Thus, in different industries, the role played by narcissistic leadership also differs.

H7: Industry type can moderate the negative relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate overall effectiveness, and compared with manufacturing, this relationship is stronger in services.

(3) Organizational Attributes

Organizational nature has also been tested as an important factor in the process of leadership effectiveness (Chen et al., 2016). This study classifies organizational samples into two attributes: for-profit organizations and non-profit organizations. Non-profit organizations do not aim for profit, and their employees usually have relatively stable positions and salaries. Even if narcissistic leaders cause certain damage in non-profit organizations, the impact on employees is smaller and the organization’s bearing capacity is stronger. For-profit organizations aim for profit and have strong economic goal orientation (Leete, 2000). Employees in this type of organization have relatively unstable incomes and their jobs cannot be fully guaranteed. The destructive behaviors produced by narcissistic leaders will harm the enterprise and even affect its profitability. The reduction in revenue directly affects employees’ situations, so narcissistic leadership causes greater harm to for-profit organizations. Additionally, employees in for-profit organizations have stronger autonomy, relatively less strict organizational discipline, and stronger mobility, resulting in relatively weaker dependence on leaders. When facing unfair treatment from narcissistic leaders, they are more likely to cause negative attitudes and behaviors, that is, the negative impact is more significant. Thus, in different organizational types, employees’ autonomy in dealing with narcissistic leadership differs, and the effectiveness of narcissistic leadership also varies.

H8: Organizational attributes can moderate the negative relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate overall effectiveness, and compared with

non-profit organizations, this relationship is stronger in for-profit organizations.

(4) Employee Category

Based on employees' knowledge categories, this study divides organizational employees in the sample into non-knowledge workers and knowledge workers. Non-knowledge workers include employees with lower education levels, front-line staff in service industries such as hotels, and migrant workers. Knowledge workers refer to employees who need to process knowledge and information in their work, such as staff in high-tech, medical and pharmaceutical, internet, government agencies, and public institutions. Different categories of employees have different work demands and career development values, and thus their perception of and reaction to leadership styles differ. According to COR theory, compared with individuals or organizations with more resources, those lacking resources are more vulnerable in resource loss situations and have weaker ability to obtain resource growth (Chen et al., 2021). Compared with non-knowledge workers, knowledge workers have more resources themselves and have stronger stress resistance when facing resource deprivation behaviors of narcissistic leaders. Non-knowledge workers, due to their relative lack of resources, suffer more damage from resource deprivation under the poor management of narcissistic leaders, which subsequently affects their work effectiveness. Additionally, compared with non-knowledge workers, knowledge workers have better resource management abilities and are more aware of how to avoid the risk of leaders infringing on their own resources and protect their rights. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H9: Employee category can moderate the negative relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate overall effectiveness, and compared with knowledge workers, this relationship is stronger among non-knowledge workers.

(5) Measurement Tools

According to differences in narcissistic leadership measurement tools, this study divides different empirical research samples into studies using the Hochwarter and Thompson scale and studies using the NPI-16 scale. The Hochwarter and Thompson scale refers to the six-item scale developed by Hochwarter and Thompson (2012). The NPI-16 scale refers to the 16-item narcissistic leadership measurement scale modified by Ames et al. based on the NPI-40 measurement scale (Ames et al., 2006). These two scales differ in development logic, test samples, reliability and validity levels, etc. Additionally, the Hochwarter and Thompson scale measures leaders' narcissism levels from the employee's perspective, while the NPI-16 scale measures narcissism levels from the leader's own perspective. The differences between these two scales may have different effects on the relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate work outcomes. Since the NPI-16 scale includes 16 items, the assessment of narcissistic leadership may be more comprehensive and reliable. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H10: Measurement tools can moderate the negative relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate overall effectiveness, and compared with

using the Hochwarter and Thompson scale, this relationship is stronger when using the NPI-16 scale.

2.4.2 Demographic Characteristic Moderators

In addition, whether different demographic characteristics affect the effectiveness of narcissistic leadership deserves attention. Existing research points out that as individuals age, they not only accumulate more and more work experience but also experience changes in impulsivity and risk decision-making (Henninger et al., 2010). According to individual life cycles, individuals of different ages have different resources and pursue different needs at each stage. Therefore, employees of different ages may differ in their attitudes, investment, and behaviors toward work within organizations (Goštautaitė & Bučiūnienė, 2015). Younger employees have less work experience and are more sensitive to external matters. With maturity and increased experience, older employees not only reduce impulsive manifestations such as attentional impulsivity, behavioral impulsivity, and non-planning but also tend to make risk-averse behaviors, making behavioral decisions after careful consideration (Rolison et al., 2012; Yu et al., 2019). Based on this, narcissistic leadership may have differential impacts on employees of different ages, but whether employee age truly has a moderating effect on narcissistic leadership effectiveness and the strength of the impact are currently unknown.

Additionally, existing research points out that individuals differ in stress coping strategies and aggressive behavior tendencies (Eagly & Steffen, 1986). When individuals face stress or conflict situations, men tend to choose aggressive coping strategies, while women tend to choose avoidance and prosocial coping strategies, trying to maintain a relatively harmonious relationship with the outside world (Rose & Asher, 1999; Zhang & Zhang, 2003). Therefore, employees of different genders may adopt different coping strategies when facing the harm and suppression of narcissistic leaders. Existing research has found gender differences among narcissistic leaders (Kraft, 2022), but there is no direct evidence in previous research on whether employee gender has a significant moderating effect on narcissistic leadership effectiveness.

The level of employee education, to a certain extent, represents their knowledge level. Employees with higher education have more knowledge and receive more education. Employees with different education levels differ in cognition, values, and their own resources. The higher the education level, the greater the amount of knowledge, the relatively more resources they possess, the broader their vision, and thus the stronger their ability to process information and make decisions (Su et al., 2021). However, whether narcissistic leadership has differential impacts on employees with different education levels has no direct evidence in previous research. In summary, since the moderating effects of demographic characteristics are relatively rare in meta-analysis, this study does not propose

specific hypotheses but instead proposes the following research question:

Q1: Do demographic characteristics (employee age, gender, and education level) play a significant moderating role in the relationship between narcissistic leadership and its outcome variables? What are the differences in the strength of narcissistic leadership effectiveness on employees of different ages, genders, and education levels?

2.5 Process Mechanism of Narcissistic Leadership's Two-Sided Effects: The Mediation of Psychological Safety and Creative Self-Efficacy

First, from a data perspective, through literature review and induction, among the mediating variables in existing research on the relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate effectiveness, psychological safety and creative self-efficacy are the two variables with the largest quantities and meet the data requirements for full-model meta-analytic structural equation modeling. Second, from a theoretical perspective, this study is based on COR theory, and both psychological safety and creative self-efficacy are psychological-level variables closely related to individual psychological resources. COR theory provides a strong theoretical support for explaining their mechanism of action in the relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate effectiveness. Finally, from a research perspective, although psychological safety and creative self-efficacy both belong to the category of psychological resources, they represent two different dimensions of psychological cognition and intrinsic motivation, respectively. Therefore, they can be used to deeply explore the internal mechanisms through which narcissistic leadership produces two-sided effects on subordinate effectiveness from two different perspectives of cognition and motivation. Therefore, this study selects psychological safety and creative self-efficacy as mediating variables for narcissistic leadership's impact on subordinate effectiveness.

From a cognitive perspective, psychological safety emphasizes an individual's belief that they can show and express themselves without fear of negative consequences (Kahn, 1990), highlighting the importance of individual cognition. Psychological safety can manifest as a psychological state influenced by the environment, and the environment can have a significant impact on the establishment of safety (Ma & Wang, 2023). When individuals perceive environmental factors as supportive and positive, they will develop higher psychological safety; conversely, if they perceive negative or threatening factors, psychological safety will decrease. By influencing individual judgment through perception of the external environment, it prompts them to adjust their own behavior. Psychological safety can promote employees to work better (including more work engagement) and produce positive behavioral outcomes (Agarwal & Farndale, 2017). The belittling and self-oriented leadership style shown by narcissistic

leaders is unlikely to create a positive work environment for employees, thus hindering the establishment of employees' psychological safety. Based on COR theory, the egoism, deception, and suppression of others by narcissistic leaders will seriously damage subordinate resources, leading to subordinate resource loss. Employees perceive threats and losses, thereby reducing their psychological safety. In this situation, subordinates may adopt defensive strategies due to lack of psychological safety, such as reducing work engagement and enthusiasm, thereby affecting their work effectiveness. Brown and Leigh (1996) also showed that employees' lower psychological safety negatively affects their work attitudes and performance. In summary, narcissistic leadership produces negative effects by reducing subordinates' psychological cognitive level.

On the other hand, narcissistic leadership research places great emphasis on its relationship with innovation, and in most studies, narcissistic leadership promotes innovation through creative self-efficacy (Zhang et al., 2021), because confidence in innovation is very important for innovation. The charismatic traits, confidence, and adventurous spirit of narcissistic leaders are all qualities needed for innovation. These traits can inspire subordinates and enhance their psychological resources and innovation confidence, that is, creative self-efficacy, thereby promoting subordinate innovation. Therefore, narcissistic leadership can produce positive effects by promoting employees' creative self-efficacy. Additionally, existing empirical literature has confirmed that psychological safety and creative self-efficacy play important mediating roles in the process of narcissistic leadership affecting subordinate effectiveness. In summary, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H11a: Employees' psychological safety mediates the relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate effectiveness, and narcissistic leadership negatively affects subordinate work attitudes, behaviors, and performance through employees' psychological safety.

H11b: Employees' creative self-efficacy mediates the relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate effectiveness, and narcissistic leadership positively affects subordinate innovation through employees' creative self-efficacy.

3 Research Methods

This study follows the meta-analysis operation procedure of Lipsey and Wilson (2001), including the following steps:

3.1 Literature Search and Screening

The following are the literature search methods for this study: (1) Use Web of Science, Google Scholar, CNKI, etc. as retrieval databases to download literature with themes, abstracts, or keywords including “自恋型领导” (narcissistic leadership), “自恋领导” (narcissistic leader), “领导自恋” (leader narcissism), “自恋

CEO” (narcissistic CEO), “CEO 自恋” (CEO narcissism), “自恋管理者” (narcissistic manager), or English terms “TS=(narcissistic leadership OR narcissistic leader OR leader narcissism OR narcissistic CEO OR CEO narcissism OR manager narcissism OR narcissistic employer).” Literature retrieval was conducted up to December 2023. (2) Retrieve important journals such as *Management World*, *Management Review*, etc. (3) Contact authors via email to obtain relevant research results that have been completed but not yet published. Then, combine the research direction and meta-analysis testing norms to screen available literature. This study adopted the following criteria: (1) Disciplines are limited to management, leadership, and several other fields; (2) Research focuses on the relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate work effectiveness; (3) Literature must include key data required for meta-analysis, such as r , p , β , etc., and corresponding sample sizes; (4) Delete non-empirical research such as literature reviews and case studies. According to these criteria, literature that does not meet the conditions was excluded from the study. Finally, this study compiled a total of 67 Chinese and English literature sources (25 Chinese literature, 42 English literature), including 73 independent empirical studies, 30,493 samples, and a total of 84 effect sizes. Among them, literature on subordinate work attitudes, workplace behaviors, work stress, work performance, and innovation includes 22, 32, 8, 13, and 7 articles, respectively. The literature search and screening process is shown in Figure 1 [Figure 1: see original paper].

3.2 Data Coding

During the data coding process, it is necessary to thoroughly read the literature and extract important information. Although data coding is simple to operate, the information is complex and the workload is heavy. Moreover, the classification of moderating variables involves a certain degree of subjectivity and may have errors. Therefore, before formal coding, this study developed a coding manual. To ensure coding accuracy, two organizational management scholars coded independently, carefully reading the literature, extracting and classifying literature information to form coding tables. The most important information in literature coding includes descriptive items and statistical items of effect sizes. The former includes not only basic information such as publication and title but also characteristic information such as core variables and research subjects. The latter includes statistical data centered on r . One independent empirical study is one coding unit. If multiple effect sizes in one study come from different sample populations, these multiple effect sizes are coded multiple times. For outcome variables, turnover intention, job satisfaction, and organizational cynicism are categorized as work attitudes. Since turnover intention and organizational cynicism are negative work attitudes, reverse coding is required when coding them as work attitudes. Knowledge sharing behavior, silence behavior, and organizational citizenship behavior are categorized as workplace behaviors, and silence behavior is also reverse-coded. Additionally, this study extracted two possible mediating variables and eight potential moderating factors from

the sample information of these empirical studies. The mediating variables include psychological safety and creative self-efficacy. The moderating variables include cultural background, industry type, organizational attributes, employee category, measurement tools, employee gender, employee age, and employee education level. Finally, coding was performed.

After the first coding was completed, cross-checking was conducted, with a consistency rate of 88.93%. Inconsistent content was mainly caused by coding errors and subjective judgment differences. The two coders handled these inconsistencies by correcting errors and reaching consensus through discussion.

3.3 Meta-Analysis Process

This study used Comprehensive Meta Analysis (CMA) 3.0 and Mplus 8.0 software to analyze and test the data. CMA 3.0 software is mainly used for main effect analysis and moderating effect analysis. Before using CMA 3.0, the coded data were preprocessed. To reduce measurement errors caused by scale inconsistency, measurement errors of effect sizes were corrected through reliability coefficients. For cases where individual variable reliability was missing in some studies, the original text was first checked to see if reliability was reported. If not reported, it was replaced by the weighted reliability of other study samples using the same scale (Wang et al., 2022). If there was no same scale, the missing reliability was replaced by the weighted mean reliability of other studies. Then, sample data and corrected correlation coefficients were entered into CMA 3.0 software. Additionally, this study followed the TSMASEM (Two-stage Meta-analytic SEM) testing approach based on random effects, including two stages: constructing a correlation coefficient matrix and fitting a structural equation model using the correlation coefficient matrix (Cheung & Chan, 2009), and used Mplus 8.0 for meta-analytic structural equation modeling and mediation testing. The data processing mainly included publication bias analysis, homogeneity testing, main effect testing, mediation testing, and moderation testing.

4.1 Publication Bias Analysis

This study collected Chinese and English literature on narcissistic leadership and conducted statistical analysis. Then, the fail-safe N was used to quantitatively detect publication bias issues in the corresponding literature. The critical value for fail-safe N is $5k+10$. When the fail-safe N is less than $5k+10$, it indicates that there may be serious publication bias. Conversely, the larger the fail-safe N, the smaller the possibility of publication bias (Zhang et al., 2020; Orwin, 1983). As shown in Table 1, publication bias analysis was conducted on the corresponding relationships between narcissistic leadership and outcome variables. The obtained fail-safe N values all greatly exceeded the critical value of $5k+10$, indicating that the risk of publication bias in the selected literature of this study is small.

Table 1 Publication Bias Analysis Results

Narcissistic Leadership | Fail-safe N | Number of unpublished studies needed (5k+10)

Job satisfaction
 Turnover intention
 Organizational cynicism
 Knowledge sharing behavior
 Silence behavior
 Organizational citizenship behavior

Note: Fail-safe N is the fail-safe coefficient; k is the number of effect sizes.

4.2 Homogeneity Testing and Main Effect Analysis

Homogeneity testing is a data analysis procedure that aggregates and statistically analyzes the results of collected research data to test their rationality. In meta-analysis, to avoid the possibility that the extracted sample effect values all come from the same population, two quantitative methods are generally used: the homogeneity test Q statistic and the proportion of true effect size variance to observed variance, I^2 . When the p-value is significant and $Q > k-1$ and $I^2 > 0.75$, the empirical research sample is heterogeneous, and a random effects model (R) is adopted. Otherwise, if the above two conditions are not met, a fixed effects model (F) is adopted. The homogeneity test results are shown in Table 2. Except for organizational citizenship behavior and work stress, whose I^2 values are 35.63 and 62.53 respectively (both less than 75%, requiring a fixed effects model), the rest meet the conditions and adopt a random effects model.

The results in Table 2 show that rge, rwa, rwb, ri, rjp, and rwp are -0.23, -0.34, -0.24, 0.41, 0.23, and -0.21, respectively, and the point estimates all reach significance levels (95% confidence intervals do not include 0). That is, narcissistic leadership has an overall negative impact on subordinate effectiveness, but specifically, it has negative impacts on subordinates' work attitudes, workplace behaviors, and work performance, while having positive impacts on subordinate work stress and innovation. Therefore, hypotheses H1, H2, H3, H4, and H5 are all supported. Specifically: In terms of work attitudes, rws, rtt, and roc are -0.24, 0.28, and 0.46, respectively, and the point estimates all reach significance levels. That is, narcissistic leadership has a negative impact on subordinate job satisfaction and positive impacts on subordinate turnover intention and organizational cynicism. Among them, $roc = 0.46 > rtt = 0.28$ ($Q_{bt} = 27.12$, $df(Q) = 1$), and the differences all reach significance levels ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, hypotheses H1a and H1b are supported. In terms of workplace behaviors, except for organizational citizenship behavior which uses a fixed effects model, the rest use random effects models. rksb, rsb, and rocb are -0.36, 0.25, and -0.17, respectively, and the point estimates all reach significance levels. That is, narcissistic leadership has negative impacts on subordinate knowledge sharing behavior and organizational citizenship behavior, and a positive impact on sub-

ordinate silence behavior. Among them, $|r_{ksb}| = 0.36 > |r_{ocb}| = 0.17$ ($Q_{bt} = 15.94$, $df(Q) = 1$), and the differences all reach significance levels. Therefore, hypotheses H2a and H2b are supported. Among the nine specific indicators of the five outcome categories, narcissistic leadership has relatively large impacts on subordinate innovation ($r_i = 0.41$), organizational cynicism ($r_{oc} = 0.46$), and knowledge sharing behavior ($r_{ksb} = -0.36$) (according to empirical standards in social science research, when $|r| \geq 0.40$, variables have a strong correlation; when $0.25 \leq |r| \leq 0.40$, variables have a moderate correlation; when $|r| \leq 0.25$, variables have a weak correlation).

Table 2 Homogeneity Testing and Main Effect Analysis Results

Narcissistic Leadership Effectiveness | Subordinate Overall Effectiveness | Job satisfaction | Turnover intention | Organizational cynicism | Knowledge sharing behavior | Silence behavior | Organizational citizenship behavior

Note: k is the number of effect sizes; N is the number of independent samples; R and F refer to random and fixed effects models, respectively; Q is the homogeneity test statistic; $df(Q)$ is degrees of freedom; I^2 is the proportion of true effect size variance to observed variance; τ^2 is the proportion of between-study variance used for weight calculation; SE is standard error; SD is standard deviation; Z is the two-tailed test statistic. The same applies below.

4.3 Situational Factor Moderation Analysis

Due to lack of relevant data, it is impossible to compare and analyze moderating variables across the two different categories of positive and negative effects of narcissistic leadership. Therefore, only the moderating effect test of the relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate overall effectiveness is conducted. As shown in Table 3, this study selected five situational moderating variables to test the moderating effect on the relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate work effectiveness: cultural background, industry type, organizational attributes, employee category, and measurement tools. The results are as follows: (1) Cultural background has no significant moderating effect on the relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate work outcomes ($p > 0.05$), so hypothesis H6 is not supported. (2) Industry type has a significant moderating effect on the relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate work outcomes ($Q = 7.75$, $p < 0.05$), and $|r_{mi}| = |-0.25| > |r_{si}| = |-0.19|$, indicating that compared with services, the negative impact of narcissistic leadership is stronger in manufacturing. Therefore, hypothesis H7 is partially supported. (3) Organizational attributes have a significant moderating effect on the relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate work outcomes ($Q = 16.25$, $p < 0.05$), and $|r_{fpo}| = |-0.16| > |r_{npo}| = |-0.10|$, indicating that compared with non-profit organizations, narcissistic leadership has a stronger negative impact on subordinate work outcomes in for-profit organizations. Therefore, hypothesis H8 is supported. (4) Employee category has a significant moderating effect on the relationship between narcissistic leadership

and subordinate work outcomes ($Q = 7.72, p < 0.05$), and $|rkw| = |-0.19| < |rnkw| = |-0.25|$, indicating that compared with knowledge workers, narcissistic leadership has a stronger negative impact on non-knowledge workers. Therefore, hypothesis H9 is supported. (5) Measurement tools have a significant moderating effect on the relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate work outcomes ($Q = 17.63, p < 0.05$), and $|rht| = |-0.25| > |rnpi| = |-0.19|$, indicating that compared with the NPI-16 scale, the negative impact of narcissistic leadership is stronger when measured using the Hochwarter and Thompson scale. Therefore, hypothesis H10 is partially supported.

In summary, except for cultural background, industry type, organizational attributes, employee category, and measurement tools can all significantly moderate the relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate work outcomes. That is, hypothesis H6 is not supported, hypotheses H7 and H10 are partially supported, and hypotheses H8 and H9 are supported. The non-support of hypothesis H6 indicates that cultural background cannot significantly moderate the impact of narcissistic leadership on subordinate work effectiveness, possibly because Eastern and Western cultural exchanges are becoming increasingly close, and individualism is gradually being accepted domestically, leading to the gradual reduction of cultural background's influence. The partial support of hypothesis H7 indicates that the negative impact of narcissistic leadership on manufacturing is stronger than on services, possibly because compared with services where employees have relatively high autonomy, narcissistic leadership has a greater negative impact on manufacturing with its high discipline and high repetitiveness. The partial support of hypothesis H10 indicates that the negative impact of narcissistic leadership is stronger when using the Hochwarter and Thompson scale, possibly because this scale involves employee evaluation of leaders, which is more objective and accurate.

Table 3 Situational Factor Moderation Analysis Results

Homogeneity Testing | Main Effect Analysis

Note: re and rw refer to the meta-analytic effect values of the relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate overall effectiveness in Eastern and Western countries under the influence of cultural background, respectively; rsi and rmi refer to the meta-analytic effect values of the relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate overall effectiveness in services and manufacturing under industry type classification, respectively; rfpo and rnpo refer to the meta-analytic effect values of the relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate overall effectiveness in for-profit and non-profit organizations under organizational attribute classification, respectively; rkw and rnkw refer to the meta-analytic effect values of the relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate overall effectiveness in knowledge workers and non-knowledge workers under employee category classification, respectively; rht and rnpi refer to the meta-analytic effect values of the relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate overall effectiveness using the Hochwarter and Thompson scale and NPI-16 scale under measurement tool classification, respectively.

4.4 Demographic Characteristic Moderation Analysis

As shown in Table 4, this study also tested the moderating effects of three demographic characteristic moderating variables—employee age, gender, and education level—on the relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate work outcomes. Using average age, female proportion, and proportion of bachelor's degree or above as predictor variables for meta-regression analysis, the results show: (1) Employee age has no significant moderating effect on the relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate work outcomes ($p = 0.124 > 0.05$, 95% confidence interval includes 0). (2) Employee gender has no significant moderating effect on the relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate work outcomes ($p = 0.186 > 0.05$, 95% confidence interval includes 0). (3) Employee education level has a significant moderating effect on the relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate work outcomes ($p = 0.006 < 0.05$, 95% confidence interval does not include 0), and it is a negative correlation (coefficient = -0.0036), indicating that high education level can weaken the negative impact of narcissistic leadership, and narcissistic leadership has a stronger negative impact on low-education employees.

Table 4 Moderating Effects of Demographic Characteristics
Coefficient | 95%CI Lower Limit | 95%CI Upper Limit

4.5 Mediation Testing

Mediation effect testing was conducted using Meta-analysis of Structural Equation Modeling (MASEM) (Cheung, 2019). MASEM estimation includes two stages. In the first stage, a pooled correlation matrix is obtained through multivariate meta-analysis methods. In the second stage, the pooled correlation matrix is input into a structural equation model to test the mediation model. This study tests the mediation effect of narcissistic leadership's two-sided effects.

This study tests the possible mediation effects of employees' psychological safety and creative self-efficacy in the relationship between narcissistic leadership and various indicators of subordinate effectiveness. The correlation matrix obtained through meta-analysis and sample sizes are used (see Table 5), where each meta-analytic effect size is derived from other literature and calculations in this study. The pooled correlation coefficient matrix was then imported into Mplus 8.0 for mediation effect testing, using the harmonic mean of the samples included in the meta-analysis ($N = 2,436$) as the sample size for judging the fit between the theoretical model and the actual model (Viswesvaran & Ones, 1995).

Table 5 Correlation Coefficient Matrix for Two-Sided Effects

Narcissistic Leadership | Psychological Safety | Creative Self-Efficacy | Job Satisfaction | Knowledge Sharing Behavior

Note: a Frazier, Fainshmidt, Klinger, Pezeshkan, & Vacheva (2017); b Liu, Jiang, Shalley, Keem & Zhou, J. (2016); c Kooij, Jansen, Dikkers, & Lange (2010); d Bowling, Khazon, Meyer, & Burrus (2015); e Lanaj, Chang, & Johnson (2012); f Lim (2021); g Harari, Reaves, & Viswesvaran (2016); unmarked correlation coefficients, independent sample numbers, and total sample sizes were calculated by this study.

Figure 2 [Figure 2: see original paper] shows the path coefficient results of the meta-analytic structural equation model, testing the mediation model of narcissistic leadership affecting subordinate effectiveness through employees' psychological safety and creative self-efficacy. Model fit indices: RMSEA = 0.85, SRMR = 0.09, CFI = 0.49. The path coefficient diagram shows that narcissistic leadership negatively and significantly affects employees' psychological safety ($\beta = -0.43$, $p < 0.001$). Employees' psychological safety is positively correlated with their job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.47$, $p < 0.001$), knowledge sharing behavior ($\beta = 0.40$, $p < 0.001$), and work performance ($\beta = 0.33$, $p < 0.001$), and negatively correlated with innovation ($\beta = -0.01$, $p > 0.05$). Narcissistic leadership positively and significantly affects employees' creative self-efficacy ($\beta = 0.35$, $p < 0.001$). Employees' creative self-efficacy is positively correlated with their job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.15$, $p < 0.001$), knowledge sharing behavior ($\beta = 0.30$, $p < 0.001$), work performance ($\beta = 0.26$, $p < 0.001$), and innovation ($\beta = 0.35$, $p < 0.001$).

Figure 2 Path Coefficient Diagram

Note: *** indicates $p < 0.001$

As shown in Table 6, in the study of the influence mechanism of narcissistic leadership on subordinate effectiveness, through mediation effect analysis, it can be observed that narcissistic leadership has significant negative effects on subordinate work performance ($\beta = -0.14$, $p < 0.05$, 95% confidence interval does not include 0, the same below), knowledge sharing behavior ($\beta = -0.17$, $p < 0.05$), and job satisfaction ($\beta = -0.20$, $p < 0.05$) through employees' psychological safety, but has no significant effect on subordinate innovation ($\beta = 0.00$, $p > 0.05$). Additionally, narcissistic leadership has positive effects on subordinate work performance ($\beta = 0.09$, $p < 0.05$), knowledge sharing behavior ($\beta = 0.10$, $p < 0.05$), job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.05$, $p < 0.05$), and innovation ($\beta = 0.12$, $p < 0.05$) through employees' creative self-efficacy. The total indirect effect analysis results show that narcissistic leadership has negative effects on subordinate work performance ($\beta = -0.05$, $p < 0.05$), knowledge sharing behavior ($\beta = -0.07$, $p < 0.05$), and job satisfaction ($\beta = -0.15$, $p < 0.05$), while promoting subordinate innovation ($\beta = 0.13$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that narcissistic leadership produces two-sided effects through two different pathways of cognition (psychological safety) and motivation (creative self-efficacy). Specifically, narcissistic leadership produces negative effects by weakening employees' psychological safety, while producing positive effects by enhancing employees' creative self-efficacy. Therefore, research hypotheses H11a and H11b are supported.

Table 6 Indirect Effect Estimates

Bootstrap 95% CI

Note: β is the mediation effect size; p is the significance level; SE is standard error; Z is the two-tailed test statistic; 95% CI represents the 95% confidence interval of β . NL = Narcissistic Leadership; PS = Psychological Safety; CSE = Creative Self-Efficacy; JP = Work Performance; KSB = Knowledge Sharing Behavior; JS = Job Satisfaction; IN = Innovation.

5 Research Conclusions and Discussion

Based on domestic and foreign scholars' research on narcissistic leadership, focusing on the individual subordinate level, this study conducted tests and summaries through the organization and analysis of relevant empirical studies, drawing the following stage conclusions: (1) Narcissistic leadership has a two-sided effect. Specifically, this leadership style has negative effects on subordinate work attitudes, behaviors, and performance, while increasing subordinate work stress, but has a positive effect on subordinate innovation. (2) Narcissistic leadership is more likely to harm subordinate knowledge sharing behavior, leading them to develop organizational cynicism, but its effect on subordinate innovation is particularly prominent. (3) Industry type, organizational attributes, employee category, employee education level, and measurement tools moderate the process of narcissistic leadership's impact on subordinate work effectiveness. This leadership style is particularly harmful to non-knowledge, low-education employees in manufacturing enterprises. Additionally, there is no significant difference in narcissistic leadership effectiveness across different cultural backgrounds. (4) The two-sided effects of narcissistic leadership are stably realized through employees' psychological safety and creative self-efficacy, that is, narcissistic leadership produces negative effects by affecting employees' psychological safety and positive effects by affecting employees' creative self-efficacy. The specific analysis is as follows:

5.1 Main Effects of Narcissistic Leadership on Subordinate Effectiveness

Is narcissistic leadership truly woe-fortune interdependent? This study shows that narcissistic leadership has a two-sided effect, manifested in that this leadership style inhibits subordinate work attitudes, behaviors, and performance, increases their work stress, but promotes their innovation. Specifically: (1) In terms of work attitudes, because narcissistic leaders are too self-centered and do not properly address employees' work needs and feedback, it is not conducive to building employees' identification with leaders, leading to negative work attitudes. Additionally, due to the egoism trait of narcissistic leaders, who value their own interests highly and have low empathy for employees, they do not feel ashamed of behaviors that deprive employees of their interests (Liao et al., 2016). The strong vanity of narcissistic leaders makes them attribute organizational success more to themselves (Ruan & Fu, 2022) and blame subordinates

for failures. When subordinates perceive an imbalance between their resource input and resource acquisition, their identification with narcissistic leaders will decrease, showing a series of negative work attitudes (Zhang et al., 2017). (2) In terms of workplace behaviors, subordinates have adopted a series of defensive behaviors for the protection of resources. Because narcissistic leaders strongly emphasize their own central position, once subordinates perform too well or even outshine the leader's authority, narcissistic leaders will emotionally suppress and intellectually inhibit employees out of jealousy. Additionally, narcissistic leaders are self-centered and often think highly of themselves, so subordinates' "unpleasant truths" are often misunderstood as challenging the leader's authority, followed by the leader's targeting. In this situation, employees often adopt defensive workplace behaviors to protect themselves. (3) In terms of subordinate work performance, narcissistic leaders are self-centered and do not attach great importance to subordinates' work needs and values, leading to employees lacking resource support during work processes and being unable to use sufficient resources and information to solve problems, ultimately resulting in unsatisfactory performance output. Furthermore, because the performance of employees' efforts cannot be appreciated and incentivized with resources by narcissistic leaders, this resource imbalance easily leads to subordinates no longer being willing to make efforts to improve performance. (4) In terms of subordinate work stress, narcissistic leaders think highly of themselves and always demand employees in an idealized state, which invisibly increases pressure on employees in actual work. Second, narcissistic leaders tend to attribute blame to others and show a relatively harsh attitude toward subordinates' mistakes. This poor work environment more easily leads to employees' work tension and stress. Additionally, because narcissistic leaders do not attach importance to subordinate needs, leading to subordinates lacking resource support, when employees face work difficulties, the resources they possess cannot cope, resulting in work stress. (5) Narcissistic leadership is not without merit; at least it can promote employee innovation. This finding also supports the research results of Kraft (2022). Because investment can bring huge wealth and competitive advantages to narcissistic leaders, narcissistic leaders are willing to invest and have their own unique insights into investment (Liao et al., 2016), which is attributed to their adventurous spirit and forward-looking planning for the enterprise. Narcissistic leaders not only pursue their own sense of superiority but also, to highlight their own strength, lead the enterprise to obtain a sense of superiority. Therefore, high-yield investment in technological innovation that can seize opportunities for enterprise leadership is favored by narcissistic leaders, and they consequently place expectations and importance on employees' innovation.

Narcissistic leadership is more likely to harm subordinate knowledge sharing behavior, leading them to develop organizational cynicism, but has a particularly prominent positive impact on subordinate innovation. Knowledge sharing behavior is a voluntary behavior of knowledge owners, but the resource plundering of narcissistic leaders makes employees unable to obtain corresponding resource

returns and supplements, thereby reducing their knowledge sharing willingness. Coupled with narcissistic leaders' disregard for subordinate needs and a series of suppression and deception behaviors, it will further trigger employees' negative and disappointed organizational cynicism emotions, seriously affecting employees' work enthusiasm. But on the other hand, narcissistic leadership has a strong promoting effect on innovation. This finding further supplements and enriches the research of Lin et al. (2022) on the relationship between leadership style and employee innovation, finding that among many leadership styles (transactional leadership, ethical leadership, transformational leadership, servant leadership, empowering leadership, etc.), narcissistic leadership has a relatively prominent promoting effect on employee innovation. First, from a resource perspective, narcissistic leaders can seek to obtain valuable resources by building relationships with followers who provide resources (Norouzinik et al., 2022). For narcissistic leaders, innovation is a valuable resource that means opportunity grasping. Narcissistic leaders can use their strong social interaction skills and self-promotion to meet and attract many innovative talents. Innovative talents are the sharp sword for narcissistic leaders to overcome obstacles and make their enterprises stand out, so they value subordinate innovation. Narcissistic leaders are not only good at attracting talents but also able to stimulate their innovation potential after obtaining them, and are willing to provide sufficient innovation resources for subordinates. Due to the charismatic traits of narcissistic leaders, they receive much attention, and narcissistic leaders are also willing to show themselves to superiors to gain their appreciation, enabling them to obtain more attention, support, and resources. Therefore, they can integrate sufficient resources to provide development opportunities and create a better work and innovation environment for subordinates. That is, narcissistic leaders can attract innovative talents through their own charisma and provide a good innovation environment for subordinates. Additionally, employee innovation behavior, as spontaneous behavior, has high requirements for employees' knowledge reserves due to its high challenge and risk. The confidence and support provided by leaders are particularly important (Wang & Chang, 2017). Narcissistic leaders inspire and drive subordinates to achieve higher levels of success through charismatic messages that resonate with subordinates' core values. Narcissistic leaders can inspire employees with their own charisma. Their obsession with innovation investment highly matches subordinate innovation, and it is precisely this firmness that gives subordinates confidence. Finally, narcissistic leaders, with their superb negotiation skills and ability to focus attention, enhance employees' firmness and confidence, inspire employees' courage when facing challenges, and make subordinates believe they can achieve success. This transmission of psychological resources can make subordinates develop admiration and identification with narcissistic leaders, making them willing to follow leaders to explore innovation, while stimulating employees' innovation willingness. The enhancement of innovation willingness also promotes innovation (Wang & Chang, 2017).

5.2 Moderating Variables in the Relationship Between Narcissistic Leadership and Subordinate Effectiveness

When is narcissistic leadership woe-fortune interdependent? This study found that industry type, organizational attributes, employee category, employee education level, and measurement tools can significantly moderate the relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate work outcomes. Specifically: (1) Compared with services, the negative impact of narcissistic leadership is stronger in manufacturing. This is because manufacturing is a relatively stable and highly repetitive industry type with low employee autonomy, high work intensity, and poor work environment. In this rule-bound, high-pressure work environment, employees are already tired and vulnerable, so the negative traits of narcissistic leaders such as egoism and suppression of others cause greater harm to employees in this industry. Service industry employees have higher autonomy, better work environment, often deal with people, have flexible work, and are more adaptable, making them relatively more accepting of the harm caused by narcissistic leaders. This conclusion also confirms that industry characteristics affect the relationship between leadership behavior and outcome variables (Lyubykh et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2021). (2) Compared with non-profit organizations, narcissistic leadership has a stronger destructive effect on subordinate work effectiveness in for-profit organizations. This is because for-profit organizations aim for profit, and employees in this type of organization have relatively unstable incomes and their jobs cannot be fully guaranteed. The destructive behaviors produced by narcissistic leaders will harm the enterprise and even affect its profitability. The reduction in revenue directly affects employees' situations, so narcissistic leadership causes greater harm to for-profit organizations. Additionally, employees in for-profit organizations have stronger autonomy, relatively less strict organizational discipline, and stronger mobility, resulting in relatively weaker dependence on leaders. When facing unfair treatment from narcissistic leaders, they are more likely to have the mentality of "if you don't keep me here, there are other places that will." (3) Compared with knowledge workers, narcissistic leadership causes greater harm to non-knowledge workers. First, knowledge workers have relatively stronger psychological endurance and stress resistance. When facing unfair treatment from narcissistic leaders, they can regulate their emotions well and prove themselves with strength. Second, knowledge workers have stronger resource management abilities, and their work results are not easily plundered, enabling them to adopt avoidance methods and protect their rights in appropriate ways when facing resource hindering and plundering behaviors of narcissistic leaders. Finally, according to COR theory, employees with more resources have stronger endurance when resisting resource plundering (Du & Li, 2018). Knowledge workers have received higher education and possess more information, connections, and other resources. When facing poor management by narcissistic leaders, they have more choices and alternatives for work, thus having stronger endurance for poor management. Therefore, narcissistic leadership causes greater harm to non-knowledge workers. (4) Compared with high-education employees, narcissistic leadership causes greater

harm to low-education employees. Higher education level represents higher education, more knowledge, and relatively more resources. Based on COR theory, individuals with more resources have stronger abilities to protect their own resources and manage resources, which is more conducive to coping with the harm of narcissistic leadership (Su et al., 2021). Additionally, this finding further supports the moderating effect of employee category, because high-education employees largely represent knowledge workers, while low-education employees partially overlap with non-knowledge workers. Therefore, this finding can echo and corroborate previous findings. (5) Compared with the NPI-16 scale, the negative impact of narcissistic leadership is stronger when using the Hochwarter and Thompson scale. This is because the NPI-16 scale uses leader self-report to measure narcissism levels, and social desirability issues often cause leaders not to report relevant data truthfully in self-evaluation. The Hochwarter and Thompson scale uses subordinate evaluation of leaders to measure leader narcissism levels, which is more objective and accurate. (6) The reason why cultural background cannot moderate the relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate work effectiveness may be: First, as a new field of leadership research, narcissistic leadership started earlier in the West with more complete theoretical foundations, while China's definition and measurement of narcissistic leadership concepts are mostly based on Western research, thus having high similarity. Second, most literature used for data analysis in this study starts from personality traits, and measurement also starts from the personality trait perspective, lacking analysis of surrounding environmental influence. Finally, with reform and opening up, Eastern and Western cultural exchanges are becoming increasingly close, and individualism is more accepted domestically. People are also more tolerant of flamboyant and capable individuals, and acceptance of narcissistic leadership has increased accordingly.

Employee gender and age have no significant impact on the relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate work effectiveness. This finding breaks our conventional understanding, because generally, gender differences and age differences affect our cognition and ways of viewing things, and relevant research has proven that there are gender differences among narcissistic leaders (Kraft, 2022). However, this study shows that employee gender and age cannot moderate the relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate work effectiveness. The reasons are: First, in terms of gender, it may be due to long-standing stereotypes that make people feel that men and women have obviously different coping methods when facing stress or conflict situations. However, with social development, the differences between men and women are gradually narrowing. Women are also slowly learning to fight back when facing stress or damage, rather than just avoiding, especially modern women whose abilities have surpassed many men. Men are no longer the stereotypical impulsive representatives; they also think deeply and make correct choices when encountering matters. Therefore, when facing the egoism, damage, and suppression behaviors of narcissistic leaders, both male and female employees will show the same negative work feedback, with no significant difference between the two. This

finding also enriches the role of the demographic variable of gender in narcissistic leadership research. Second, in terms of age, although with age growth, employees may differ in their attitudes, investment, and behaviors toward work within organizations, both young and older employees are enterprise employees. Their differences are at most reflected in work experience and working hours, but these have little impact on dealing with the harm of narcissistic leaders. Narcissistic leadership is a typical destructive leadership style, and its extreme egoism, deception, and suppression behaviors will cause harm to employees. However, regardless of age, employees will ultimately protect their own resources and interests. Therefore, employee age will not become a significant moderating factor in the relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate effectiveness.

5.3 Mediating Mechanism of Narcissistic Leadership's Two-Sided Effects

How is narcissistic leadership woe-fortune interdependent? The study found that the two-sided effects of narcissistic leadership are stably realized through employees' psychological safety and creative self-efficacy. It produces negative effects by affecting employees' psychological safety, that is, negatively affecting subordinate work attitudes, behaviors, and performance, and produces positive effects by affecting employees' creative self-efficacy, that is, promoting innovation. On the one hand, individuals pursue stable and safe psychological states in organizations to maintain the balance of their psychological resources. The suppression and deception of others and extreme egoism of narcissistic leaders deeply hurt subordinates and damage and plunder subordinate resources, which may lead to uncertainty and instability in the work environment, reduce employees' positive cognition of the external environment, and thus damage their psychological safety. Based on COR theory, when individuals' own resources are lost, it will trigger resource defense behaviors. Therefore, when employees perceive that psychological resources are damaged, it will trigger protection mechanisms, making them defensive and inclined to avoid risks, and will invest more time and energy in protecting their psychological resources rather than in work (Halbesleben & Bowler, 2007), thereby reducing work engagement and willingness, producing negative work behaviors, and ultimately affecting work effectiveness. Therefore, narcissistic leadership produces negative effects by damaging employees' psychological safety. On the other hand, in research on narcissistic leadership, great emphasis is placed on its relationship with innovation, and in most studies, narcissistic leadership promotes innovation through creative self-efficacy (Zhang et al., 2021), because confidence in innovation is very important for innovation. The charismatic traits, confidence, and adventurous spirit of narcissistic leaders are all qualities needed for innovation. These traits can inspire subordinates and enhance their psychological resources and innovation confidence, that is, creative self-efficacy, thereby promoting subordinate innovation. Therefore, narcissistic leadership can produce positive effects by promoting employees' creative self-efficacy.

6.1 Theoretical Contributions

- (1) This study comprehensively and systematically clarifies the two-sided effects of narcissistic leadership and its specific impacts on five categories of subordinate effectiveness, drawing stage conclusions with high reliability and validity. Given that existing research has not formed a comprehensive induction and consistent conclusion on the relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate work effectiveness, and lacks relevant meta-analysis research, this study, based on summarizing and meta-analyzing 73 empirical studies, integrates many research samples, systematically summarizes the relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate work effectiveness, further confirms the two-sided effects of narcissistic leadership, enriches the research content of narcissistic leadership, and provides a theoretical basis for the management practice of narcissistic leadership in enterprises. At the same time, this study also shows that the relationship strength between narcissistic leadership and the five categories of subordinate effectiveness differs. By comparing and analyzing the strength of narcissistic leadership's impact on the five outcome variables of subordinate work attitudes, workplace behaviors, work performance, work stress, and innovation, as well as their specific indicators, the conclusion that "narcissistic leadership has a particularly prominent promoting effect on subordinate innovation" is drawn. Among the specific indicators, the conclusion that "narcissistic leadership has the greatest impact on subordinate organizational cynicism and knowledge sharing behavior, promoting subordinate organizational cynicism on the one hand and inhibiting subordinate knowledge sharing behavior on the other hand" is drawn. These stage conclusions systematically answer the question of "whether narcissistic leadership is truly woe-fortune interdependent," confirm the complexity of narcissistic leadership's woe-fortune interdependence, and provide targeted suggestions and "concise rules" for management practice.
- (2) This study relatively completely elaborates on the boundary mechanism of the relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate work effectiveness, confirming that when conditions are limited to different industries, organizations, employees, and measurement tools, the impact strength of narcissistic leadership on subordinate work effectiveness differs. This study introduces eight moderating factors: cultural background, industry type, organizational attributes, employee category, measurement tools, employee gender, age, and education level. From the perspectives of macro, meso, and micro contexts and demographic characteristics, it comprehensively explores the boundary conditions of the relationship between narcissistic leadership and subordinate work effectiveness, systematically answering the question of "when narcissistic leadership is woe-fortune interdependent," and obtains the conclusion that "narcissistic leadership is

particularly harmful to non-knowledge, low-education employees in manufacturing enterprises, but cultural background, employee age, and gender cannot affect narcissistic leadership effectiveness,” which has not been found in previous research.

- (3) This study reveals the process “black box” through which narcissistic leadership’s two-sided effects are formed. It finds that narcissistic leadership produces two-sided effects through employees’ psychological safety and creative self-efficacy, and the process is stable. That is, it negatively affects subordinate work attitudes, workplace behaviors, and work performance by inhibiting employees’ psychological safety, and positively affects subordinate innovation by promoting employees’ creative self-efficacy. This finding answers the question of “how narcissistic leadership is woe-fortune interdependent.”
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6.2 Management Implications

- (1) In enterprise management, enterprise leaders should dialectically view narcissistic leadership, conduct benign guidance, and seek advantages while avoiding disadvantages. This study shows that narcissistic leadership has two-sided effects, that is, while having a series of negative effects, it can also promote innovation. Therefore, in management practice, narcissistic leadership should be used reasonably. Research shows that considering relevant confidence, extroversion, and social skills, healthy levels of narcissism are productive (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Therefore, it is necessary to monitor and intervene in the level of leader narcissism. The greater the bias in leaders’ self-cognition, the greater their narcissism level. In this case, narcissistic leaders need in-depth communication with external individuals to help them form correct cognition of self and others, reducing their narcissism level. During organizational manager selection, professional testing of narcissistic personality trait levels should be conducted, and candidates with excessive narcissism should not be passed, to avoid them engaging in poor management in leadership positions and causing harm to the organization.
- (2) In enterprise management, it is necessary to prevent narcissistic leadership from harming subordinate knowledge sharing behavior, avoid causing organizational cynicism and even turnover intention, while giving full play to the promoting effect of narcissistic leadership on innovation. Focus should be placed on the negative impact of narcissistic leadership on subordinate knowledge sharing behavior, while caring about subordinates’ emotions and states to avoid causing negative emotions and turnover intention. Innovation is an important way for enterprises to maintain sustainable development (Zeng et al., 2022). Organizations should not blindly reject narcissists. Platforms should be appropriately created for them to play

positive roles, making full use of their charismatic traits to create greater value for the enterprise. Enterprise managers establishing a soft environment with a strong innovation atmosphere can effectively stimulate employee innovation behavior (Leete, 2000). Narcissistic leaders can provide more resources and create an innovation environment for subordinates to promote innovation. Environmental improvement brings a positive emotional atmosphere, and emotional contagion makes employees generate or maintain positive emotional states (Henninger et al., 2010). For some work positions, teams, and organizations with complex tasks such as R&D, narcissistic leaders can be appropriately introduced to stimulate subordinates' innovation confidence and enthusiasm, bringing a "catfish effect" of "introducing one person activates a whole area."

- (3) Leaders should apply narcissistic leadership according to individuals and local conditions, that is, avoid using narcissistic leadership on non-knowledge, low-education employees in manufacturing enterprises. This study shows that narcissistic leadership has a stronger negative impact on employees in manufacturing enterprises, non-profit organizations, non-knowledge workers, and low-education employees. Therefore, narcissistic leadership style is particularly unsuitable for managing non-knowledge, low-education employees in manufacturing enterprises, and the harm of this leadership style should be avoided.
- (4) In the enterprise management of narcissistic leadership, it is necessary to enhance employees' psychological safety level and effectively stimulate creative self-efficacy. Narcissistic leadership produces negative effects by harming employees' psychological safety. Therefore, in enterprise management, employees' psychological safety should be enhanced and their psychological resources improved to weaken the negative impact of narcissistic leadership. This can be approached from two aspects: First, organizational managers should do their utmost to provide employees with a good psychological experience environment, such as providing a stable work environment, establishing good communication and feedback mechanisms, and paying attention to employee well-being, so that employees can perceive a positive external environment and ensure their psychological safety. Second, enterprises should strengthen mental health support services, provide mental health counseling and guidance services to help employees cope with stress in work and life, and carry out mental health education to improve employees' psychological safety. Additionally, under narcissistic leadership, attention should be paid to the cultivation of employees' self-efficacy, especially creative self-efficacy, because this is the source of employee innovation. Enhancing employees' self-confidence is also a supplement to employees' psychological resources. Therefore, narcissistic leaders should be used to cultivate and stimulate employees' innovative psychology, such as establishing scientific fault-tolerance mechanisms and a relaxed innovation atmosphere, strengthening knowledge and skill training and innovation incentives, and enhancing employees' creative self-

efficacy. The level of employees' creative self-efficacy can determine the exertion of narcissistic leadership's positive effects, and a higher level of self-efficacy can also reduce the negative impact of narcissistic leadership to a certain extent.

6.3 Research Limitations and Future Directions

This study also has some limitations that need further improvement: (1) Due to the relatively late start of research on narcissistic leadership, the number of empirical studies is relatively insufficient, limiting the study to some subordinate effectiveness variables with relatively sufficient empirical research quantities, and cannot comprehensively explain its impact on subordinate work effectiveness. More empirical studies can be collected in the future to more comprehensively analyze the impact of narcissistic leadership on subordinate work effectiveness. (2) In this study, the number of effect sizes between narcissistic leadership and psychological safety, creative self-efficacy, innovation, and other variables is small, and the robustness of its conclusions is relatively low. Further analysis and testing can be conducted when relevant research data are more abundant in the future. (3) Most research on the antecedent variables of narcissistic leadership is review literature, lacking sufficient empirical studies. Therefore, this study failed to study its triggering factors. Future meta-analysis research can form a relatively complete research chain from the perspective of narcissistic leadership's triggering factors (such as personal traits and environmental push). (4) Current research on narcissistic leadership is mostly discussed together with humble leadership, and the two leadership styles form a sharp contrast. This study does not explore this comparison. Future research can further enrich and improve from this perspective. (5) Narcissistic leadership has a positive effect of promoting innovation, and after promoting innovation, there may also be the possibility of promoting performance. However, this study is based on a cross-sectional perspective, treating innovation and work performance as outcome variables together, and does not explore the subsequent effect of narcissistic leadership on performance after promoting subordinate innovation. Future research can conduct more in-depth research on this issue. (6) This study selected psychological safety and creative self-efficacy to explore the mediating mechanism of narcissistic leadership's two-sided effects, exploring the process mechanism of narcissistic leadership's two-sided effects from different perspectives of psychological resources. However, other mediating mechanisms may also exist. Future research can further enrich and explore other process mechanisms (such as leader-member exchange, organizational identification, etc.).

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Appendix Table: Basic Data of Meta-Analysis Original Coding

(Note: The appendix table contains raw coding data that was not fully provided in the original text. The table structure and variable codes are preserved as in the original.)

Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.

Source: ChinaXiv — Machine translation. Verify with original.