

The Influence of Narcissistic Leadership on Employees: A Systematic Review and Directions for Future Research

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Abstract

Narcissistic leaders are common in the workplace, and narcissistic leadership has received much attention from researchers. This study has conducted a systematic literature review of research on the influence of narcissistic leadership on employees. This research has clarified the present situation of the consequences, mediators, moderators, and theoretical perspectives of relevant studies. Based on this literature review, the present study has proposed directions for future research that highlight the need to intensify the research on the double-edged sword effect of narcissistic leadership, strengthen the applications of various theories, expand the explorations of mediators, broaden the research on moderators, and enrich the research designs. This research contributes to the literature on narcissistic leadership and employees' attitudes and behaviors and offers practical benefits for managers to cope with narcissistic leaders in organizations.

Keywords: Narcissistic Leadership; Leaders' Narcissism; Employees' Behaviors; Conservation of Resources Theory; Social Exchange Theory

1. Introduction

Narcissistic leadership is defined as leaders' behaviors that are "principally motivated by their own egomaniacal needs and beliefs, superseding the needs and interests of the constituents and institutions they lead" (Rosenthal and Pittinsky, 2006). As narcissists are inclined to emerge as leaders, narcissistic leaders are prevalent in the workplace (Nevicka et al., 2018), such as Steve Jobs and Bill Gates (Schmid et al., 2021). Narcissistic leadership has received much attention from scholars, and some studies have investigated the influence of narcissistic leadership on employees. However, the relevant research needs to be reviewed systematically, which is imperative for future research on narcissistic leadership and management practices in

organizations. Consequently, this study aims to conduct a systematic review of research on narcissistic leadership's impact on employees and further provide directions for future research.

The present research provides significant theoretical and practical contributions. First, this study systematically reviews existing research on narcissistic leadership's effect on employees by clarifying the consequences, mediators, moderators, and theoretical perspectives, thereby helping understand the current situation of relevant research comprehensively. Second, the present study highlights the directions for future studies of narcissistic leadership's impact on employees, which is beneficial to the development of the literature on the outcomes of narcissistic leadership and the antecedents of employees' attitudes and behaviors. Third, since narcissism is a dark personality, this research answers the call for more research on dark personalities in the workplace (e.g., Harms and Spain, 2015; LeBreton et al., 2018; Spain et al., 2014) and contributes to the literature on how dark personality relates to leadership consequences. Fourth, this study helps managers in organizations realize how narcissistic leadership influences employees and then adopt proper actions to deal with narcissistic leaders.

2. The Systematic Literature Review of Narcissistic Leadership's Influence on Employees

Narcissistic leaders' actions are mainly motivated by their own egomaniacal demands and beliefs that are linked to the features of narcissism, such as lack of empathy, unreasonable sense and expectations of entitlement, envy, an inflated sense of self-importance, needs for excessive admiration, and overwhelming fantasies of power and achievement (Rosenthal and Pittinsky, 2006). This research systematically reviews the prior research on the effect of narcissistic leadership on employees. This study integrates the research on narcissistic leadership and the research on leaders' narcissism by regarding the research on leaders' narcissism as the research on narcissistic leadership. This systematic literature review includes the consequences, mediators, moderators, and theoretical perspectives of narcissistic leadership's influence on employees (see Figure 1).

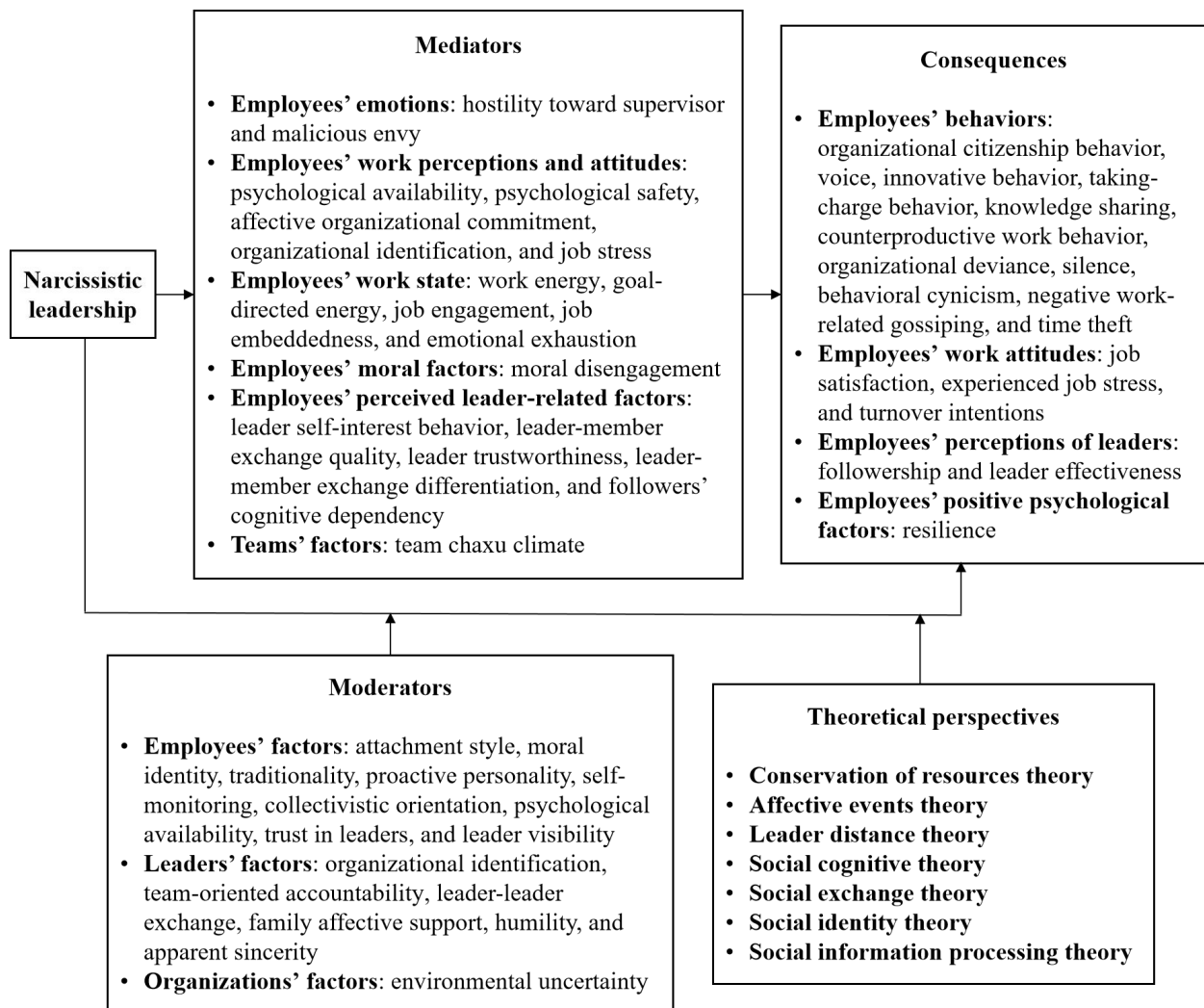


Figure 1. The Systematic Literature Review of Narcissistic Leadership's Influence on Employees

2.1. The Consequences of Narcissistic Leadership's Influence on Employees

The consequences of narcissistic leadership's influence on employees include employees' behaviors, work attitudes, perceptions of leaders, and positive psychological factors.

2.1.1. Employees' Behaviors

Most research on the influence of narcissistic leadership on employees' behaviors has indicated the adverse impact of narcissistic leadership. Specifically, narcissistic leadership was found to negatively influence some employees' positive behaviors, including change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior (Fang et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2021), organizational citizenship behavior to supervisor (Li et al., 2018), voice (Carnevale et al., 2018; Huang et al., 2020; Yao et al., 2020), innovative behavior (Norouzinik et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2021), taking-charge behavior (Chen et al., 2020), and knowledge sharing (Xiao et al., 2018). In addition, prior research has shown that narcissistic leadership could be positively related to some employees' negative behaviors, including counterproductive work behavior (Chen et al., 2024), supervisor-targeted counterproductive work behavior (Braun et al., 2018), organizational deviance (Zhang et al., 2018), silence (Aboramadan et al., 2021; Hamstra et al., 2021), behavioral cynicism

(Aboramadan et al., 2021), negative work-related gossiping (Aboramadan et al., 2021), and time theft (Ding et al., 2018).

However, the research of Chen et al. (2024) has found the favorable impact of narcissistic leadership, and their research has shown that narcissistic leadership could positively affect employees' organizational citizenship behavior through employees' psychological availability.

2.1.2. Employees' Work Attitudes

The effect of narcissistic leadership on employees' work attitudes has been investigated by prior research. Nevicka et al. (2018) found that leaders' narcissism positively influenced employees' overall job attitudes, including job satisfaction, experienced job stress, and turnover intentions, for employees with lower leader visibility. However, the research of Bernerth (2022) showed that leaders' narcissism negatively affected employees' job satisfaction.

2.1.3. Employees' Perceptions of Leaders

Existing studies have explored the link between narcissistic leadership and employees' perceptions of leaders. Narcissistic leaders were found to negatively affect employees' followership (Wang and Guo, 2022). Nevertheless, Nevicka et al. (2018) reported that leaders' narcissism was positively related to employees' perceived leadership effectiveness for employees with lower leader visibility.

2.1.4. Employees' Positive Psychological Factors

The research on the impact of narcissistic leadership on employees' positive psychological factors has shown that narcissistic leadership could be positively related to employee resilience (Li and Tong, 2021).

2.2. The Mediators of Narcissistic Leadership's Influence on Employees

The mediators of narcissistic leadership's effect on employees include employees' emotions, employees' work perceptions and attitudes, employees' work state, employees' moral factors, employees' perceived leader-related factors, and teams' factors.

2.2.1. Employees' Emotions

Previous research has indicated that employees' emotions could mediate the relationship between narcissistic leadership and employees' counterproductive work behavior. Specifically, hostility toward supervisor was found to mediate the relationship between narcissistic leadership and employees' counterproductive work behavior (Chen et al., 2024). Braun et al. (2018) revealed that employees' malicious envy mediated the effect of leader narcissism on employees' supervisor-targeted counterproductive work behavior.

2.2.2. Employees' Work Perceptions and Attitudes

Prior research has shown that the link between narcissistic leadership and employees' behaviors could be mediated by employees' work perceptions and attitudes. Specifically, Chen et al. (2024) found that employees' psychological availability mediated the link between narcissistic leadership and employees' organizational citizenship behavior. Wang et al. (2021) revealed that the influence of narcissistic leadership on employees' change-oriented organizational citizenship

behavior was mediated by employees' psychological safety and then by employees' affective organizational commitment. Xiao et al. (2018) demonstrated that employees' organizational identification mediated the relationship between narcissistic leadership and employees' knowledge sharing. Yao et al. (2020) reported that employees' job stress mediated the link between narcissistic leadership and employees' voice. The research of Li et al. (2018) showed that employees' hindrance stress mediated the effect of perceived leader narcissism on employees' organizational citizenship behavior to supervisor.

2.2.3. Employees' Work State

Past studies have revealed that employees' work state could be regarded as the mediator. For example, Carnevale et al. (2018) found that employees' work energy mediated the link between narcissistic leadership and employees' voice. Li and Tong (2021) revealed that employees' goal-directed energy mediated the influence of narcissistic leadership on employees' resilience. Employees' job engagement and job embeddedness were found to mediate the effect of narcissistic leadership on employees' innovative behavior (Norouzinik et al., 2022). The research of Chen et al. (2020) showed that employees' work engagement mediated the relationship between leader narcissism and employees' taking-charge behavior. Ding et al. (2018) reported that employees' emotional exhaustion mediated the impact of supervisor narcissism on employees' time theft.

2.2.4. Employees' Moral Factors

The research on the mediating effects of employees' moral factors has shown that employees' moral disengagement could mediate the impact of perceived narcissistic supervision on employees' organizational deviance (Zhang et al., 2018).

2.2.5. Employees' Perceived Leader-Related Factors

Existing studies have found the mediating roles of employees' perceived leader-related factors. For instance, employees' perceived leader self-interest behavior has been found to mediate the relationship between narcissistic leaders and employees' followership (Wang and Guo, 2022). Bernerth (2022) revealed that employees' perceived leader-member exchange quality mediated the influence of leaders' narcissism on employees' job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion. Employees' perceptions of leader trustworthiness were found to mediate the impact of leader narcissism on employees' silence (Hamstra et al., 2021). The research of Huang et al. (2020) showed that employees' perceived leader-member exchange differentiation mediated leader narcissism's effect on employees' voice. Followers' cognitive dependency was found to mediate the link between leader narcissism and employees' innovative behavior (Yang et al., 2021).

2.2.6. Teams' Factors

The research on the mediating effects of teams' factors has revealed that narcissistic leadership could affect employees' change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior through team chaxu climate (Fang et al., 2024).

2.3. The Moderators of Narcissistic Leadership's Influence on Employees

The moderators of the impact of narcissistic leadership on employees include employees' factors, leaders' factors, and organizations' factors.

2.3.1. Employees' Factors

Prior studies have investigated the moderating roles of employees' factors, including employees' individual characteristics, work perceptions, and leader-related factors. The relevant studies have mainly focused on employees' individual characteristics. For instance, employees' attachment style was found to moderate the indirect impact of supervisor narcissism on employees' time theft via employees' emotional exhaustion (Ding et al., 2018). This indirect impact was weaker for employees with high attachment avoidance, while this indirect impact was stronger for employees with high attachment anxiety. Zhang et al. (2018) found that employees' moral identity moderated the indirect effect of perceived narcissistic supervision on employees' organizational deviance via employees' moral disengagement, and this indirect effect strengthened for employees with a low moral identity. Yao et al. (2020) demonstrated that employees' traditionalism moderated the indirect link between narcissistic leadership and employees' voice through employees' job stress, and this indirect link was stronger when employees' traditionalism was higher. Chen et al. (2020) reported that employees' proactive personality moderated the indirect relationship between leader narcissism and employees' taking-charge behavior via employees' work engagement, and this indirect relationship was stronger for employees with low proactive personality. Employees' self-monitoring was found to moderate the indirect effect of perceived leader narcissism on employees' organizational citizenship behavior to supervisor through hindrance stress, and this indirect effect was stronger for employees with low self-monitoring (Li et al., 2018). The research of Xiao et al. (2018) showed that employees' collectivistic orientation moderated the relationship between narcissistic leadership and employees' knowledge sharing, and this relationship strengthened for employees with low collectivistic orientation.

Additionally, research on the moderating role of employees' work perceptions has revealed that employees' psychological availability could moderate the indirect link between narcissistic leadership and employees' resilience via goal-directed energy, such that this indirect link could be stronger for employees with lower psychological availability (Li and Tong, 2021). Moreover, prior studies have revealed the moderating effects of employees' leader-related factors. Specifically, employees' trust in leaders was found to moderate the indirect influence of narcissistic leadership on employees' voice via employees' job stress, and this indirect influence was stronger when employees' trust in leaders was lower (Yao et al., 2020). Nevicka et al. (2018) reported that employees' leader visibility moderated the impacts of leaders' narcissism on employees' perceived leadership effectiveness and employees' overall job attitudes. These impacts were positive for employees with lower leader visibility, while these impacts were not significant for employees with higher leader visibility.

2.3.2. Leaders' Factors

Previous research has found the moderating effects of leaders' factors, including leaders' work-related factors, family-related factors, and individual characteristics. The moderating effects of leaders' work-related factors have been explored. For example, leaders' organizational identification was found to moderate the indirect effect of narcissistic leaders on employees' followership via employees' perceived leader self-interest behavior, and this indirect effect was stronger when leaders' organizational identification was low (Wang and Guo, 2022). Carnevale et al. (2018) demonstrated that leaders' team-oriented accountability moderated the indirect impact of narcissistic leadership on employees' voice via work energy. This indirect impact was significant only when leaders' team-oriented accountability was low, and this indirect impact became non-significant when leaders' team-oriented accountability was high. Huang et al. (2020) reported that leaders' leader-member exchange moderated the indirect link between leader narcissism and employees' voice via leader-member exchange differentiation, and this indirect link was stronger for leaders with lower leader-member exchange.

Moreover, research on the moderating effects of leaders' family-related factors demonstrated that leaders' family affective support moderated the indirect relationship between narcissistic leadership and employees' change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior through team climate, such that this indirect relationship was weaker when leaders' family affective support was stronger (Fang et al., 2024). Furthermore, existing studies have revealed the moderating roles of leaders' individual characteristics. Specifically, leaders' humility was found to moderate the influence of narcissistic leadership on employees' job engagement and job embeddedness, and employees were more engaged and embedded under narcissistic leaders with high humility than under narcissistic leaders with low humility (Norouzinik et al., 2022). Hamstra et al. (2021) reported that leader apparent sincerity moderated the indirect effect of leader narcissism on employees' silence through employees' perceptions of leader trustworthiness, and this indirect effect occurred for leaders with low levels of apparent sincerity but not for leaders with high levels of apparent sincerity.

2.3.3. Organizations' Factors

The research on the moderating roles of organizations' factors has mainly examined environmental uncertainty. For instance, Chen et al. (2024) revealed that environmental uncertainty moderated the indirect influence of narcissistic leadership on employees' counterproductive work behavior via employees' hostility toward supervisor and the indirect influence of narcissistic leadership on employees' organizational citizenship behavior via employees' psychological availability. When environmental uncertainty was higher, these above indirect influences were stronger. Environmental uncertainty was found to moderate the indirect relationship between leader narcissism and employees' innovative behavior through followers' cognitive dependency, and this indirect relationship was stronger when environmental uncertainty was higher (Yang et al., 2021).

2.4. The Theoretical Perspectives of Narcissistic Leadership's Influence on Employees

The theoretical perspectives of narcissistic leadership's impact on employees include conservation of resources theory, affective events theory, leader distance theory, social cognitive theory, social exchange theory, social identity theory, and social information processing theory.

2.4.1. Conservation of Resources Theory

Conservation of resources theory proposes that individuals tend to acquire, keep, cultivate, and protect the things they value (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Based on conservation of resources theory, the research on employees' consequences of narcissistic leadership involves three perspectives, including the perspective of leaders' needs to protect and acquire resources, the perspective of the losses of employees' resources, and the perspective of the gains of employees' resources. The related studies are shown as follows.

First, some studies have examined employees' outcomes of narcissistic leadership from the perspective of leaders' needs to protect and acquire resources. For example, the research of Fang et al. (2024) argued that narcissistic leaders could prompt team chaxu climate as they might form and maintain social relationships with subordinates who could give them psychological resources, which in turn could decrease employees' change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior. In addition, the research of Huang et al. (2020) suggested that narcissistic leaders might choose to protect their limited resources by not engaging all employees equally and might try to obtain resources by building relationships with the employees who could offer resources, which could reduce employees' voice through increasing leader-member exchange differentiation. This research also argued that narcissistic leaders with lower leader-leader exchange with their leaders might compensate for the resource loss by acquiring support from employees who could benefit their leadership success. Thus, this research showed that when leaders had lower leader-leader exchange, the indirect link between leader narcissism and employees' voice through leader-member exchange differentiation was stronger.

Second, prior research has investigated narcissistic leadership's effect from the perspective of the losses of employees' resources. For instance, from this perspective, the study of Chen et al. (2024) demonstrated the positive impact of narcissistic leadership on employees' counterproductive work behavior via employees' hostility toward supervisor. In addition, Carnevale et al. (2018) argued that narcissistic leadership could reduce employees' work energy because of consuming employees' emotional and cognitive resources, which in turn could decrease employees' voice. Moreover, Ding et al. (2018) pointed out that employees' emotional exhaustion could be caused by being bullied and oppressed by narcissistic leaders, which in turn could lead to employees' time theft because of employees' needs to avoid further loss of their own resources. This research also found that the above indirect relationship was weaker for individuals with high attachment avoidance due to their tendency to experience no excessive loss of their own resources, and the above indirect relationship was stronger for individuals with high attachment anxiety because of their tendency to experience greater loss of their own resources. Furthermore, Yao et al. (2020) argued that employees might not obtain help from narcissistic leaders and consume more resources to cope with work tasks under narcissistic leadership. Thus, this research showed that narcissistic leadership increased employees' job stress, which in turn

reduced employees' voice. This research also found that the above indirect relationship was stronger for employees with higher traditionality and employees with lower trust in leaders.

Third, existing research has explored the influence of narcissistic leadership from the perspective of the gains of employees' resources. Specifically, from this perspective, Chen et al. (2024) revealed the positive influence of narcissistic leadership on employees' organizational citizenship behavior through employees' psychological availability. Moreover, Li and Tong (2021) argued that narcissistic leaders might help employees acquire and preserve resources. This research found that narcissistic leadership increased employees' goal-directed energy, which in turn enhanced employees' resilience. This indirect effect was stronger when employees had lower psychological availability.

2.4.2. Affective Events Theory

Based on affective events theory, negative work events can lead to individuals' negative emotions and further influence individuals' attitudes and behaviors (Chen et al., 2020). Drawing upon affective events theory, Chen et al. (2020) suggested that leader narcissism could reduce employees' work engagement because of narcissistic leaders' tendency to blame, threaten, and demotivate employees, which in turn could decrease employees' taking-charge behavior. This research also showed that this indirect relationship was stronger when employees had a low proactive personality.

2.4.3. Leader Distance Theory

According to leader distance theory, since the more distant followers are more inclined to receive scant and superficial information of leaders, the formation of their simplified perceptions of leaders is more likely to be automatic, schema-driven, and based on their implicit leader prototypes (Shamir, 1995; Nevicka et al., 2018). Drawing upon leader distance theory, Nevicka et al. (2018) proposed that narcissistic leaders could be perceived more positively by employees with fewer chances to observe leaders, while narcissistic leaders' negative side could be more likely to be perceived by employees with more chances to observe leaders. This research found that narcissistic leadership positively influenced employees' perceived leadership effectiveness and employees' overall job attitudes when employees had lower leader visibility, while these positive influences disappeared when employees had higher leader visibility.

2.4.4. Social Cognitive Theory

Social cognitive theory proposes that moral disengagement is a series of cognitive mechanisms that can deactivate individuals' moral self-regulation processes (Detert et al., 2008). Based on social cognitive theory, the research of Zhang et al. (2018) showed that perceived narcissistic supervision enhanced employees' moral disengagement, which in turn increased employees' organizational deviance. This indirect effect was stronger when employees had a low moral identity.

2.4.5. Social Exchange Theory

According to social exchange theory, reciprocity is one significant exchange norm (Cheng et al., 2022). Drawing upon social exchange theory, Bernerth (2022) suggested that narcissistic leaders

might develop poor-quality dyadic relationships. This research found that leaders' narcissism decreased employees' perceived leader-member exchange, which in turn reduced employees' job satisfaction and increased employees' emotional exhaustion.

2.4.6. Social Identity Theory

Based on social identity theory, when individuals identify with the organizations, individuals will accept the values and rules of organizations and behave in conformity to them (Wang and Guo, 2022). Drawing upon social identity theory, Wang and Guo (2022) found that the influence of narcissistic leaders on employees' perceived leader self-interest behavior was stronger for leaders with low organizational identification, which in turn caused more decrease in employees' followership.

2.4.7. Social Information Processing Theory

Social information processing theory proposes that employees tend to seek information around them to understand the work environment and then adapt their attitudes and behaviors to the work environment (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978). Based on social information processing theory, Yang et al. (2021) suggested that employees could collect information from narcissistic leaders. This research found that leader narcissism reduced employees' innovative behavior via followers' cognitive dependency, and this indirect link strengthened when environmental uncertainty was higher.

3. Directions for Future Research on Narcissistic Leadership's Influence on Employees

Researchers have conducted meaningful studies on narcissistic leadership's influence on employees and have provided valuable research results. However, the existing related research still has some limitations. Based on the above systematic literature review, this research proposes the following directions for future research.

3.1. Intensifying the Research on the Double-Edged Sword Effect of Narcissistic Leadership

As narcissistic leaders have both favorable and unfavorable features, narcissistic leadership may cause both positive and negative consequences. Narcissists possess charisma and a grand vision (Rosenthal and Pittinsky, 2006), while narcissistic leaders display an inability to learn from errors, a pursuit of their own benefits, and the exploitation of employees (Ouimet, 2010). Narcissists tend to trigger positive results in novel or chaotic circumstances, while narcissists are more prone to cause negative consequences following threats and in stable and long-term circumstances (Campbell et al., 2011). Based on the above literature review, most existing relevant studies have revealed the unfavorable impact of narcissistic leadership on employees. However, fewer studies have shown the double-edged sword effect or the favorable effect of narcissistic leadership on employees. For instance, Chen et al. (2024) found that narcissistic leadership had a double-edged sword effect by revealing narcissistic leadership's positive impact on employees' counterproductive work behavior through employees' hostility toward supervisor and showing narcissistic leadership's positive influence on employees' organizational citizenship behavior via employees' psychological availability. Moreover, the research of Li and Tong (2021)

showed that narcissistic leadership enhanced employees' goal-directed energy, which in turn improved employees' resilience. Nevicka et al. (2018) reported that leaders' narcissism positively affected employees' perceived leadership effectiveness and employees' overall job attitudes for employees who had lower leader visibility. Therefore, the present research encourages future studies to deeply explore the double-edged sword effect of narcissistic leadership on employees and further clarify the mediating mechanisms and boundary conditions of narcissistic leadership's double-edged sword effect.

3.2. Strengthening the Applications of Various Theories

According to the above literature review, the research on narcissistic leadership's effect on employees has applied some theories, including conservation of resources theory, affective events theory, leader distance theory, social cognitive theory, social exchange theory, social identity theory, and social information processing theory. Previous relevant studies have mainly focused on conservation of resources theory and have lacked detailed explorations of other theories. This research suggests future related studies to deeply apply various theories to examine the impact of narcissistic leadership, which is crucial for both improving the research framework of narcissistic leadership and expanding the applications of theories to the area of leadership. For example, based on social exchange theory, treatments in organizations tend to affect employees' felt obligation to the organizations (e.g., Cheng et al., 2022). Leaders act as organizational agents due to leaders' responsibilities of directing and assessing employees' performance (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). Hence, employees tend to view how leaders treat them as an indication of the organization's treatment and opinion to them (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). Narcissistic leaders are inclined to treat employees without empathy, manipulate and exploit employees, and react aggressively to employees' adverse feedback (Ouimet, 2010). Therefore, drawing upon social exchange theory, these unfavorable treatments from narcissistic leaders may reduce employees' felt obligation to the organizations, thereby increasing employees' adverse behaviors that hinder the success of organizations.

3.3. Expanding the Explorations of Mediators

The literature review of this research shows that previous studies of narcissistic leadership's impact on employees have investigated the mediating roles of employees' emotions, employees' work perceptions and attitudes, employees' work state, employees' moral factors, employees' perceived leader-related factors, and teams' factors. Nevertheless, in order to comprehensively understand why narcissistic leadership influences employees, this research recommends future studies to expand the explorations of mediators in the relationship between narcissistic leadership and employees. For example, anxiety may mediate the impact of narcissistic leadership on employees' unethical behaviors. Specifically, narcissistic leadership is likely to cause employees' anxiety (Bernerth, 2022), and the increased anxiety may further prompt employees' unethical behaviors (Kouchaki and Desai, 2015).

3.4. Broadening the Research on Moderators

The above literature review reveals that prior research on narcissistic leadership's influence on employees has examined the moderating effects of employees' factors, leaders' factors, and

organizations' factors. Nevertheless, the relevant research is still in the initial stage. Therefore, future studies are encouraged to broaden the research on moderators, especially the factors of work, task, and organization, thus helping systematically understand when narcissistic leadership is more likely to influence employees.

3.5. Enriching the Research Designs

Future studies on narcissistic leadership's influence on employees are suggested to enrich the research designs to ensure the reliability and comprehensiveness of the research's results. As existing research has mainly adopted the survey design, this study recommends future research also to consider other research methods. For example, Carnevale et al. (2018) focused on the influence of narcissistic leadership on employees' voice through a field survey study and an experimental study. Braun et al. (2018) examined the relationships between leader narcissism, employees' malicious and benign envy, and supervisor-targeted counterproductive work behavior by utilizing the field survey design and experimental design. Moreover, since most relevant studies have only focused on individual-level factors, this research encourages future research to adopt the multi-level research design by combining individual-level factors with factors from other levels, such as team level and organizational level. For instance, Fang et al. (2024) examined the influence of narcissistic leadership on employees' change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior with investigating the mediating role of team chaxu climate and the moderating role of leaders' family affective support by constructing a multi-level model that involved factors of both team level and individual level.

4. Conclusion

This research has presented a systematic literature review of research on narcissistic leadership's influence on employees. The present study has revealed the current situation of the consequences, mediators, moderators, and theoretical perspectives of related research. Based on the systematic literature review, this research has proposed directions for future relevant research. Future studies are encouraged to intensify the research on the double-edged sword effect of narcissistic leadership, strengthen the applications of various theories, expand the explorations of mediators, broaden the research on moderators, and enrich the research designs. The present research benefits the advancement of related studies and the implementation of effective management measures. This research hopes to spark future research on the influence of narcissistic leadership on employees.

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Conceptualization, methodology, software, validation, formal analysis, investigation, resources, data curation, writing—original draft preparation, writing—review and editing, visualization, supervision, project administration, and funding acquisition were all conducted by Chen Zhao and Junli Wang. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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