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The Influence of Differential Leadership on Employees' Affective Commitment: A Perspective of the Insiders and Outsiders

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ABSTRACT

From the perspective of the insiders and outsiders, this study explores the influence of differential leadership on employees' affective commitment and the moderating effect of leader's self-enhancing humor and individual traditionality. The results show that the differential leadership has a positive impact on the organizational affective commitment of employees, the leader's self-enhancing humor and the employees' traditionality play a positive regulatory role respectively. Moreover, compared with the outsiders, the low traditionality has a stronger influence on the relationship between differential leadership and organizational affective commitment of the insiders. This paper enriches the research on the influence of leadership style on employee's affective commitment, proposes and verifies the moderation of leader's self-enhancing humor and employee's traditionality, which complements the boundary conditions for the effectiveness of differential leadership style.

1. Introduction

As a key work attitude, employees' organizational commitment level is related to many outcomes, such as task and situational performance, satisfaction, cognitive withdrawal and turnover^[1]. Commitment research is still important in employee organization relationship literature. Although organizational commitment has three different dimensions, namely, affect, norm and persistence^[2], this study focuses on affective commitment, because it can predict key organizational outcomes better than the other two (namely, persistent commitment and norm commitment)^[3]. There are many factors influencing

employees' affective commitment, such as organizational characteristics^[4], organizational practice^[5], leadership style^[6], relationship factors^[7], employees' personal characteristics^[8], etc. Among them, on the relationship between leadership style and affective commitment, the existing literature rarely pays attention to the impact of local leadership style on organizational affective commitment.

In addition, commitment research is mainly carried out in the western context^[4]. Therefore, transforming the commitment model of the western context into the eastern context does not provide an appropriate solution. Recently, with regard to the relationship between leadership

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style and affective commitment, domestic scholars have begun to pay attention to the impact of local leadership style such as benevolent leadership^[9] on employees' organizational affective commitment. However, there are few studies on how the local leadership style such as the differential leadership style affects employees' organizational affective commitment.

Due to the characteristics of differential pattern in Chinese Society^[10], differential leadership style is prevalent in Chinese organizations^[11]. Different from the western leadership style which regards employees as equal individuals, as a kind of biased leadership style, how the differential leadership style affects employees' organizational affective commitment, and what factors regulate this influence need to be explored.

2. Theory and Hypothesis

2.1 Differential Leadership and Employees' Affective Commitment

With the development of leadership theory and the prosperity of Chinese dominated economic system, scholars began to pay attention to the local leadership style such as differential leadership style. In view of the phenomenon that Chinese leaders treat their subordinates in different order, scholars have interpreted the connotation of differential leadership style from the perspective of leadership cognitive structure^[12] and employee cognition^[13]. The existing research believes that the differential leadership has an impact on the individual level behavior (such as advice, innovation, pro organizational unethical behavior) and team level behavior (such as knowledge transfer performance, team creativity), but in general, the theoretical and empirical research results of the differential leadership still need to be rich.

Affective commitment means accepting and internalizing the other party's goals and values, being willing to work for the other party, and having strong emotional attachment to the other party^[14]. Organizational affective commitment enables employees to stay in the organization because of organizational interests, rather than because staying in the organization may bring some benefits^[15]. When employees are truly involved in the organization and connect with the organization by recognizing their identity value, organizational emotional commitment is formed^[16]. Due to the loyalty and strong emotional connection to the organization, individuals are willing to do things in certain modes according to the views of the organization^[17], and the sense of belonging will motivate everyone to do their best and improve performance. Employees with organizational emotional commitment think

that they are part of the organization, so they will try their best to repay the organization^[18]. Organizational affective commitment is considered to be an important predictor of organizational outcomes, such as performance, organizational citizenship behavior and employee turnover^[3].

The biased behavior of differential leadership has different effects on the cognition and psychology of insiders and outsiders^[11]. Therefore, this study analyzes the influence mechanism of differential leadership on employees' organizational emotional commitment from the perspectives of insiders and outsiders.

According to the theory of social exchange, the inner circle subordinates follow the norms of reciprocity, and "repay" the leader through work autonomy and behavior outside the role when the leader has a biased behavior towards the insiders in terms of communication and care, tolerance and trust, promotion and reward^[13]. Moreover, the leader's biased behavior fully meets the insiders' psychological needs for respect, recognition and belonging, and the insiders' increased cognition of role status and organization related social identity improves employees' organizational affective commitment^[5]. In addition, in the interactive contact with the leader as the agent of the organization, the insiders gradually show similar attitudes and behaviors with the leader, and to a certain extent, achieve the consistency of individual values and organizational values. Internalization^[19] makes individuals produce affective commitment to the organization. The fit of individual values and organizational values explains the appropriate organizational strategy for creating employee commitment^[20].

The leaders' biased treatment makes the outsiders tend to have a relative sense of separation, but the Confucian concept of justice and the mentality of "tolerance" may alleviate this adverse effect. The Confucian concept of justice abides by the cultural tradition of "respect" and the code of conduct of "kinship". The outsiders generally accept the leader's moderate and partial care for "their own people", and do not question the authority and fairness of the leader. In addition, in the face of adverse situations, the "tolerance" coping style may not only take into account the face of leaders, but also exchange the possibility and opportunity of positive interaction with leaders in the future. Because according to the view of power dependence, through the partial distribution of resources, differential leadership may make subordinates obey the requirements of leaders, and this obedience may have the characteristics of both compulsion and voluntariness^[13,21]. From the perspective of social cognition, the outsiders will have the desire to enter the "circle" in order to obtain resources. In addition, with the continuous efforts of the outsiders to become leaders' own people, most leaders

do not exclude the expansion of “own people” group in order to better achieve leadership effectiveness. In the process of the efforts of the outsiders to enter the “circle”, their work autonomy and behaviors outside their roles are increasing, which are gradually similar to the attitudes and behaviors of leaders. According to the perspective of agent-oriented model, the outsiders also have affective commitment to the organization.

To sum up, although the biased behavior of differential leadership has different effects on the cognition and psychology of the insiders and outsiders, it may promote the employees’ organizational affective commitment. Therefore, the hypothesis is put forward:

H1: There is a positive effect of differential leadership on employees’ organizational emotional commitment.

In addition, although this study believes that differential leadership has a positive impact on employees’ organizational affective commitment, there may be differences in the extent of its impact on the insiders and outsiders. At present, the research on this kind of difference is still lacking, which needs to be further explored. Therefore, the following question is raised:

Q1: The influence of differential leadership on employees’ organizational emotional commitment may be different between the insiders and the outsiders.

2.2 The Moderating Effect of Leaders’ Self-enhancing Humor

There are two perspectives of leadership humor: behavioral perspective and trait perspective, this study focuses on the perspective of behavioral view. Leadership humor as a communication strategy used by leaders^[22], Martin et al.^[23] divided leadership humor into four dimensions, in which leadership self-enhancing humor involves a universal humorous outlook on life, a tendency to be often amused by the disharmony of life, and a humorous perspective even in the face of pressure or adversity^[24]. It is closely similar to the concept of humor coping^[25], which is related to the use of humor as a mechanism of emotion regulation or coping^[26]. It is most in line with Freud’s definition of humor. In a narrow sense, humor is a healthy defense mechanism, which allows one to avoid negative emotions while maintaining a realistic view of potential aversion^[27]. Self-enhancing humor focuses more on psychology than interpersonal, and focuses on regulating negative emotions through humor perspective^[23]. It is found that leadership humor regulates the effect and process of leadership style, including transformational leadership, contingent reward leadership, laissez faire leadership, etc.^[28]

This study considers that self-enhancing humor can moderate the effect of differential leadership style. Based

on the implicit theory, followers evaluate leaders’ behaviors according to leaders’ prototypes and implicit expectations of leaders’ behaviors related to these prototypes. Using humor to reduce tension or create a comfortable atmosphere in the team may be one of the typical or excellent leaders’ behaviors expected by followers. Leaders who use self-enhancing humor will show less anxiety and depression at work, and produce more positive effects, so as to improve employees’ psychological well-being^[29]. In addition, a relaxed environment can lead to positive emotions (i.e. laugh heartily), which may lead to less rigid thinking and enhance the ability to connect and integrate different materials, so as to effectively manage work-related issues. Compared with the outsiders, because the leader contacts with the insiders more frequently, the positive emotion experienced by the leader when using self-enhancing humor will be more easily “transmitted” to the insiders. At the same time, for the insiders, the use of leadership humor is a kind of self-disclosure^[30]. While facing the insiders, leaders use humor more frequently to share personal information, which gives followers an opportunity to “understand them in a deeper level”^[31], which can help leaders establish close relationship with their subordinates and facilitate the exchange of ideas and information between superiors and subordinates, this kind of ideological exchange will help lower level to effectively manage issues related to work. Based on the similarity attraction paradigm, the use of leaders’ self-enhancing humor helps to perceive similarity, shorten the social distance between superiors and subordinates, reduce the significance of hierarchy, and stimulate the positive emotional experience of the insiders^[32], which is more likely to promote the insiders to internalize the experience of leaders in their work. Therefore, based on the view of agent-oriented model, the hypothesis is put forward:

H2: Leaders’ self-enhancing humor positively moderates the influence of differential leadership on employees’ organizational affective commitment, that is, the more self-enhancing humor is used, the stronger the positive relationship between differential leadership and employees’ organizational affective commitment is, and vice versa.

In addition, although this study believes that leaders’ self-enhancing humor positively moderates the influence of differential leadership on employees’ organizational affective commitment, there may be differences in the extent of its moderating role for the insiders and the outsiders. At present, the research on this kind of difference is still lacking, which needs to be further explored. Therefore, the following question is raised:

Q2: The moderating effect of leaders’ self-enhancing humor on the relationship between differential leadership

and employees' organizational affectional commitment.

2.3 The Moderating Effect of Individual Traditionality of Employees

Traditionality refers to the influence of Chinese traditional culture on individual's cognitive attitude, ideology, value orientation, temperament and behavior will [33]. The traditional Chinese society is based on the five Lun relationship of Confucianism, which is constructed by the hierarchical model. When this hierarchical orientation is extended to the working environment, the traditional characteristics are mainly manifested in the hierarchical relationship of dignity and order [34]. Individuals with high traditionality choose to respect and obey their superiors, while individuals with low traditionality emphasize egalitarianism. Existing research shows that employees' response to leadership style is influenced by individual traditionality [35,36].

In this study, we think that individual traditionality can moderate the effect of differential leadership style. Higher traditional individuals are more in line with the hierarchical relationship of dignity and order, and believe that they have responsibilities and obligations to meet the expectations of their superiors, while lower traditional individuals are more egalitarian and follow the principle of incentive contribution balance in work and interpersonal communication [37]. The biased behavior of differential leadership has different effects on the cognition and psychology of the insiders and the outsiders. The insiders hold the psychology of "repaying", the higher traditional individuals abide by the role norms more, and strive to meet the leaders' expectations more. For the outsiders, the high traditional individuals will still perform the role obligations; while the outsiders with lower traditionality experience a stronger sense of separation in the face of the leaders' partial treatment. Therefore, based on the view of agent-oriented model, the hypothesis is put forward:

H3: Individual traditionality positively moderates the influence of differential leadership on employees' organizational affective commitment, that is, the more traditional the individual is, the stronger the positive relationship between the differential leadership and the employee's organizational affective commitment is, and vice versa.

In addition, although this study believes that individual traditionality positively moderates the influence of differential leadership on employees' organizational affective commitment, there may be differences in the extent of its moderating role for the insiders and the outsiders. At present, the research on this kind of difference is still lacking, which needs to be further explored. Therefore, the following question is raised:

Q3: The moderating effect of individual traditionality

on the relationship between differential leadership and employees' organizational affectional commitment may be different between the insiders and the outsiders.

In conclusion, the research model is shown in Figure 1.

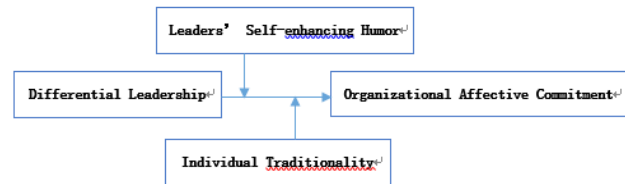


Figure 1. Research Model

3. Research Design

3.1 Sample and Data Collection

In this study, questionnaire survey was used to collect data in three times from May 2019 to September 2019. The first survey mainly collects the data of enterprise characteristics (such as enterprise scale, etc.), subject characteristics (gender, age, etc.), differential leadership, and individual traditionality of employees. The second survey (2 months later) collected data by pairing on the leaders' self-enhancing humor and identity recognition of insiders. The third survey (2 months later) collected data of organizational affective commitment by pairing. The survey samples are the employees of 18 enterprises in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai, involving cultural, sports and entertainment, real estate, machinery manufacturing, software, finance and other industries. The data collection process is strictly confidential.

547 questionnaires were distributed in this survey. After the invalid questionnaires were eliminated, the final number of valid questionnaires was 449, and the effective recovery rate of the questionnaire was 82.05%. In terms of gender, men accounted for 50.79% and women 49.21%; in terms of age, 16.96% were under 25 years old, 35.25% were under 25-35 years old, 39.29% were under 36-45 years old, and 8.5% were over 45 years old; in terms of education, 6.61% were senior high school or below, 23.79% were junior college, 50.55% were undergraduate, 19.05% were postgraduate or above; in terms of positions, 35.18% were general employees, and 34.73% were first-line managers, 22.7% were the middle-level management, 7.39% were the top-level management; in terms of seniority, 13.5% are within one year, 43.5% are within one to five years, 25.14% are within six to 10 years, 9.82% are within 11 to 15 years, and 8.04% are over 16 years.

3.2 Variable Measurement

In this study, mature and authoritative scales at home and

abroad were used to measure variables. Likert 7-grade scoring method was used in all scales. 1 was very disagree, 7 was very agree.

Differential leadership: using the differential leadership scale developed by Jiang and Zhang^[13], there are 14 items in total. Before each item, state “when your leaders treat the insiders compared with the outsiders”^[13]. The reliability coefficient of the scale is 0.861.

Leaders’ self-enhancing humor: the scale of self-enhancing humor developed by Martin et al.^[23] was used, with 8 items in total. The reliability coefficient of the scale is 0.847.

Individual traditionality: using the scale developed by Farh et al.^[38], there are 5 items in total. The reliability coefficient of the scale is 0.791.

Affective commitment: using the “organizational affective commitment scale” compiled by Zhou^[39], including 6 items. The reliability coefficient of the scale was 0.902.

Classification variables: for the classification of the insiders and the outsiders, the scale of perceptions of insider status^[40] was used to measure, and then the mean score plus one standard deviation was used as the grouping standard to form inner circle and outer circle groups. The reliability coefficient of the scale was 0.894.

Control variables: take the common demographic variables as control variables.

4. Research Results

4.1 Homologous Error Test

The measurement of all variables from the subjects will cause homologous errors, which may affect the research results. Therefore, Harman single factor test method is used to check the homologous errors. The result of Harman single factor test shows that the first principal component obtained without rotation accounts for 31.298% (cumulative interpretation is 73.485%), which does not account for a large proportion. Therefore, the homology error exists but is not serious.

4.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

In this paper, amos21.0 is used to analyze the four constructs of differential leadership, organizational affective commitment, leaders’ self-enhancing humor and individual traditionality (see Table 1). The results show that the four factor measurement model has the best fit ($\chi^2/DF=3.09$, GFI=0.927, NFI=0.919, CFI=0.914, RMSEA=0.073), which is obviously superior to other models,

Table 1. Comparison of Measurement Models

Model	χ^2/df	GFI	NFI	CFI	RMSEA
Four factors: differential leadership/leaders’ self-enhancing humor/ individual traditionality/ organizational affective commitment	3.09***	0.927	0.919	0.914	0.073
Three factors: differential leadership + leaders’ self-enhancing humor/ individual traditionality/ organizational affective commitment	4.57***	0.882	0.870	0.867	0.104
Tow factors: differential leadership + leaders’ self-enhancing humor/ individual traditionality + organizational affective commitment	9.42***	0.645	0.628	0.636	0.296
One factor: differential leadership + leaders’ self-enhancing humor + individual traditionality + organizational affective commitment	13.18***	0.481	0.407	0.438	0.387

Notes: ***, **and * indicate that the significance level is less than 0.001, 0.01 and 0.05 respectively. The same as below. The significance level of χ^2 in each model in Table 1 is less than 0.001.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and Correlation Coefficient

Variable	Mean Value	Standard Deviation	Gender	Age	Education	Position	Seniority	Differential Leadership	Self-enhancing Humor	Individual Traditionality
Gender	0.482	0.502								
Age	2.393	1.123	-0.374**							
Education	2.808	0.803	-0.311**	-0.299**						
Position	2.041	1.285	-0.104	0.234**	-0.093**					
Seniority	2.559	1.123	-0.031*	0.542**	-0.177	0.212*				
Differential Leadership	4.517	0.742	0.024	0.103	0.014	0.137	0.028			
Self-enhancing Humor	4.375	0.861	0.211*	0.240*	-0.236*	0.122	0.181	0.138		
Individual Traditionality	3.686	1.137	-0.206*	0.009	-0.117	0.156	0.099	0.305**	0.172	
Organizational Affective Commitment	5.063	0.850	0.197*	0.192*	-0.160	0.052	0.192*	0.229**	0.324**	0.245**

Notes: ***, **and * showed significant correlation at the levels of 0.001, 0.01, and 0.05 respectively. The same as below.

indicating that the four constructs have good discrimination validity.

4.3 Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis

Descriptive statistics of the variables studied are shown in Table 2. It can be seen from table 2 that there is a significant positive correlation between differential leadership and organizational affective commitment ($r= 0.229$, $P < 0.010$), which preliminarily supports the theoretical model of this study.

4.4 Hypothesis Test

In this study, the hierarchical regression method was used to test the hypothesis of the total sample, the insiders sample and the outsiders sample. The total number of samples was 449, the insiders samples were 194 and the outsiders samples were 119. The mean value of the two moderating variables plus or minus one standard deviation is used as the grouping standard, which is divided into high and low groups, and the moderating effect graph based on the total sample is drawn.

4.4.1 Hypothesis Test Based on Total Sample

The results of the hierarchical regression method based on the main effect and moderating effect of the total sample are shown in Table 3. It can be seen from table 3 that the regression results of model 2 show that there is a significant positive effect of differential leadership on organizational affective commitment ($\beta=0.219$, $P < 0.001$). Therefore, hypothesis 1 holds.

According to table 3, the results of model 4 and model 7 show that the interaction effect of differential leadership and leaders' self-enhancing humor has a significant

positive impact on organizational affective commitment ($\beta=0.069$, $p < 0.01$; $\beta=0.051$, $p < 0.01$). The moderating effect of leaders' self-enhancing humor in the total sample is shown in Figure 2. The simple slope estimates of high and low leaders' self-enhancing humor groups are 0.311 ($p < 0.001$) and 0.172 ($p < 0.01$) respectively, and the difference between the high and low groups is 0.139 ($p < 0.001$), 95% confidence interval was [0.110, 0.392], did not contain 0. Therefore, hypothesis 2 holds.

From table 3, the results of model 6 and model 7 show that the interaction effect of differential leadership and individual traditionality has a significant positive impact on organizational affective commitment ($\beta=0.046$, $p < 0.01$; $\beta=0.035$, $p < 0.01$). The moderating effect of individual traditionality in the total sample is shown in Figure 3. The simple slope estimates of high and low individual traditionality were 0.346 ($P < 0.001$) and 0.165 ($P < 0.01$) respectively, and the difference between the high and low groups was 0.181 ($P < 0.001$), the 95% confidence interval was [0.216, 0.477], did not contain 0. Therefore, hypothesis 3 holds.

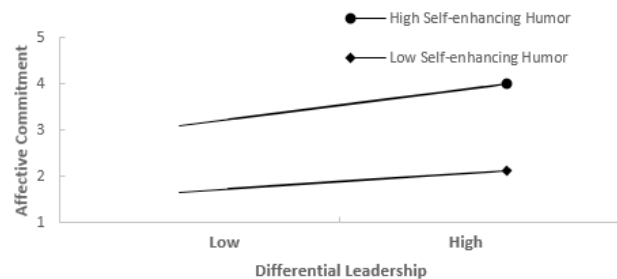


Figure 2. The Moderating Effect of Leaders' Self-enhancing Humor on the Relationship between Differential Leadership and Organizational Affective Commitment (Total Sample)

Table 3. Hierarchical Regression Results of Main Effect and Moderating Effect (Total Sample)

Variable	Organizational Affective Commitment						
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Gender	0.180**	0.174**	0.060*	0.068**	0.082***	0.075***	0.053***
Age	0.082	0.070	0.047	0.011	0.063	0.071	0.025
Education	-0.171*	-0.19	-0.059	-0.047	-0.132	-0.139	-0.006
Position	0.167*	0.199*	0.142*	0.146*	0.158***	0.157***	0.139**
Seniority	0.149*	0.160*	0.127*	0.125*	0.110	0.108	0.110
Differential Leadership		0.219***	0.172**	0.100**	0.071**	0.048**	0.032**
Leaders' Self-enhancing Humor			0.355***	0.217**			0.141**
Individual Traditionality					0.271***	0.209	0.128
Differential Leadership * Leaders' Self-enhancing Humor				0.069**			0.051**
Differential Leadership * Individual Traditionality						0.046**	0.035**
R ²	0.094	0.145	0.318	0.327	0.212	0.215	0.359
ΔR ²		0.051***	0.173***	0.009***	0.067***	0.003***	

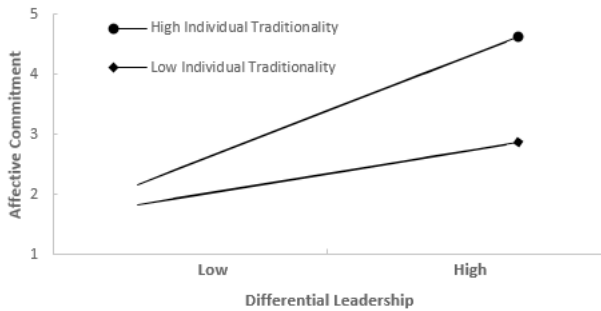


Figure 3. The Moderating Effect of Individual Traditionalness on the Relationship between Differential Leadership and Organizational Affective Commitment (Total Sample)

4.4.2 Hypothesis Test Based On the Insiders Sample

This study further tests the hypothesis of the insiders and outsiders sample. See Table 4 for the hierarchical regression results based on the insiders sample and table 5 for the hierarchical regression results based on the outsider sample.

According to table 4, regression results of model 9 show that differential leadership has a significant positive impact on organizational affective commitment of the insiders ($\beta=0.285$, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, hypothesis 1 holds.

From table 4, the results of model 11 and model 14 show that there is a significant positive effect of the interaction effect of differential leadership and leaders’ self-enhancing humor on the organizational affective commitment of the insiders ($\beta=0.074$, $p < 0.01$; $\beta=0.067$,

$p < 0.01$). As far as the moderating effect of leaders’ self-enhancing humor of the insiders sample is concerned, the simple slope estimates of high and low leaders’ self-enhancing humor are 0.333 ($p < 0.001$) and 0.221 ($p < 0.01$) respectively, and the difference between the high and low groups was 0.112 ($P < 0.001$), the 95% confidence interval was [0.126, 0.684], did not contain 0. Therefore, hypothesis 2 holds. The moderating effect chart of leaders’ self-enhancing humor of the insiders sample is similar to that of leaders’ self-enhancing humor of the total sample. Therefore, it is no longer shown in a schema, the same as below.

From table 4, the results of model 13 and model 14 show that the interaction between differential leadership and individual traditionalness has a significant positive impact on the organizational affective commitment of the insiders ($\beta=0.016$, $p < 0.01$; $\beta=0.010$, $p < 0.01$). As far as the moderating effect of individual traditionalness of the insiders sample is concerned, the simple slope estimates of high and low individual traditionalness are 0.369 ($p < 0.001$) and 0.271 ($p < 0.01$) respectively, and the difference between the high and low groups was 0.098 ($p < 0.001$), the 95% confidence interval was [0.086, 0.470], did not contain 0. Therefore, hypothesis 3 holds.

4.4.3 Hypothesis Test Based On the Outsiders Sample

It can be seen from table 5 that the regression results of model 16 show that there is a significant positive effect of differential leadership on organizational affective commitment of outsiders ($\beta=0.168$, $p < 0.001$). Therefore,

Table 4. Hierarchical Regression Results of Main Effect and Moderating Effect (The Insiders Sample)

Variable	Organizational Affective Commitment						
	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12	Model 13	Model 14
Gender	0.102**	0.095**	0.071*	0.079	0.098**	0.067**	0.038
Age	0.082	0.080	0.025	0.030	0.042	0.039	0.032
Education	-0.115	-0.164	-0.070	-0.065	-0.102	-0.178	-0.090
Position	0.266***	0.287***	0.196**	0.204**	0.200***	0.157***	0.220**
Seniority	0.076	0.047	0.113	0.112	0.082	0.080	0.082
Differential Leadership		0.285***	0.182***	0.108*	0.077**	0.069**	0.043**
Leaders’ Self-enhancing Humor			0.447***	0.378**			0.293
Individual Traditionalness					0.296**	0.202	0.125
Differential Leadership * Leaders’ Self-enhancing Humor				0.074**			0.067**
Differential Leadership * Individual Traditionalness						0.016**	0.010**
R ²	0.173	0.208	0.397	0.400	0.252	0.259	0.409
ΔR^2		0.035***	0.189***	0.003***	0.044***	0.007***	

hypothesis 1 holds.

According to table 5, the results of model 18 and model 21 show that the interaction effect of differential leadership and leaders' self-enhancing humor has a significant positive impact on the organizational affective commitment of the outsiders ($\beta=0.117, p < 0.01$; $\beta=0.074, p < 0.01$). As far as the moderating effect of leaders' self-enhancing humor of the outsiders sample is concerned, the simple slope estimates of high and low leaders' self-enhancing humor are 0.264 ($p < 0.001$) and 0.102 ($p < 0.05$) respectively, and the difference between the high and low groups was 0.162 ($P < 0.001$), the 95% confidence interval was [0.116, 0.305], did not contain 0. Therefore, hypothesis 2 holds.

According to table 5, the results of model 20 and model 21 show that the interaction effect of differential leadership and individual traditionality has a significant positive impact on the organizational affective commitment of the outsiders ($\beta=0.075, p < 0.01$; $\beta=0.021, p < 0.01$). As far as the moderating effect of individual traditionality of the outsiders sample is concerned, the simple slope estimates of high and low individual traditionality are 0.260 ($p < 0.001$) and 0.089 ($p < 0.05$) respectively, and the difference between the high and low groups was 0.171 ($p < 0.001$), the 95% confidence interval was [0.214, 0.807], did not contain 0. Therefore, hypothesis 3 holds.

4.5 On the Difference of Influence Between the Insiders and the Outsiders

The bootstrap method is used to preliminarily test the influence of the insiders and the outsiders and the difference

of moderating effect. See Table 6 for the test results of the difference of moderating effect.

The results show that there is no significant difference in the influence of differential leadership on employees' organizational affective commitment between the insiders and the outsiders (0.093, n.s.), the 95% confidence interval was [-0.104, 0.529], did contain 0. Therefore, Q1 does not hold.

There is no significant difference in the moderating effect of high leaders' self-enhancing humor on the relationship between differential leadership and employees' organizational affective commitment of the insiders and the outsiders (0.069, n.s.), the 95% confidence interval was [-0.366, 0.129], did contain 0. There is no significant difference in the moderating effect of low leaders' self-enhancing humor on the relationship between differential leadership and employees' organizational affective commitment of the insiders and the outsiders (0.119, n.s.), the 95% confidence interval was [-0.294, 0.305], did contain 0. Therefore, Q2 does not hold.

There is no significant difference in the moderating effect of high individual traditionality on the relationship between differential leadership and employees' organizational affective commitment of the insiders and the outsiders (0.109, n.s.), the 95% confidence interval was [-0.259, 0.431], did contain 0. There is significant difference in the moderating effect of low individual traditionality on the relationship between differential leadership and employees' organizational affective commitment of the insiders and the outsiders (0.182, $p < 0.001$), the 95% confidence interval was [0.116, 0.713], did not contain 0.

Table 5. Hierarchical Regression Results of Main Effect and Moderating Effect (The Outsiders Sample)

Variable	Organizational Affective Commitment						
	Model 15	Model 16	Model 17	Model 18	Model 19	Model 20	Model 21
Gender	0.052	0.057	0.064	0.072	0.068*	0.091*	0.062*
Age	0.073**	0.026*	0.051	0.048	0.057	0.083	0.083
Education	-0.075**	-0.082**	0.125	0.124	0.229	0.218	0.132
Position	0.130	0.158**	0.133	0.124	0.144	0.142	0.135
Seniority	0.075**	0.071***	0.058	0.081	0.067	0.091	0.052
Differential Leadership		0.168***	0.137**	0.091**	0.152***	0.103**	0.079**
Leaders' Self-enhancing Humor			0.327***	0.198**			0.124**
Individual Traditionality					0.243***	0.168*	0.113*
Differential Leadership * Leaders' Self-enhancing Humor				0.117**			0.074**
Differential Leadership * Individual Traditionality						0.075**	0.021**
R ²	0.106	0.138	0.385	0.390	0.236	0.247	0.414
ΔR^2		0.032***	0.247***	0.005***	0.098***	0.011***	

Therefore, Q3 hold partly.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Research Results

Differential leadership has a positive impact on employees' organizational affective commitment, but there is no significant difference between the insiders and the outsiders, which may be related to the fact that most leaders in the organization are in the form of "leading group"^[41]. The leaders' self-enhancing humor positively moderates the influence of the differential leadership on employees' organizational affective commitment, but there is no significant difference between the insiders and the outsiders. The individual traditionality of employees positively moderates the influence of differential leadership on their organizational affective commitment, and compared with the outsiders, low individual traditionality has a stronger impact on the relationship between differential leadership and organizational affective commitment of the insiders.

5.2 Theoretical Implications

First, to explore the impact of local leadership style on employees' affective commitment, enriching the research on the impact of leadership style on employees' affective commitment. At present, the study on the influence of leadership style on employee's affective commitment mainly uses western leadership theory to explain, and pays less attention to the influence of local leadership style. This study starts from the local leadership style, complements and enriches the local leadership theory.

Secondly, from the perspective of the insiders and outsiders, this paper empirically studies the influence of differential leadership on employees' emotional commit-

ment, which provides an empirical basis for further understanding the cognition and attitude of the insiders and outsiders. There are few empirical studies on the influence of differential leadership on employees' cognition and attitude from the two paths of the insiders and outsiders. This study tests the total sample, the insiders sample and the outsiders sample respectively, which improves the accuracy and logicity of the research conclusion.

Thirdly, from the two aspects of leadership communication strategy and employee characteristics, this paper investigates the moderating role of self-enhancing humor and employee's individual traditionality in the process of leadership style, which complements and improves the boundary conditions for the effectiveness of leadership style. The current research examines the moderating effect of leadership humor on the effect and process of transformational leadership, contingent reward leadership and laissez faire leadership. However, there are few studies on the effect of leadership humor on the effect of local leadership style, and few studies on the effect of different leadership styles such as leadership self-enhancing humor on the effect of local leadership style. This study selects self-enhancing humor and individual traditionality as the moderating variables in the process of the influence of differential leadership on employee's affective commitment and adds the boundary conditions for the effectiveness of the differential leadership style.

5.3 Management Implications

The conclusion of this study is valuable to the practice of organizational management. First, the results show that differential leadership has a significant positive impact on employees' affective commitment, which shows that as a local leadership style, differential leadership

Table 6. Bootstrap Test Results of the Difference of Moderating effect

Moderating Variable	Group	Simple Slope Estimation	Standard Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				lower limit	Upper Limit
High Self-enhancing Humor	Insiders	0.333***	0.061	0.318	0.649
	Outsiders	0.264***	0.065	0.294	0.942
	Difference	0.069	0.070	-0.366	0.129
Low Self-enhancing Humor	Insiders	0.221**	0.072	0.079	0.364
	Outsiders	0.102*	0.080	0.107	0.316
	Difference	0.119	0.079	-0.294	0.305
High Individual Traditionality	Insiders	0.369***	0.066	0.460	0.819
	Outsiders	0.260***	0.089	0.392	0.815
	Difference	0.109	0.074	-0.259	0.431
Low Individual Traditionality	Insiders	0.271**	0.091	0.116	0.582
	Outsiders	0.089*	0.075	0.072	0.469
	Difference	0.182***	0.078	0.116	0.713

has strong vitality and is an effective leadership style. At the same time, leaders should strive to create a united and fair working atmosphere, so as to improve the relationship between superiors and subordinates, and gradually transform the subordinates from outsiders to insiders, so as to give full play to their leadership effectiveness. Secondly, leaders should pay attention to the implementation of appropriate communication strategies that match the leadership style. Based on implicit theory, followers evaluate leader behavior according to leader prototypes and implicit expectations of leader behavior related to these prototypes. In the workplace, pressure, frustration, conflict and exclusion are inevitable. Leaders use self-enhancing humor which will show less anxiety and depression at work. At the same time, it can reduce the social distance between superiors and subordinates, which can stimulate the followers' positive emotional experience. In addition, a relaxed environment can lead to positive emotions (i.e. laugh heartily), which may lead to less rigid thinking and enhance the ability to connect and integrate different materials, so as to effectively manage work-related issues. Thirdly, leaders should distinguish the management of their subordinates. Individuals with different traditionality have different behavior patterns, perceive and response to leadership differently. As the post-90s and post-2000s gradually enter the workplace, there will be more and more employees with low traditionality^[42], and for employees, their feelings for the organization mostly come from various performances of leaders. Therefore, leaders should strengthen the investigation of the psychology and behavior of the new generation of employees, strengthen their interpersonal interaction, establish high-quality interpersonal relationships, and stimulate employees' positive attitude and behavior towards leaders and organizations, and then improve leaders' leadership effectiveness.

5.4 Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study inevitably has some limitations. First of all, the questionnaire adopts self-report method. Although longitudinal sampling can reduce the problem of homologous error to a certain extent, this error is inevitable. Secondly, the division method of the insiders and outsiders in this study still needs to be discussed, because the statistical ability of analysis in each sub sample group is lower than that obtained from the whole sample^[43]. In the future, the local "circle" scale can be developed for division and measurement. Thirdly, this study examined the moderating effect of leaders' self-enhancing humor on the effectiveness of differential leadership, and in the future, we can examine the moderating effect of other leadership humor

styles, such as leaders' ironic humor. Again, this study only discusses the direct impact of differential leadership on employees' affective commitment, and whether there is intermediary effect in this impact is also worth thinking. Finally, this study investigates employee affective commitment as outcome variable, and makes some progress, but whether it can be extended to other outcome variables, such as job satisfaction, innovation behavior and organizational cynicism, remains to be studied.

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