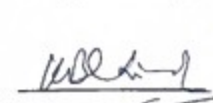


Abstract

Organizational life abounds with paradoxical tensions, which are defined as contradictory yet inter-related elements that exist simultaneously and persist over time. Although largely latent, paradoxical tensions gain salience under environmental conditions of scarcity, plurality and change. Set in the post-pandemic context that brought to awareness a plethora of paradoxes, the present thesis draws from Paradox Theory to examine the antecedents and consequences of the experience of paradoxical tensions. Two structural models were developed to study the antecedents and consequences respectively, followed by a gender-based comparative analysis of two paradox-related constructs, namely the experience of paradoxical tensions and paradox mindset. Data collected through standardized self-report measures from 570 full-time employees working in the IT Sector in India were analyzed with the help of SPSS v29 and AMOS v29. The results of structural equation modeling revealed perceived leadership behaviour to be significant antecedents of the experience of paradoxical tensions, with affect-based relational factors influencing their link. Furthermore, paradoxical tensions significantly predicted employee-level outcomes like psychosocial prosperity, employee voice behaviour and turnover intentions. The strength and direction of these relationships were however contingent on the level of a cognition-based individual factor called paradox mindset. Gender-based comparative inquiry revealed that males and females differed significantly in both their experience and cognition of organizational paradoxes. This cross-sectional empirical examination lies at the nexus of paradox and leadership research, and contributes to a nuanced understanding of how the experience of paradox unfolds within affective and cognitive domains. It addresses critical gaps in extant literature by focusing on the microfoundations of paradox and by challenging the assumptions of employees being a gender-neutral entity. The thesis advances new knowledge by positioning affect-based trust as a pivotal mechanism translating leadership behaviour into the experience of tensions, and by advocating for the inclusion of paradox mindset as a critical personal and trainable resource for constructively navigating paradoxical tensions. Theoretically, the findings of the present research extend Paradox Theory by revealing how relational and cognitive mechanisms shape the experience and outcomes of paradoxes. By reinstating the centrality of affect in paradox scholarship, the thesis articulates a compelling vision for future workspaces that are not only affectively-attuned but are paradox ready as well.

Keywords: Paradox Theory, leadership, affect, paradox mindset, gender, IT Sector, India

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