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Unmasking Exploitative Leadership's Dual Pathways: An FsQCA and PLS-SEM Comparison Analysis of Emotional Exhaustion and Job Satisfaction in Workplace Procrastination

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Abstract: This study investigates how exploitative leadership(EL) exacerbates employee work procrastination(WP) through the chain mediation of emotional exhaustion(EE) and job satisfaction(JS), while examining psychological resilience(PR) as a critical moderator. Grounded in affective events theory and conservation of resources theory, this study collected data from 450 employees of Chinese companies. Structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) revealed that EL significantly increases WP ($\beta = 0.340$, $p < 0.001$), with EE ($\beta = 0.306$) and JS ($\beta = -0.188$) serving as partial mediators (VAF = 63.3% and 30.5%, respectively). Furthermore, PR attenuates EL's adverse effects, weakening its association with EE ($\beta = -0.302$) and buffering JS decline ($\beta = 0.161$). Fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) identified three causal configurations, with the EL × EE pathway showing the highest explanatory power (raw coverage = 0.756). These findings advance understanding of the dynamic interplay between destructive leadership and procrastination, emphasizing the role of emotional and cognitive depletion. Practically, the study advocates for institutional transparency and resilience-building interventions to mitigate EL's covert harm. By integrating symmetric and asymmetric methodologies, this research bridges theoretical gaps and offers a nuanced framework for fostering healthier workplaces.

Keywords: Exploitative Leadership; Employee Work Procrastination; Affective Events Theory; FsQCA; Psychological Resilience

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1.Introduction

In recent years, researchers have shifted from focusing on the positive aspects of leadership to studying the negative aspects of leadership [1]. A substantial corpus of research has been dedicated to the exploration of various manifestations of destructive leadership, including exploitative leadership [2], despotic leadership [3], and hubristic leadership [4]. Exploitative leadership is characterized primarily by appropriating the results of the work of followers, pressuring and manipulating them, increasing their workload and undermining their personal development [5]. Exploitative leadership is one of the more prevalent and self-serving leadership behaviors, but it is so insidious that research has paid less attention to it [5]. Previous research has shown that exploitative behavior is often presented in the form of ambiguous transgressions [6]. Its harming process is

naturally obscured by power asymmetry, leading to short-term difficulties for employees to identify the causal link between leadership behavior and personal development [7, 8]. This causal ambiguity is further exacerbated by the information gap when exploitative leaders use progressive strategies (e.g., implicit resource appropriation or responsibility shifting), allowing the exploitative nature to be rationalized in the power structure [9]. Therefore, this study focuses on: how do employees dynamically deconstruct the implicit harm mechanisms of exploitative leadership under the structural constraint of status inequality? What factors shape their cognitive evolutionary paths and behavioral response boundaries? Revealing the hidden nature of exploitative leadership exploitation and employees' procrastination behavior is worth studying.

Leaders represent their organizations and their activities are often related to the actions of their employees [10, 11]. Previous affective event theory theoretical studies have emphasized that characteristics of the work environment can trigger certain events that affect employees' emotional and attitudinal responses, which in turn affect their work behaviors [12]. Exploitative leadership often leads to negative work events [5], which involve emotional and state reactions [13]. Depending on the differentiation of employees' personalities, their perceived stress can present different levels of psychological resilience responses [8]. Specifically, factors such as work environment characteristics, events, and employee personality affect employee mood and satisfaction, and ultimately emotionally driven behavior [14]. Although a few studies have investigated the potential relationship between leadership style and employee behavior. However, the full underlying mechanisms and the internal logic of regulation between exploitative leadership and employee procrastination have not yet been theoretically elucidated or empirically investigated [15]. Therefore, this study is based on the affective event theoretical framework to reveal how exploitative leadership as a negative work event affects employees' behaviors. Filling a gap in empirical research on the mechanisms of dynamic emotional and attitudinal evolution between negative leadership behaviors and employee procrastination.

Despite numerous studies linking academic procrastination with stress, there is little research on the correlation between workplace procrastination [16-18]. Workplace stress is considered an excessive demand on employees that exceeds their coping resources, which can have a negative impact on job satisfaction [19, 20]. And cross-cultural studies have emphasized the inverse relationship between work-related stress and satisfaction (Mohsin & Ayub, 2014; Wilson, 2016). According to conservation of resources theory, individual emotional resource depletion exacerbates job satisfaction when employees are under stressful situations [21]. Emotional suppression of employees in a high-pressure work environment leads to dissatisfaction with work and spitting in the face of leaders [22, 23]. Therefore, by integrating affective event theory and conservation of resources theory to construct a chain transmission model of "stressful event-emotional depletion-cognitive appraisal-behavioral response", the present study not only breaks through the traditional single mediator pathway explanation, but also provides micro-mechanism evidence to understand how individual differences shape the threshold of exploitation tolerance. This study not only breaks through the limitations of the traditional single mediator pathway, but also reveals the boundary role of psychological resilience in resource compensation (e.g., emotion regulation, cognitive reappraisal), and provides micro-mechanisms evidence to understand how individual differences shape the threshold of tolerance to exploitation.

Inspired by the concept of "personality differentiation" in organizational behavior. This study aims to reveal the hidden mechanisms by which exploitative leaders exacerbate employees' procrastination behaviors through the chain-mediated path of emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction, to test the moderating effects of psychological resilience between stress perception, emotional exhaustion, and job satisfaction, to construct an integrative explanatory model of the dynamic evolution of implicit exploitation and the interaction of resources-stress in the context of power asymmetry, and to fill the gap in the theory of dynamic cognitive paths and cultural boundary conditions between destructive leadership and workplace procrastination. the theoretical gap of cultural boundary conditions. In order to address the above research gaps, this study adopts a progressive structure: (1) the theoretical foundation integrates the affective event theory and conservation of resources theory, and constructs a theoretical model of exploitative leadership influencing procrastination behaviors through the chain mediation of emotional depletion-job satisfaction; (2) the hypothesis of the moderating effect of psychological resilience on the stress-satisfaction pathway is proposed. Satisfaction pathway; (3) examine the strength of the chain mediation effect and the moderating effect of psychological resilience through symmetric PLS-SEM, and introduce fsQCA

to reveal the multiple concurrent causal conditions; (4) reveal the dynamic game mechanism between the masking effect of the organizational leadership and the individual's mental resources, and put forward the dual-path governance framework of "institutional transparency and cultivation of resilience". Therefore, this study not only fills the theoretical gap of the dynamic cognitive path between destructive leadership and procrastination, but also provides an integrative explanatory model for the design of organizational intervention strategies in cross-cultural contexts.

2.Literature review and hypothesis development

2.1 Affective events theory

Affective event theory was first proposed and defined by Weiss and Cropanzano [12], where the work environment is an important source of various work events that in turn influence individuals' affective responses and attitudes and trigger their work behaviors. Affective event theory suggests that specific events in the workplace, known as "affective events," can trigger positive or negative emotional responses [24]. These emotional reactions affect the relationship between work events and outcomes [12, 14, 25]. Leadership style is one of the key characteristics of the work environment, and exploitative leadership is a negative force in the work environment and a source of becoming negative work events [15]. Bajaba, Al-Judibi [26] showed that exploitative leaders prioritize self-interest at the expense of their subordinates' well-being and undermine organizational development. These behaviors constitute negative events that lead to mental internal depletion and emotional exhaustion of employees [27].

Previous research has shown several negative consequences of exploitative leadership, including increased burnout, willingness to leave, and imbalance in social exchanges, among other deviations [28, 29]. Ghanbari, Majooni and Taajobi [30] showed that negative emotions triggered by exploitative leaders not only affect employees' work attitudes, but also affect the overall emotional climate of the team through the emotional contagion effect, which reduces team performance. Bonanno and Burton [31] investigated the role of individual psychological differences, such as personality traits and psychological responses, in regulating the impact of emotional events. For example, people with high psychological resilience may be more capable of regulating their emotional responses, thereby reducing the negative impact of stressful events [32]. In addition, Rodell and Judge [33] showed that an individual's emotions are the result of various work events which in turn affect their behavior. Humble leadership enhances employees' positive emotions, which promotes improvisation [34]. Whereas, destructive leadership weakens employees' work ethic and undermines the development of the organization [27].

According to affective event theory, characteristics of the work environment trigger certain events that in turn affect employees' emotions and work attitudes, leading to relevant work behaviors [12]. Specifically, exploitative leaders' behaviors as negative affective events trigger negative emotional responses (e.g., emotional exhaustion, anger, sadness), which further affect employees' attitudes (e.g., decreased job satisfaction) and ultimately lead to negative work behaviors such as procrastination. The affective event theory explains the key role of personal affective responses between work events and behavioral outcomes through this chain, revealing the function of emotions as a bridge between leadership style and employee behavior. As such, it is a suitable framework for exploring the influences between leadership style and employee behavior to understand the antecedents and consequences of specific employee behaviors.

2.2 The impact of exploitative leadership on employee work procrastination

Exploitative leadership is a destructive leadership style characterized by leaders prioritizing self-interest at the expense of the well-being of subordinates and the goals of the organization [5]. Exploitative leadership behavior can be deconstructed into five dimensions [5]: Egoistic behavior, manifested in the leader's placing his personal goals above those of his subordinates and instrumentalizing his subordinates as a vehicle for achieving his personal interests; Results-appropriating behavior, where the leader appropriates the results of the subordinate's work for himself or herself; Pressure shifting behavior, which refers to a leader's ability to gain personal advantage by exerting excessive pressure on subordinates; Developmentally destructive behaviors, manifested by leaders limiting their subordinates' room for career advancement by assigning repetitive, low-value work tasks; Relationship manipulation, in which a leader deliberately provokes relationships between subordinates for personal gain [27]. Similarly destructive leaders such as narcissistic, manipulative, and authoritarian leaders exhibit manipulative, exploitative, and selfish behaviors, but their negative behaviors are obvious [1, 35]. Exploitative leadership differs

from other destructive leadership styles in that leaders use “overly friendly” and “extremely pleasant” behaviors to achieve their personal goals, and do not display their exploitative behaviors in a hostile manner [5, 36, 37]. Research has shown that exploitative leadership as a consumptive stressor [27] can have significant negative impacts on employees, such as increased turnover intentions [38] and decreased job satisfaction [39].

Work procrastination is the intentional delaying of work tasks that need to be completed [40], which is usually a maladaptive coping mechanism to cope with a stressful work environment. Work procrastination can be recognized by two dimensions, namelynamely soldiering and cyberslacking [41-43]. Metin, Taris and Peeters [42] indicate that although work theoretically distinguishes between these two dimensions of procrastination, it is difficult to distinguish them in practice. Paulsen [44] defined “work avoidance” as avoiding work for more than one day without harming others or transferring work to colleagues. Therefore, high levels of stress are associated with an increase in work procrastination and a decrease in work engagement [41]. According to affective event theory [12], factors such as workplace characteristics, work events, and employee personality influence employees' affective responses and attitudes, and ultimately emotionally driven behavior [45]. Majeed, Fatima and Irshad [1] argued that when employees perceive that their leaders are exploiting them, they experience higher levels of emotional exhaustion and diminished motivation, decreasing their ability to effectively engage in tasks. This process of emotional exhaustion not only weakens employees' task performance, but also leads to intentional delays in task completion as a form of psychological withdrawal [46]. If employees perceive leaders as self-serving, credit-hungry and manipulative, they tend to display negative emotions such as frustration and anger [47]. Consequently, the chronic stress and unfavorable development associated with this leadership style leads to increased psychological stress among employees [5], which can be manifested in work delays.

H1: Exploitative leaders positively influence employees’ procrastination behavior at work

2.3 Emotional exhaustion as a mediator between exploitative leadership and employee work procrastination

Emotional exhaustion is defined as a state in which an employee is so overworked that he or she has no energy left to give, and involvement in the environment attributed to the feeling of emotional depression is associated with psychological discomfort [48-50]. Emotional exhaustion is the core essence of burnout [49, 51]. Emotional exhaustion involves the decline or depletion of an individual’s emotional capacity [52] and is associated with work overload, time pressure, and lack of resources [53]. Emotional exhaustion occurs when there are high demands placed on the subject and there is a perceived lack of emotional and physical resources to cope with these demands [54]. Dodanwala and Shrestha [55] showed that an increase in stressors such as role ambiguity, conflict, overload, etc. can directly lead to an increase in the level of emotional exhaustion of employees. Kim and Lee [56];Martínez-Iñigo, Totterdell [58] showed that emotional exhaustion is induced by stress. Thus, emotional depletion occurs when individuals do not have the critical traits to adapt to adversity and are not able to buffer the erosion of psychological resources from stressors.

Burnout is a long-term stress response often referred to as emotional exhaustion [59]. Burnout has become a unique syndrome in the workplace, but is distinct from depression and other forms of stress and fatigue [60, 61]. Emotional exhaustion occurs when an individual exerts too much energy and demands on his or her time [62]. Elsaied [63] showed that the relationship between exploitative leadership and organizational cynicism can be more fully explained by examining the mediating role of emotional exhaustion. Lee and Ashforth [64] showed that, other things being equal, the negative effects of job demands such as role conflict and stress on emotional exhaustion outweighed the positive effects of job resources such as coworker and supervisor support. Exploitative leaders can place excessive burdens on their subordinates by setting unrealistic deadlines and exploiting them, which can increase people’s negative emotional states [5, 65].

H2a: Exploitative leadership shows a positive correlation with employees’ emotional exhaustion

Research has shown that emotional exhaustion has become a major concern for organizations and that it is directly related to employee work delays [66-68]. In previous studies, Balkıs [69] observed a significant correlation between their exhaustion and deliberate academic procrastination. Krischer, Penney and Hunter [70] showed that emotionally exhaustion employees are highly likely to perform counterproductive work behaviors. Çelik, Turunç and Begenirbaş [71] stated that when employees feel tired

at work, they are likely to behave abnormally in their interpersonal relationships. Ugwu, Enwereuzor [72] found that employees with high levels of exhaustion may intentionally use counterproductive behaviors that are harmful to their organizations compared to employees with low levels of exhaustion. Emotional depletion of employees positively affects transgressive behaviors because this disruption is detrimental to their ability to properly maintain normal work behaviors [73, 74]. Therefore, there is a positive correlation between employees' emotional exhaustion and procrastination behavior, and employees in an organization experiencing emotional exhaustion significantly increase negative behaviors that are harmful to the organization [75].

H2b: Employee's emotional exhaustion positively correlates with employee's procrastination work

The combination of these arguments suggests that emotional exhaustion plays a key mediating role. Exploitative leaders continue to deplete the psychological resources of their employees through implicit resource appropriation (e.g., stealing results) and responsibility shifting (e.g., setting unreasonable deadlines) [5], this chronic stressor forces employees into long-term emotional overload [76], this ultimately leads to the core symptoms of emotional exhaustion-emotional exhaustion and a sudden drop in work engagement. When the continuous depletion of emotional resources exceeds the individual compensatory threshold, employees will activate self-protection mechanisms [77], reducing immediate emotional load by delaying task progress through procrastination behavior. Empirical evidence suggests that highly emotionally exhaustion employees are impaired by cognitive regulation [78], prefer delay as a non-adaptive coping strategy [66], creating a vicious cycle of "emotional overdraft-behavioral withdrawal".

H2: Employee emotional exhaustion mediates the relationship between exploitative leadership and work procrastination

2.4 Job satisfaction as a mediator between exploitative leadership and work procrastination

Job satisfaction is an employee's emotional response to his or her job, which is based on a comparison between actual results and desired results [79-81]. Job satisfaction is considered to be a multifactorial structure that includes employees' perceptions of various intrinsic and extrinsic job factors [82]. They cover specific satisfaction with working conditions, organizational practices and co-worker relations, among other things [83], Perceived attitude towards the job and the organization in which it is located [84]. Job satisfaction is strongly influenced by factors such as work-life balance, career advancement opportunities, and type of leadership [85, 86], is a prerequisite for predicting employee behavior [87]. Previous research has shown that job satisfaction remains one of the most studied job attitudes in organizational psychology [88]. In organizational behavior research, employees who feel appreciated, supported by colleagues and management, and have a sense of purpose show higher job satisfaction [89]. And when the sense of organizational support is insufficient, employees reinforce their negative evaluations to show dissatisfaction with their jobs [90], which in turn promotes negative employee behavior. However, most studies have not used job satisfaction as a potential factor in job attitudes to measure leadership style and corresponding behaviors produced by employees, nor have they demonstrated the effect of employee emotional state on job satisfaction between potential factors. Therefore, this study will further explore the effect of employees' emotional exhaustion on job satisfaction by conceptualizing job satisfaction as the attitude that employees develop towards their work environment, which further influences their characteristic behaviors.

Leaders are key determinants in alleviating psychological distress and coping with negative emotions [91]. Leadership is recognized as an important predictor and plays a central role in the determinants of job satisfaction [82]. Leadership is a management function that focuses on human and social interaction and the process of influencing people to achieve organizational goals [92]. Hajiali, Kessi [93], Naeem and Khanzada [94] showed that employees' job satisfaction depends on leadership style. Employee job satisfaction is high under humble leadership [95, 96] and lower under destructive leadership [89]. Exploitative leaders seek to exert pressure, heavy workloads, gain honor from followers, sources of psychological resource fatigue [65] and also reduce employee satisfaction [97].

H3a: Exploitative leadership and job satisfaction show negative correlation

Employees need satisfaction and self-actualization through qualified and autonomous work [98]. Factors that motivate work are positively related to overall workplace satisfaction, such as: variety of tasks required, autonomy, importance of the task, or feedback [98]. Tudose and Pavalache–Ilie [99] showed that job satisfaction affects employee productivity, absenteeism, business turnover and overall organizational efficiency. Procrastination is recognized as a significant predictor of job stress,

which in turn is a significant predictor of job satisfaction [99]. Several studies on employee job satisfaction have found that procrastination is negatively related to job satisfaction [18]. Workplace satisfaction is lower when procrastination and job stress overlap [18]. Job dissatisfaction can lead to counterproductive work behaviors [100]. As a result, dissatisfied employees will leave the workplace more often than satisfied employees [101-103].

H3b: Employee job satisfaction and procrastination show negative correlation

The combination of these arguments suggests that job satisfaction plays a key mediating role. Exploitative leaders erode employees' fundamental trust in organizational fairness by undermining norms of reciprocity and distorting boundaries of responsibility [73], and this systemic resource imbalance triggers negative reappraisal of employees' psychological contracts [104]. As a result, employees' intrinsically motivated need for autonomy is blocked and their extrinsically motivated perception of instrumental value is weakened. Empirical evidence suggests that low job satisfaction employees are more inclined to adopt procrastination as a passive workplace alienation strategy due to goal commitment decoupling [105] with prospective cognitive control deficits [106]. Affective event theory [12]) further reveals that decreased satisfaction significantly raises the activation threshold for procrastination as an emotionally driven coping strategy by enhancing the salience of negative affective events versus weakening positive affect regulation.

H3: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between exploitative leadership and work procrastination

Emotional exhaustion has been directly associated with job satisfaction in most burnout studies [107]>. Many researchers have confirmed that emotional exhaustion has a negative impact on job satisfaction [108]. As emotional exhaustion increases, job satisfaction decreases [49]. Emotional exhaustion also negatively affects employee job satisfaction [109-111]. Pu, Sang [112] showed a negative correlation between emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction among hotel workers. Kara [113] revealed that emotional burnout showed a negative correlation with job satisfaction in a work study of Turkish teachers. Thus, higher emotional exhaustion is associated with lower job satisfaction [114].

H4: Emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction show negative correlation

2.5 Psychological resilience as moderator between exploitative leadership, employee emotional exhaustion and work procrastination

As a core element of stable psychological traits, psychological resilience is the ability of individuals to overcome obstacles and adapt to difficult situations [115, 116]. Psychological resilience, a key trait for individuals to adapt to adversity, buffers the erosion of psychological resources by stressors [117]. According to conservation of resources theory, employees' responses to the loss of resources caused by workplace stressors depend on personal resources [118]. Resilience is an important personal resource for coping with stressful situations [119].Guo, Cheng and Luo [27] showed that all employees react differently when they encounter exploitative leaders. High resilience gives individuals the ability to cope with challenges in a well-adapted and productive manner, whereas low resilience impairs the ability of individuals in dealing with environmental problems [120-122]. Therefore, this study used psychological resilience as a moderating variable to reveal the effects of employees' psychological individual differences in responding differently to exploitative leadership both on self-emotional and work attitude changes.

Exploitative leaders can accelerate the loss of employees' psychological resources through persistent resource solicitation (e.g., excessive work demands) and emotional indifference (e.g., lack of supportive behaviors), which in turn leads to emotional exhaustion [5]. The conservation of resources theory suggests that when individuals are consistently confronted with a resource imbalance (resources given > resources received), this triggers an accelerated depletion of emotional resources [123]. Exploitative leaders continue to deplete employees' resources through behaviors such as unreasonable shifting of responsibility, while suppressing avenues for replenishing their resources (e.g., denying emotional support or development opportunities) [27]. Together, this impeded access to resources and increased resource loss constitute a dual-path formation mechanism for emotional depletion [124]. Psychological resilience, a core competency of individuals to adapt to adversity, moderates the impact of stressors through cognitive reappraisal and resource substitution mechanisms [119]. Specifically, low psychological resilience employees faced with exploitative behaviors: are more likely to develop uncontrollable threat appraisals and activate strong stress responses [125] and lack an effective arsenal of coping strategies, leading to inefficient resource recovery [126]. As a result, this dual vulnerability magnifies the negative effects of exploitative leadership.

H5a: The positive relationship between exploitative leadership and emotional exhaustion is moderated by psychological resilience, i.e., the higher the psychological resilience, the weaker the relationship between exploitative leadership and emotional exhaustion.

The protective effects of psychological resilience are particularly significant in organizational contexts [127]. Good psychological resilience has been described as a way for individuals to overcome obstacles, to self-regulate and to have the flexibility to accept change [121, 128]. Research has shown that resilient people tend to exhibit optimism, creative problem-solving skills, and positive emotions, which enhance their ability to cope with stress [129, 130]. This positive mindset enables them to maintain positive social interactions and a sense of personal professional fulfillment, mitigating the negative effects of exploitative behaviors [131]. In addition, resilience can minimize resource loss in stressful work environments [132] and help individuals maintain well-being under exploitative leadership [133]. Highly psychologically resilient employees possess greater emotional regulation [134] and are more inclined to employ cognitive reappraisal strategies to reinterpret exploitative leadership behaviors as manageable challenges rather than uncontrollable threats [135]. As a result, exploitative leadership may have a greater impact on employees who are less psychologically resilient, thereby maintaining lower job satisfaction.

H5b: The negative relationship between exploitative leadership and job satisfaction is moderated by psychological resilience, i.e., the higher the psychological resilience, the stronger the relationship between exploitative leadership and job satisfaction.

3.Methods

This study integrates symmetric and asymmetric analysis methods to systematically examine the formation mechanisms of employees' procrastination behavior at work. At the symmetric level of analysis, PLS-SEM (Smart PLS 4.0) was used to conduct multicluster components [136] to validate the predictive effects of antecedent variables on outcome variables [137]. At the asymmetric level of analysis, fsQCA 3.0 was applied to identify multivariate causal combinations that lead to work delays, revealing complex paths of action through the sufficiency configuration solution and necessary conditions analysis [138]. Based on the validation of the two-party method, this study deeply analyzes the direct effect and mediating mechanism of exploitative leadership on work procrastination to provide more robust empirical evidence for theory construction.

3.1 Participants and procedures

This study obtains research data by means of questionnaire survey. The top 500 companies in the service sector included in the White Paper on Chinese Enterprises 2024 were selected and 50 companies were selected from them using random sampling method. The specific sampling operation is to number all enterprises and then use a random number generator to complete the sample selection. After identifying the sample enterprises, the research team contacted their managers and sent out invitations for research. In the end, a total of 43 enterprises agreed to participate in the survey and provided valid data, and all enterprises participated in the research on a voluntary basis.

The academic nature of the study was explained in detail to the participants prior to the formalization of the survey and a promise was made to maintain strict confidentiality of the data, while support was obtained from the heads of the departments. The questionnaire based on the mature scale design was pre-tested and participants gave positive feedback on the clarity and relevance of the questions. The content validity of the questionnaire was ensured after adjustments were made based on input from domain experts, and all items were eventually retained to ensure reliability. Through the assistance of the human resources department, we finalized 521 voluntary participants from 607 candidates using random sampling matched to employee job numbers. The research team explained the purpose of the study in detail to the selected employees by phone or email and obtained their informed consent. To minimize the effect of common method bias [139, 140], this study used a three-stage time-point separation method to collect data. In the first phase of the survey, 521 employees completed questionnaires containing demographic variables, psychological resilience, and perceptions of exploitative leadership, and 500 valid questionnaires were returned (95.96% return rate). The second phase of the survey was conducted after a one-month interval, in which the aforementioned 500 employees were asked to report on their emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction status, and 480 valid responses were obtained (96.00% recovery rate). In the third phase of the survey, conducted at a further one-month interval, 480 continuing participants completed the work delay assessment, and 466 valid questionnaires were recovered (97.08% recovery rate). After rigorous data cleaning (excluding invalid questionnaires such as abnormal response

times and regular responses), a final sample of 450 valid samples was obtained, with an overall validity rate of 86.37%. Among them, 52% were male (SD=0.50), the mean age was 38.26 years (SD=10.67), and the mean tenure was 5.71 years (SD=3.15); 47% had a bachelor's degree.

Table 1. Sample characteristics (n =450)

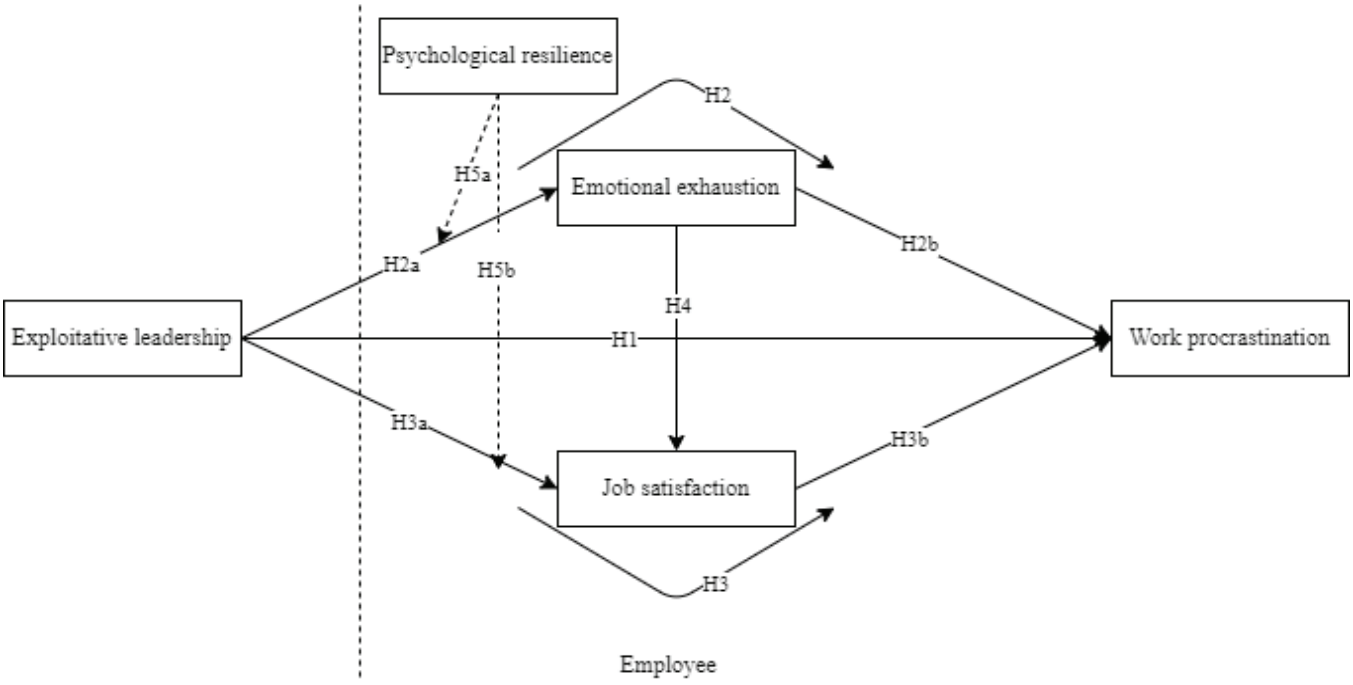
		Total (450)	
		Frequency	%
Gender	Male	234	52.0%
	Female	216	48.0%
Age	18-25	53	11.78%
	26-35	153	34.00%
	36-45	107	23.77%
	46-55	124	27.55%
	56-65	10	2.22%
	≥65	3	0.68%
Education	Below High School	6	0.20%
	High school or technical secondary school	15	3.20%
	Undergraduate or junior college	301	67.80%
	Master degree or above	128	28.80%
Work years	1-2years	90	20.00%
	3-5years	201	44.67%
	6-9years	126	28.00%
	10-15years	25	5.56%
	>15years	8	1.77%

Note(s): SD – Standard deviation

3.2 Measures

Following the reverse translation procedure [141], all English questionnaire entries were translated into Chinese. To avoid language bias, two language experts were invited to proofread the scales.The sample items measuring "exploitative leadership" were adapted from Schmid, Pircher Verdorfer and Peus [5]; Sample items measuring "psychological resilience" adapted from Smith, Dalen [142]; Sample items measuring "emotional exhaustion" adapted from Maslach, Jackson and Leiter [59]; Sample items measuring 'job satisfaction' adapted from De Simone, Lampis [84], which is based on the originally developed [143] scale; The sample item measuring "work delays" was adapted from the scale assessed by He et al. (2021). A seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 "completely disagree" to 7 "completely agree" was used in this study.

Figure 1. Proposed research framework.



4.Results

4.1 Control of confounding variables and assessment of common method variance

The study sample was limited to individuals who had worked full-time for their current business for 1 year or more, and sample characteristics were matched to minimize the impact of potential confounding variables (internships or part-time employees) on the results of the study. In order to control, eliminate, and detect extraneous variables such as sample characteristics [144], the effect of demographic characteristics (e.g., age, gender, etc.) on each construct was examined through an analysis of covariance [145]. The data showed that these factors had no effect on any of the structures of the research model. To check for common method bias, two tests of one-factor methods as well as tests of simple and complex model comparison methods were conducted, which showed that common method variance was not an issue in this study (see Table 2).

Table 2. Common method bias tests

Test method	Test	Result
Harmon single-factor test	Fourth factors appeared (the total 64.4% variance explained) First factor: 38.4% Second factor: 12.0% Third factor: 7.1% Fourth factor:6.9%	Since more than one factor appears, and the first factor has less than 40% variance, common method bias is not an issue [139].
Comparing single factor model (simple model; all independent factors considered one variable) and hypotheses model (complex)	Simple model: AVE: 0.698 (the larger the better) R2: 37.3% (the larger the better)	Since the complex model is superior to the simple model, common method bias is not an issue in this study[146] .
	Research model: AVE: 0.699 R2: 48.2%	

Note: All tests show that common method bias is not problem in this study.

4.2 PLS-SEM

4.2.1 Reliability and validity

The results of data analysis showed (Tables 3 and 4) that the factor loadings of all measures were higher than 0.7, while the composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha coefficients exceeded 0.7, and the average variance extracted (AVE) was

greater than 0.5.These results fully demonstrated that the scales had high reliability with good convergent validity [147]. In addition, all heterogeneous trait ratios (HTMT) were less than 0.8, and the square root of the AVE of each latent variable was greater than its correlation coefficient with the other latent variables (based on the Fornell-Larcker criterion, see Table 4), which further verified that the scale had desirable discriminant validity [147].

Table 3. Measurement items.

Construct	Measurement Item	Factor Loading	Mean	Standard Deviation	Kurtosis	Skewness	VIF
Exploitative Leadership	My supervisor used my work product for personal gain	0.832	4.013	1.238	-0.172	0.052	2.165
	My supervisor thinks my work product can be used for his/her personal gain	0.812	3.987	1.213	-0.256	0.191	2.004
	My supervisor increases my workload to achieve his/her goals without considering my needs	0.833	3.964	1.209	-0.145	0.015	2.123
	My supervisor gives me boring daily tasks so he/she can profit from them	0.807	4.024	1.186	-0.141	0.073	2.000
	My supervisor picks on my coworkers for his/her own purposes	0.859	3.998	1.234	-0.377	0.047	2.370
Emotional Exhaustion	I feel depressed at work	0.782	4.018	1.211	-0.028	0.071	1.559
	I woke up in the morning feeling tired and had to face a new day at work!	0.821	4.031	1.211	0.002	-0.015	1.797
	I'm frustrated with my job	0.832	3.989	1.232	-0.211	0.014	1.868
	I feel like dealing directly with people puts too much pressure on me	0.771	4.009	1.215	0.028	0.095	1.585
Job Satisfaction	I'm quite happy with my current job	0.884	4.013	1.215	-0.117	-0.018	1.997
	I'm quite unhappy with my current job R	0.835	3.962	1.228	0.123	0.034	1.728
	I'm passionate about what I'm doing	0.842	3.998	1.246	-0.436	-0.058	1.754
	I feel as if each day's work never ends R	0.831	3.875	1.238	0.329	0.046	1.679
	I really like my job	0.846	3.951	1.173	-0.131	-0.021	1.811
Work Procrastination	I promise myself I'll do something, but I keep putting it off because of pressure	0.785	4.033	1.176	-0.001	-0.081	1.508
	I usually delay the start of a job	0.862	3.987	1.229	-0.337	0.155	1.801
	I will postpone work that is not needed at the moment	0.858	4.016	1.260	-0.398	0.011	1.696
Psychological Resilience	I recover quickly from stressful events	0.838	3.956	1.248	-0.463	-0.046	1.663
	I have a hard time with stressful events R	0.831	3.942	1.253	0.315	0.028	1.570
	I tend to recover quickly after tough times	0.856	3.971	1.226	-0.187	0.048	1.801
	When bad things happen, it's hard for me to pull myself together R	0.851	3.867	1.221	0.172	-0.036	1.792
	I usually get in a little trouble when times are tough	0.828	3.971	1.210	-0.024	0.048	1.602

Note:Exploitative Leadership(EL),Emotional Exhaustion(EE),Job Satisfaction(JS),Work Procrastination(WP),Psychological Resilience(PR)；"R" representing reverse-coded items

Table 4. Reliability and validity

	Cron-bach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Fornell-Larcker Criterion					Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)					
				EE	EL	JS	PR	WP	EE	EL	JS	PR	WP	PR x EL
EE	0.815	0.878	0.643	0.802										
EL	0.886	0.916	0.687	0.553	0.829				0.648					
JS	0.821	0.893	0.736	-0.468	-0.528	0.858			0.571	0.617				
PR	0.793	0.879	0.707	-0.174	-0.057	0.120	0.841		0.217	0.071	0.147			
WP	0.785	0.874	0.699	0.582	0.609	-0.511	-0.129	0.836	0.722	0.721	0.635	0.164		
PR x EL									0.294	0.079	0.193	0.047	0.058	

4.2.2 Structural model analysis

In this study, PLS-SEM was used to analyze the subsample and the results are presented in Figure 2. Exploitative leadership has a significant positive effect on employee procrastination (H1: $\beta = 0.340$, $p < 0.001$), and hypothesis H1 is valid. Exploitative leadership has a significant positive effect on employee emotional exhaustion (H2a: $\beta = 0.567$, $p < 0.001$), and emotional exhaustion has a significant positive effect on employee work procrastination (H2b: $\beta = 0.306$, $p < 0.001$), Hypotheses H2a and b hold. Exploitative leadership has a significant negative effect on employee job satisfaction (H3a: $\beta = -0.444$, $p < 0.001$) and employee job satisfaction has a significant negative effect on job procrastination (H3b: $\beta = -0.188$, $p < 0.001$), hypotheses H3a, b hold. Employees' emotional exhaustion has a significant negative effect on job satisfaction (H4: $\beta = -0.168$, $p = 0.002$) and hypothesis H4 holds. High psychological resilience employees showed attenuated emotional exhaustion and mitigated decrease in job satisfaction when faced with exploitative leaders (H5a: $\beta = -0.302$, $p < 0.001$; H5b: $\beta = 0.161$, $p < 0.001$), Hypotheses H5a, b hold.

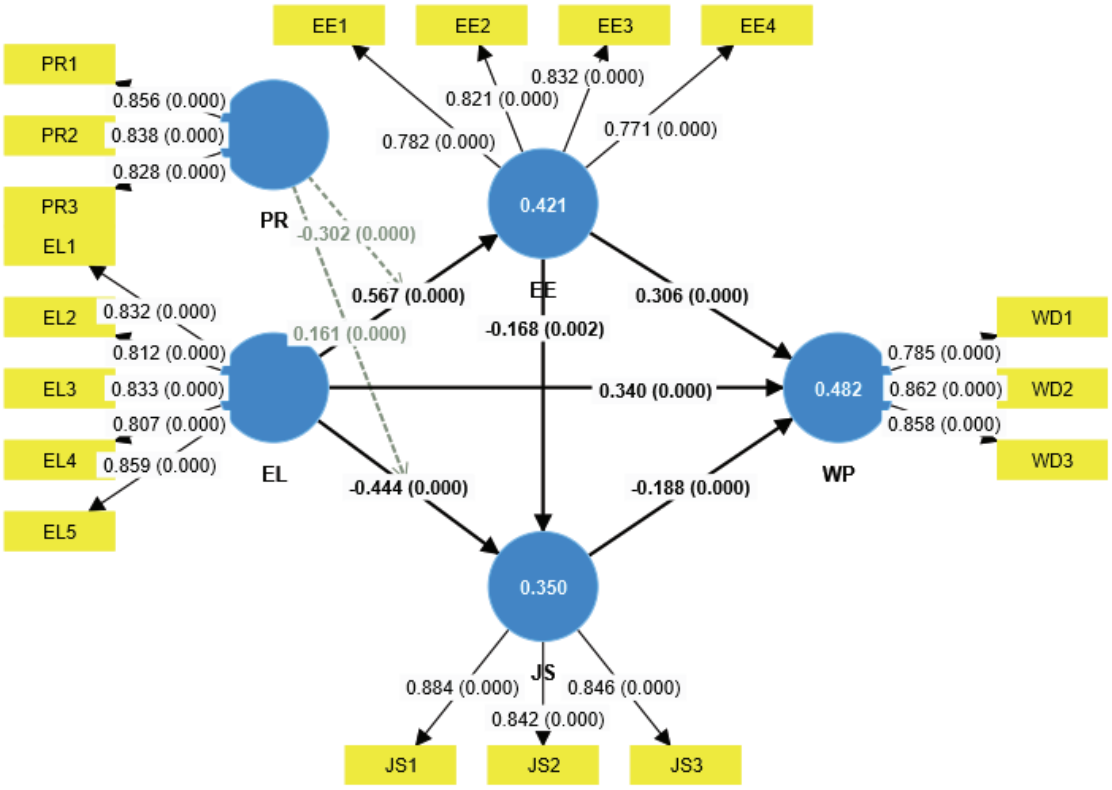
In order to test the indirect effects of employees' emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction, this study used the PLS-SEM bootstrapping method with 5000 bootstrapping sessions. employees' procrastination was indirectly affected by emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction (H2: $\beta = 0.084$, $p < 0.001$; H3: $\beta = 0.174$, $p < 0.001$), and it was hypothesized that H2 and 3 would be affected by emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction (H2: $\beta = 0.084$, $p < 0.001$; H3: $\beta = 0.174$, $p < 0.001$). were established. Therefore, emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction played a mediating role in this study. Table 5 reports the results of the data analysis of indirect effects, full mediation and partial mediation of the research model.Variance accounted for value in PLS is a process of calculating the strength of mediation, and also the ratio of indirect effects to the total effect, VAF is less than 20% no mediation, 20%-80% belongs to partial mediation, and greater than 80% belongs to full The VAF was calculated as VAF = Indirect effect / Total effect % (Hair Jr, Hult, Ringle, Sarstedt, Danks, & Ray, 2021). The data results indicated that EL-JS-WP, EL-EE-WP were all partial mediators.Hair Jr, Hult, Ringle, Sarstedt, Danks, et al. (2021) showed that 0.005, 0.01, and 0.025 were used as realistic criteria for small, medium, and large effects, respectively, and the data results indicated that all but the PR -> JS small effect was the large effects.

Table 5. VAF and effect size

	Indirect effect	**Total effect**	**T statistic**	**2.50%**	**97.50%**	**VAF(Result)**	f^2
EL ->JS ->WP	0.084***		3.988	0.045	0.127	30.50%(Partial mediation)	
EL ->EE ->WP	0.174***		6.825	0.125	0.224	63.30%(Partial mediation)	
EL ->WP		0.275***	9.486	0.219	0.332		0.134
EE -> JS							0.025
EE -> WP							0.118
EL -> EE							0.551
JS -> WP							0.046
EL -> JS							0.194
PR -> EE							0.038
PR -> JS							0.007

Note: ***p<0.001; **p<0.01; *p<0.05.

Fig 2 Results of PLS-SEM analy



4.3 fsQCA

4.3.1 Variable calibration

This study uses fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) in order to reveal the multiple causative factors and grouping paths of employees' procrastination triggered by exploitative leadership. By integrating qualitative and quantitative logics, this method can resolve the nonlinear interaction mechanism between emotional and attitudinal factors and compensate for the limitations of traditional linear models. Most of the studies used the direct method to transform the Likert scale data into 0-1 fuzzy set affiliation scores during the data calibration stage. The extremes were set as full affiliation (0.95) versus non-affiliation (0.05), with (0.5) as the intersection point [148, 149]. This study followed Pappas and Woodside [150] to ensure standardization and operationalization of the analytical framework by marking the actual maximum and minimum values of each variable as calibrated values for full affiliation and full non-affiliation. The mean and median values of the variables are close to each other, and choosing the mean as a calibration benchmark helps to retain more valid cases [151].

Table 6. Calibration points of variables

Variables	Full membership	Crossover	Full non-membership
Exploitative Leadership	6.80	4.00	1.40
Emotional Exhaustion	7	4.01	1.50
Job Satisfaction	7	3.99	1.00
Work Procrastination	7	4.01	1.33
Psychological Resilience	7	3.97	1.00

4.3.2 Necessity analysis

According to Schneider and Wagemann [152], necessity conditions are prerequisites for the occurrence of an outcome but alone do not necessarily lead to the outcome and are recognized as necessary when the consistency of the condition reaches 0.9. This study examined the necessity of each individual condition (including its non-setting values) for employee work delays and non-employee work delays. The results showed (Table 6) that the consistency of the conditions ranged from 0.663 to 0.841

for employee work procrastination and from 0.646 to 0.848 for non-employee work procrastination.All values were below the criterion of 0.9, indicating that no single condition was necessary for employee work procrastination or non-employee work procrastination.

Table 7. Analysis results of necessary conditions

	Outcome:Work Procrastination		Outcome:~Work Procrastination	
Variables	**Consistency**	**Coverage**	**Consistency**	**Coverage**
Exploitative Leadership	0.841	0.843	0.646	0.662
~Exploitative Leadership	0.663	0.647	0.847	0.845
Emotional Exhaustion	0.831	0.842	0.656	0.680
~Emotional Exhaustion	0.684	0.660	0.848	0.837
Job Satisfaction	0.686	0.680	0.817	0.829
~Job Satisfaction	0.828	0.816	0.685	0.690
Psychological Resilience	0.731	0.725	0.760	0.771
~Psychological Resilience	0.769	0.758	0.729	0.735

Note: ~ represents the absent of the condition.

4.3.3 Sufficiency analysis

In previous research, we set the threshold for raw consistency at 0.8, the threshold for proportional reduction inconsistency (PRI) at 0.5, and the case frequency threshold for configurational adequacy analysis at 10 [150]. This study is based on affective event theory, so for the causal conditions of employee procrastination emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction were indicated as present, and for psychological resilience as present or uncertain. Therefore, by comparing the intermediate and parsimonious solutions, the core condition (present in both solutions) and the peripheral condition (seen only in the intermediate solution) can be identified. Results are presented strictly following Ragin [153] canonical format to clarify the relative importance of each condition. Specifically, ● core condition present, • peripheral condition present, ⊗ core condition missing, ⊗ peripheral condition missing, and “blank” indicate no concern.

Table 7 presents three typical path patterns that lead to employee procrastination, each representing a specific set of condition combinations. The results show that the consistency index for each path exceeds the threshold of 0.9, while the overall solution has a consistency of 0.88, which means that 88% of the respondents in cases that meet these condition combinations experience procrastination behaviors in exploitative leadership environments. In terms of explanatory power, the overall solution coverage of 0.827 suggests that these condition combinations explain 82.7% of the observed cases [153]. Notably, the overall solution consistency and coverage were significantly higher than the benchmark value of 0.75 [153], fully confirming the validity of these condition combinations as sufficient conditions. The findings corroborate the causal effect of multifactorial combinations, i.e., work procrastination is often not caused by a single factor, but is the result of a combination of specific conditions.

Differential antecedent conditioning analyses revealed that different combinations of factors had significantly different effects on employees’ work procrastination behaviors. Specifically, Solution 1 (Exploitative Leadership x Emotional Exhaustion) the combination has a raw coverage of 0.756 and a consistency of 0.912 suggesting that the combined effect of exploitative leadership and emotional exhaustion constitutes a highly consistent path to work procrastination. This suggests that employees are highly susceptible to procrastination when they are subjected to both exploitative management and emotional exhaustion. The unique coverage (0.077) shows that this combination explains some of the cases not covered by the other solutions; Solution 2 (Emotional exhaustion × low psychological resilience × low job satisfaction) has an original coverage of 0.642 and a consistency of 0.928 reveals that emotional exhaustion superimposed on the absence of psychological resilience and job satisfaction still leads to procrastination even in the absence of exploitative leadership. The lower unique coverage (0.03) suggests that there is a partial overlap between this path and the other solutions; Solution 3 (exploitative leadership x

low psychological resilience x low job satisfaction) has a raw coverage = of 0.6 with a consistency of 0.918 confirming that exploitative leadership with the same lack of psychological resources and job satisfaction triggers procrastination. This result highlights the interaction of leadership behavior with employees' psychological and job resources. In this study all three paths have raw coverage of more than 0.6 but path 1 has raw coverage of 0.756. hence path 1 is the best path.

Table 8. Analysis results of sufficient conditions

	Solutions of work procrastination		
	Exploitative Leadership - Emotional Exhaustion	Emotional Exhaustion - Psychological Resilience - Job Satisfaction	Exploitative Leadership - Psychological Resilience - Job Satisfaction
	1	2	3
Exploitative Leadership	●		●
Emotional Exhaustion	●	●	
Job Satisfaction		⊗	⊗
Psychological Resilience		⊗	•
Raw coverage	0.756	0.642	0.600
Unique coverage	0.077	0.030	0.041
Consistency	0.912	0.928	0.918
Overall solution coverage	0.827		
Overall solution consistency	0.880		

Note: ● indicates the presence of core conditions, ⊗ indicates the absence of core conditions, • indicates the presence of peripheral conditions, ⊗ indicates the absence of peripheral conditions and blank spaces for 'don't care

4.3.4 Robustness test

In configurational analysis, robustness testing is essential to ensure the reliability of research findings [152]. According to methodological studies, if the research findings remain stable after parameter adjustment or show only a subset of relationships rather than essential changes, the results are shown to be robust. It has been established in the literature that the robustness of the results can be effectively verified by adjusting the consistency threshold and frequency threshold [151, 152]. As shown in Table 8, this study verifies robustness in two ways: after raising the consistency threshold from 0.80 to 0.85 while keeping the PRI and frequency thresholds unchanged, the three resulting configurations (B1~B3) are completely consistent with the initial solution; when fixing the consistency thresholds and PRI thresholds, and adjusting the frequency thresholds from 10 to 5, of the three newly generated conditional configurations, B4 and B5, respectively, are consistent with the initial solutions of scenarios 1 and 2 correspond to each other, while B6 constitutes a subset relationship of scenario 3. These test results verify the robustness of the research conclusions from different perspectives.

Table 9. Robustness test results

Threshold	**configurations**	**Set theoretic representation**
Baseline model	1	EL1*EE1
10a/0.80b/0.5c	2	EE1*~JS1*~PR1
	3	EL1*~JS1*PR1
10a/0.85b/0.5c	B1	EL1*EE1
	B2	EE1*~JS1*~PR1
	B3	EL1*~JS1*PR1
5a/0.80b/0.5c	B4	EL1*EE1
	B5	EE1*~JS1*~PR1
	B6	EL1*~JS1

5.Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion of results

This study deepens our understanding of how exploitative leadership exacerbates employee procrastination through the dual mediating pathways of emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction, while emphasizing the critical moderating role of psychological resilience. Consistent with affective event theory, our findings suggest that exploitative leadership acts as a chronic stressor that triggers negative affective responses (e.g., emotional exhaustion) and worsens cognitive appraisals of work (e.g., job satisfaction), ultimately leading to procrastination as a maladaptive coping mechanism. Specifically, exploitative leaders show significant direct effects on employee procrastination, confirming previous evidence that destructive leadership styles weaken employees' task engagement and self-regulation [1, 5].

The chain mediator model reveals that exploitative leadership depletes employees' emotional resources, which in turn amplifies procrastination. This is consistent with the Conservation of resources theory, as chronic exposure to exploitative behaviors (e.g., outcome plagiarism, responsibility shifting) results in a loss of resources, leaving employees emotionally drained and cognitively disconnected [27, 123]. At the same time, exploitative leadership undermines job satisfaction, and lower satisfaction further predicts work procrastination. This dual-path mechanism emphasizes the interplay of emotional exhaustion and attitudinal disengagement in shaping behavioral outcomes.

Notably, psychological resilience is a critical buffer. High psychological resilience employees exhibit attenuated emotional exhaustion and mitigated job satisfaction decline when confronted with exploitative leadership. fsQCA results further validate this by identifying different configurations: exploitative leadership-induced procrastination is most pronounced in the low psychological resilience and high emotional exhaustion conditions (raw coverage = .756), whereas high psychological resilience, even in the context of impaired job satisfaction, can undermine this pathway. These findings resonate with research that emphasizes resilience as a dynamic ability to reframe stressors and mobilize compensatory resources [119].

5.2 Theoretical implications

This study advances the organizational behavior literature by integrating and extending theoretical frameworks to reveal the subtle mechanisms by which exploitative leadership shapes employee procrastination. Our findings yield three key theoretical contributions that address critical gaps in destructive leadership research. First, we extend affective event theory (AET) by embedding conservation of resources theory (COR) to elucidate how chronic leadership stressors function through continuous affective and cognitive pathways. Although AET has traditionally emphasized discrete emotional triggers [12], our dual-mediation model suggests that prolonged exposure to leadership stressors (e.g., resource depletion) leads to cumulative affective exhaustion, which in turn leads to diminished job satisfaction and ultimately procrastination. This continuous mediating effect (EL → EE → JS → WP) challenges previous views of the role of EE and JS as parallel mediators [49, 112]. By viewing EE as a proximal affective response that precedes cognitive reappraisal, the present study reconciles micro-level affective processes with macro-level behavioral outcomes, providing a dynamic perspective to understand how persistent harmful leadership erodes psychological resources and attitudinal engagement over time.

Second, we redefine psychological resilience as a key boundary condition that redefines the interaction between leadership toxicity and employee outcomes. While existing research has primarily focused on leader-centered traits (e.g., humility) [95], the moderated mediation analysis in this study revealed that psychological resilience serves as a dynamic personal resource that buffers against the adverse effects of destructive leadership. Employees with high psychological resilience mitigated emotional exhaustion and alleviated declines in satisfaction by reframing leadership toxicity-induced stressors as manageable challenges through cognitive reappraisal. This is consistent with the COR principle that resilience facilitates resource substitution [123], but we provide further evidence of its asymmetric efficacy: fsQCA results suggest that low psychological resilience amplifies the effects of leadership toxicity (raw coverage of 0.756), whereas high mental resilience breaks the path of the association between leadership toxicity and job stress even in the presence of inadequate satisfaction under satisfaction as well. These findings contribute to a contingent perspective in leadership research by emphasizing employee agency in neutralizing toxic environments, which differs from trait-centered paradigms.

Third, we bridge the methodological divide by combining symmetric (PLS-SEM) and asymmetric (fsQCA) approaches to

capture the complexity of delay drivers. In SEM, the EE-JS chain mediation dominates (VAF = 63.3%), whereas in fsQCA, three equivalent final configurations are revealed-such as EL × EE and Low PR × Low JS-which together explain 82.7% of the cases. This dual methodological rigor not only validates the robustness of our theoretical model, but also challenges the linear assumptions by revealing nonlinear interactions (e.g., the effect of EL shifts from destructive to neutral with increasing PR). This methodological plurality enriches leadership research by advocating the adoption of a configurational framework to complement variance-based models [149].

Overall, this study redefines the field of disruptive leadership research by (1) viewing exploitative leadership (EL) as a chronic stressor that sequentially depletes emotional and cognitive resources, (2) positioning resilience as a transformative buffer capable of recalibrating the assessment of the stressor, and (3) demonstrating the value of integrative approaches in capturing workplace dynamics. These contributions pave the way for future research to explore temporally and culturally conditioned variables and provide actionable insights for promoting resilient and equitable work systems.

5.3 Practical implications

Organizations must adopt a dual strategy to counteract the negative effects of EL. First, institutional transparency mechanisms-such as anonymous feedback systems and ethics audits-may reduce the opportunities for leaders to be exploited in secret. Clear accountability frameworks for credit allocation and task delegation may also reduce the ambiguity of EL by enabling employees to recognize and report exploitative behavior. Resilience building interventions should be prioritized. Training programs in cognitive reassessment, stress management, and social support mobilization can improve employees' ability to withstand resource depletion [135]. For example, positive thinking-based practices and peer mentoring networks can help high-risk employees reframe EL-induced stress as a manageable challenge.

5.4 Suggestions for future research and Limitations

Despite its contributions, this study has limitations. First, the cross-sectional design precludes causal inferences. Future longitudinal studies could track the dynamic evolution of EL effects over time, especially during critical periods such as organizational restructuring. Second, the sample is limited to Chinese firms. Cross-cultural comparisons can be made, especially in low power distance cultures, which can reveal how cultural values moderate the effects of EL. Finally, reliance on self-reported work procrastination may be subject to common methodological biases, although our robustness checks (e.g., Harman test, fsQCA) mitigated this concern. Future research could incorporate objective indicators (e.g., task completion logs) or supervisor ratings to triangulate results. In addition, exploring alternative mediators (e.g., psychological contract violations) and moderators (e.g., organizational justice) could deepen our understanding of EL boundary conditions. Qualitative methods may also reveal subtle employee coping strategies in exploitative systems. By revealing the affective and cognitive pathways through which exploitative leadership contributes to procrastination, this study emphasizes the need to address systemic leadership deficits and personal resilience. Our integrative model not only advances the theoretical discourse on destructive leadership, but also provides actionable insights for fostering healthier and more equitable workplaces.

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Conflict of Interests

The author(s)declare(s) that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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