


Authoritarian versus benevolent leadership styles: A moderated mediation model of paternalistic leadership, engagement, job status and hospitality employee service performance

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Paternalistic leadership
Benevolent leadership
Authoritarian leadership
Work engagement
Interaction quality
Job status
Hospitality industry

ABSTRACT

This study examined whether work engagement mediated the impact of paternalistic leadership styles on the service performance of hospitality employees and further investigated if job status (full-time vs. part-time) moderated the impact of paternalistic leadership styles, based on the affective event and partial inclusion theories. Through an analysis of matching data from 286 restaurant employees and their 2129 customers in Thailand, the study found that work engagement mediated the effect of authoritarian leadership, a dimension of paternalistic leadership (father-like) on service interaction quality rated by customers, and that the mediation effect was stronger for full-time employees than for their part-time counterparts. However, the effect of benevolent leadership, the other dimension of paternalistic leadership (mother-like) was neither mediated by work engagement, nor moderated by job status. Theoretical and managerial implications of the findings are discussed for hospitality researchers and practitioners.

1. Introduction

The hospitality industry plays an important role in the global economy. It stands apart through its reliance on frequent, face-to-face exchanges between employees and customers. The quality of these moments, shaped by how staff behave, how they respond, and the emotional work they perform, sets the tone for customer satisfaction and loyalty (Pizam et al., 2016). When staff are motivated, engaged, and supported, guests tend to be happier when they leave. Elkhwesky et al. (2022), and Terjav et al. (2016) have shown that leadership significantly shapes employee behavior, influencing how service is felt and delivered.

The way leaders lead is influenced by culture. Paternalistic leadership is widely practiced in many Asian societies shaped by Confucian thinking (Bedi, 2020). Confucianism is built on hierarchy, respect, and duty (Wang et al., 2020). These values translate into leadership practices where the manager is seen not simply as a boss, but as a guide and moral

figure. Firm but fair. Strict but kind. This balance of strength and compassion reflects the Yin-Yang concept, in which Yang represents direction and structure, and Yin embodies empathy and understanding (Zhang et al., 2015). When effective, the approach fosters loyalty and encourages team to go beyond the bare minimum (Bedi, 2020; Mansur et al., 2017).

Even with the growing interest in paternalistic leadership, a few important questions remain open, especially in hospitality. First, most of what we know comes from how employees or managers see things. We know much less about how customers perceive service shaped by this style of leadership (Tuan, 2018). Given that customer judgment is the final word in service industries, this remains a notable omission. By collecting data from customers, this study addresses a critical gap and offers direct insight into how leadership translates into customer-rated service performance. This customer-based evidence adds practical weight to findings that have often relied on internal perceptions alone.

Second, while several studies have explored various psychological

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processes linking leadership and performance, few have examined work engagement as a core explanatory mechanism. Engaged employees are more likely to demonstrate initiative, persistence, and attentiveness during service interactions, directly enhancing the customer experience (Shafi et al., 2021). Moreover, work engagement offers a psychologically grounded explanation—consistent with Affective Events Theory (AET)—of how leadership shapes employee behavior by influencing employees' emotional and cognitive investment in their work (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996). Despite its practical and theoretical relevance, work engagement has not been sufficiently studied in relation to paternalistic leadership in hospitality settings.

Finally, while previous studies have explored moderators such as power distance (Wang and Guan, 2018), HR practices (Tuan, 2018), and exchange quality (Zhang et al., 2021a), the role of employment status has received limited attention. This is especially relevant in the hospitality sector, where part-time and full-time employees often differ in their organizational involvement and sense of inclusion (Terrah et al., 2023). Employment status is a meaningful structural factor that shapes how employees perceive and respond to leadership. Drawing on Partial Inclusion Theory (Katz and Kahn, 1978), full-time employees are more fully integrated into the organizational system and are therefore more likely to view leadership behaviors as relevant to their roles and professional identity. The question of whether these employment categories respond differently to leadership has yet to be adequately addressed.

These gaps highlight a broader issue: understanding of how paternalistic leadership shapes frontline service delivery in hospitality remains limited—particularly when examined through the dual lenses of customer experience and workforce structure. To address this, the study draws on two complementary theoretical frameworks. Affective Events Theory (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996) explains how leadership behaviors function as emotionally salient events that influence employees' engagement and behavioral responses. Partial Inclusion Theory (Katz and Kahn, 1978) offers insight into how employees' varying degrees of organizational inclusion—shaped by their employment status—may influence how they respond to leadership. Together, these frameworks guide the study's focus on both psychological mechanisms and workforce segmentation. Based on this foundation, the study asks:

- (1) How does paternalistic leadership influence customer-perceived service interaction quality?
- (2) Is work engagement the mechanism that links leadership to service quality?
- (3) Does employment status make a difference to this link?

The aim of the study is to examine how paternalistic leadership enables frontline employees to service quality perceived by customers. By incorporating both work engagement and employment status into the conceptual framework, the study offers an integrated view of leadership in service-based contexts. It contributes theoretically by advancing leadership research in Confucian-influenced hospitality settings and practically by offering insights for managing diverse teams to enhance customer experience.

2. Literature review

2.1. Paternalistic leadership and service performance

Paternalistic leadership is a leadership style inspired by familial structures, particularly the father-child dynamic. It demonstrates a deep concern for the holistic well-being of employees, while also establishing firm control and authority (Aycan, 2006; Farh and Cheng, 2000). Recent scholarship has reaffirmed the relevance of this style in contemporary work environments (Lee et al., 2023; Lu et al., 2022). This leadership approach, prevalent in collectivist cultures that endorse high power distances, has been widely discussed in the context of Asian managerial practices. According to Wang et al. (2020), Confucian traditions categorize social relationships into five cardinal relationships, three of which are familial. These relationships, particularly the father-son

dynamic, embody the essence of filial piety—a central virtue in Confucianism. This relationship is characterized by unconditional respect and obedience from the son, alongside the father's responsibility to guide and support. Such dynamics are mirrored in paternalistic leadership, where leaders assume a father-like role, exerting authority while simultaneously nurturing their subordinates (Lee et al., 2023; Lu et al., 2022). Lin (2008) also discusses the ruler-official relationship in Confucianism, which parallels the modern employer-employee relationship under paternalistic leadership. In both scenarios, the leader's authority is absolute and yet is tempered by a moral obligation to ensure the welfare of the followers (employees), establishing a significant power distance, combined with a benevolent governance.

In hospitality contexts, where service quality is shaped by frequent interpersonal interactions, paternalistic leadership offers a culturally resonant framework for managing frontline teams. Pellegrini and Scandura (2008) argue that this leadership style can enhance performance in Confucian-influenced settings, providing a conceptual basis for its application in many Asian workplaces, including hospitality. However, much of the existing empirical research on paternalistic leadership originates from outside the hospitality sector. For instance, Bedi (2020) presents a meta-analytic review showing that benevolence and morality—two key dimensions of paternalistic leadership—are positively associated with employee performance and retention across a range of industries. Similarly, Ugurluoglu et al. (2018) examined hospital staff in Turkey and found that benevolent and moral leadership behaviors significantly enhanced job performance and reduced turnover intention. Lee et al. (2023), drawing on data from full-time employees in various Malaysian organizations in the service industry, positioned paternalistic leadership within the job demands-resources framework. Their results showed that benevolent leadership promoted work engagement and reduced burnout through work meaningfulness, whereas authoritarian leadership increased burnout via emotional demands. Chan et al. (2013), using dyadic data from a Chinese manufacturing firm, demonstrated that benevolence could buffer the negative effects of authoritarian leadership on employee self-esteem and performance outcomes. While these studies do not specifically focus on hospitality, they offer valuable insights into how paternalistic leadership may function in high-contact service environments. Lu et al. (2022) further contribute by linking paternalistic leadership to employee innovation and discretionary effort, underscoring its motivational potential. Together, these findings suggest the need for context-specific research to explore how the distinct dimensions of paternalistic leadership influence employee outcomes in hospitality settings.

This dualistic style, which balances direction and care, aligns with hospitality's need for both consistent performance and emotional labor. Benevolent leadership, marked by a leader's personal concern for staff, fosters trust and organizational citizenship (Bedi, 2020; Mansur et al., 2017). Far from being passive, this approach can reduce withdrawal behaviors and build retention (Chen and Kao, 2009; Pellegrini and Scandura, 2008). In contrast, authoritarian leadership is directive and control based, often receiving criticism for dampening creativity (Chen et al., 2014). Yet, in structured hospitality environments, it can also provide clarity and reinforce expectations (Chen et al., 2017; Zhang et al., 2021b). When integrated with benevolence, authoritarian traits may still lead to trust and performance (Tian and Sanchez, 2017; Wang and Guan, 2018).

Affective Events Theory offers a useful lens for understanding how different leadership behaviors influence employee engagement (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996). Benevolent leadership, which conveys care, support, and personal concern, is likely to generate positive affective experiences such as feeling respected, encouraged, and valued. According to AET, these positive emotions increase employees' willingness to invest emotional and cognitive energy in their roles, which enhances the quality of their service interactions with customers. Authoritarian leadership, though more directive and hierarchical, can also function as an affective event by reducing uncertainty and clarifying expectations.

In high power distance hospitality settings, where deference to authority is culturally accepted, such structure may lead to feelings of psychological safety, predictability, or competence (Tian and Sanchez, 2017; Wang and Guan, 2018). These feelings, while less affiliative than those associated with benevolent leadership, may nevertheless motivate employees to align with service expectations and perform consistently. In both cases, leadership evokes emotional and cognitive reactions that are reflected in customer-facing behavior. These differing affective mechanisms provide the theoretical basis for the proposed mediation effect of work engagement in this study. Hence the following hypotheses were proposed to examine how the dimensions of paternalistic leadership relate to service interaction quality through the lens of employee engagement in hospitality settings.

Hypothesis 1a. : There will be a positive relationship between benevolent leadership and service interaction quality among hospitality employees.

Hypothesis 1b. : There will be a positive relationship between authoritarian leadership and service interaction quality among hospitality employees.

2.2. The mediating role of work engagement in the relationship between paternalistic leadership and service interaction quality

Although the relationship between paternalistic leadership and employee outcomes has been examined in the extant literature, few studies have explored the underlying mechanisms driving this relationship. To bridge this gap, the current study explored the role of work engagement, as a mediating factor between paternalistic leadership and service interaction quality. Work engagement is defined by Schaufeli et al. (2006) as, “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption” (p. 702). Vigor reflects high levels of energy and resilience at work; dedication refers to being strongly involved and finding meaning, enthusiasm, and pride in one’s role; and absorption refers to being fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in one’s tasks.

This study focuses on the dedication and absorption dimensions of work engagement, as these align most closely with the nature of service in Thai restaurants. In Thai culture—particularly within hospitality settings—the concept of *namjai* (น้ำใจ), a sincere, heartfelt willingness to serve, is highly valued. Employees are expected to express genuine warmth, pride, and attentiveness, which are more accurately captured through dedication and absorption than vigor. As defined by Schaufeli et al. (2002), dedication reflects “a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge,” while absorption refers to being “fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in one’s work” (pp. 74–75). Hospitality work in Thailand is often characterized by high turnover, limited recognition, and a lack of empowerment (Kusluvan et al., 2010; Ronra and Chaisawat, 2010). Employees in the Thai hospitality sector frequently report feeling mistreated or emotionally undervalued, which can lead to a sense of worthlessness (Amarin Academy, 2017). These conditions reinforce the importance of cultivating employees’ emotional commitment and psychological involvement rather than emphasizing physical energy or outward displays of vigor. Moreover, studies have shown that service quality depends heavily on emotional expressions such as empathy, responsiveness, and attentiveness (Chin and Tsai, 2013; Parasuraman et al., 1985), all of which align more closely with dedication and absorption. Under such conditions, vigor becomes a less observable or culturally relevant indicator of engagement. Hence, excluding vigor from the measurement model reflects both the cultural norms and operational realities of frontline service in Thai hospitality settings.

The current study draws on AET, which posits that emotional reactions to workplace events play a significant role in shaping employees’ attitudes and behaviors (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996). In the workplace, leadership behavior is a highly salient event because leaders are

perceived as representatives of the broader organization (Kim and Beehr, 2020). According to AET, when employees interpret leadership actions as supportive or morally grounded, these are perceived as affective events that trigger emotional responses such as pride, gratitude, or trust. These affective experiences can increase the perceived meaningfulness of work and psychological investment in one’s role. This internal state is commonly expressed as “work engagement,” which has been identified as a key mechanism associated with a range of employee outcomes (Öge et al., 2018; Orłowski et al., 2020; Shafi et al., 2021; Tuan, 2018).

In high-contact service sectors such as hospitality, work engagement plays a particularly critical role, as employees are expected to display emotional labor, maintain attentiveness, and regulate interpersonal interactions. From this perspective, different forms of paternalistic leadership can elicit distinct affective responses and motivational patterns, which may, in turn, influence levels of engagement and ultimately impact service performance. Benevolent leadership promotes emotional safety and trust by demonstrating personal concern and guidance. In line with AET, such behaviors are likely to be interpreted by employees as meaningful events, potentially strengthening emotional commitment to their roles (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996). Pellegrini and Scandura (2008) suggest that benevolent leadership encourages discretionary effort, which is reinforced through the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960). In hospitality environments where service requires ongoing emotional presence, studies have shown that leadership perceived as caring and respectful is associated with higher engagement through increased psychological safety and perceived organizational support (Öge et al., 2018; Orłowski et al., 2020; Shafi et al., 2021; Tuan, 2018).

The connection between benevolent leadership and employee engagement is particularly relevant in Thai hospitality, where cultural values such as harmony, humility, and interpersonal sensitivity shape workplace expectations. In such contexts, leadership that conveys respect and relational grace may strengthen employees’ emotional connection to their work and support composed, efficient service during high-stress interactions. When employees perceive that their leaders embody organizational values, they are more likely to find their work meaningful, which can deepen engagement and improve customer interactions (Kim and Beehr, 2020). Engaged employees are more likely to be linked with positive service experiences and higher customer satisfaction (Harter et al., 2002; Kanjanakan et al., 2023). Based on this reasoning, the following hypothesis was proposed:

Hypothesis 2a. : Work engagement will mediate the relationship between benevolent leadership and service interaction quality among hospitality employees.

In contrast to relational leadership styles, authoritarian leadership is characterized by directive control, clearly defined expectations, and close monitoring of performance. Rather than cultivating engagement through emotional rapport, it tends to be linked with cognitive pathways that emphasize structure, clarity, and compliance. Goal Setting Theory suggests that specific and challenging goals may enhance motivation and focus, particularly when employees perceive them as legitimate and attainable (Locke and Latham, 2006). Within authoritarian leadership, this emphasis on clarity may help reduce role ambiguity and support a sense of task-based commitment, especially in operationally structured service environments.

From the perspective of AET (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996), leadership behavior represents a salient workplace event that is likely to influence employees’ emotional and cognitive reactions. Although authoritarian leadership may not foster warmth or affective bonding, it can still be perceived as meaningful when viewed as fair and aligned with organizational purpose. When such directive behaviors are interpreted as legitimate and consistent with broader organizational or cultural expectations, they may foster a sense of security, role certainty, and psychological preparedness (Kim and Beehr, 2020). In this way, employee engagement may not arise from affective elevation, but rather

from cognitive alignment with organizational goals and expectations.

This theoretical framing is particularly relevant in high power distance, collectivist cultures such as Thailand, where hierarchical relationships are culturally normative and directive leadership is more likely to be viewed as both legitimate and effective (Zhang et al., 2021b). In such contexts, employees may be more receptive to leadership styles that emphasize order and structure, which can reduce uncertainty and reinforce workplace expectations (Huang et al., 2015; Wang and Guan, 2018). Although studies in other contexts have reported that authoritarian leadership is linked to lower engagement and diminished autonomy (Busse and Regenberg, 2019; Fouad, 2019; Zhao and Sheng, 2019), goal-oriented leadership may nevertheless correspond with increased task engagement in settings where clarity and discipline are valued. In the hospitality sector, where emotional labor, performance visibility, and customer interaction are constant demands, authoritarian leadership may be associated with psychological conditions that help employees remain composed and focused. By simplifying decision-making, reinforcing behavioral expectations, and providing structure, this leadership style may support a form of engagement that facilitates consistent and attentive service (Kang et al., 2020). Based on the above theoretical and empirical considerations, the following hypotheses were proposed:

Hypothesis 2b. Work engagement will mediate the relationship between authoritarian leadership and service interaction quality among hospitality employees.

2.3. The moderated mediation effects of employment status in the relationship with paternalistic leadership, work engagement, and service interaction quality

The role of employment status in shaping responses to leadership styles is a topic of considerable interest. Full- and part-time employees often have differing perceptions and expectations relating to their work, which can influence how they react to, and engage with various leadership styles (Aggarwal and Bhargava, 2009; Conway and Briner, 2002). Full-time employees typically exhibit greater organizational commitment, stronger role identification, and a higher dependency on their workplace for career progression. In contrast, part-time employees often have weaker attachments to their organizations, prioritizing flexibility and balancing work with other life responsibilities, such as education or family (Terrah et al., 2023). These differences shape how employees perceive and respond to leadership styles, with full-time employees generally seeking long-term relational engagement and part-time employees focusing on short-term benefits. Research suggests that employment status moderates the relationships between work-related variables and outcomes, as full-time employees are more embedded in organizational systems and thus perceive workplace stimuli differently compared to part-time employees (Babakus et al., 2017; Ma et al., 2019; Terrah et al., 2023).

Employment status is likely to moderate the indirect relationship between benevolent leadership and service interaction quality via work engagement. Partial Inclusion Theory (Katz and Kahn, 1978) suggests that full-time employees are more deeply embedded in the organizational system, while part-time employees are less integrated. As a result, full-time employees tend to perceive benevolent leadership, which reflects care, support, and concern for personal development (Farh and Cheng, 2000), as a signal of long-term investment in their growth and well-being. This interpretation aligns with their stronger role identity and psychological contracts based on long-term mutual obligations (Conway and Briner, 2002; Freese and Schalk, 1996). These employees are more likely to reciprocate with higher levels of engagement, which in turn improves the quality of their service interactions. In contrast, part-time employees, whose psychological contracts tend to be more transactional and short term, may view the same benevolent behaviors as less relevant to their immediate goals. Terrah et al. (2023) highlight that part-time staff in hospitality often experience lower motivation and

commitment due to limited leadership support. Taken together, this suggests that the positive effects of benevolent leadership on engagement and service quality may be stronger among full-time employees than their part-time counterparts.

Employment status is also expected to moderate the indirect relationship between authoritarian leadership and service interaction quality through work engagement. Authoritarian leadership involves directive communication, strict role enforcement, and structured performance expectations. These behaviors may be interpreted differently depending on the employee's degree of inclusion in the organization. Full-time employees, who tend to rely more on the organization for career advancement and continuity, may see authoritarian leadership as providing clarity and security, especially in service environments that demand predictability and discipline (Joung et al., 2018). This can result in stronger engagement and more consistent customer service delivery. In contrast, part-time employees, who often value flexibility and autonomy, may interpret authoritarian leadership as controlling or incompatible with their expectations. Without strong relational inclusion, these employees may become disengaged or less responsive to such leadership cues (Alexandrov et al., 2007). Therefore, the indirect effect of authoritarian leadership on service quality through engagement is likely to be more pronounced among full-time employees.

Based on this rationale, the following hypotheses were developed:

Hypothesis 3a. Employment status will moderate the indirect effect of benevolent leadership on service interaction quality via work engagement, such that these indirect effects will be stronger among full-time hospitality employees.

Hypothesis 3b. : Employment status will moderate the indirect effect of authoritarian leadership on service interaction quality via work engagement, such that these indirect effects will be stronger among full-time hospitality employees.

Based on the literature review, the research framework is presented below (Fig. 1). This study integrates AET and partial inclusion theory to explore the relationships between paternalistic leadership, work engagement, and service interaction quality, moderated by employment status. AET (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996) provides a lens through which leadership styles are viewed as significant workplace events that influence employees' emotional and behavioral responses. Benevolent leadership fosters trust and support, encouraging positive engagement, while authoritarian leadership, characterized by directive control, can have variable effects depending on how it is perceived by employees. Partial inclusion theory (Katz and Kahn, 1978) complements this by recognizing that full- and part-time employees differ in their levels of integration within an organization, which affects how they respond to leadership styles. Full-time employees, being more embedded in organizational systems, are more likely to interpret leadership behaviors, whether supportive or directive, as being directly relevant to their roles. This enhances their engagement and subsequently improves service

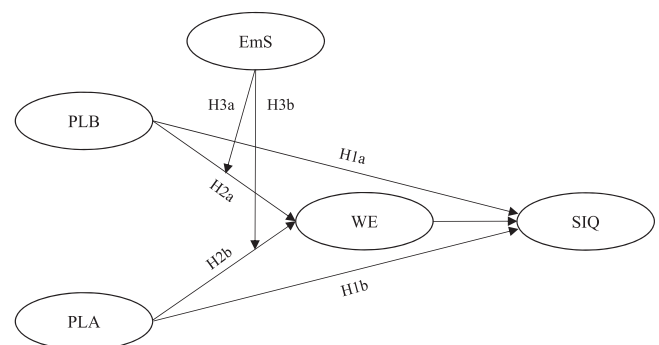


Fig. 1. Research Model. Note. PLB = Benevolent leadership, PLA = Authoritarian leadership, WE = Work engagement, SIQ = Service interaction quality.

quality. Part-time employees, with less organizational commitment and involvement, may not derive the same level of engagement from these leadership styles, resulting in weaker effects on service outcomes. By combining these theoretical perspectives, the study addresses the gap in understanding how leadership styles interact with employee characteristics to influence key organizational outcomes, providing a detailed view of leadership effectiveness in the hospitality context.

3. Methods

3.1. Participants and procedure

In this study, data were collected from casual dining restaurants across five provinces in Thailand, targeting frontline employees and their customers. The restaurant sector was selected due to the intense nature of customer-employee interactions, which are more pronounced in this sector compared to others (Chang et al., 2020). A two-stage data collection process was employed over a two-week period. The population consisted of restaurants in five provinces, with the sample being 51 randomly selected restaurants. The sampling method involved purposive sampling, targeting frontline employees who interact directly with customers. Each participating restaurant was contacted through its manager to ensure engagement and cooperation.

In the first stage, frontline employees were approached through their restaurant managers, and each employee received a survey package that included one employee questionnaire and 10 customer questionnaires. Employees were required to complete a questionnaire focusing on their perceptions of different types of paternalistic leadership, work engagement, and demographic variables. In the second stage, over a five-day period, these employees distributed the customer questionnaires to the second and last customers they served each day. The customer questionnaire aimed to capture perceptions of service interaction quality along with demographic questions. To ensure the reliability of the data, the questionnaires were adapted from validated scales used in previous research, with Cronbach's alpha calculated to assess internal consistency. The study also employed a pilot test involving a small subset of participants to refine the instruments. Validity was addressed through content validation by industry experts and academicians, who reviewed the questionnaire items for relevance and clarity.

After checking for missing data, the final stage of this study involved matching 286 employees and 2129 customers. Of the 286 employees, 187 were female (65%), and 99 were male (35%). The mean age of employees was 24.26 years ($SD = 6.52$), and the mean tenure at their current restaurants was 1.50 years ($SD = 2.25$). Of the participating employees, 207 worked full-time (72%), and 79 worked part-time (28%). Of the 2129 customers, 1203 were female (56.5%). The mean age of the customers was 30.78 years ($SD = 10.28$), and 719 visited the restaurant once a month or less (34%).

3.2. Measures

To certify the validity and the reliability of the constructs, a 7-point Likert scale of all measurements from previously validated research was adopted. All the employees were Thai nationals, and therefore, the measurement items were translated into Thai. Conventional translation and back-translation following Brislin's (1980) procedures were implemented to confirm the accuracy of the Thai versions of the questionnaire. Specifically, the questionnaire was translated into Thai and refined through back-translation by a certified bilingual expert. A pilot test with Thai restaurant stakeholders (5 managers, 10 employees, 20 customers) assessed clarity, flow, and format following Gray (2018) guidelines. Due to participants' proficiency in English, a second pilot test was conducted in Thailand with three hospitality professionals, leading to further revisions for accuracy and ease of use.

Authoritarian leadership was measured by using five items adapted from Cheng et al.'s (2004) paternalistic leadership scale. Employees

were asked to rate their leader's behavior from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Examples of items included, "My supervisor always has the last say in the meeting," and "My supervisor exercises strict discipline over subordinates." However, an item of "I feel pressured when working with him/her" was dropped during confirmation factor analysis due to a low factor loadings value (Öge et al., 2018).

Benevolent leadership was also assessed through the use of four items adapted from Cheng et al. (2004)'s paternalistic leadership scale. Employees were asked to rate their leader's behavior from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Examples of items included, "My supervisor devotes all his/her energy to taking care of me," and "My supervisor will help me when I'm in an emergency."

Work engagement was measured through the dedication and absorption dimensions of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9) (Schaufeli et al., 2006). This study prioritized dedication and absorption, the emotional and cognitive dimensions of work engagement. As discussed in the literature review, the concept of *namjai* (น้ำใจ) is central to Thai hospitality culture. Employees are expected to demonstrate pride, attentiveness, and emotional presence, making dedication and absorption more representative of their engagement than vigor. There were three items for each dimension. Employees were asked to rate work engagement on a scale from 0 (never) to 6 (always). Examples of items for the dedication dimension included, "I am enthusiastic about my job," and "I am proud of the work that I do." Examples of items for the absorption dimension included, "I feel happy when I am working intensely," and "I get carried away when I am working." The aim of this study was to capture the psychological processes underlying work engagement as a mediator in the relationship between leadership styles and employee performance. Therefore, the emotional and cognitive dimensions of work engagement—more directly reflected in dedication and absorption (Karatepe, 2013; Schaufeli et al., 2006)—were prioritized.

Service interaction quality was evaluated by nine items adapted from Brady and Cronin (2001). These scales measured three dimensions of interaction quality: attitude, behavior, and expertise. Customers were asked to rate from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Examples of items included, "The attitude of the restaurant's employees demonstrates their willingness to help me" (attitude), "The restaurant's employees respond quickly to my needs" (behavior), and "The restaurant's employees are able to answer my questions quickly" (expertise).

To minimize potential confounding effects and ensure robust findings, employee background variables, such as age, gender, and job tenure, were used as control variables. These variables were selected based on prior research on leadership (e.g., Park et al., 2021) and employment status (e.g., Conway and Briner, 2002), as they have been shown to influence employee attitudes and behaviors. Gender and employment status were dummy coded. (Gender: 1 = female, 2 = male; Employment status: (used as a moderator), 1 = full-time, 2 = part-time).

3.3. Data analysis

A second-order confirmation factor analysis (CFA) was first performed to evaluate the fitness of the measurement model (Hair et al., 2014; Hox, 2010). Hypothesis testing was conducted using a simple linear regression model and Hayes (2017) PROCESS Macro. To examine mediation effects in Hypotheses 2a and 2b, PROCESS Model 4 was employed with 5000 iterations of bootstrap (Preacher and Hayes, 2004). Each of the paternalistic leadership types was inserted as predictors, work engagement was inserted as the mediator, and service interaction quality was inserted as the outcome, while controlling for age, gender, and tenure. As for the moderated mediation effects in Hypotheses 3a and 3b, PROCESS Model 7 was applied with a bootstrapping with 5000 iterations (Preacher et al., 2007). Employment status was entered as the moderator in the previous setting. The results were able to ensure a mediation effect, and a moderated mediation effect, where the confidence interval at 95% did not contain zero.

4. Results

4.1. Measurement model, descriptive statistics and correlations

Common method variance was assessed using Harman’s single-factor test, a widely accepted method for detecting common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The analysis revealed that a single factor accounted for 34.94 % of the total variance, which is below the recommended threshold of 50 %, indicating that common method bias was not a concern (Kock et al., 2021). Additionally, following recommendations by Cooper et al. (2020), an unmeasured latent variable (UMLV) technique was also employed. The model with the additional latent variable demonstrated a poorer fit ($\chi^2 = 595.62$, $df = 241$, CFI = .94, TLI = 0.93, RMSEA = 0.07) than the hypothesized four-factor model (Podsakoff et al., 2024) (See Table 1).

To be consistent with previous recommendations (Hu and Bentler, 1999; Park et al., 2021), an acceptable model fit was implied when CFI $\geq .90$, TLI $\geq .90$, and RMSEA $\leq .08$. Two of the four variables contained multiple dimensions, and therefore, a second-order CFA was performed to examine the validity of the measurements. As shown in Table 1, the overall model fit of the measurement model was $\chi^2 = 405.97$, $df = 220$, CFI = .97, TLI = 0.96, RMSEA = 0.05, which indicated a good model fit and presented a better fit of the data than the one factor model ($\chi^2 = 2400.74$, $df = 230$, CFI = .63, TLI = 0.56, RMSEA = 0.18), two factors model (IQ + WE, PLA+PLB; $\chi^2 = 1672.63$, $df = 229$, CFI = .76, TLI = 0.71, RMSEA = 0.15) and three factors model (IQ, WE, PLA + PLB; $\chi^2 = 859.63$, $df = 227$, CFI = .89, TLI = 0.87, RMSEA = 0.10). Moreover, the factor loadings of all variables were greater than 0.5 (ranging from 0.87 to 0.98) and were statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). This confirmed the convergent validity of the measurement. Additionally, discriminant validity is satisfied when HTMT values are below the 0.85 threshold (Henseler et al., 2015). This is further supported by all AVEs being greater than the squared correlations for each pair of constructs and composite reliability (CR) exceeding 0.7.

The means, standard deviations, and correlations among variables are presented in Table 2. Both predictor variables (benevolent and authoritarian leadership) were correlated with mediator and outcome variables (work engagement, and service interaction quality, respectively) which satisfied the mediation condition, as suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986). The correlation results suggested the positive relationship between benevolent leadership and service interaction quality (H1a) and the positive relationship between authoritarian leadership and service interaction quality (H2a). Furthermore, the simple linear

regression of benevolent leadership on service interaction quality was significant ($B = .09$, $F = 3.50$, $p \leq .01$). The simple linear regression of authoritarian leadership on service interaction quality was also significant ($B = .07$, $F = 2.92$, $p < .05$). Therefore, Hypotheses 1a and 1b were supported.

Employment status as a moderator variable was only related to authoritarianism. Thus, a correlation analysis was further conducted to compare full- and part-time employees. The results revealed that only benevolence was significantly related to work engagement for both full- and part-time employees, and that this effect was stronger among part-time employees (Table 3). Authoritarianism was only significantly related to work engagement among full-time employees. This result suggested possible significant differences between employment statuses.

4.2. Mediating tests for work engagement

The authors proposed that work engagement would mediate the relationship between benevolent leadership (H2a), authoritarian leadership (H2b) and service interaction quality. Model 4 of the PROCESS macro was utilized with 5000 bootstrapped. The results indicated that the mediation effect of work engagement on the relationship between benevolence and service interaction quality was not significant ($B = .05$, LLCI = $-.01$, ULCI = .11) (see Table 4). Therefore, Hypothesis 2a was not supported. However, the results showed that the mediation effect of work engagement on the relationship between authoritarianism and service interaction quality was significant ($B = .04$, LLCI = .00, ULCI = .09). Thus, Hypothesis 2b was supported. When work engagement was included in the model, the direct effect of authoritarianism and service interaction quality was not significant ($B = .05$, LLCI = $-.02$, ULCI = .12). This implied that work engagement mediated the relationship.

4.3. Moderated mediation tests for employment status

It was proposed that the mediation effect of work engagement on the relationship between benevolent leadership (H3a), authoritarian leadership (H3b) and service interaction quality, would be moderated by employment status. Model 7 of the PROCESS macro was utilized with 5000 bootstrapped. As Table 5 demonstrates, conditional indirect effects of benevolence on service interaction quality via work engagement were not significant for either full- or part-time employees (see Fig. 2). Hence, Hypothesis 3a was not supported. As shown in Fig. 3, the conditional effect of authoritarianism on service interaction quality via work engagement was stronger and significant for full-time employees ($B =$

Table 1
Confirmation factor analysis.

Variables	Factor loading	Cronbach’s alpha	AVE	CR	HTMT			
					PLB	PLA	WE	SIQ
Benevolent leadership (PLB)		.90	.70	.90				
PLB1	.79							
PLB2	.88							
PLB3	.85							
PLB4	.84							
Authoritarian leadership (PLA)		.77	.47	.78	.23			
PLA1	.78							
PLA2	.78							
PLA3	.62							
PLA4	.54							
Work engagement (WE)		.87	.81	.90	.50	.36		
Dedication	.95							
Absorption	.85							
Service interaction quality (SIQ)		.98	.96	.99	.16	.15	.20	
Attitude	.96							
Behavior	.99							
Expertise	.98							

Note. $\chi^2 = 405.97$, $df = 22$, CFI = 0.97, TLI = 0.96, RMSEA = 0.05; AVE = Average variance extracted; CR = Composite reliability; HTMT = Heterotrait-monotrait; All factor loadings were significant at $p < .01$

Table 2
Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations.

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Age	24.26	6.52	-							
2. Gender	1.65	.48	-.40	-						
3. Tenure	1.50	2.25	.36**	-.03	-					
4. EmS	0.27	.45	-.27**	-.02	-.32**	-				
5. PLB	5.74	1.11	.10	.09	.01	-.02	-			
6. PLA	4.71	1.16	.10	-.03	.14*	-.18**	.09	-		
7. WE	4.76	.90	.10	.03	.05	-.09	.42**	.21**	-	
8. SIQ	5.70	.64	.15*	-.01	.11	-.10	.15*	.12*	.17**	-

Note. EmS = Employee status (0 = full-time, 1 = part-time), PLB=Benevolent leadership, PLA=Authoritarian leadership, WE = Work engagement, SIQ = Service interaction quality,

* $p < .05$.

** $p \leq .01$.

.02, LLCI = .00, ULCI = .05), while it was insignificant for part-time employees ($B = .00$, LLCI = $-.02$, ULCI = .03). The index of moderated mediation also indicated that the effect between full- and part-time employees was significantly different from each other ($B = -.02$, LLCI = $-.0554$, ULCI = $-.0002$). Thus, Hypothesis 3b was supported.

5. Discussion

This study sought to explore how paternalistic leadership affects service interaction quality, providing insights into the mechanisms that drive this relationship, as well as testing the moderating role of employment status. The findings indicated that both authoritarian and benevolent leadership positively influenced service quality. This challenges the traditional view that authoritarian leadership is inherently detrimental, suggesting that, when used appropriately, it can motivate employees to deliver high-quality service. Specifically, work engagement was found to mediate the relationship between authoritarian leadership and service interaction quality, implying that authoritarian leadership can foster work engagement by providing clear expectations and structure to ensure smooth service, which in turn enhances employees' performance in customer interactions. Moreover, the study revealed that employment status moderated the relationship between authoritarian leadership, work engagement, and service interaction quality, with full-time employees showing a stronger mediated effect of work engagement on service interaction quality. This suggests that employees who are more integrated into the organization, with higher organizational identification, are more likely to respond positively to authoritarian leadership practices that align their performance with organizational expectations. The results also revealed that managers who adopt a benevolent leadership style—demonstrating care, empathy, and understanding—can improve employee engagement and service interaction quality for both full- and part-time employees. These findings not only deepen the theoretical understanding of paternalistic leadership but also provide valuable practical insights for managing diverse workforces in restaurant settings.

5.1. Theoretical implications

The present study offers new insights into the influence of paternalistic leadership. While previous research has explored the effects of paternalistic leadership on organizational outcomes (Liao et al., 2017; Zhuang et al., 2022), it has predominantly focused on outcomes such as employee job attitudes (e.g., turnover intention, and job satisfaction), or behavioral attitudes (e.g., voice behavior, innovation behavior). Consequently, the value of paternalistic leadership as an independent variable has remained unclear, as little has been known about its impact on distal organizational consequences, such as customer-rated behaviors. This study contributes to addressing this issue by examining the relationship between a manager's paternalistic leadership style and service interaction quality. This endeavor is crucial, not only to fill a gap

in the literature, but also because of the critical importance of customer satisfaction and loyalty to an organization's bottom line (Pizam et al., 2016).

This research also contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the influence of authoritarian leadership. Authoritarian leadership is often perceived as having detrimental effects, but contrary to claims that have revealed a negative impact on employee performance (Fouad, 2019), the current findings confirm a positive correlation between authoritarian leadership and service interaction quality, which resonates with previous studies by Wang and Guan (2018), and Huang et al. (2015). Given that the data were collected in Thailand, a collectivist country, the results support the argument that authoritarian leadership fosters better performance in contexts where power distance is widely accepted (Zhang et al., 2021b).

Furthermore, grounded in affective event theory, this study examined the mechanisms by which paternalistic leaders foster better service interaction quality in the hospitality context. Contrary to research undertaken in non-service industry contexts which have reported a negative relation between authoritarian leadership and work engagement (Busse and Regeberg, 2019; Zhao and Sheng, 2019), the current findings reveal that work engagement can positively mediate the relationship between authoritarian leadership and service interaction quality. Without forgetting the influence of high-power distance culture, this could possibly be attributed to the high-demanding and fast-paced nature of the hospitality work environment, where clear direction is appreciated (Kang et al., 2020). In this setting, authoritarian leaders who establish clear and strict rules and service procedures, can help employees feel supported, and alleviate their emotional pressure, thereby facilitating their engagement in work tasks, and enhancing service quality.

An intriguing aspect of the current findings is that work engagement did not mediate the relationship between benevolent leadership and service interaction quality, whereas it significantly mediated the effect of authoritarian leadership. This suggests that the mechanisms through which these leadership styles influence outcomes differ. Benevolent leadership, characterized by nurturing and supportive behaviors, may directly enhance performance by fostering loyalty and commitment, rather than through increasing work engagement. This aligns with Liao et al. (2017) observation that the psychological contract—based on trust and mutual obligations—does not mediate the link between benevolent leadership and intention to leave, suggesting that its impact bypasses engagement and directly influences employee attitudes and behaviors. Leader-member exchange theory also supports this distinction, indicating that high-quality relationships, built on trust and mutual respect, can directly lead to better performance outcomes without necessarily enhancing engagement (Dansereau et al., 1975). In hospitality and tourism contexts, where young employees, who often question authority, make up a significant portion of the workforce (Sakdiyakorn et al., 2021), the direct impact of benevolent leadership may be more pronounced. These employees value authentic support and recognition

Table 3
Bivariate correlations by employment status.

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	Mean	SD	Part-time
Full-time	5.75	1.04	1	.06	.46**	-.01	5.71	1.27	
1. PLB	4.84	1.18	.11	1	-.01	.02	4.37	1.04	
2. PLA	4.81	.94	.42**	.25**	1	.05	4.63	.77	
3. WE	5.75	.66	.21**	.12	.19*	1	5.60	.58	
4. SIQ									

Note. PLB = Benevolent leadership, PLA = Authoritarian leadership, WE = Work engagement, SIQ=Service interaction quality.

* $p < .05$.
** $p \leq .01$

Table 4

Estimates and confidence intervals for the indirect effects of work engagement.

	Direct effect				Mediation effect			
	B	SE	LLCI	ULCI	B	SE	LLCI	ULCI
PLB – WE – SIQ	.07	.04	-.02	.15	.05	.03	-.01	.11
PLA – WE – SIQ	.05	.04	-.02	.12	.04	.02	.00	.09

Note. PLB = Benevolent leadership, PLA = Authoritarian leadership, WE = Work engagement, SIQ = Service interactive quality.

Table 5

Estimates and confidence intervals for the conditional indirect effects of employment status.

	Value of moderator	B	SE	LLCI	ULCI
PLB	Full-time	.03	.02	-.01	.08
	Part-time	.02	.02	-.01	.05
Index of moderated mediation		-.01	.01	-.04	.01
PLA	Full-time	.02	.01	.00	.05
	Part-time	.00	.01	-.02	.03
Index of moderated mediation		-.02	.02	-.06	-.00

Note. PLB = Benevolent leadership, PLA = Authoritarian leadership.

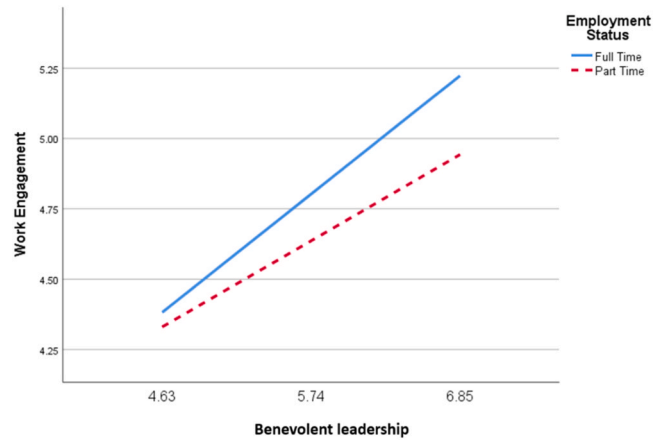


Fig. 2. A moderated mediation model of employment status on the indirect effect of benevolent leadership on service interaction quality via work engagement.

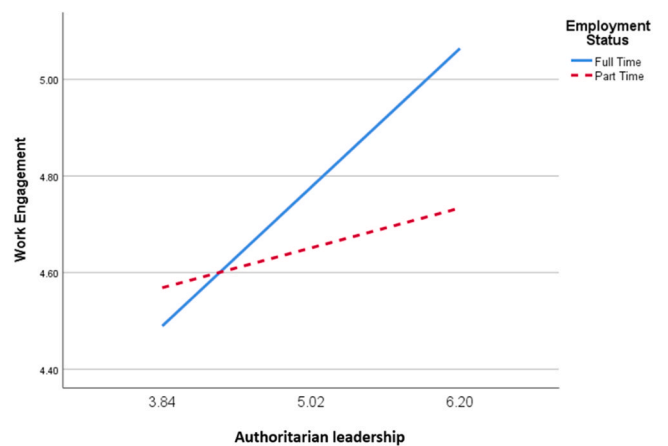


Fig. 3. A moderated mediation model of employment status on the indirect effect of authoritarian leadership on service interaction quality via work engagement.

from their leaders, which can enhance performance without requiring increased work engagement. This pattern in our findings supports Mansur et al. (2017) assertion of the need for further research to explore how different dimensions of paternalistic leadership might influence outcomes across various contexts.

This research is among the few to investigate the boundary conditions of the relationships between paternalistic leadership dimensions and service interaction quality, using employment status as a potential moderator. As predicted by partial inclusion theory (Katz and Kahn, 1978), full-time employees who were more integrated into an organization's social system demonstrated higher levels of work engagement, and improved service interaction quality under authoritarian leadership. This finding can be used to bolster those of Alexandrov et al. (2007), i.e., that the influence of management concern on employees' attitudes was stronger among full-time employees, and that this was due to their stronger attachment and involvement within the organization. More importantly, in essence, the current findings further support the use of partial inclusion theory, as a useful foundation to understand how the divergent extents of employee integration within a company, affects their responses to the various leadership styles (Cha and Borchgrevink, 2018); it also demonstrates the need for doing so based on empirical data. It is important to note that the results did not support the moderating role of employment status in the relationship between benevolent leadership and service interaction quality via work engagement. One possible explanation is that the nurturing and supportive behaviors associated with benevolent leadership may have universal appeal, regardless of employment status, particularly in a service-oriented environment such as hospitality. Another factor could be that part-time employees, while perhaps more transient in their roles, may still experience a strong sense of connection to their work if the leadership style is empathetic (Raub, 2016). However, further research is needed to explore these dynamics more thoroughly, particularly with larger sample sizes and across different hospitality contexts.

Previous research has implicitly noted the impact of paternalistic leadership on service quality (e.g., Ling et al., 2011; Zhuang et al., 2022). However, methodologically, such propositions mainly stem from studies using employees' intentions to provide high-quality customer service (e.g., employees' customer-oriented organizational citizenship behaviors) as a proxy of service quality, raising concerns about common method bias (CMV) and necessitating caution regarding the true causal relationship between paternalistic leadership and service quality. This study addressed these concerns through a multi-stage, multi-source data collection process. In the first stage, employees completed surveys on leadership, engagement, etc., while in the second stage, they distributed customer questionnaires. By using data from two distinct sources—employees and customers—the study minimized the risk of CMV, as ratings were not from the same respondents. The use of customer-rated service interaction quality is a key strength, moving beyond self-reports and providing a more objective assessment of service quality (Kaminakis et al., 2019). Researchers often opt for measuring organizational outcomes through the use of attitudinal criteria (e.g., He et al., 2011), due to their ease of collection. However, studies have long indicated that practitioners tend to prioritize distal organizational outcomes, such as customer ratings, over proximal outcomes, such as work self-reported attitudes (Kim, 2010). Therefore, there is the need for more papers that focus on distal organizational outcomes (e.g., performance index) from a human resource perspective, using multi-source data.

5.2. Managerial implications

The findings provide several managerial references for hospitality practitioners. First, while much of the existing literature focuses on the negative effects of authoritarian leadership, this study suggests that both authoritarian and benevolent leadership can positively impact employee performance, particularly in the area of service interaction quality. This highlights the importance of considering both leadership styles, as each

can contribute to positive outcomes. Hospitality organizations should recognize that authoritarian leadership does not inherently lead to negative outcomes. While benevolent leadership is often more desirable for employees, clear and structured guidance from authoritarian leadership is still essential for maintaining high service standards (Xia et al., 2019). Therefore, hospitality organizations could invest in training programs to help managers effectively apply both leadership styles. These programs could focus on balancing authority with empathy, setting clear expectations while also demonstrating care for employees. For example, training could involve real-life scenarios where managers practice giving clear, direct instructions while also showing concern for employees' feelings and needs (Tuan, 2018). Managers could role-play situations (e.g., service recovery) where they need to enforce service standards, such as addressing a mistake in customer service, while also offering support and understanding to the employee. Through such training, employees can develop greater empathy for authoritarian leadership, understanding that 'father-like' leaders who display tough love do so with the intention of supporting their subordinates and improving the organization as a whole (Gu et al., 2019).

Second, the results of the study indicate a positive relationship between authoritarian leadership and service interaction quality, with work engagement serving as a mediating mechanism. Thus, to enhance service quality, managers employing an authoritarian leadership style could prioritize improving employee engagement. To effectively boost engagement, leaders need to use their authority in a way that facilitates smooth service delivery and aligns employee performance with service goals, rather than merely demanding compliance through rigid instructions that fail to consider employees' needs during fast-paced encounters with demanding customers (Shu, 2015). By promoting trust and mutual understanding, leaders can foster a positive work environment, which in turn, will enhance employees' motivation to meet performance expectations (Gu et al., 2018). Managers can achieve this by encouraging open communication channels, such as informal off-work gatherings or team-building activities, providing opportunities for leaders and employees to engage in more personal, relaxed conversations. This approach not only strengthens relationships but also helps bridge the gap between authority and care, fostering a supportive atmosphere that motivates employees to perform at their best.

In addition, the results of the moderated mediation analysis indicated that work engagement connecting authoritarian leadership to service interaction quality could be more pronounced among full-time employees. Full-time employees, who typically have higher expectations, are more likely to engage when managers provide clear direction and set high standards. Therefore, managers could be more structured and instructive with full-time employees to help them meet organizational expectations and boost engagement. Practical steps include providing regular feedback and setting clear performance goals aligned with their long-term career growth within the organization. For part-time employees, authoritarian leaders could focus on improving their integration into the organization's social life. This could involve creating opportunities for part-time employees to interact with full-time staff, enhancing their sense of belonging and insider identity (Raub, 2016). It should be remembered that isolated part-time employees may develop negative attitudes toward the organization, which can affect full-time employees as well (Wallace and Coughlan, 2022). The results of the current study indicate that managers who adopt a benevolent leadership style—demonstrating care, empathy, and understanding—can improve service interaction quality for both full- and part-time employees. Thoughtful, sincere managers who build strong relationships with employees are key to fostering work engagement and enhancing performance.

5.3. Limitations and future research

While this study offers significant value, it also has a range of limitations that could provide further research direction. First, the current

study focused on the impact of paternalistic leadership on restaurant employees' work engagement and customer perceptions of service interaction quality. Future research could benefit from comparing the effects of paternalistic leadership from both employees' and managers' perspectives. By including both viewpoints, researchers could gain a more balanced understanding of how such leadership is perceived and experienced at different levels. This approach would help minimize social desirability bias and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the leadership dynamics at play. Potential mediators that explain the positive effect of authoritarian leadership style and customer outcomes could also be explored. Personal factors (e.g., personality traits) and contextual factors (e.g., business size) could be investigated as additional moderators using the current model. Additionally, longitudinal data collection would allow researchers to track changes over time and capture the long-term effects of paternalistic leadership on employee outcomes and service quality, providing deeper insights into the causal relationships and dynamics that a cross-sectional study cannot fully reveal.

Besides, the disproportionate distribution of full- (72 %) versus part-time employees (28 %) in the sample should also be acknowledged. However, the higher proportion of full-time employees reflects the reality of the foodservice industry, where full-time staff often make up the core workforce, especially in roles that require greater responsibility and customer interaction (Joung et al., 2018). This ratio is also consistent with those reported in recent studies conducted in the Thai hospitality sector (Chanyasak et al., 2021; Sirichokchatchawan et al., 2021). While a more balanced distribution would provide a more robust comparison, the current sample allowed an exploration of how paternalistic leadership might interact with employment status, offering preliminary insights into the different responses of full- and part-time workers.

Furthermore, this study was conducted in casual dining restaurants in Thailand—a context characterized by high power distance and moderately personalized service interactions. As such, the generalizability of the findings to other hospitality sectors such as luxury hotels or fast-food chains may be limited. In luxury hotels, service delivery involves high levels of personalized guest engagement and employee autonomy, which may strengthen the effect of benevolent leadership—marked by individualized care and emotional support—on service interaction quality, as staff are encouraged to go beyond standard expectations (Bharwani and Mathews, 2021). Conversely, fast-food environments are typically governed by rigid protocols, time pressure, and routinized roles, which may increase the relevance of authoritarian leadership for ensuring efficiency and compliance, while limiting the impact of benevolence (Butler and Hammer, 2018). Additionally, the study was situated in Thailand, a high-power distance culture (Hofstede, 2011), where authoritarian leadership may be more culturally accepted. In contrast, in low power distance cultures—such as many Western societies—such leadership may be seen as controlling or demotivating, potentially weakening its indirect effect on service interaction quality via work engagement (Wang and Guan, 2018). Future studies could examine whether the observed patterns hold across different hospitality formats and cultural contexts.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Peter B. Kim: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Validation, Supervision, Project administration, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Dan Zhu:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Methodology, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Pola Q. Wang:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Validation, Supervision, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Conceptualization. **Pattamol Kanjanakan Thawornlamert:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Investigation, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Data availability

The data that has been used is confidential.

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