MODERATED MEDIATION MODEL OF TEAM CONFLICT AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT APPROACH ON RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CREATIVE LEADERSHIP AND TEACHER INNOVATION PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES, GUANGDONG PROVINCE

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Abstract

The objectives of this research were (1) To research on the Impact of Creative Leadership in Public Universities in Guangdong Province on Teachers' Innovation Performance. (2) To research the mediating role of team conflict in creative leadership and teacher innovation performance in public universities in Guangdong Province, and (3) To research the moderating effect of conflict management methods on team conflict and teacher innovation performance. The population of this research were 2749 teachers engaged in design and art education at 21 public higher education institutions in Guangdong Province. The sample was determined using G* Power software and included 547 teachers, selected through a proportional stratified random sampling method. The data were collected using a five-point rating scale questionnaire. The statistical methods used for data analysis included confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling.

The research results indicated that:

(1) Creative leadership positively affected the innovation performance of teachers in public universities in Guangdong Province;

(2) Team conflict in public universities in Guangdong Province had a mediating effect between creative leadership and teacher innovation performance, with stronger creative leadership leading to weaker team conflict;

(3) The conflict management approach had a moderating effect on team conflict and teacher innovation performance. When conflict management was at a high level, weaker conflict was associated with higher teacher innovation performance. The above conclusions suggested that creative leadership in universities enhanced teachers' innovation performance and further promoted innovation by reducing team conflicts, while high-level conflict management methods mitigated the adverse effects of conflicts on innovation. Therefore, university administrators should have focused on cultivating creative leadership, managing team conflicts effectively, and improving conflict management skills to foster the innovative development of universities.

Keywords: Creative Leadership, Team Conflict, Conflict Management Approach, Teacher Innovation Performance, Public Universities

Background and significance of the problem

Against the backdrop of globalization and informatization, Chinese universities face unprecedented opportunities and challenges, necessitating a transformation in leadership models. Traditional leadership approaches are insufficient to address the complexities of modern higher education, particularly in fields that emphasize creativity, such as design and art education. Effective

performance management in these disciplines relies on fostering innovation among teachers and organizations, highlighting the importance of strong, creative leadership. The theory of creative leadership provides a theoretical foundation for leadership model innovation in universities, as it promotes adaptability and problem-solving in an environment that requires interdisciplinary integration and continuous learning (Al Shahwan, 2019). While past research often treated creativity as an optional trait of leadership, it has become essential for university leaders to drive institutional progress and enhance teachers' innovative performance.

Conflict in higher art education is a multidimensional phenomenon that can arise in teaching, research, resource allocation, and cultural differences, impacting leadership and organizational performance. While conflict is often seen as negative, appropriate management strategies can uncover systemic issues, drive reform, and stimulate innovation (Mabry, 2016). However, unresolved conflicts in educational institutions may discourage teachers from sharing ideas and improving performance, ultimately affecting organizational success (Kaya, 2021). Therefore, creative leadership plays a crucial role in managing conflicts effectively to enhance both organizational and individual innovation performance. This study explores creative leadership in art colleges, focusing on new management paradigms that improve work performance, resolve conflicts, and foster an environment conducive to research and teaching. By integrating creative leadership with conflict management strategies, universities can balance leadership effectiveness and efficiency, ultimately enhancing teacher performance and institutional development.

Research objectives

1. To research on the Impact of Creative Leadership in Public Universities in Guangdong Province on Teacher Innovation Performance.
2. To research the mediating role of team conflict in creative leadership and teacher innovation performance in public universities in Guangdong Province.
3. To research the moderating effect of conflict management approach on team conflict and teacher innovation performance.

Conceptual Framework

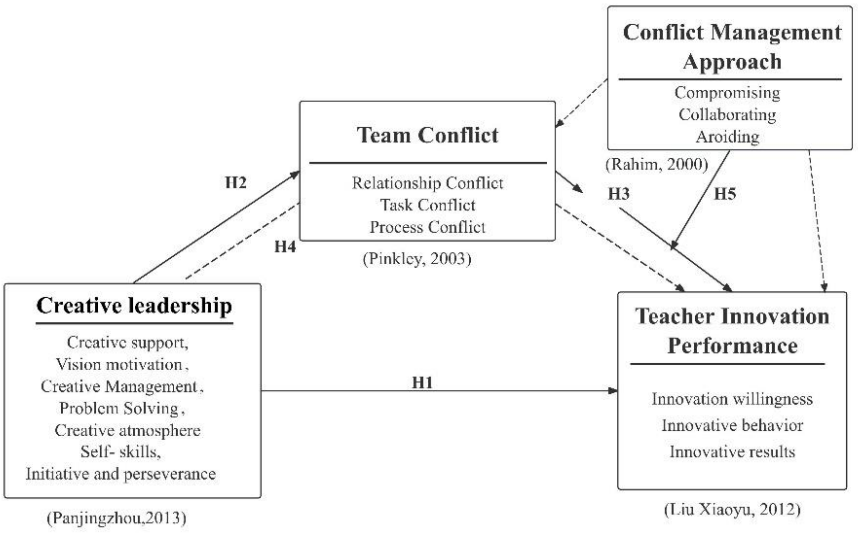

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of this research

Research hypothesis

H1: Creative leadership has a positive impact on teachers' innovative performance.

H2: Creative leadership has a negative impact on team conflict (the stronger the creative leadership, the weaker the team conflict).

H3: Team conflict has a negative impact on teacher innovation performance (the weaker the team conflict, the stronger the innovation performance).

H4: Team conflict has a mediating effect on creative leadership and teacher innovation performance.

H5: Conflict management approach play a moderating role between team conflicts and teacher innovation performance.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative research method. Using the proportional stratified random sampling method, data was collected from universities in a stratified manner, and measurement models (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) techniques were employed for data analysis and hypothesis testing.

Population and Sample

This research used a proportional stratified random sampling method to stratify universities. The universities were stratified according to the design and art schools where the teachers were located. Then, samples were selected from each cluster through simple random sampling based on proportion. A total of 21 universities in Guangdong Province were randomly selected. The appropriate total sample size for this study was 547 teachers.

Research Instruments

The researchers used a questionnaire consisting of two parts; Part One: Basic Information of Teachers. Part2: Creative leadership, team conflict, conflict management approach, and measurement indicators for teacher innovation performance. The quality of the questionnaire is evaluated through content validity and reliability. For content validity, it was checked by 5 experts and analyzed using index of item-Objective Congruence (IOC). The value of each item ≥ 0.50. and reliability, Cronbach's alpha > 0.80 was used for analysis.

Data Collection

The researchers distributed a Likert (5-point) questionnaire to the participants. Selecting design and art teachers from 21 universities in Guangdong Province as research samples, data was collected through online questionnaires.

Data Analysis

1. Demographic of samples using the frequency and the percentage.
2. Descriptive statistics for variable analysis of sample.
3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) for measurement model estimation.
4. Structural Equation model for hypothesis testing.

Research Result

1) To facilitate the presentation and interpretation of research results, a series of abbreviations were used in the study. CL represents Creative leadership, TC represents Team conflict, CMA represents Conflict management approach, TIP represents Teachers innovative performance.

Table 1. Demographic statistics for samples:

Variable	Group	n	Percentage	% Cumulative
Gender	Female	237	43.3%	43.3%
	Male	310	56.7%	100%
	Total	547	100%	
Age	less than 30 years	110	20.1%	20.1%
	31-40 years	182	33.3%	53.4%
	41-50 years	164	30.0%	83.4%
	More than 50	91	16.6%	100%
	Total	547	100%	
Working Age	5 years or less	112	20.5%	20.5%
	5-10 years	182	33.3%	53.8%
	10-20 years	164	30.0%	83.8%
	20 years or more	89	16.3%	100%
	Total	547	100%	
university	General undergraduate	293	53.6%	53.6%
	Key undergraduate	174	31.8%	85.4%
	First-class university	53	9.7%	95.1%
	Double first-class	27	4.9%	100%
	Total	547	100.0%	100.0%

From the table1, the samples consisted of 56.7% females (310 individuals) and 43.3% males (237 individuals). The higher proportion of female respondents indicated that women played an important role in university faculty and staff. The majority of respondents were between the ages of 31-40 (33.3%) and 41-50 (30%). Mid-career professionals dominated the sample, reflecting the views of experienced but relatively young professionals who may have actively participated in research and innovation. In terms of service years, 5-10 years (33.3%) and 10-20 years (30%) were the main groups. Most participants came from regular universities (53.6%) and key universities (31.8%). This study primarily reflected the views of educators from non-elite institutions rather than top universities.

The population statistics of the sample indicated that the study mainly captured the views of mid-career teachers in regular and key universities, with a slightly higher representation of female educators. This distribution was highly valuable for understanding the role of creative leadership, team conflict, and conflict management in typical higher education environments.

2) To analyzed for Intercorrelation Between Latent Variables as the table 2.

Table 2. The Square Matrix of Intercorrelation Between Latent Variables.

	CL	TC	CMA	TIP
CL	1			
TC	-0.489**	1		
CMA	0.256**	-0.294**	1	
TIP	0.523**	-0.539**	0.418**	1

According to Table 2, Correlation analysis between variables:

CL and TIP: The correlation coefficient was 0.523 ($p<0.01$), indicating that creative leadership had a positive impact on teachers' innovation performance.

CL and TC: The correlation coefficient was -0.489 ($p<0.01$), showing a significant negative correlation between creative leadership and team conflict.

TC and TIP: The correlation coefficient was -0.539 ($p<0.01$), indicating that team conflict had a significant negative impact on teachers' innovation performance.

CMA and TIP: The correlation coefficient was 0.418 ($p<0.01$), suggesting that conflict management methods could, to some extent, promote teachers' innovation performance. Effective conflict management helped negative all impact conflicts.

Tables 3. Descriptive data for all observed variables.

Variables	$\overline{X}$	S.D.	Skewness		Kurtosis	
			Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std.
A1	3.695	0.872	-0.371	0.104	-0.656	0.209
A2	3.487	1.036	-0.323	0.104	-1.023	0.209
A3	3.652	0.935	-0.348	0.104	-0.620	0.209
A4	3.750	1.035	-0.570	0.104	-0.634	0.209
A5	3.595	1.027	-0.472	0.104	-0.742	0.209
A6	3.450	0.900	-0.218	0.104	-0.596	0.209
A7	3.717	1.048	-0.685	0.104	-0.412	0.209
B1	3.218	0.927	-0.080	0.104	-1.099	0.209
B2	3.268	1.043	-0.163	0.104	-1.190	0.209
B3	3.225	1.091	-0.246	0.104	-1.108	0.209
C1	3.384	0.898	-0.165	0.104	-0.958	0.209
C2	3.402	1.049	-0.226	0.104	-1.123	0.209
C3	3.295	0.939	-0.307	0.104	-0.889	0.209
D1	3.574	0.969	-0.324	0.104	-0.791	0.209
D2	3.768	0.954	-0.502	0.104	-0.726	0.209
D3	3.647	0.982	-0.329	0.104	-0.972	0.209

Table 3, presents descriptive statistical data (mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis) for multiple variables (A1-A7, B1-B3, C1 to C3, and D1 to D3). Overall, all indicators of creative leadership (CL) show high average values (3.695-3.750), and the data distribution is left skewed, indicating that most respondents have a high evaluation of leadership creativity. The average value of team conflict (TC) was relatively low (about 3.218-3.225), indicating a weak perception of internal conflicts within the team, which was consistent with the harmonious atmosphere brought by efficient leadership. The scores of Conflict Management Method (CMA) and Teacher Innovation Performance (TIP) were relatively high and stable, indicating that conflict management measures were effective and teacher innovation performance was good. As figure 2.

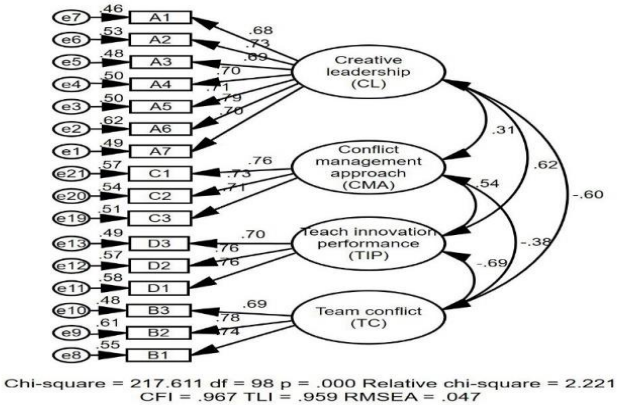

Figure 2 The Measurement Model in Standardized estimates

Table 4. Measurement model indicators.

Measure	Estimate	Threshold	Interpretation
CMIN	217.611	--	--
DF	98	--	--
CMIN/DF	2.221	1-3 Excellent,3-5 Acceptable	Excellent
RMSEA	0.047	<0.05 Excellent, <0.08 Acceptable	Excellent
GFI	0.955	>0.95 Excellent, >0.9 Acceptable	Excellent
TLI	0.959	≥0.90 Excellent, >0.8 Acceptable	Excellent
CFI	0.967	>0.95 Excellent, >0.9 Acceptable	Excellent

This table displays the model fitting index of the structural equation model and compares the obtained model values with the ideal threshold. All model fitting indices exceeded the recommended threshold, indicating that the proposed model fits the data well. The low RMSEA values and high GFI, CFI, and TLI confirm that the model effectively explains the relationships between variables, making it suitable for interpretation and further hypothesis testing.

Table 5. Results of convergence validity analysis.

Effect		Factor Loadings		S.E.	Z	p	CR	AVE
		Estimate	Beta					
A7<--	CL	1.000	0.697	--	--	--	--	--
A6<--	CL	0.969	0.786	0.058	16.637	***	--	--
A5<--	CL	0.999	0.711	0.066	15.120	***	0.88	0.511
A4<--	CL	0.997	0.704	0.066	15.118	***	--	--
A3<--	CL	0.887	0.693	0.059	15.120	***	--	--
A2<--	CL	.1.036	0.730	0.067	14.912	***	--	--
A1<--	CL	0.812	0.680	0.056	14.499	***	--	--
B1<--	TC	1.000	0.739	--	--	--	--	--
B2<--	TC	1.191	0.782	0.078	15.177	***	0.781	0.544
B3<--	TC	1.097	0.689	0.077	14.308	***		--
D1<--	TIP	1.000	0.759	--	--	--	--	--
D2<--	TIP	0.983	0.758	0.062	15.930	***	0.784	0.548
D3<--	TIP	0.937	0.702	0.062	15.071	***	--	--
C1<--	CMA	1.000	0.714	--	--	--	--	--
C2<--	CMA	1.148	0.733	0.083	13.804	***	0.778	0.0539
C3<--	CMA	1.012	0.755	0.075	13.565	***	--	--

Table 5, show the standardized factor loading relationships between 16 observed variables and 4 latent factors All factor loadings (β) were above 0.50, with most exceeding 0.60, indicating that the observed variables contribute significantly to their respective potential structures. All Z-values were significant (P<0.001), confirming that the factor loading was statistically different from zero. The CR of all structures exceeds 0.7 and the AVE exceeds 0.5, indicating that the measurement of each latent variable was stable and can reflect its essence well. Therefore, the measurement model performs well in terms of convergence effectiveness, laying a solid foundation for path analysis in subsequent structural equation modeling.

Table 6. Results of discriminant validity analysis.

Variables	CR	AVE	MSV	MAXR（H）	CL	TC	CMA	TIP
CL	0.88	0.511	0.480	0.901	0.715	--	--	--
TC	0.781	0.544	0.293	0.823	-0.597	0.738	--	--
CMA	0.778	0.539	0.480	0.781	0.309	-0.38	0.734	--
TIP	0.784	0.580	0.786	-0.693	0.621	-0.693	0.541	0.74

Discriminant validity analysis: MSV<AVE, The square root of AVE on the diagonal (√ AVE) was greater than other correlation coefficients in the same column or row, which further supports discriminant validity, that was, the correlation between each latent variable and its own measurement item was higher than its correlation with other latent variables.

Table 7. Discriminant validity (HTMT method).

	CL	TC	CMA	TIP
CL				
TC	0.862			
CMA	0.675	0.519		
TIP	0.731	0.807	0.673	

Table 7, presents the results of the HTMT (Heterotrait-Monotrait) analysis, The discriminant validity of the model was good, with all HTMT values below 0.85, and the distinguishability between different latent variables was clear.

Structural equation model

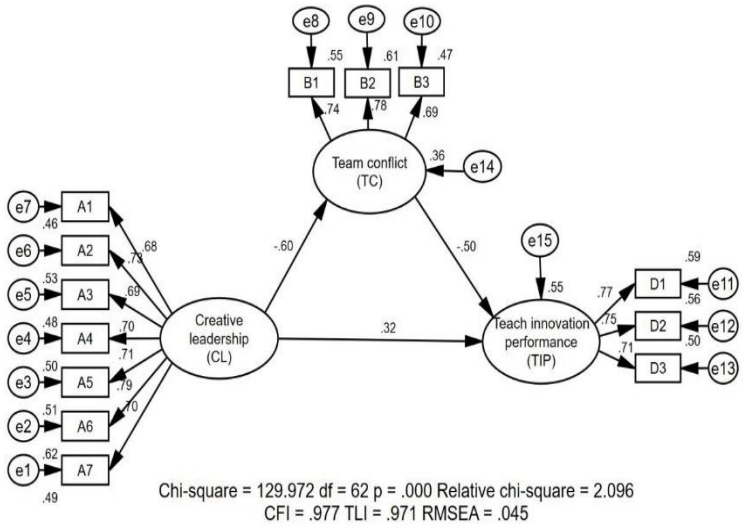

Figure 3 Structural Equation Models and Model Evaluation

Direct effect analysis

Table 8. The hypotheses testing of direct effects.

Effects	Path coefficient		SE	CR	p	Hypothesis
	Estimate	Beta				
TIP <-- CL	0.327	0.322	0.061	5.38	***	H1
TC <-- CL	-0.560	-0.598	0.054	-10.45	***	H2
TIP <-- TC	-0.542	-0.500	0.070	-7.70	***	H3

Significance Indicators: ***p<0.001

H1.P-value<0.001(significant).Creative leadership has a significant positive effect on teacher innovation performance.

H2:P-value<0.001(significant)There was a significant negative effect of creative leadership on team conflict. As creative leadership increases, team conflict decreases.

H3:.P-value<0.001(significant).There was a significant negative effect of team conflict on teacher innovation performance.

Indirect effects analysis

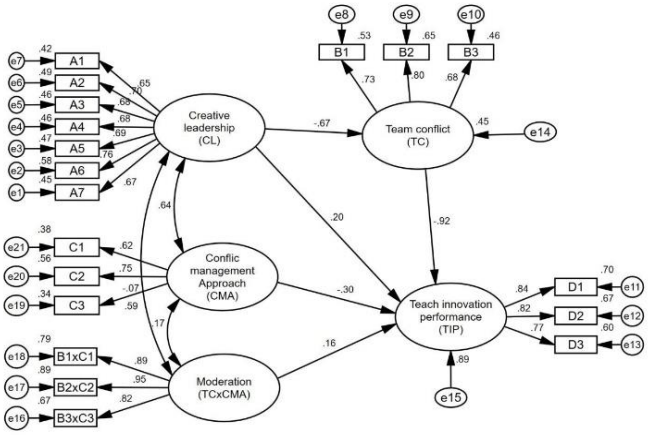

Figure 4 Moderation and mediation effect model

Table 9. Intermediate moderation effect test.

Effects	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	p	Label
TIP <--- CL	0.321	0.101	3.19	0.001	H1
TC <--- CL	-0.851	0.08	-10.577	***	H2
TIP <--- TC	-0.993	0.123	-8.077	***	H3
TIP <--- CMA	-0.366	0.137	-2.677	0.007	
TIP <--- TC x CMA	0.248	0.046	5.352	***	H5
TIP <-- TC <-- CL	0.294	0.218	0.394	***	H4

The results in Table 9, show the intermediate moderation effect test.

H1: The path form CL ⟶ TIP (Creative Leadership ⟶ Teacher Innovation Performance).The estimated value is 0.321,Standard Error(S.E) =0.101,Critical Ratio(C.R)=3.190,P-value=0.001 (significant).Creative leadership has a significant positive effect on teacher innovation performance. H2: The path form CL ⟶ TC (Creative Leadership ⟶ Team Conflict). The estimated value was -0.851, Standard Error (S.E.) = 0.080, Critical Ratio (C.R.) = -10.577, P-value<0.001(significant). There was a significant negative effect of creative leadership on team conflict. H3: The path form TC ⟶ TIP (Team Conflict ⟶Teacher Innovation Performance).

Estimate: -0.993, Standard Error (S.E.): 0.123, Critical Ratio (C.R.): -8.077, P- value <0.001 (significant). There is a significant negative effect of team conflict on teacher innovation performance. H4: The path form CL ⟶ TC ⟶ TIP (Creative Leadership ⟶ Team Conflict ⟶ Teacher Innovation Performance). Estimate = 0.294. Confidence interval (Lower Upper)=0.218-0.394.P-value=0007, This indirect effect (the mediation effect) shows that creative leadership influences teacher innovation performance indirectly by reducing team conflict. H5: The path form (TC × CM) ⟶ TIP (Team Conflict × Conflict Management approach ⟶Teacher Innovation Performance). Estimate: 0.248, Standard Error S.E.): 0.046, Critical Ratio (C.R.): 5.352, P-value<0.001 (significant). The interaction between team conflict and conflict management has a significant positive effect on teacher innovation performance.

probing interaction analysis

Table 10. Moderation effect test.

Parameter	Estimate	Lower	Upper	p
Low	-1.148	-1.470	-.324	.000
Med	.993	-1.263	-.430	.000
High	-.838	-1.081	-.536	.000

Table 10, mainly examines the moderating effect of Conflict Management (CMA) on the relationship between Team Conflict (TC) and Teaching Innovation Performance (TIP), namely: TC×CMA ⟶ TIP. Different levels (Low, Med, High) indicate the impact of team conflict on teaching innovation performance under varying degrees of conflict management.

Negative effect: At all levels of conflict management, team conflict (TC) has a significant negative impact on teaching innovation performance (TIP) (estimated values are negative, P<0.001).Significant regulatory effect: When dealing with low-level conflict management (Low CMA), TC has the strongest negative impact on TIP (-1.148).As the level of conflict management (CMA) increases, the negative impact of TC on TIP gradually weakens (from -1.148 to -0.838).This indicates that good conflict management can effectively alleviate the negative impact of team conflicts on innovation performance.

Confidence interval analysis: All intervals do not contain 0, indicating that the moderation effect is significant at different levels. The confidence interval for high-level conflict management (-1.081~-0.536) has a small degree of convergence, indicating that the results are relatively stable.

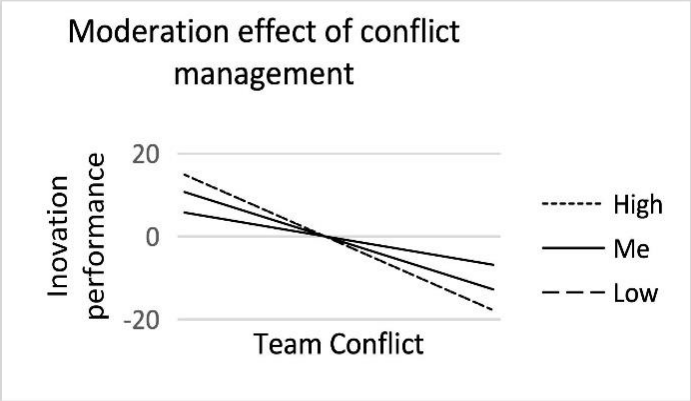

Figure 5 Moderation Effect of Conflict Management

This graph illustrates the moderating effect of conflict management (CMA) on the relationship between team conflict (TC) and innovation performance (TIP), with different lines representing high, medium, and low levels of conflict management. Team conflict (TC) consistently has a negative impact on innovation performance (TIP): Regardless of the level of conflict management, an increase in team conflicts will lead to a decline in innovation performance. The higher the level of conflict management, the smaller the negative impact: Low level conflict management approach (CMA), The fastest decline in innovation performance indicates that if a team lacks good conflict management, once conflicts increase, innovation performance will sharply decline.

Discussions

Research Objective 1: Creative leadership can enhance the innovation performance of teams or individuals by stimulating the innovation potential and initiative of organizational members. Leaders can significantly promote creative behavior by creating an organizational culture that supports innovation, providing members with psychological security and necessary resources. In the group of university teachers, leaders who demonstrate creative behavior can effectively motivate teachers to try new methods and challenge traditional thinking patterns, thereby improving innovation performance. (Amabile. T. et al., 1996). Creative leadership can stimulate creativity by enhancing the intrinsic motivation of team members. The job characteristics of university teachers

require high autonomy and creativity, and leaders can enhance teachers' investment in innovative tasks by providing clear goals, timely feedback, and emotional support. This internal incentive mechanism encourages teachers to demonstrate stronger innovative abilities in teaching methods, research activities and resource integration. (Tierney and Farmer, 2002). The universities have a high degree of academic freedom, but also face challenges such as fast knowledge updates and diverse teaching needs. Creative leadership is particularly important in universities, as it guides teacher collaboration, optimizes resource allocation, and sets innovation driven work goals to create a relaxed and supportive work environment for teachers, thereby stimulating innovation capabilities. (Zhang, et al., 2011). The behavior of leaders is deeply influenced by high power distance and collectivist culture, Creative leadership can gradually guide team members to break through thinking inertia and adapt to rapidly changing educational environments while respecting traditional authority, Research shows that in universities with strong creative leadership, teachers are more willing to accept innovative tasks and try diverse teaching methods, thereby significantly improving individual and team innovation performance (Xiaoqin Liu, et al., 2020). The positive impact of creative leadership on teacher innovation performance has been widely confirmed. By enhancing teachers' intrinsic motivation, providing resource support, and building an innovation friendly culture, creative leadership can effectively improve teachers' innovation ability and work performance. This conclusion not only provides important theoretical basis for the construction of leadership in universities, but also points out the direction for improving the innovation performance of university teachers in practice.

Research Objective 2: The study reveals the mechanism by which creative leadership indirectly promotes innovation performance by reducing team conflicts, expands the theoretical applicability of creative leadership in the field of education, and enriches relevant research on team conflict management. College administrators should attach importance to the cultivation of creative leadership, and further enhance teachers' innovation ability and performance by optimizing team conflict management. At the same time, training or workshops can help team members master effective conflict management strategies and maximize innovation potential. The Mechanism of Creative Leadership on Team Conflict. Reduce relationship conflicts: Creative leadership emphasizes building an open and supportive work atmosphere, encouraging trust and understanding among team members. This leadership style helps reduce emotional conflicts caused by tense interpersonal relationships, thereby maintaining team harmony. Optimizing task conflicts: Creative leaders reduce task conflicts caused by inconsistent goals or uneven resource allocation through clear goal setting and effective resource allocation In a team, leaders can guide task conflicts towards constructive directions, making them a driving force for innovation rather than a hindrance. (Mumford. D. et al., 2002). The Impact of Team Conflict on Teachers' Innovation Performance. The inhibitory effect of team conflict: Studies have shown that high-level team conflict reduces the willingness of team members to collaborate, weakens resource integration and knowledge sharing abilities, and thus has a negative impact on innovation performance. Especially the existence of relationship conflicts can easily distract individuals' focus on innovative tasks and reduce creativity performance. The innovation effect after conflict reduction: After effective control of team conflicts, teachers can focus more on innovative solutions to tasks, and resource collaboration and information exchange within the team are more efficient. (Farh L., et al., 2010).

Research Objective 3) This study reveals the moderating effect of conflict management methods on the relationship between team conflict and innovation performance, further improving the theoretical framework of conflict management and innovation performance. Conflict management methods aim to reduce the negative impact of conflicts on team performance through effective means. Appropriate conflict management methods can shift the nature of conflicts from

destructive to constructive, thereby reducing the adverse impact of conflicts on innovation performance. Especially in the field of education, good conflict management can promote teamwork and knowledge sharing, further improving teachers' innovative performance. (Rahim, 2002) Conflict management methods emphasize cooperation and joint problem-solving, promoting consensus among team members by encouraging open discussions and information sharing. This method can guide task conflicts to promote innovation, while effectively reducing the negative impact of relationship conflicts. Quickly resolve conflicts by making appropriate concessions and balancing interests. Although it may not fully tap into the innovative potential of conflict, it can effectively avoid conflict escalation and mitigate the direct negative impact on performance. Avoidance or mandatory management methods: Although they may temporarily alleviate conflicts in certain situations, they often fail to address deeper issues, which may lead to more significant long-term impacts of conflicts on performance (Dechurch and Marks, 2001). Appropriate conflict management approach can resolve tense relationships caused by conflicts and reduce the interference of negative emotions on team members' focus and creativity. Appropriate management methods can reduce the damage of conflicts to team relationships, enhance team members' willingness to collaborate, and provide a supportive environment for innovation (Farh L., et al., 2010).

Recommendations

1. Recommendation for Policies Formulation

(1) Promote the cultivation and practice of creative leadership. Establish leadership training programs: Education authorities or universities should regularly conduct creative leadership training programs for school level and departmental leaders, including innovative thinking development, team management skills, and methods for building an innovative culture. Improve the leadership evaluation system: Incorporate creative leadership into the performance evaluation index system of university leaders, and motivate leaders to pay more attention to innovation and motivation in actual management.

(2) Building a harmonious team culture. Establish specialized training on conflict management: Universities should enhance team members' awareness and ability to handle conflicts, and encourage active communication and collaboration through training or workshops. Strengthening mental health support: Universities can establish psychological counseling mechanisms to provide emotional support for team members and reduce the negative impact caused by team conflicts. Establishing a conflict mediation mechanism: Universities should establish independent conflict mediation institutions or introduce third-party mediation services to provide institutional guarantees for the resolution of team conflicts.

(3) Optimizing the incentive mechanism for innovation performance in universities. Implement multidimensional performance evaluation: In teacher performance evaluation, increase the assessment weight of innovative achievements (such as teaching method innovation and scientific research achievement transformation), and motivate teachers to actively improve their innovation ability. Provide resource support: Support innovative projects through special funds, reward outstanding teachers in innovative teaching and research, and create a campus atmosphere that respects innovation.

2. Recommendations for the application of research findings

(1) Enhance the creative leadership of leaders. Universities regularly hold creative leadership training sessions for leaders, combining successful case analysis and simulation exercises to help school level and department level leaders master practical methods of innovative management. Equip newly appointed leaders with experienced mentors to help them quickly adapt

to the practical requirements of creative leadership through guidance and communication. setting up pilot units within universities to provide leaders with the opportunity to apply creative leadership in real innovation projects and accumulate practical experience.

(2) Strengthen the management and intervention of team conflicts. Regularly provide conflict management training to teachers and managers, teaching effective communication skills, conflict identification and resolution strategies, and enhancing team members' collaborative abilities. provide professional mediation services when team conflicts are severe, help team members resolve differences in a constructive manner, and promote cooperation. Establish an early warning mechanism: Utilize digital tools such as team management platforms or mental health monitoring systems to monitor internal team dynamics, detect and intervene in potential conflicts in advance.

(3) Optimize the innovation performance support system for teachers. Establish a special fund for innovative projects to provide sufficient resource support for teachers, including research funding, experimental equipment, and technical services. Clearly include innovative teaching and research achievements in the performance evaluation system, regularly select and commend teachers with outstanding innovative performance, and set an example.

3. Recommendations for the next research

(1) To expand the scope of the research sample. This study focuses on public universities in Guangdong Province, and subsequent research can cover education organizations in other regions, different types of universities, and different industries to verify the universality and robustness of the research results.

(2) To explore more potential mediating variables. can be introduced to further explore the multiple pathways through which creative leadership affects teacher innovation performance. adopt multiple research methods. In the future, experimental research, longitudinal tracking surveys, and qualitative research can be combined to dynamically verify causal relationships and deeply explore the changing patterns of creative leadership, team conflict, innovation performance.

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