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Asian Conceptualizations of Leadership: Progresses and Challenges

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paternalistic leadership, paternalism, *guanxi*, cultural contingency

Abstract

By investigating broadly a contingency approach and implicit leadership theoretical perspectives with a multilevel lens as a starting point, this review highlights the potential for Asian conceptualizations of leadership. More specifically, by highlighting the important contingent role national culture plays in influencing leadership effectiveness, we review Asian conceptualizations of leadership that exist (e.g., paternalistic leadership style, paternalism, and *guanxi* in the leadership setting) in the literature and the findings that have been found in a relatively selective manner. This also allows us to advance the notion of a culturally contingent leadership perspective by developing the notion of hierarchical social exchange and various modalities associated with such a relationship. By so doing, this review enables us to underscore the advantages as well as challenges associated with Asian conceptualizations of leadership as well as future research directions that need to be undertaken to more firmly establish their utility to general leadership literature.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership, broadly referring to a social influence process through which one individual exerts influence, intentionally, over others and structures the behaviors and relationships within a group or organization (Yukl 1994), along with motivation, is arguably one of the most fundamental topics for organizational scholars and practicing managers (Steers et al. 1996). Searching by keyword "leadership" returns 3.9 million hits in Google Scholar, whereas it returns 82,000 in Web of Science, indicating significant interest in this topic.

Although there are different approaches and perspectives to examining leadership, we adopt the contingency approach to leadership [e.g., path-goal theory (House 1971), LPC (Least Preferred Coworker) contingency theory (Fiedler 1967), leadership substitute theory (Kerr & Jermier 1978), normative decision theory (Vroom & Yetton 1973), and multiple linkage model (Yukl 1981)] as a broad overarching framework in this review, given its contention that leader effectiveness depends on leader as well as situational characteristics. For example, the contingency model of leadership effectiveness (Fiedler 1964, 1971) posits that the effectiveness of leadership is contingent on the interaction of leadership style and situational favorableness, or the degree to which the situation provides the leader with the potential power and influence over the followers' behaviors. Similarly, situational leadership theory (Hersey & Blanchard 1969, 1977) postulates that, because the effectiveness of leadership depends on the situational variables, leaders adjust their tasks and/or relationship behaviors with followers to increase the likelihood of success (House 1971, Hughes et al. 1999, Reddin 1967, Vecchio 1987). This contingency perspective also underscores the importance of examining leadership in situ.[1]

In addition, implicit leadership theory (e.g., Epitropaki & Martin 2004, Lord et al. 1984, Offermann et al. 1994) makes apparent that individuals develop their own cognitive structures or schemas specifying traits and behaviors that characterize ideal leaders. Lord and colleagues (e.g., Lord 1985, Lord & Alliger 1985, Lord & Maher 1993, Phillips & Lord 1981) have conducted the most influential work in this area, and they explore a categorization theory of leadership, whereby individuals form several hierarchically organized cognitive categories or schemas, each represented by a set of prototypes—"abstract conception of the most representative member or most widely shared features of a given cognitive category" (Phillips 1984, p. 126). Leadership prototypes are formed through exposure to social events, interpersonal interactions, and prior experiences with leaders. Subsequently, people are categorized as leaders on the basis of the perceived match between their behavior or character and the prototypic attributes of a preexisting leader category (Rush & Russell 1988). Such a categorization process is likely to be affected by the cultural context in which an individual is embedded (e.g., Sy et al. 2010).

When we view leadership from these perspectives, the cultural contingency perspective of leadership as well as, for example, the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (or GLOBE) project (House et al. 2001) and associated findings (e.g., Aktas et al. 2016, Javidan et al. 2006; but also see Graen 2006) seem to provide new insights on the way leadership and leadership effectiveness can be conceptualized. In this review, we examine, in particular, how Asian conceptualizations of leadership may provide additional contributions to leadership literature by considering how various aspects of leadership may differ within non-Western and more Asian cultural contexts.[2]

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[1]We are not applying any of the leadership contingency theories noted here; these are merely examples of Western leadership theories that have considered boundary conditions to be important components of their theorizing.

[2]Although the GLOBE project has provided additional insights into leadership effectiveness across cultures, our review is limited to Asian conceptualizations of leadership that may differ from Western conceptualizations

WHY THE INTEREST IN ASIAN CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF LEADERSHIP?

If we agree with the basic premise of the contingency perspective in organizational behavior (see Johns 2006, 2017), in general, and contingency and implicit leadership theoretical perspectives (see meta-analyses by Peters et al. 1985, Podsakoff et al. 1996, Schriesheim et al. 1994, for instance), in particular, this naturally leads us to consider potential variations across different environments (national culture being one of them) in terms of the effectiveness of particular leadership styles (e.g., Vogel et al. 2015), or unique leadership styles being effective (e.g., autocratic, paternalistic) in certain cultural contexts. For instance, abusive supervision, referring to "sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical contact" (Tepper 2000, p. 178), has been found to be more detrimental to fairness perceptions of employees in Anglo (versus Confucian Asian) cultures (e.g., Vogel et al. 2015). Related, paternalistic leadership style, referring to a leadership style that "combined strong discipline and authority with fatherly benevolence and moral integrity" (Farh & Cheng 2000, p. 84), has been found to be related to different indicators of performance in Asian contexts (e.g., Chan et al. 2013, Chen et al. 2014, Huang et al. 2015).

Our basic stance is that there are likely to be universal as well as culturally specific aspects of leadership that need to be taken into account when considering the effectiveness of various leadership styles. In particular, we endorse two different types of contingencies that may exert influence on leadership across cultural boundaries. First, as Farh et al.'s (1997) work on organizational citizenship behaviors suggests, we consider that it may be possible for a particular leadership style to contain both etic (culture general) and emic (culture specific) aspects. Specifically, Farh et al. (1997) found three dimensions that are etic (civic virtue/identification with organization, altruism/altruism toward colleagues, and conscientiousness) as well as two dimensions that are emic (sportsmanship and courtesy in Western culture versus interpersonal harmony and protecting company resources in Chinese culture). Similarly, Morris et al. (1999) described the potential synergies that can occur by integrating both etic and emic approaches, even though they were specifically referring to justice judgment in their work.

Second, we consider national cultural context as a significant moderator (e.g., Aycan et al. 2013) that influences leadership emergence (i.e., a particular leadership style being more prevalent in a particular cultural context) as well as leadership effectiveness (i.e., a particular leadership style being more or less effective in a particular cultural context). Thus, transformational leadership, for example, may be equally effective across different cultural contexts (Kirkman et al. 2009), but the influence of leader-member exchange on leader trust, justice perceptions, job satisfaction, turnover intentions, and organizational citizenship behaviors was stronger in horizontal-individualistic (e.g., Western) contexts than in vertical-collectivistic (e.g., Asian) contexts (Rockstuhl et al. 2013). Here, we are not only interested in Asian ideas about leadership per se but how ideas can be contextualized to account for the potential differences that may exist in the macro environment. **Table 1** provides examples of the leadership studies that have investigated the role of national culture to give us a better idea about the impact national cultural context provides.

Although we do not have the space to review each of these studies in detail, one of the major trends we can see from the past two decades of this research is the importance of power distance (at the national and individual levels). Power distance, referring to "the extent to which a society accepts the fact that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally" (Hofstede 1980, p. 45), and its individual-level component (power distance orientation) have emerged as important moderators that can alter the relationship between various aspects of leadership and its

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of leadership. This focus on the Asian (and not other non-Western or world) context is due to space limitations as well as fast advancement in this body of literature in the past two decades.

Table 1 Examples of studies that have examined leadership and national cultures

Publication source	Major findings
Hui et al. 2004	Power distance orientation moderated the positive relationship between empowerment practices (e.g., offering job autonomy and discretionary power) and job satisfaction, such that the positive association between empowerment practices and job satisfaction was weaker for subordinates with high as opposed to low levels of power distance orientation.
Kirkman et al. 2009	Across China and the United States, power distance orientation moderated the cross-level relationship between transformational leadership and procedural justice; the relationship was more positive when power distance orientation was lower rather than higher. Procedural justice, in turn, predicted organizational citizenship behavior.
Kabasakal et al. 2012	A GLOBE-project-based study indicated that in-group collectivism, power distance, desire for higher performance, and future orientation are characteristic of the Middle East and North Africa. Examination of the leadership prototypes showed a preference for honest, just, and inspirational leadership that encourages loyalty in this region.
Lian et al. 2012	Compared with subordinates low in power distance orientation, those high in power distance orientation were less likely to view abusive supervision as interpersonally unfair but were more likely to pattern their own interpersonally deviant behavior after that of their abusive supervisors.
Mittal & Dorfman 2012	A comparison based on the GLOBE project analyzed the degree to which five aspects of servant leadership were endorsed as important for effective leadership across cultures. Egalitarianism and empowerment practices were endorsed more strongly in Nordic/European cultures, whereas empathy and humility were more strongly endorsed in Asian cultures.
Rockstuhl et al. 2013	Results based on 282 independent samples ($N = 68,587$) from 23 countries indicate that relationships of leader-member exchange with citizenship behavior, justice perceptions, job satisfaction, turnover intentions, and leader trust are stronger in horizontal-individualistic (e.g., Western) contexts than in vertical-collectivistic (e.g., Asian) contexts.
Castaño et al. 2015	A GLOBE-project-based study found that an outstanding leader in Latin American regions tends to engage in high levels of charismatic and team-oriented leadership, moderate levels of participative and humane-oriented leadership, and low levels of autonomous leadership, which is often considered important in North American settings.
Ng & Feldman 2015	A meta-analysis found that the relationships of ethical leadership with transformational leadership and with the use of contingent rewards were stronger in North American samples than in Asian ones. The findings suggest that although the content of ethical leadership appears to be universal, the importance attached to its key aspects may vary.
Vogel et al. 2015	Subordinates from Anglo culture, compared with Confucian Asian culture wherein the importance of hierarchical status is emphasized, perceived abusive supervision as less fair; this led to lower trust-in-supervisor and work effort. Subordinates' power distance orientation explained the moderating effect of culture.
Aktas et al. 2016	Analyses of data partly based on the GLOBE project showed that cultural tightness, or the strength of social norms, positively related to the endorsement of autonomous leadership and negatively related to the endorsement of charismatic and team leadership, even when controlling for in-group collectivism, power distance, and future orientation.
Mansur et al. 2017	On the basis of the GLOBE project's data from 59 societies, the authors tested endorsement of paternalistic leadership. Twenty-two of the societies endorsed some forms of paternalistic leadership, but paternalism was not homogeneously endorsed. Both exploitative and benevolent paternalistic leadership styles were found in these 22 societies.

impact on employee outcomes. Leadership styles that are more aligned with egalitarian values, such as transformational leadership, empowerment, and the offering of involvement opportunities and organizational support, tend to have weaker effects on subordinates who have higher, as opposed to lower, power distance orientation (Farh et al. 2007, Hui et al. 2004, Jiang et al. 2015,

Kirkman et al. 2009). Moreover, employees high in power distance orientation are more likely to tolerate leaders' use or even abuse of power, such as differentiating between in- and out-groups and showing abusive supervision, as compared to those low in power distance orientation (Lian et al. 2012, Vogel et al. 2015).

This line of research suggests that in cultural contexts that endorse a strong and stable social hierarchy, the seemingly universal facilitators of leadership effectiveness, such as being visionary, inspirational, participative, and communicative, may not be as effective as in those cultural contexts that value equal power distribution. As such, being controlling, dictatorial, or autocratic in these contexts may not be as detrimental as in Western cultural contexts. This provides impetus for our search of more indigenous theoretical models that explain leadership phenomena in Asian settings. We choose Asian settings for two reasons: (*a*) With the ascendancy of economic power of the greater China region, Asia is arguably one of the most important geographical areas in the world, and (*b*) there is fast advancement of theoretical and empirical leadership studies from this region. We focus our review on the following aspects of leadership, which we discuss in the sections on (*a*) paternalistic leadership and paternalism, and (*b*) *guanxi* in leadership settings.

Review of Paternalistic Leadership and Paternalism

One of the Asian conceptualizations of leadership that have been examined more is the paternalistic leadership model (Farh & Cheng 2000). This leadership model is the one that is most well developed, systematically researched, and clearly Chinese indigenous (Chen & Farh 2010). Farh & Cheng's model includes three components/dimensions: authoritarianism, benevolence, and morality. Authoritarianism refers to a controlling, demanding, and domineering leadership style that asserts leaders' absolute authority and control over followers; benevolence refers to leaders' holistic concern for followers' personal and familial well-being; and morality refers to leaders' demonstration of superior moral character, such as unselfishness and leading by example. The basic premise of the model is that leaders are effective in Chinese organizations when their leadership style combines authoritarianism, benevolence, and morality simultaneously to varying degrees depending on the situational contexts.

Our review of the paternalistic leadership literature (see **Table 2** for more details) uncovered 27 empirical studies published in refereed English journals, not including review articles such as those by Chen & Farh (2010) and Pellegrini & Scandura (2008) and numerous studies published in books, or Chinese language journals. The following is thus not a comprehensive review of extant studies but one that fairly represents the extant literature. Nonetheless, these studies do reveal several major trends worth mentioning.

First, since the first proposal of the triad (authoritarianism, benevolence, and morality) model, almost all studies investigated the Chinese paternalistic leadership model at the dimensional level (i.e., the examination of the three paternalistic leadership components/dimensions), using a survey approach and convenience samples. This body of research documented the main effects of the three components of the paternalistic leadership style separately and the interactive effects of two components (mostly authoritarianism and benevolence) jointly. Interestingly, none of the empirical studies reported significant three-way interactions among the three components. Given the poor statistical power of detecting high-level interactions using multiple regression analyses and sampling limitations (most leaders in these survey samples having high morality scores), a survey-based approach is clearly not the ideal way to capture the complex joint effects of the three leadership components. To avoid this shortcoming, Farh et al. (2008) have called for studying paternalistic leadership using a configurational approach in which leaders can be classified into distinct profiles based on their leadership styles being high or low on each of the three components.

Table 2   Paternalistic leadership and paternalism

Publication source	Major findings
The Chinese triad model	
Cheng et al. 2004	Leader benevolence and morality was positively related to followers' gratitude and identification, whereas leader authoritarianism failed to predict followers' compliance. In addition, the positive effects of leader benevolence on follower responses strengthened when leader authoritarianism was high.
Aryee et al. 2007	Leader authoritarianism was positively related to leaders' demonstration of abusive supervision, which led to unfavorable follower outcomes. Moreover, it moderated the negative relationship between leaders' perceptions of interactional justice and abusive supervision such that the relationship was stronger for supervisors high rather than low in authoritarianism.
Niu et al. 2009	Leader benevolence and morality increased subordinates' deference to supervisor and work motivation, whereas leader authoritarianism was unrelated to these outcomes. In addition, leader benevolence and morality interacted to affect employees such that leaders high in both benevolence and morality elicited the highest levels of employee outcomes.
Wang & Cheng 2010	Despite its deep connection with cultural traditions, leader benevolence served as a facilitator for creative performance in certain conditions. Both creative role identity and job autonomy moderated the positive relationship between leader benevolence and employee creativity such that when each moderator was high, the positive relationship was stronger.
Chan & Mak 2012	Leader-member exchange partially mediated the positive relationship between leader benevolence and task performance, whereas it fully mediated the relationship between benevolence and organization-directed citizenship behavior.
Wu et al. 2012	Perceived interactional justice mediated the effects of moral leadership and benevolent leadership on trust in supervisor, but not the link between authoritarian leadership and trust in supervisor. Trust in supervisor then explained associations among the three leader behaviors, justice, and employee performance.
Chan et al. 2013	Organization-based self-esteem mediated the negative relationships between leader authoritarianism and task performance/citizenship behavior. Leader benevolence moderated the negative relationship between authoritarian leadership and organization-based self-esteem such that the negative effects of authoritarianism weakened when benevolence was high.
Wang et al. 2013	The negative link between leader authoritarianism and subordinate performance was stronger for female than for male leaders, whereas the positive effects of leader benevolence on subordinate performance was stronger for male than for female leaders. Leader benevolence benefited male leaders due to its positive deviation from the male gender roles.
Chan 2014	Leader authoritarianism negatively, and leader morality positively, related to employee voice, whereas leader benevolence was unrelated to employee voice. Moreover, the positive relationship between leader morality and employee voice was stronger when employees received higher levels of information sharing.
Chen et al. 2014	Affective trust mediated the positive relationships between leader benevolence and in-role/extra-role performance and between leader morality and the two forms of performance. Leader authoritarianism negatively related to extra-role performance, but affective trust could not explain this relationship.
Cheng et al. 2014	Across Taiwan, China, Japan, and South Korea, paternalistic leadership occurred in an equivalent three-factorial structure indicating the applicability of the triad model. The findings indicate generalizability of the meaning attributed to paternalistic leadership via leader authoritarianism, benevolence, and morality across the four contexts.

(Continued)

Table 2 (*Continued*)

Publication source	Major findings
Chen et al. 2015a	CEO paternalistic leadership approaches and conflict modes determined top management team decision effectiveness. Whereas leader benevolence and morality positively related to decision effectiveness, leader authoritarianism had negative effects. In addition, cognitive and affective team conflicts partially mediate the links between the three paternalistic leadership types and decision effectiveness.
Chou et al. 2015	Latent profile analysis indicated the prevalence of three leadership profiles in the Taiwanese military: Most common was a moral-authoritarian profile (60.1%), followed by a moral-benevolent profile (29.1%). Least prevalent was an authoritarian-only profile (10.8%). The first profile best predicted followers' positive attitudes.
Huang et al. 2015	Leader authoritarianism was positively related to firms' revenue growth when economic munificence (regional economic activities and consumption capacity) was low but negatively related to revenue growth when economic munificence was high. Leader authoritarianism was functional in harsh economic environments.
Li & Sun 2015	Senior managers' authoritarianism negatively related to employee voice through the mediation of direct supervisors' authoritarianism. Leader identification moderated the indirect, cascading negative effect, whereas power distance orientation moderated the direct negative effect of senior managers' authoritarianism on employee voice.
Zhang et al. 2015b	Leader authoritarianism negatively related to employees' voice by reducing employees' own status judgment. Leader benevolence positively related to employee voice by enhancing both leader-member exchange and status judgment. Leader morality positively related to employee voice mainly through leader-member exchange.
Chen et al. 2017	The authors propose and examine directive-achieving leadership, a leader authoritarianism–related concept that reflects the Confucian juxtaposition of hierarchical control with a training and achieving focus. It had a positive mediated relationship with subordinate job performance through role clarity and cognition-based trust.
Schaubroeck et al. 2017	Power distance moderated negative indirect effects of leader authoritarianism through perceived insider status on employee outcomes such that these effects became nonsignificant when power distance was high. These conditional indirect effects were stronger among employees with relatively high role breadth self-efficacy.
Tian & Sanchez 2017	Affective trust mediated the interacting effect of leader benevolence and authoritarianism on employee innovative behavior and knowledge sharing.
Wang et al. 2017	On the basis of the qualitative findings, six important components of leader morality were proposed: moral courage, openness to criticism, incorruptibility, reliability, fairness, and role modeling. A cultural analysis suggested that three cultural traditions influence these components: relationalism, the rule of man, and Taoism values.
Zhang & Xie 2017	As a leadership style of exercising formal authority and position power, leader authoritarianism positively related to subordinates' role conflict and role overload, which, in turn, negatively related to citizenship behavior. Leader authoritarianism behavior also positively related to role ambiguity, but it was unrelated to citizenship behavior.
Li et al. 2018a	There was a curvilinear, inverted-U-shaped relationship between leader benevolence and team performance through the mediation role of team action processes. This too-much-of-a-good-thing effect became weaker when team commitment neutralized the diminishing performance returns of excessive benevolence.
Lin et al. 2018	Leader-member exchange mediated the relationship between leader benevolence and employee creativity. Moreover, the association between leader benevolence and leader-member exchange was strengthened when employees had high levels of power distance orientation.

(*Continued*)

Table 2 (*Continued*)

Publication source	Major findings
Wang et al. 2018	Polynomial regression models proposed and tested a new typology of paternalistic leadership styles based on how leaders demonstrate *authoritarianism* (A) and *benevolence* (B). A positive relationship between classical (i.e., high *A*–high *B*) paternalistic leadership and subordinate performance was as strong as the effect of benevolence-dominant (i.e., low *A*–high *B*) paternalistic leadership.
Zheng et al. 2019	Leader authoritarianism was found to reduce employee ethical voice (i.e., speaking out opinions against unethical issues) through employee felt uncertainty. Such a negative relationship is mitigated by higher levels of leader benevolence. That is, when authoritarian leaders simultaneously exhibit high benevolence, they are less likely to cause feelings of uncertainty in their followers who are then more likely to speak up about unethical issues.
Wang 2019	This qualitative study shows that Chinese-style developmental leadership integrates authoritarianism and benevolence by (*a*) emphasizing discipline, (*b*) taking initiative to remove obstacles, (*c*) insisting on the pursuit of excellence, and (*d*) engaging in role modeling as a means of dealing with crises. Such behaviors enhance subordinates' professional capabilities, interpersonal insight, and self-transcendence.
The paternalism model	
Pellegrini & Scandura 2006	In the Turkish setting, paternalism mediated the relationship between leader-member exchange and subordinates' job satisfaction, whereas delegation failed to serve as a mediator given its nonsignificant effect on job satisfaction. The findings suggest that paternalism indicates a high-quality exchange relationship between leaders and followers.
Pellegrini et al. 2010	In India, paternalism positively related to leader-member exchange, and positively predicted subordinates' job satisfaction and organizational commitment. In contrast, paternalism also had a positive relationship with leader-member exchange in the US setting, but it only predicted organizational commitment.
Raghuram 2011	In the Indian setting, subordinates' perception of paternalism moderated the positive relationship between perceived job challenge and organizational identification, such that the relationship mentioned above was stronger when paternalism was high.
Ersoy et al. 2012	The authors compared paternalism with empowering leadership across Turkey and the Netherlands. Paternalism had stronger positive effects on subordinate outcomes, such as perceived organizational support and job dedication, in Turkey than in the Netherlands, whereas empowering leadership had stronger effects in the Netherlands than in Turkey.
Wagstaff et al. 2015	The authors developed a new measure of subordinates' perception of paternalism using three US samples. In addition to offering evidence of the convergent and discriminant validity, this study found that supervisors high in paternalism tended to combine authoritarian and benevolent behaviors in front of their subordinates.
Mansur et al. 2017	Using data on 59 societies from the GLOBE project, the authors found that Southeast and Confucian Asian culturally clustered to endorse paternalistic leadership consistently, whereas the Nordic European cluster did not. Of the 22 societies that endorsed some form of paternalistic leadership, two patterns of paternalistic leadership were identified: benevolent paternalism (higher levels of benevolence and integrity and lower level of authority) and exploitative paternalism (higher level of authority and lower levels of benevolence and integrity).
Li et al. 2018b	Paternalism predicted supervisor-directed citizenship behavior through the mediation of supervisor-focused procedural justice. The proposed effects of paternalism (through the mediation of justice) became stronger when subordinates had high levels of leader identification and traditionality.

Empirical work using this approach has just begun. Recently, for example, Chou et al. (2015) used latent profile analysis to identify major paternalistic leadership profiles of Taiwanese military officers.

Second, **Table 2** illustrates that many studies have attempted to identify various mediating mechanisms underlying the relationships between the three paternalistic leadership components and subordinate outcomes. Affective trust and leader-member exchange are the most frequently studied mediators. Although this line of research offers consistent findings, these two mediators are not necessarily only related to paternalistic leadership per se. Both affective trust and leader-member exchange emphasize mutual sharing and a close relationship between the two parties, but paternalistic leaders tend to maintain higher levels of distance with followers. Moreover, these mediators better explain the effects of leader benevolence and morality, but not authoritarianism. In particular, the original model proposed dependence and compliance as being a direct and the most relevant consequence of authoritarianism, respect and identification for morality, and gratitude and repayment for benevolence. Farh et al.'s (2006) path analysis revealed the distinctive role fear (for authoritarianism), gratitude and repayment (for benevolence), and identification (for morality) play in influencing follower outcomes (compliance, satisfaction with supervisor, and organizational commitment). Chan et al.'s (2013) work also tried to explain the effects of authoritarianism directly by identifying organization-based self-esteem as the mediating mechanism. Perhaps future research could try to identify additional mediators that are distinctively related to and unique to each of the three paternalistic leadership components.

Third, with regard to the impact of these three components, most studies found that leader benevolence and morality have positive effects on subordinate outcomes, whereas authoritarianism is typically associated with unfavorable employee outcomes (Hiller et al. 2019). The findings of negative effects regarding authoritarianism introduce the greatest amount of controversy in this line of research. If leader authoritarianism is bad for subordinate outcomes (especially performance), why do Chinese leaders insist on using it? A recent trend, therefore, has been to identify critical factors that moderate the negative effects of authoritarianism (Chan et al. 2013, Huang et al. 2015, Li & Sun 2015, Schaubroeck et al. 2017, Tian & Sanchez 2017, Wang et al. 2013). However, most of them show that such negative effects can, at most, be weakened. Only Huang et al. (2015) demonstrate a positive association between leader authoritarianism and firm performance in underdeveloped economic environments. Together with other recent studies showing the negative effects of leader authoritarianism on employee voice (Chan 2014, Li & Sun 2015, Zhang et al. 2015b), role conflict and overload (Zhang & Xie 2017), and top management team decision effectiveness (Chen et al. 2015a), the puzzle becomes even more intriguing. Chen et al. (2017) proposed a new concept named directive-achieving leadership, which reflects the Confucian juxtaposition of hierarchical control with a training and achieving focus. They developed a new scale and show that directive-achieving leadership positively related to employee performance through role clarity and cognitive trust, whereas leader authoritarianism did not show any effects on role clarity, trust, or job performance. This research suggests that there may be different manifestations of authoritarianism that may avoid the negative consequences typically observed in extant studies. Additionally, authoritarianism may interact with benevolence and/or morality in too complex a way to be easily captured by survey research. Demonstrating a new approach to understanding the joint effect of leader authoritarianism and benevolence, Wang (2019) conducted a qualitative study to investigate how Chinese leaders integrate authoritarianism and benevolence to cultivate followers. These are examples of meaningful and timely future research directions to investigate the effects of leader authoritarianism.

Finally, most of the studies we review are conducted at the individual level, with Chen et al.'s (2015) and Huang et al.'s (2015) being the only exceptions. So we know very little about how

paternalistic leadership affects group- or organizational-level outcomes. The performance effect of paternalistic leadership at the individual level may not be the same as at the unit level. For example, leaders who are highly authoritarian may lead to higher unit performance through fast decision making and execution and increased operating efficiency (Huang et al. 2015), none of which is directly linked to increased individual performance. In addition, whereas prior research has shown that followers' cultural orientations (e.g., power distance) may play a moderating role, how leaders' cultural beliefs and values alter the relationships documented in the current literature may be worth probing as well.

This review of the paternalistic leadership literature also offers several practical implications. Although prior research has often documented the downsides of authoritarianism, it may be unrealistic to ask non-Western (in particular, Chinese) leaders to give up their exercise of authoritarianism because in many cultural contexts, leader authoritarianism has deep roots in cultural traditions. Regarding how to employ leader authoritarianism wisely, current research has found that it may be particularly effective when operating in harsh economic environments (Huang et al. 2015), may become harmless in work contexts where power distance is widely accepted (Li & Sun 2015, Schaubroeck et al. 2017), or may better fit with male than with female leaders (Wang et al. 2013). Accordingly, the use of leader authoritarianism needs to be tailored to particular situations, given it may remain effective in military or traditional manufacturing settings and problematic in R&D as well as high-end service contexts.

Of course, leader authoritarianism is one facet of paternalistic leadership, and it is more likely that paternalistic leaders combine the use of authoritarianism with moral and/or benevolent facets of paternalistic leadership; it is this combination that may be more effective in eliciting more desirable follower reactions and outcomes (e.g., Wang 2019, Wang et al. 2018). More specifically, leader authoritarianism can be integrated with benevolence and used to facilitate subordinates' development (Chan et al. 2013, Tian & Sanchez 2017, Wang 2019, Wang et al. 2018). This integration strategy blends the exercise of leader authoritarianism with benevolence, as the latter has been proven to be beneficial to deference to supervisors and trust-in-supervisor (Niu et al. 2009, Wu et al. 2012), task performance (Chan & Mak 2012), citizenship behavior and voice (Chen et al. 2014, Zheng et al. 2019), and even creativity under certain conditions (Wang & Cheng 2010). While we also await empirical evidence, leader authoritarianism and morality should also interact with each other. Additionally, leaders should proactively use their position power to help followers achieve self-cultivation (Wang 2019). Doing so better connects leaders' authoritarian face with their sincere, proactive striving to meet followers' needs, which is one of the core values of leader morality (Wang et al. 2017). Echoing perhaps the earliest scholarly observations on Asian leadership (e.g., Farh & Cheng 2000, Redding 1990), our review indicates that the authentic integration of the three paternalistic leadership components has the best potential to win collective endorsement from the followers and achieve the highest level of managerial effectiveness while simultaneously mitigating the downsides of authoritarianism.

In addition, we also reviewed several studies that have focused on the idea of paternalism (see **Table 2**), which is taking a personal interest in subordinates' off-the-job lives and attempting to promote their personal welfare more directly (Pellegrini & Scandura 2006). Only a handful of studies have followed the paternalism construct to examine the paternalistic leadership phenomenon. One of the major conclusions drawn from this set of studies, albeit limited, is that paternalism seems to be more powerful in those countries that are higher in power distance and paternalism explains more variance in follower outcomes than does leader-member exchange. There are some interesting distinctions between the Chinese triad model and the paternalism model. First, almost all Chinese sample studies adopt the triad model (except Li et al. 2018b), whereas non-Chinese sample studies solely use the paternalism construct (except Wang et al. 2018 and

Zheng et al. 2019). In addition, Chinese sample studies tend to take a mono-cultural approach, whereas non-Chinese sample studies often conduct cross-cultural comparisons (Ersoy et al. 2012, Pellegrini et al. 2010).

Given that the idea of paternalism is very closely related to paternalistic leadership (overall), it is worth comparing between the two constructs empirically. For example, are the two constructs psychometrically distinct? Does the Chinese triad model explain more variance in subordinates' outcomes after the paternalism construct is controlled for (or vice versa)? Future research is encouraged to examine these questions, which may serve as a starting point to integrate the two lines of literature on paternalistic leadership. One noteworthy development in this regard may be Mansur et al.'s (2017) study wherein they highlighted the difference between benevolent and exploitative paternalism—i.e., leaders can demonstrate paternalism due to either their concern about their subordinates or their desire to obtain useful resources from their subordinates. This suggests that without taking leaders' motivation into consideration, consistent relationships between paternalism and its outcomes cannot be found. This also indicates that benevolent paternalism may be similar to authoritarian leaders who show high benevolence at the same time (i.e., interactive effect between authoritarianism and benevolence), whereas exploitative paternalism may be akin to authoritarian (only) leaders who act selfishly (with low morality) and with low levels of benevolence (Chou et al. 2015, Wang 2019).

Review of *Guanxi* Within the Leadership Setting

Next, our review of Asian conceptualizations of leadership examines the idea of *guanxi*. The term *guanxi* in the Chinese language refers to the state of two or more entities being related (Chen et al. 2013). In the context of leadership, *guanxi* may be defined as the existence of direct particularistic ties between an individual and others (Farh et al. 1998) or interpersonal relations that carry characteristics of affect, obligation, and informality (Chen et al. 2013). **Table 3** shows the results of our review of studies that have looked at *guanxi* in the context of the leader-follower relationship. In general, this line of research demonstrates Chinese leaders' tendency to utilize *guanxi* in the workplace and to offer differentiated treatment to their followers. Such a tendency is consistent with early observations that Chinese individuals do not make decisions mainly based on short-term self-interest (Hwang 1987). Instead, they are highly sensitive to the hierarchically structured network of social relations in which they are embedded and follow distinct rules to interact with people categorized into different social groups (e.g., Hwang 1987). Thus, in addition to showing high levels of paternalistic leadership, as reviewed above, incorporating *guanxi* judgment into leadership processes and, thereby, engaging in differentiated treatment are also highly characteristic of Chinese leaders.

The idea of *guanxi* in leadership, however, is not a simple replication of Western vertical dyad linkage or leader-member exchange models contending that leaders categorize followers and treat distinct groups differently in order to simplify the work-related context and reduce cognitive loads (Dansereau et al. 1975, Graen & Uhl-Bien 1995, Liden et al. 1997). The main difference between leader-member exchange and *guanxi* is the inclusion of nonwork/personal domains by embedding the work context in the more holistic network of social relations, which allows the leader to gain more insight on how to interact with followers more properly from the culturally sensitive, relational perspective specified in the cultural traditions. Consistent with this theoretical distinction, many of the reviewed studies deliberately compared supervisor-subordinate *guanxi* with related Western relational constructs (i.e., leader-member exchange and relational demography) and showed that *guanxi* constructs had additional explanation power over Western constructs (Chen et al. 2009; Farh et al. 1998; Shih & Lin 2014; Zhang et al. 2015a, 2017). These

Table 3 *Guanxi* and leadership

Publication source	Major findings
Farh et al. 1998	The authors compared *Guanxi*, or the existence of direct particularistic ties between an individual and others, with relational demography. Both *guanxi* and relational demography related to subordinates' trust in the supervisor positively, but only *guanxi* was found to be (extremely) important for business executives' trust in their connections.
Chen et al. 2004	*Guanxi*-based human resources management practices had a negative effect on trust in management through the mediation of perceived procedural justice. A follow-up experiment further indicated that whereas favoring a nephew or a hometown fellow, for example, lowered trust, favoring a college schoolmate or a close friend did not.
Chen et al. 2009	The authors defined and measured supervisor-subordinate *guanxi* as a three-dimensional concept consisting of affective attachment, personal-life inclusion, and deference to supervisor. Whereas affective attachment predicted perceived procedural justice, deference to supervisor positively related to organizational commitment.
Chen et al. 2011	Group-level *guanxi* practice was negatively related to employees' perceived procedural justice, whereas interpersonal *guanxi* practice had a positive effect on procedural justice perceptions. The relationship between interpersonal *guanxi* and procedural justice perceptions became stronger when group-level *guanxi* practice perception was high.
Jiang et al. 2013	Supervisory favors had a positive effect on trust-in-supervisor, and this effect became stronger for subordinates who made higher merit attribution of supervisory favor than for those who made lower merit attribution. Personal favor attribution, in contrast, had a negative effect on trust-in-supervisor.
Zhai et al. 2013	Subordinates' positive and negative affect predicted their workplace *guanxi* with both their supervisors and their coworkers. Supervisor-subordinate *guanxi* related to job satisfaction positively, whereas coworker *guanxi* did not. Supervisor-subordinate *guanxi* also mediated the relationship between positive affect and job satisfaction.
Shih & Lin 2014	After controlling for leader-member exchange, the authors showed that supervisor-subordinate *guanxi* had a unique positive effect on subordinates' psychological contract fulfillment, which subsequently predicted subordinates' felt obligation for engaging in more citizenship behavior in exchange for leaders' personalized favors.
Chen et al. 2015b	When leaders included followers in their personal lives, such life inclusion had a positive spillover effect on followers' interpersonal facilitation and job dedication, particularly when followers were low in horizontal collectivism. This was not the case, however, when leaders did not include all followers in their personal lives uniformly.
Lam et al. 2015	There was a U-shaped relationship between job insecurity and citizenship behavior. Moreover, psychological capital and supervisor-subordinate *guanxi* moderated this curvilinear relationship, such that it was more pronounced among those with lower psychological capital or less positive subordinate-supervisor *guanxi*.
Zhang et al. 2015a	Although both supervisor-subordinate *guanxi* and leader-member exchange mediated the effects of proactive personality on affiliative organizational citizenship behavior (i.e., interpersonal facilitation), *guanxi* was more strongly related to challenging organizational citizenship behavior (i.e., taking charge) and leader-member exchange was more strongly related to task performance.
Zhang et al. 2017	Leader-member exchange, as the indicator of in-role relationship, was positively related to person-organization fit, which, in turn, decreased turnover intention. In contrast, supervisor-subordinate *guanxi*, or extra-role relationship quality, was more strongly related to person-supervisor fit, which facilitated subordinates' helping behaviors.

studies have established the discriminant validity as well as incremental validity of *guanxi* through methodologically rigorous approaches.

Although these studies demonstrated that *guanxi* does play an important role in building interpersonal networks between leaders and followers in the Chinese context, one significant

methodological issue is the coexistence of multiple scales pertaining to different aspects of *guanxi* being used in these studies. This makes the advancement of research on *guanxi* more challenging. For example, Lam et al. (2015) used Law et al.'s (2000) six-item scale, whereas Shih & Lin (2014) used Wong et al.'s (2003) 15-item scale. Chen et al. (2015b) used the 12-item multidimensional supervisor-subordinate *guanxi* scale developed by Chen et al. (2009) with three dimensions (i.e., affective attachment, personal life inclusion, and deference to superiors). Thus, three studies used three separate scales to measure *guanxi*. Moreover, Jiang et al. (2013) developed a five-item scale to measure supervisor favors, which they argue are essential for building personal relationships (*guanxi*) in China. Rather than spending effort and time in developing additional scales, scholars are advised to conduct more psychometric validation work on the existing measures to carefully establish the validity of *guanxi* measures.

Our review on *guanxi* and leadership also suggests that the employment of *guanxi* in leadership settings has mixed effects on subordinates. *Guanxi*-based in-group members tend to respond to leaders' differentiated treatment favorably. For example, they have higher levels of trust-in-supervisor and fairness perceptions (Chen et al. 2011, Farh et al. 1998), experience more job satisfaction (Zhai et al. 2013), and exert more effort to engage in job dedication and citizenship behavior (Chen et al. 2015b; Lam et al. 2015; Shih & Lin 2014; Zhang et al. 2015a, 2017). Nevertheless, when the *guanxi*-based in-group membership becomes salient, leaders' differentiated treatment may have unfavorable effects on group performance due to within-group divergence and lowered group cohesion (Chen et al. 2015b). Similarly, human resource management decisions based on *guanxi* may also endanger subordinates' perceived procedural injustice and distrust in management (Chen et al. 2004).

According to these findings, Chinese leaders often utilize *guanxi* and include followers in their personal lives. Doing so signals that leaders switch from the equity principle, which guides interpersonal interactions with individuals without *guanxi*, to the mixed principles of considering both equity and individual needs, which is applied to *guanxi*-based social ties (Hwang 1987). Such a change in interacting logics may elicit more extra-role follower outcomes in return. However, leaders must apply this to all followers uniformly, rather than draw a clear boundary line between in- and out-group members. Otherwise, the pursuit of in-group members' favorable work outcomes is at the cost of decreased group effectiveness and increased intragroup interpersonal conflict. In addition, the source of this particularistic ties needs to be taken into account, as preliminary evidence exists to show the differential impacts of the source of this particularistic ties (Chen et al. 2004). Specifically, Chen et al. (2004) found in a follow-up experiment that favoring a nephew or a hometown fellow lowered trust, whereas favoring a college schoolmate or a close friend did not. More studies can be conducted to explicate the effects of such varying sources as well as the reasons why that may be so.

A Brief Summary of the Literature Review

Table 4 summarizes the research agenda that we propose for the two primary literatures regarding Asian conceptualizations of leadership (i.e., paternalistic leadership/paternalism and *guanxi* in leadership settings). As the table shows, there are several future research directions that could prove very useful in advancing not only what we know about Asian conceptualizations of leadership but also what we could know about Western leadership, in general. We organize our thoughts using the emic-etic distinctions noted previously by Farh et al. (1997). First, regarding the emic perspective (i.e., focusing on Asian conceptualizations of leadership), construct and scale consolidation is an urgent issue. This is critical as multiple conceptualizations and measures coexist without rigorous comparison among their theoretical or psychometrical properties for both

Table 4   A research agenda for Asian conceptualizations of leadership

Perspective	Key issues
Paternalistic leadership and paternalism (emic)	Construct consolidation of paternalism with the paternalistic leadership model
	Examination of the impact of paternalistic leadership at the team and firm levels
	Investigation of the interactive effects of the three components of the paternalistic leadership model using profile analysis, experiments, and qualitative research
Guanxi in leadership setting (emic)	Scale consolidation
	Potential double-edged effect of *guanxi* at the individual, team, and firm levels
	Examination of tie source effects
Leadership and national cultures (etic and emic)	Consolidation of leadership styles regarding the impact of power distance
	Examination of the influence of cultural values on leadership other than power distance
Integrative (etic)	Integrative consolidation across the perspectives

paternalistic leadership/paternalism and *guanxi* in leadership settings. This is necessary for accumulating more solid empirical evidence regarding the influence these conceptualizations have on relevant outcomes. For paternalistic leadership and paternalism, examination of the impact of such leadership styles on the team and firm outcomes (i.e., multilevel theorizing) as well as the potential interactive effects of the three components of paternalistic leadership using profile analysis, experiments, and qualitative research seem to be fruitful areas for future research. For *guanxi* in leadership settings, scale consolidation is most critically needed; in addition, examination of potential double-edged effects (i.e., positive as well as negative impact) of *guanxi* at the individual, team, and firm levels may provide additional insights regarding how *guanxi* works. For *guanxi*, examination of the effects of different sources may also be fruitful, given the notion that particularistic ties are an important component of *guanxi*.

For the etic perspective, our review underscored the importance of the power distance that differentiates Asian conceptualizations of leadership. However, this is only one of the several cultural values that differ across countries that can impact leadership (as shown by the GLOBE project's studies). Thus, investigation of how other cultural values may give rise to different leadership styles, for instance, may be necessary to have a more complete understanding of leadership emergence across cultures. In addition, even though it is beyond the scope of this review, we nonetheless acknowledge the existence of other non-American conceptualizations of leadership that merit further attention [e.g., African leadership (Bolden & Kirk 2009), European leadership (Brodbeck et al. 2000)]. We also believe that integration of different perspectives may produce useful knowledge advancement (emic-etic integration). For instance, both etic and emic dimensions (or elements) of organizational citizenship behavior have been found to exist in different cultural contexts (see, e.g., Farh et al. 1997). Similarly, it may be useful to investigate paternalistic leadership cross-culturally to identify if there is any emic and etic component associated with paternalistic leadership dimensions.

DISCUSSION

Our review of the leadership literature that considers the impact of national culture reveals that power distance or hierarchical aspects of national culture are, arguably, the most important aspects of culture and Asian conceptualizations of leadership (i.e., paternalistic leadership and paternalism, as well as the use of *guanxi* in leadership settings). This also indicates that inclusion of nonwork factors/domains in work life is important. On the basis of our review, we propose a theoretical framework of hierarchical social exchange in the leadership context that has the potential to extend

the conceptualization of social exchange, one of the most important foundations of many Western leadership theories.

Hierarchical Social Exchange in the Leadership Context

The idea of social exchange is used in many leadership theories to explain the interaction between leaders and followers, and they often conclude that leaders should rely less on the use of power, authority, and control, which clearly limit the exchange of socioemotional resources between the two parties (Hollander & Offermann 1990). Thus, the social exchange between the leader and the follower in the Western conceptualizations of leadership is one of egalitarian exchange. In other words, the leader and the follower consider each other fundamentally as equal in power and status and the resources being exchanged are typically restricted to work domains (e.g., socioemotional support provided by the leader at work in exchange for more interpersonal helping or favor doing; Wayne et al. 1997). Related, a social exchange relationship in a low power distance culture typically implies that leader and follower share work responsibilities and treat each other as equals. Thus, the exchange currencies that are transferred between the leader and follower tend to be relatively more homogeneous (primarily work-related support from the supervisors being reciprocated by higher task performance by the follower). The distributive norm between the two also tends to be based more on the equity rule (i.e., resources are allocated in proportion to contributions). The interaction norm between them is also based on mutual respect. Thus, the modalities of this egalitarian form of social exchange can be characterized as equality in power and status between the leader and the follower, limited to work domain, with the equity rule as the distributive norm and mutual respect as the interaction norm.

However, in many non-Western settings, high levels of power distance exist (Daniels & Greguras 2014), and leaders' authority is more likely to be legitimated as appropriate, proper, and just (Tyler 2006). Moreover, vertical differentiation in hierarchical organizations has been found to enhance team performance, based on the acceptance of hierarchy within teams (De Hoogh et al. 2015, Friesen et al. 2014, Halevy et al. 2011, Schoel et al. 2011). One way to resolve the inconsistency between theories and phenomena is to understand leader-follower exchange from a more vertical, hierarchical perspective.

The relationship between leader and follower from a high power distance culture is presumed to be hierarchical with leaders, by default, enjoying higher power, authority, and status over their followers. In this context, the social exchange between the leader and the follower can be construed as one of hierarchical social exchange. Within this hierarchical social exchange relationship, the leader is expected to provide not only extensive work-related support but also nonwork-related support but, in return, the follower is expected to show the leader high levels of loyalty and obedience.

In this relationship, the follower may expect a broad range of support from the leader. For instance, the notion of *guanxi*, as our review has illustrated, takes into consideration personal or nonwork-related ties that have impact on how the leader makes decisions and how the followers react. In this regard, the followers may expect to be included in the leader's personal/life domains more extensively such that they feel more secure about their standing in the leader's eyes at the workplace. The reliance on the particularistic ties also allows the leader's use of different distributive norms depending on the level of *guanxi* the leader has with the follower. The final point is that the interaction norm within this hierarchical social exchange is more unidirectional in that the follower is expected to show respect to the leader at all times. **Figure 1** illustrates the definitional elements of hierarchical social exchange and contrasts them with egalitarian social exchange in the leader-follower relationship.
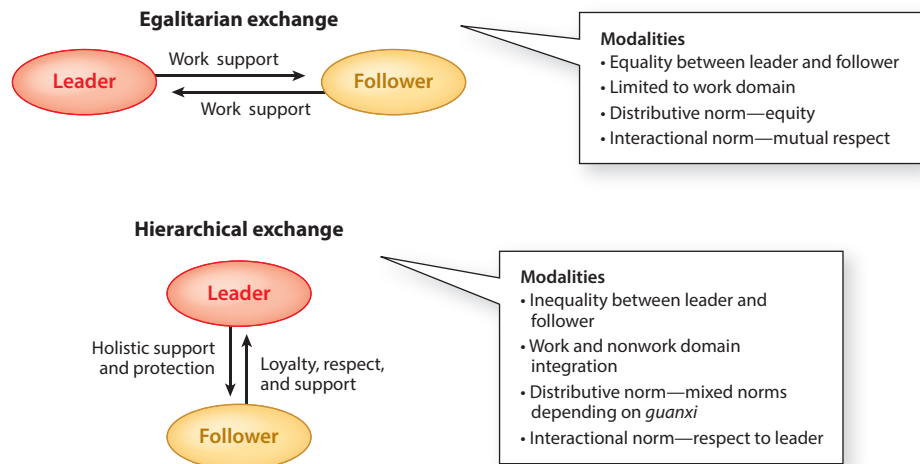
Egalitarian exchange

Leader — Work support → Follower
Work support

Modalities
• Equality between leader and follower
• Limited to work domain
• Distributive norm—equity
• Interactional norm—mutual respect

Hierarchical exchange

Leader
Holistic support and protection ↓ ↑ Loyalty, respect, and support
Follower

Modalities
• Inequality between leader and follower
• Work and nonwork domain integration
• Distributive norm—mixed norms depending on *guanxi*
• Interactional norm—respect to leader

Figure 1

Two (hierarchical and egalitarian) forms of social exchange between leader and follower.

If the basic premise of this hierarchical social exchange holds, then, we could make this idea more specific to leader-follower relationships. As **Figure 2** illustrates, the leader may have a very close relationship with a follower (designated as Follower 1) who is a family member or a quasi-family member (e.g., very close friend). For this follower, the leader will provide strong holistic support that extends well into nonwork domains, and the distributive norm that is applied is need-based (i.e., resources are distributed to satisfy followers' legitimate needs, regardless of their relative contributions). Of course, in return, the leader will expect unconditional support and absolute loyalty from the follower in work as well as nonwork domains. As Follower 2 in the figure shows, the leader may have a personal relationship with a follower due to particularistic ties or positive work interactions. For example, this follower may share the same alma mater with the leader because they graduated from the same university. In this case, this follower will be considered part of the in-group, and the leader will provide strong support in the work domain and some support in the nonwork domain. The follower, in return, is expected to show strong support and loyalty to the leader in the work domain as well as some support in the nonwork domain, and the distributive norm governing the social exchange is a mixture of equity and need considerations depending on the specific circumstances that this follower is in. Finally, for Follower 3 in the figure, who is an out-group member with whom the leader has not established a personal relationship, the leader provides support in the work domain only, which is conditional on this follower satisfying the requirements of the job and performing at an appropriate level. The distributive norm used in this case is equity-based only, and the leader and the follower are not involved in nonwork domain exchange.

A major difference between **Figures 1** and **2** is that **Figure 2** introduces the well-accepted assumption in Asian settings that the party at higher levels of a social hierarchy should take the lead to initiate appropriate relationships with those at lower levels (Modality 1 in the figure; see also Ho 1989, 1994), and that leaders proactively utilize their nonwork domain social relations to understand and differentiate their work-domain interpersonal relations (Modality 2; see also Hwang 1987). **Figure 2** also highlights that leaders follow distinct distributive and interaction norms to interact with followers categorized in different social categories (Modalities 3 and 4). With the assumption that Asian employees in a given social network have been socialized to be
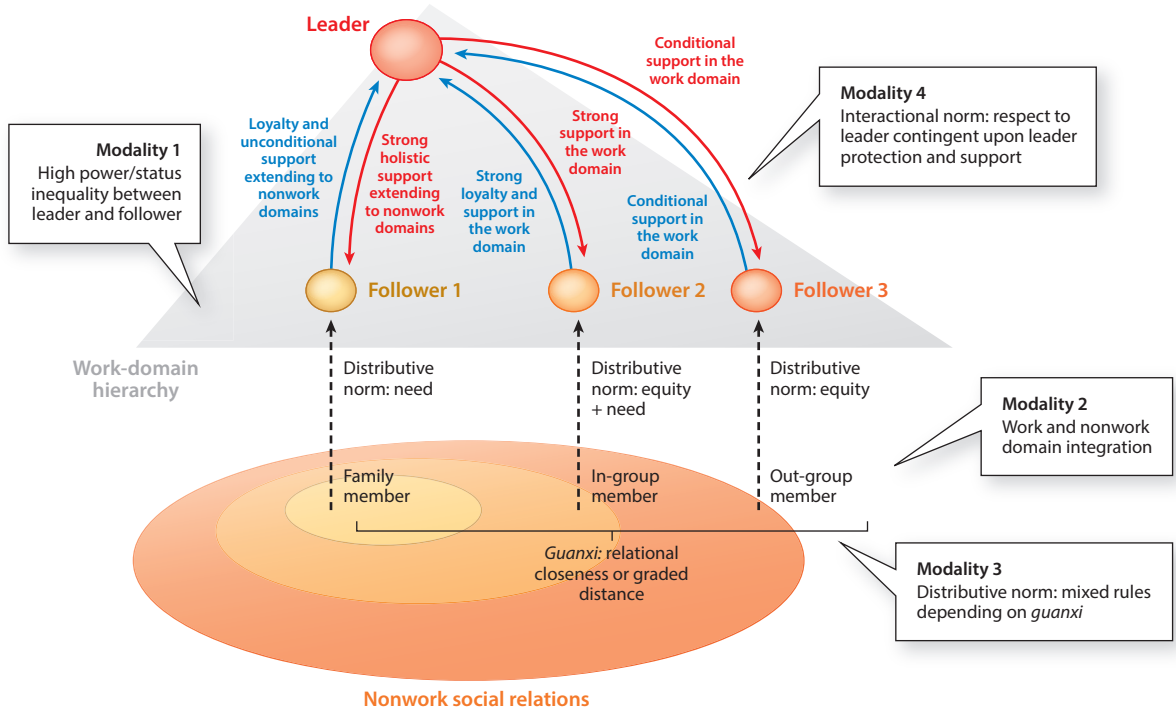
Figure 2

Hierarchical social exchange between leader and follower with different *guanxi*.

fully aware of the rules of context-specific proper conduct (Bell & Ham 2003), leaders expect followers to identify the most appropriate way of responding to leaders' differentiated treatment. Through smooth, role-expectations-guided interpersonal interactions, stable, harmonious, hierarchical social relationships emerge and endure (Chuang et al. 2015, Cole 2015).

Implications for Research and Future Research Directions

On the basis of our model of hierarchical social exchange in the leadership context, there are several important research implications. First, according to our model, because the inequality in status and power between the leader and the follower is taken for granted, the more controlling leadership styles, such as leader authoritarianism, and the active use of *guanxi*, are more acceptable, less resisted, and therefore less harmful in Asian as opposed to Western settings. Our model suggests that the acceptance of power/status inequality may serve as a key underlying mechanism for this cross-cultural difference, but we encourage future research to further understand why power/status inequality is more acceptable in the Asian context. One possible explanation is that although a national culture of high power distance implies a social hierarchy with power/status inequality, the real cornerstone of this social hierarchy is a sense of responsibility on the part of the leader. That is, individuals at the top of the hierarchy can enjoy higher levels of power and status because they take more responsibility for all members in the hierarchy than others. For example, based on the influence of Confucianism, Chinese leaders are expected to protect and show parent-like concern for their followers (Farh & Cheng 2000). If leaders fail to fulfill their prescribed responsibility, their power and status may be reduced substantially. In contrast, when they fulfill

their responsibility, even their borderline abuse of power may be tolerated. Future research is thus recommended to clarify what essential elements of such culturally prescribed responsibility may be, how these responsibility-related expectations relate to followers' power distance orientation, and whether levels of responsibility fulfillment interact with the display of controlling leadership styles to affect follower outcomes. Such a research endeavor can better inform cross-cultural differences in leadership effectiveness and implicit theories of leadership (e.g., Epitropaki & Martin 2004, Lord et al. 1984).

Second, Asian leaders' inclination to integrate work and nonwork social relations indicates that the boundary between work and nonwork domains in Asian settings may not be clear and definite. As we reviewed earlier, showing concern for followers' personal and familial well-being is characteristic of Chinese leaders' benevolence (Farh & Cheng 2000, Wang & Cheng 2010), and one of the *guanxi* practices in Chinese leadership settings is the personal-life inclusion between leaders and followers (Chen et al. 2009). Whereas related prior work primarily focused on the notion that Asian leaders tend to extend their influence on followers to nonwork domains, our model suggests a novel research direction: Asian leaders may proactively utilize nonwork social relations to define work-related interpersonal relationships and achieve their goals in work domains more efficiently. For example, when both leaders and followers do not draw a clear boundary between work and nonwork domains, it is possible that leaders' individualized consideration in follower life domains builds a trustful leader-follower relationship that may not be easily realized when leaders rely solely on their display of workplace consideration. With more future investigation on Asian leaders' efforts to maintain appropriate nonwork relationships with their followers, researchers may better understand how leaders build trust, particularly the affective aspect of it, in followers by understanding the needs and wants of the individual follower in nonwork domains and, eventually, helping them fit with their work groups better.

Third, our model suggests that in more hierarchical social exchange relationships, both leaders and followers do not make fairness judgments based on a universal set of egalitarian exchange principles. It is likely that followers still maintain satisfactory levels of distributive (procedural) justice perceptions when leaders distribute uneven benefits (apply distinct distribution procedures) to followers categorized into different groups, as long as followers are fully aware of, and agree with, the logic of leaders' categorization. That is, although many researchers may consider *guanxi* practices rather illicit and haphazard, an important research proposition based on our model is that the maintenance of a transparent *guanxi* network among leaders as well as all members in a unit may be beneficial. Future research is encouraged to explore this possibility. In addition, our model has the potential to inform current research on leader-member-exchange differentiation by better clarifying the complicated nature of the variability in leader-member exchange quality between members of the same workgroup. For example, Yu et al. (2018) proposed an equity-equality perspective derived from the allocation preferences theory to hypothesize contradictory effects of leader-member-exchange differentiation on group process and performance. It is worth noting, however, that both equity and equality rules are more compatible with egalitarian than hierarchical exchange relationships. Other exchange principles, such as need principle, may be employed to understand the nature of more hierarchical social exchange. Accordingly, a more careful approach to separating hierarchical from egalitarian exchange relationships is needed to better explain the paradoxical leader-member-exchange differentiation phenomena.

Practical Implications

Our model suggests that Asian leaders in the superior position of a hierarchical social exchange should be sensitively aware that they are expected to take greater responsibility, which is likely to

extend from work to nonwork domains, than those having an egalitarian exchange with followers. Whereas prior research mainly discussed the demonstration as well as effects of their authority and control, our model further urges Asian leaders to rethink how they can enjoy the use of their position power and expect respect and even unconditional loyalty and support from their followers. Our previous review indicated that one of the culturally prescribed responsibilities of Asian leaders is prioritizing followers' development and showing concern for followers' personal and familial well-being as opposed to simply accomplishing organizational goals (e.g., Chan et al. 2013, Wang 2019). Integrating authoritarianism with genuine benevolence may effectively justify leaders' superior power status and, thereby, the use of more controlling leadership styles (Mansur et al. 2017). In addition to such relatively individualized approaches, with the help of more future research findings, Asian leaders should identify more ways to show their responsible leadership that are consistent with cultural expectations of individuals at the top of a social hierarchy.

Our model also provides a theoretical rationale for building differentiated exchange quality with followers in more hierarchical exchange relationships. Whereas prior research based on discussions regarding more egalitarian exchange relationships has identified various downsides of displaying differential leadership, Asian leaders' inclination to utilize nonwork domain social relations to buttress their interpersonal relationships in the workplace is likely to serve as the source of justifications that buffer unfavorable effects of exchange relationship differentiation. However, Asian leaders have to be cautious enough to continuously monitor whether their understanding of *guanxi*-based social relations is aligned with their followers'. For example, offering too little holistic support to followers within leaders' in-groups tends to be as detrimental as asking too much unconditional loyalty and respect from followers who are not in-group members. Additionally, it may be important for Asian leaders to manage and maintain the consensus regarding the structure of the social network among members they lead in their unit. Whereas current research on *guanxi* and leadership tends to consider such structures to be merely mental models residing in leaders' minds, our model indicates that a transparent mutual understanding of it among team members may be essential to the sustainability of differential leadership in hierarchical social exchange relationships.

CONCLUSION

Although this review illustrates what we know about the Asian conceptualizations of leadership that differ in several aspects to Western leadership theories, there are many additional studies that need to be conducted in order for us to have more comprehensive understanding of leadership across cultures. Nonetheless, our review of Asian conceptualizations of leadership and elaboration of hierarchical social exchange provides important insights regarding how Western leadership theories may be supplemented. We hope that this review instigates additional interest in advancing leadership theories across cultural boundaries.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The authors are not aware of any affiliations, memberships, funding, or financial holdings that might be perceived as affecting the objectivity of this review but do disclose that they are all Asian.

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