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Whipping into shape: Construct definition, measurement, and validation of directive-achieving leadership in Chinese culture

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Abstract Based on Confucian thought, this research theorizes a new form of hierarchical approach to leadership in Chinese culture. This leadership concept, termed as directive-achieving leadership, reflects the Confucian juxtaposition of hierarchical control with a training and achieving focus. Study 1 developed a measure for this leadership style and found evidence of its construct validity. In Study 2, we collected three-wave, multi-source data from 208 employees and their immediate supervisors working in a large state-owned group corporation located in China. This study examined how directive-achieving leadership affects subordinate job performance, in comparison with authoritarian leadership. Our findings revealed that directive-achieving leadership had a positive mediated relationship with subordinate job performance through role clarity and cognition-based trust. By contrast, authoritarian leadership showed no effect on the role clarity, trust, or job performance of subordinates. We discuss the implications of the hierarchical approach to leadership in the Chinese context and provide directions for future research.

Keywords Directive-achieving leadership · Authoritarian leadership · Confucianism · Role clarity · Trust · Hierarchical approach to leadership

Many multinationals are drawn to China because of its huge market potential. How to effectively manage Chinese employees presents a significant challenge to leaders (e.g., Chen & Tjosvold, 2006). Leadership is crucial to organizational effectiveness (Bass &

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Bass, 2009); hence it is imperative to identify the leadership styles that are effective for managing Chinese employees and explain why they work. To address this issue, a stream of research adopts an indigenous approach to explore the leadership phenomena that are unique in Chinese societies (e.g., Farh & Cheng, 2000; Zhang, Waldman, Han, & Li, 2015). This research endeavor opens up a new avenue for theorizing new leadership concepts by tapping into "the empirical phenomenon of the East and its cultural, philosophical, and broader intellectual tradition" (Barkema, Chen, George, Luo, & Tsui, 2015: 460–461).

In particular, Chinese leaders are found to be typically characterized by a hierarchical, command-and-control approach to leadership (Cheng, 1995; Huang, Xu, Chiu, Lam, & Farh, 2015; Redding, 1990; Silin, 1976). In the Chinese indigenous leadership literature, this leadership style has been studied predominantly from the perspective of authoritarian leadership. Cheng and colleagues (Cheng, 1995; Cheng, Chou, & Farh, 2000; Farh & Cheng, 2000), drawing on an inductive approach of observing leadership behaviors in Taiwanese firms, arrived at a definition of authoritarian leadership that emphasizes absolute control over and unquestionable obedience from subordinates. Empirical research based on this definition shows that authoritarian leadership generally exerts negative effects on employees' job attitudes and performance in China despite the high power distance of Chinese (for reviews, see Chen & Farh, 2010; Farh, Liang, Chou, & Cheng, 2008; Pellegrini & Scandura, 2008).

Notwithstanding its destructive effects on employees as revealed by the research on authoritarian leadership, the hierarchical, top-down styles of leadership remains prevalent in China as well as a variety of other cultures (Pellegrini & Scandura, 2008). This puzzling phenomenon creates a research impetus of broadening the conceptualization of authoritarian leadership beyond absolute control and dominance over subordinates (e.g., Aycan, 2006; Chen & Farh, 2010; Chiang, Wang, & Chen, 2009; Chou, Chou, Cheng, & Jen, 2010; Pellegrini & Scandura, 2008). Indeed, the hierarchical approach to leadership has complex connotations in Eastern cultures (Pellegrini & Scandura, 2008), and may integrate with certain elements that have positive influence on employees (Chiang et al., 2009; Chou et al., 2010). To systematically examine this proposition, this research adopts a theory-driven approach to explore a variant of the authoritarian style of leadership drawing on the inspiration of Confucianism, the dominant school of philosophy in China (Hofstede & Bond, 1988).

Confucianism on the one hand emphasizes the fundamental role of social hierarchy in maintaining social stability. On the other hand, it underscores that social hierarchy is premised on mutual and reciprocal role responsibilities of superiors and subordinates (Bond & Hwang, 1986; Hofstede & Bond, 1988). Confucianism advocates subordinates' respect, loyalty, and obedience to their leaders. In parallel, it specifies that leaders should act as strict fathers who exercise the control over subordinates for the sake of the subordinates' development and achievement (Hofstede & Bond, 1988). Confucian teachings reject leaders who only seek to affirm their power and authority, but instead mandate them to assume their role responsibilities in terms of *training* (or teaching and educating) their subordinates to achieve high performance (Yang, Peng, & Lee, 2008). This suggests that because of Confucian influence, the hierarchical approach to leadership in Chinese culture is expected to integrate with an attempt to train subordinates for their achievement—a combination salient in Chinese culture.

The first goal of this research is to draw on Confucianism to lay a conceptual foundation for a new hybrid leadership concept, termed as *directive-achieving leadership*, which is defined as the juxtaposition of a hierarchical and controlling style with a training and achieving focus. Further, we seek to explore whether directive-achieving leadership, a leadership style reflecting Confucian ideal of the hierarchical approach to leadership, would exert positive effects on subordinates in the Chinese context. This research would contribute to the literature by offering a novel and more comprehensive understanding of the hierarchical approach to leadership in Chinese culture. In the following sections, we first conceptualize directive-achieving leadership drawing on classical Confucian teachings. Next, we theorize a process model to account for how directive-achieving leadership, in comparison with authoritarian leadership, affects subordinate job performance in the Chinese context.

Theoretical development on directive-achieving leadership

Hierarchical, controlling leadership style has been primarily viewed in a negative light in the West (Pellegrini & Scandura, 2008; Weber, 1947). However, in Eastern cultures, the hierarchical approach to leadership is not equivalent to merely asserting control and domination over followers. Rather, the top-down style of leadership may embrace elements beneficial for subordinate job performance (e.g., Aycan, 2006; Chen & Farh, 2010; Chou et al., 2010; Pellegrini & Scandura, 2008). Early inductive research on Chinese leadership phenomenon lends initial support to this proposition. Silin (1976), based on his field interviews of leaders in Taiwan, concluded that other than centralizing power, "the primary role of the leader is to convey to subordinates the methods by which he has achieved success" (128). Similarly, Farh and Cheng (2000: 98) observed that authoritarianism in Chinese culture include didactic behaviors such as "providing guidance and instructions for improvement," although this type of behaviors was not emphasized in the subsequent retrenchment of the measurement scale. Research on paternalism also noted the fatherly role of supervisors in providing advice and guidance to their subordinates in Asian cultures (Aycan et al., 2000; Mathur, Aycan, & Kanungo, 1996; Pellegrini & Scandura, 2006). Taken together, these studies provide qualitative evidence for the existence of a variant of authoritarian leadership, characterized by a blend of a hierarchical and controlling style with a training and achieving focus.

Recent empirical studies have differentiated two facets of authoritarian leadership, namely, a strict facet and an autocratic facet; and have demonstrated that the strict facet of authoritarian leadership tends to produce positive outcomes. The strict facet includes demand for high performance, strict discipline, and monitoring, while the autocratic facet includes absolute control over and unquestionable obedience from subordinates (Chiang et al., 2009; Chou et al., 2010). These two studies have found that the strict facet is positively, while the autocratic facet is negatively, related to psychological empowerment and self-reported performance. However, both studies have methodological flaws because of the self-report data used, raising the concern of common method bias (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012). In addition to this methodological limitation, these two studies did not explicate what authoritarian leaders do to demand high performance and exercise monitoring. To extend this line of research that

probes into hierarchical, controlling styles of leadership in Chinese culture, the present paper systematically theorizes on and empirically validates a new, hybrid leadership concept that reflects Confucian ideal of the hierarchical approach to leadership.

According to Confucianism, the stability of society is based on social hierarchy (Bond & Hwang, 1986), which legitimizes the demand of superiors for compliance and respect from subordinates. Importantly, Confucianism, at the same time, mandates the fatherly role of superiors who should be responsible for the growth and achievement of subordinates. A major role of superiors is to teach and train subordinates to achieve (Yang et al., 2008). This perspective is illustrated by the following quote from the *Analects*, the major doctrine of Confucianism: "The Master observed, 'How numerous are the people!' Yû said, 'Since they are thus numerous, what more shall be done for them?' 'Enrich them,' was the reply. 'And when they have been enriched, what more shall be done?' The Master said, 'Teach them'" (Legge, 1960: 266–267). Zhuxi, a famous Confucian scholar in the Song Dynasty, developed a set of well-known teachings (*Zhu Zi Jia Xun*) to guide his family members toward success, including demands to be virtuous, diligent, and learning-oriented (Ebrey, 1991). The above descriptive analysis suggests that, although hierarchical leadership practices are generally accepted in China (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004), only those practices with a concomitant training and achieving focus is consistent with and legitimized by Confucianism.

The Confucian juxtaposition of hierarchical control with a training and achieving focus is also reflected in common parlance, such as using the two verbs *guan* (to control or regulate) and *jiao* (to train or instruct) as a verb phrase to denote a major role expectation for and obligation of parents and superiors. Such a Confucian juxtaposition has been documented by the research on parenting behaviors in Chinese families (Chao, 1994; Lau & Cheung, 1987). In view of the influence of Confucian teachings, parental control with a training focus is regarded as a key role expectation for parents. Children tend to view their parents' firm control as conveying care and involvement, and a lack of control as negligence of duty (Chao & Tseng, 2002; Lau & Cheung, 1987). The emphasis on training and discipline provides a plausible explanation for the positive effect of Chinese parents' hierarchical and controlling practices on children's academic performance (Chao, 1994). Similarly, Lau and Cheung (1987) concluded that parental control in Chinese societies includes two different dimensions: the functional control that directs a child in a rational, task-oriented manner, and the dysfunctional control that demands a child's unquestionable obedience to maintain the parents' authority. Due to the influence of pan-familism in China (Yang, 1993), leaders in Chinese organizations tend to lead their subordinates "in a manner resembling a parent" (Pellegrini & Scandura, 2008: 568). Therefore, this indigenous line of parenting research provides additional evidence to the existence of directive-achieving leadership in Chinese culture.

To tap into the definition of directive-achieving leadership as the Confucian juxtaposition of hierarchical control with a training and achieving focus, we propose three integrated dimensions of this leadership concept, namely, controlling and regulating, training and instructing, and demanding for achievement and high performance. *Controlling and regulating* refers to the actions of leaders to ensure that subordinates behave in an appropriate and expected manner, such as strict adherence to organizational regulations and work procedures (cf. Chou et al., 2010). *Training and instructing*

refers to the actions of leaders to pass their knowledge and experience to subordinates by teaching their subordinates appropriate and productive behaviors (cf. Silin, 1976). *Demanding for achievement and high performance* includes the insistence of high performance standards, continuous improvement and diligence, and intolerance of unmet goals (cf. Chou et al., 2010).

As a variant of authoritarian leadership, directive-achieving leadership shares some similarity with authoritarian leadership as it adopts a hierarchical and controlling fashion and expects the obedience of followers. However, these two leadership concepts differ in several significant ways. To begin with, these two leadership concepts reflect different philosophical schools of thought in China. Farh and Cheng (2000: 102) pointed out that their conceptualization of authoritarian leadership is more consistent with the Legalist school of thought, which emphasizes the governors' self-interests and advises the governors "never to trust, delegate to, or share authority." In sharp contrast, directive-achieving leadership is rooted in Confucianism, which advocates "the cultivation of virtue, the development of individual personality, government for the people" (Farh & Cheng, 2000: 102). Reflecting these two different schools of thought, authoritarian leadership and directive-achieving leadership have different behavioral manifests. The hierarchical approach manifested in authoritarian leadership emphasizes on maintaining "personal authority and dominance over subordinate" (Farh & Cheng, 2000: 91). In contrast, the hierarchical practices manifested in directive-achieving leadership center on demanding for followers' adherence to organizational principles and regulations, learning of productive and appropriate behaviors, and achievement of success and high performance, which would benefit subordinates' learning, personal development, and achievement. The behavioral manifests are critical in differentiating these two leadership concepts.

Other than authoritarian leadership, directive-achieving leadership is related to some leadership concepts developed in the Western literature, such as directive leadership, coaching, and achievement-oriented leadership. Directive leadership, which includes the behaviors of assigning goals and issuing instructions and commands (Pearce & Sims, 2002), shares some conceptual overlap with directive-achieving leadership. In addition, coaching is concerned with guidance, facilitation, and inspiration, thus overlapping with the training and instructing dimension of directive-achieving leadership. Achievement-oriented leadership is concerned with setting challenging goals, expecting continuous improvement and excellence in performance, and showing confidence in the attainment of high performance (e.g., Griffin, 1980). Thus, it somewhat overlaps with directive-achieving leadership with regard to the dimension of demanding for high performance and achievement of subordinates.

However, because of its juxtaposition of a hierarchical and controlling style with a training and achieving focus, directive-achieving leadership is conceptually distinct from the three Western leadership concepts aforementioned. The emphasis on subordinates' learning and achievement pulls directive-achieving leadership apart from directive leadership that focuses merely on task completion (Lorinkova, Pearsall, & Sims, 2013; Neubert, Kacmar, Carlson, Chonko, & Roberts, 2008). Moreover, while directive-achieving leaders provide training to subordinates, the training practices involved are of the command-and-control, top-down style and such leaders expect their subordinates to comply and follow. Blending the training practice with the hierarchical and controlling style, directive-achieving leadership is distinct from

coaching that tends to be egalitarian and facilitative in nature (Heslin, Vandewalle, & Latham, 2006). In a similar vein, demanding for achievement and high performance is conducted in a top-down manner and is concerned with intolerance of unmet expectations (Chou et al., 2010). The blend of the achievement focus with the hierarchical and controlling style differentiates directive-achieving leadership from achievement-oriented leadership that is conducted in an egalitarian and inspirational manner (Griffin, 1980).

Effects of directive-achieving leadership vis-à-vis authoritarian leadership on subordinate psychological processes and job performance

As discussed prior, although both directive-achieving leadership and authoritarian leadership are concerned with hierarchical, controlling practices, they differ significantly in terms of the behavioral manifests. Directive-achieving leadership involves the training behaviors toward subordinates and the emphasis on achievement and high performance of subordinates, which are different from authoritarian leadership that emphasizes solely on control and dominance over subordinates. These conceptual differences provide a basis for exploring the underlying mechanisms through which these two leadership styles exert different effects on subordinate job performance. This research proposes two unique mediators, namely, role clarity and trust in leader, as the pathways that can elucidate these conceptual differences and differentiate the effects of these two leadership concepts. The selection of role clarity and trust in leader as the focal mediators is derived from the core conceptual difference between directive-achieving leadership and authoritarian leadership to be elaborated later; if confirmed, they would provide strong evidence for the conceptual distinction of these two leadership concepts. In addition, role clarity and trust in leaders tap into different psychological mechanisms: the former is relationship-related (Brower, Schoorman, & Tan, 2000; Williams, 2007), and the latter is task-related (Breaugh & Colihan, 1994; Sawyer, 1992). These two mediators provide a good starting point to map out the diverse mechanisms through which directive-achieving leadership affects subordinate job performance.

The mediating effect of role clarity

Role clarity refers to a clear understanding of "the duties, tasks, objectives and expectations of their work roles" (Kauppila, 2014: 738). To fulfil their work roles, employees need to have a clear understanding about the duties, tasks, and objectives expected of them as well as how to meet these expectations (Katz & Kahn, 1978; Kauppila, 2014; Sawyer, 1992). According to role theory (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964), role senders have significant impact on receivers' role clarity perception. In a hierarchical relationship between a manager and an employee, the manager is the primary role sender because he or she is a major source of role-related information and knowledge for the employee (Whitaker, Dahling, & Levy, 2007). The extent to which the manager provides clear information and guidance concerning role expectations, responsibilities, and work tasks affects the employee's role clarity perception (Kauppila, 2014).

We contend that the juxtaposition of hierarchical control with a training and achieving focus of directive-achieving leadership will make it positively affect subordinate role clarity. The controlling and regulating behaviors focus on specifying organizational regulations and rules and performance requirements, and regulating subordinate toward the adherence of these rules and requirements. Moreover, directive-achieving leaders provide training about appropriate and productive processes to meet the goals and fulfil their responsibilities and work tasks, as well as set challenging and well-defined goals. These directive-achieving behaviors, despite conducted in a hierarchical and controlling manner, provide well-defined descriptions and instructions of rules, standards, duties, and expectations, which should enhance role clarity (Eatough, Chang, Miloslavic, & Johnson, 2011; Kauppila, 2014).

Interestingly, an indigenous perspective provides an additional account for the positive effect of directive-achieving leadership on role clarity. People in the cultures with a Confucian heritage work hard to assume their role responsibilities within a hierarchy (Heine et al., 2001). Confucianism specifies mutual and reciprocal role responsibilities for superiors and subordinates in hierarchical relationships (Bond & Hwang, 1986; Hofstede & Bond, 1988). That is, superiors are expected to regulate subordinates to ensure that they behave appropriately and excel, and subordinates are expected to respect and display loyalty and obedience to their superiors. In the Chinese context, subordinates tend to regard their directive-achieving leaders who regulate and train subordinates and demand success and high performance of subordinates (i.e., *guan* and *jiao*) as assuming their role responsibilities. Subordinates, in turn, tend to reciprocate their directive-achieving leaders by assuming their role responsibilities accordingly. They would put in effort to understand and live up to their directive-achieving leaders' regulations, demand of high performance, and training and instructions (cf. Heine et al., 2001). As such, subordinates would develop a high clarity perception about their work roles expected from their leaders.

Role clarity, in turn, enhances job performance by directing attention and effort to goal-consistent activities and productive behavioral strategies. Role clarity has been viewed as an important mechanism transmitting leader influence to subordinate work outcomes (Breaugh & Colihan, 1994; Sawyer, 1992). Leaders can help subordinates focus on well-defined goals and productive behaviors, thus reducing process loss and enhancing subsequent job performance (Pearce et al., 2003). Taken together, role clarity is a plausible mediator channeling the effects of directive-achieving leadership on subordinate job performance. Thus, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 1 Directive-achieving leadership is positively related to role clarity.
Hypothesis 2 The positive relationship between directive-achieving leadership and subordinate job performance is mediated by role clarity.

Because training and demanding for achievement and high performance behaviors are not involved in authoritarian leadership, we do not expect this type of leadership to have a positive relationship with role clarity, neither do we expect role clarity to mediate the relationship between authoritarian leadership and subordinate job performance.

The mediating effect of trust in leader

Trust in leader plays a central role in channeling the effects of leadership behaviors on subordinate job performance (Burke, Sims, Lazzara, & Salas, 2007; Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Two types of trust are distinguished in the literature: cognition-based trust, which is built on a trustor's attribution of the characteristics of a trustee, and affect-based trust, which develops from the socioemotional relationships between a trustor and a trustee (McAllister, 1995). The effects of leadership behaviors on subordinate cognition- and affect-based trust can be explained by character- and relationship-based perspectives, respectively (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Yang, Mossholder, & Peng, 2009; Zhu & Akhtar, 2014). The character-based perspective suggests that a sense of vulnerability resulting from hierarchical relationships should engender subordinates' judgment of the leaders' characteristics to determine the subordinates' cognition-based trust in their leaders. The relationship-based perspective, on the other hand, suggests that affect-based trust is developed through socioemotional exchange and affiliative bonds (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Yang et al., 2008; Zhu & Akhtar, 2014).

The juxtaposition of hierarchical control with a training and achieving focus of directive-achieving leadership, in comparison to authoritarian leadership that emphasizes merely on control and dominance, suggests that these two leadership styles should have different relationships with cognition- and affect-based trust in leader. We first contend that directive-achieving leadership should be positively related to both types of trust. Directive-achieving leaders regulate subordinates to behave in an appropriate and expected manner, provide training, and demand achievement and high performance of the subordinates. In doing so, the leaders tend to signal to the subordinates that they seek to enhance subordinate job performance not only through exerting control but also through offering task-focused regulations, training, and guidance. In cultures with a Confucian heritage, directive-achieving behaviors characterized by a combination of *guan* and *jiao* are the role expectation for superiors (Bond & Hwang, 1986; Hofstede & Bond, 1988), and are generally associated with positive characteristics such as care, warmth, and conscientiousness (Chao & Tseng, 2002). According to the character-based perspective of trust (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Yang et al., 2008; Zhu & Akhtar, 2014), such favorable judgment on the leaders' characteristics made by subordinates suggests that the subordinates would have a high level of cognition-based trust in their directive-achieving leaders.

Moreover, the controlling and regulating behaviors conducted by directive-achieving leaders aim at ensuring subordinates to adhere to organizational principles and regulations. Such hierarchical and controlling behaviors, in conjunction with the training behaviors and the emphasis on achievement, signal to subordinates that the directive-achieving leaders care about the job performance and the learning, personal development, and achievement of their subordinates. According to the relationship-based perspective of trust (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Yang et al., 2008; Zhu & Akhtar, 2014), subordinates are likely to develop deep-level relationships, which go beyond economical exchange, with their leaders, resulting in a high level of affect-based trust in leader. Thus, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 3 Directive-achieving leadership is positively related to (a) cognition-based trust and (b) affect-based trust.

By contrast, authoritarian leaders emphasize on maintaining personal status and power as well as the absolute control and dominance over subordinates (Cheng, Chou, Wu, Huang, & Farh, 2004; Farh & Cheng, 2000). Subordinates are likely to connote the leader characteristics of exploitation, coercion, and power abuse, resulting in a low level of cognition-based trust. Supporting our reasoning, Wu, Huang, Li, and Liu (2012) found that authoritarian leadership was negatively related to trust in leaders measured by Robinson and Rousseau's scale (1994) that mainly taps into the cognitive facet of trust. In addition, subordinates are likely to perceive the authoritarian behaviors featured by dominance and tight control as signs of disrespect and distrust of their ability (Chan, Huang, Snape, & Lam, 2013), and feel that "the leader-follower relationship is instrumental rather than social in nature" (Chen, Eberly, Chiang, Farh, & Cheng, 2014: 804). Hence, authoritarian leadership is destructive to the development of socioemotional bonds and the consequent affect-based trust. This argument is supported by Chen et al. (2014), who revealed that authoritarian leadership had a negative correlation with affect-based trust. Consistent with prior research, we expect to replicate the negative effects of authoritarian leadership on both types of trust in leader.

Hypothesis 4 Authoritarian leadership is negatively related to (a) cognition-based trust and (b) affect-based trust.

Cognition- and affect-based trust, in turn, have positive relationships with subordinate job performance and act as mediators channeling the effects of leadership behaviors on subordinate job performance (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Yang et al., 2009). Cognition-based trust enhances job performance by facilitating subordinates' task-related exchanges with leaders (Yang et al., 2009). A positive attribution of leader characteristics reduces anxiety and the sense of vulnerability, thus directing subordinates' attentional resources to task-related issues and reducing their attention to task-irrelevant issues; their job performance is thereby enhanced (Kanfer & Ackerman, 1989; Mayer & Gavin, 2005; Yang et al., 2009). Affect-based trust enhances job performance through a social exchange process (Yang et al., 2009; Zhu & Akhtar, 2014). Affect-based trust grounded on the belief that supervisors seek to develop high-quality, deep-level relationships with subordinates would obligate them to reciprocate their supervisors with great effort and diligence, thus enhancing their job performance. To sum up, we propose:

Hypothesis 5 The positive relationship between directive-achieving leadership and subordinate job performance is mediated by (a) cognition-based trust and (b) affect-based trust.
Hypothesis 6 The negative relationship between authoritarian leadership and subordinate job performance is mediated by (a) cognition-based trust and (b) affect-based trust.

We conducted two studies in this research. In Study 1, we developed a measurement for directive-achieving leadership and tested its construct validity. In Study 2, we examined and compared the effects of directive-achieving leadership on role clarity, trust in leader, and job performance by with those of authoritarian leadership.

Study 1

Item generation

To generate items for directive-achieving leadership, we first conducted a comprehensive literature review, including the strict facet of authoritarian leadership (Chiang et al., 2009; Chou et al., 2010), reconceptualization of authoritarianism in Chinese culture (Chen & Farh, 2010; Farh et al., 2008), and the paternalistic leadership research about the fatherly role of supervisors in providing advice and guidance to their subordinates (Aycan, 2006; Aycan et al., 2000; Mathur et al., 1996; Pellegrini & Scandura, 2006). Based on the relevant literature and our conceptualization, we conducted two focus group interviews with nine managers and three front-line employees (seven men and five women, with an average age of 36.8 years) from financial and service industries in China. A total of 14 distinct incidents were identified. The sample incidents included "Leaders should train the subordinates on the work procedures and principles, and leaders should have the right to demand for subordinates' learning of what leaders teach them to get things done," "Leaders should emphasize that subordinates must adhere to organizational regulations" and "Leaders should set high performance standards for subordinates."

Based on the literature review and the focus group interviews, we generated 14 items that tap the three dimensions of directive-achieving leadership after a rigorous process of item wording, revising, and deletion conducted by three organizational behavior experts. The 14 items were then subjected to a content evaluation assessment by a group of 31 working adults (61.3% were female, and 45.1% were in managerial positions) who were not involved in the following surveys. They evaluated the extent to which the 14 items matched the definition of directive-achieving leadership and captured the contents of its three dimensions based on their work experience. This content evaluation procedure revealed that two items did not fit our conceptualization and thus were dropped in subsequent analyses.

Next, we assessed the content adequacy of the retained 12 items for measuring directive-achieving leadership by comparing them with the nine items measuring authoritarian leadership developed by Cheng et al. (2004). We invited 17 doctoral or master students majoring in management to serve as expert judgers to evaluate whether each item matched its corresponding definition of leadership style. The agreement rates for correct identification exceeded the 70% cutoff for all items.

Exploratory factor analysis

We conducted exploratory factor analyses with Sample 1 to examine the factor structure of the 12-item 3-factor directive-achieving leadership construct, which was measured on 6-point scales ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 6 (*frequently, if not always*). Sample 1 consisted of 216 Chinese employees (response rate: 76.9%) from a wide variety of industries, including finance and insurance, information technology, manufacturing, logistics, and retailing. Of the respondents 53.2% were female, 93.1% were between the ages of 20 and 39 years, and 58.8% had a university level education or above. The results confirmed a general factor structure for the three distinct factors, except for three cross-loading items. We subsequently replicated the exploratory factor analyses for the

remaining nine items after removing the three problematic items. The results indicated that all nine items loaded significantly on their respective factors without cross-loadings, with three items measuring each dimension (α = .80). Table 1 presents the items, factor loadings, and percentages of variance explained based on Sample 1.

Confirmatory factor analysis

To conduct confirmatory factor analyses, we used Sample 2 consisting of 242 employees from a large travel agency in China (response rate: 61.42%). A majority of the respondents were female (73.1%), under the age of 40 (93.0%), with an organizational tenure of less than 6 years (85.1%), with a reporting relationship with their supervisor for less than 3 years (91.8%), and had a Bachelor's degree or higher (76.8%), and 28.1% of them were in a managerial position.

The measurement model of directive-achieving leadership is a "reflective first-order, reflective second-order model" (Jarvis, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2003: 205), as items are reflective indicators of each respective dimension and the three dimension (first-order factors) are reflective indicators of the latent second-order construct of directive-achieving leadership. To examine the factor structure of directive-achieving leadership, we first tested the fit of the second-order model. Then, we tested the fit of the first-order three-factor model, and compared it with the three alternative first-order two-factor models and with the first-order one-factor model. Table 2 summarizes the results of confirmatory factor analyses. The first-order three-factor model was significantly better than the three alternative first-order two-factor models and the first-order one-factor model. Moreover, the second-order model and the first-order three-factor model are

Table 1 Exploratory factor analysis for directive-achieving leadership—Sample 1

Measurement items	Factor loadings		
Controlling and regulating			
My leader insists that I strictly follow work standards for task accomplishment.	**.80**	.19	.21
My leader insists that I follow key organizational regulations and rules.	**.88**	.10	.13
My leader does not allow me to violate work principles.	**.84**	.20	.15
Training and instructing			
My leader supervises the ways that I carry out my work.	.09	**.74**	.31
My leader instructs me how to get my job done in detail.	.21	**.84**	.02
My leader supervises me to prioritize my work and requires me to strictly follow the priority set.	.15	**.84**	.03
Demanding for achievement and high performance			
My leader requires that my standards of performance must not be lower than pre-set standards.	.16	.11	**.80**
Even when I have achieved my work goal ahead of schedule, my leader still asks me to continue to improve my performance.	.17	.08	**.76**
My leader rarely lowers pre-set performance requirements when I cannot perform as expected.	.11	.09	**.80**
Percentage of variance explained	39.87	16.43	14.26

N = 216. The factor analysis was based on principle components analysis and varimax rotation. Loadings in boldface indicate their assigned factors. The directive-achieving items are translated from Chinese

Table 2 Confirmatory factor analysis for directive-achieving leadership—Sample 2

Model	χ^2	*df*	$\Delta\chi^2$	GFI	CFI	IFI	SRMR	RMSEA
Second-order factor model	32.04	24		.97	.99	.99	.04	.04
First-order, three-factor model	32.04	24		.97	.99	.99	.04	.04
First-order, two-factor model (combing controlling and regulating with training and instructing)	68.94	25	36.90**	.94	.95	.96	.13	.09
First-order, two-factor model (combing controlling and regulating with demanding for achievement and high performance)	71.91	25	39.87**	.94	.95	.95	.13	.09
First-order, two-factor model (combing training and instructing with demanding for achievement and high performance)	51.76	25	19.72**	.96	.97	.97	.09	.07
First-order, one-factor model	78.17	27	46.13**	.94	.95	.95	.15	.09

$N = 242$

** $p < .01$

mathematically equivalent (Bollen, 1989). Following Zhang et al. (2015: 549), the second-order model is preferred, as "it allows the covariation among first-order factors by accounting for corrected errors that are common in first-order CFA [confirmatory factor analysis]."

We further examined the composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) for the three dimensions of directive-achieving leadership following Fornell and Larcker (1981). The CRs were above the .70 threshold ($CR_{\text{controlling and regulating}} = .84$; $CR_{\text{training and instructing}} = .82$; $CR_{\text{demanding for achievement and high performance}} = .81$), and all the AVEs reached the .50 threshold ($AVE_{\text{controlling and regulating}} = .64$; $AVE_{\text{training and instructing}} = .61$; $AVE_{\text{demanding for achievement and high performance}} = .58$). The square roots of AVEs were larger than the correlation coefficients among the three factors. Taken together, these results supported the discriminant validity of the three-factor structure of directive-achieving leadership (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Construct validity

We used Sample 3 to examine how directive-achieving leadership is distinct from authoritarian leadership and the relevant Western leadership constructs (i.e., directive leadership, coaching, and achievement-oriented leadership) by conducting a series of confirmatory factor analyses. Moreover, we examined how directive-achieving leadership and authoritarian leadership might be differently correlated with the relevant Western leadership constructs. As pointed out, directive-achieving leadership shares some overlap with directive, coaching, and achievement-oriented behaviors, which is not the case of authoritarian leadership. Therefore, we expect that the correlations of directive-achieving leadership with directive leadership, coaching, and achievement-oriented leadership should be stronger than the corresponding correlations of authoritarian leadership with these three Western leadership styles.

Sample 3 consisted of 208 employees from a state-owned group corporation in China. The same dataset based on Sample 3 is also used in Study 2, and its sample characteristics are presented in the corresponding section. We measured directive-

achieving leadership with the 9-item scale (a = .87). Authoritarian leadership was measured with Cheng et al.'s (2004) 9-item scale (a = .91) on 5-point scales ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*frequently, if not always*). It includes three dimensions: authority and control, image building, and didactic behavior. We measured directive leadership with Griffin's (1980) 5-item scale (α = .87). A sample item was "My supervisor gives specific guidance." We measured coaching with Heslin et al.'s (2006) 10-item scale (α = .95), which includes three dimensions: guidance, facilitation, and inspiration. A sample item was "My supervisor offers useful suggestions regarding how I can improve my performance." We measured achievement-oriented leadership with Griffin's (1980) 5-item scale (α = .92). A sample item was "My supervisor shows confidence that I will attain high standards of performance." Following their original scaling, we measured directive leadership, coaching, and achievement-oriented leadership on 5-point scales ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

To examine the discriminate validity of directive-achieving leadership, we conducted two sets of confirmatory factor analyses. First, we used the dimensional scores of directive-achieving leadership, authoritarian leadership, and coaching and the item scores of directive leadership and achievement-oriented leadership to examine the distinctiveness of directive-achieving leadership from these related leadership concepts. As shown in the upper part of Table 3, directive-achieving leadership was distinct from authoritarian leadership. The two-factor model yielded an acceptable fit and was significantly better than the one-factor model, which combined directive-achieving leadership with authoritarian leadership. As shown in the lower part of Table 3, directive-achieving leadership was distinct from directive leadership, coaching, and achievement-oriented leadership. The four-factor model yielded an acceptable fit and was significantly better than the three alternative three-factor models (i.e., the first combining directive-achieving and directive leadership, the second combining directive-achieving leadership and coaching, and the third combining directive-achieving and achievement-oriented leadership), as well as the one-factor model, which combined all of the four leadership concepts.

Second, we used the item scores of the three dimensions of directive-achieving leadership to discriminate them from the related leadership concepts. Results shown in Table 4 suggest that the controlling and regulating dimension differs from authoritarian leadership; the training and instructing dimension differs from coaching; and the demanding for achievement and high performance dimension differs from achievement-oriented leadership. Taken together, the results of confirmatory factor analyses support the distinctiveness of directive-achieving leadership and its dimensions from the related leadership constructs.

Finally, based on the correlation results, directive-achieving leadership had positive and significant, yet authoritarian leadership had non-significant, correlations with directive leadership (r = .52, p < .01; r = .09, *ns,* respectively), coaching (r = .40, p < .01; r = .01, *ns*, respectively), and achievement-oriented leadership (r = .47, p < .01; r = .09, *ns*, respectively). Following Lee and Preacher's (2013) approach to testing the difference between two dependent correlations with one variable in common, we found that the differences of these three pairs of correlations were all significant (z = 4.92, p < .01; z = 4.13, p < .01; z = 4.21, p < .01, respectively). These findings supported our expectation that directive-achieving leadership rather than authoritarian leadership is related to the three Western leadership concepts. Taken together, the findings of Study 1 lend considerable support to the validity of the measurement of directive-achieving leadership in the Chinese context.

Table 3 Confirmatory factor analyses for directive-achieving leadership and related leadership concepts—Sample 3

Model	Description	χ^2	*df*	$\Delta\chi^2$	GFI	CFI	IFI	SRMR	RMSEA
Directive-achieving leadership and authoritarian leadership									
Model 1	Two-factor model: directive-achieving leadership and authoritarian leadership	7.11	8		.99	1.00	1.00	.03	.00
Model 2	One-factor model: directive-achieving leadership and authoritarian leadership combined	89.00	9	81.89**	.90	.83	.83	.25	.21
Directive-achieving leadership, directive leadership, coaching, and achievement-oriented leadership									
Model 3	Four-factor model: directive-achieving leadership, directive leadership, coaching, and achievement-oriented leadership	236.01	98		.87	.94	.94	.05	.08
Model 4	Three-factor model: directive-achieving leadership and directive leadership combined	322.10	99	86.09**	.85	.90	.90	.21	.10
Model 5	Three-factor model: directive-achieving leadership and coaching combined	337.14	99	101.13**	.84	.90	.90	.23	.11
Model 6	Three-factor model: directive-achieving leadership and achievement-oriented leadership combined	312.62	99	76.61**	.85	.91	.91	.20	.10
Model 7	One-factor model: directive-achieving leadership, directive leadership, coaching, and achievement-oriented leadership combined	340.74	104	104.73**	.84	.90	.90	.24	.11

$N = 208$

** $p < .01$

Table 4 Confirmatory factor analysis for dimensions of directive-achieving leadership and related leadership concepts—Sample 3

Model	Description	χ^2	*df*	$\Delta\chi^2$	GFI	CFI	IFI	SRMR	RMSEA
The controlling and regulating dimension and authoritarian leadership									
Model 1	Two-factor model	13.93	8		.98	.99	.99	.04	.06
Model 2	One-factor model	75.17	9	61.24**	.91	.90	.90	.23	.19
The training and instructing dimension and coaching									
Model 3	Two-factor model	24.99	8		.96	.98	.98	.05	.10
Model 4	One-factor model	105.79	9	80.80**	.88	.86	.86	.24	.23
The demanding for achievement and high performance dimension and achievement-oriented leadership									
Model 6	Two-factor model	56.36	19		.94	.96	.96	.04	.10
Model 7	One-factor model	126.75	20	70.39**	.88	.88	.89	.23	.16

$N = 208$

** $p < .01$

Study 2

Participants and procedures

Employees and their immediate supervisors from a large state-owned group corporation operating in transportation, tourism, real-estate, and investment in China participated in this study. To reduce the concern for common method bias, we followed the recommendation of Podsakoff et al. (2012) to employ a three-wave, multi-source design that temporally separated the predictors, mediators, and outcome variable with a 4-week interval. The director of human resource and administration acted as the liaison person and sent out e-mails with the links of the on-line surveys to the participants across three waves. The participants were informed that the survey was voluntary and their information would be kept strictly confidential and for research purpose only. At Time 1, the questionnaires were sent to 396 full-time employees, among whom 308 returned completed questionnaires, yielding a response rate of 77.8%. The participants completed their demographics and the measures for the leadership styles of their immediate supervisors, including directive-achieving leadership, authoritarian leadership, directive leadership, achievement-oriented leadership, and coaching. At Time 2, the 308 employees who completed the Time 1 survey were invited to complete the measures for role clarity and cognition- and affect-based trust in leader. A total of 242 employees completed the Time 2 survey, yielding an attrition rate of 21.4%. At Time 3, the 84 immediate supervisors of the 242 employees who completed both Time 1 and Time 2 surveys were invited to evaluate the job performance of their subordinates via an on-line survey. Responses were received from 74 supervisors (response rate: 88.1%), and the final sample contained 208 sets of employee-supervisor matched cases across three waves.

In the subordinate sample, the average age was 30.11 years (SD = 7.95), average organizational tenure was 5.50 years (SD = 6.83), and average length of reporting relationship with the current supervisor was 2.25 years (SD = 3.15); 75.5% were female, 63.0% had a college education or above, and 37.0% were in a managerial

position. In the supervisor sample, the average age was 34.50 years (SD = 8.26), average organizational tenure was 8.24 years (SD = 7.40); 64.9% were female, 56.7% had a college education or above, and their ranks included front-line managers (25.7%), department managers (33.8%), division managers (24.3%), and senior managers (16.2%).

Measures

The questionnaires were administered in Chinese. A standard back-translation procedure (Brislin, 1986) was followed for the scales originally in English. For directive-achieving leadership and authoritarian leadership, we used the same measures as in Study 1.

Role clarity

We measured role clarity using 10 items from Sawyer (1992) based on 6-point scales ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). The scale consisted of two subscales of goal clarity and process clarity with five items each ($\alpha = .91$). Sample items were "I am certain about the goals and objectives for my job" (goal clarity) and "I know how to determine the appropriate procedures for each work task" (process clarity).

Cognition- and affect-based trust

We used the six and five items developed by McAllister (1995) to measure cognition- and affect-based trust, respectively. On 7-point scales ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), the subordinates indicated the extent to which they agreed with each statement. A sample item for cognition-based trust was "My supervisor approaches his/her job with professionalism and dedication" ($\alpha = .78$), and a sample item for affect-based trust was "I would have to say that my supervisor and I have both made considerable emotional investments in our working relationship" ($\alpha = .90$).

Job performance

Job performance was measured with a 4-item measure developed by Farh and Cheng (1997) and used by Gong, Huang, and Farh (2009) in the Chinese context. On 7-point scales ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), the immediate supervisors rated the job performance of their subordinates. A sample item was "This subordinate's work performance always meets my expectations" ($\alpha = .94$).

Controls

We controlled for subordinate demographics of gender, age, organizational tenure, length of reporting relationship with leader, education, and rank. We also controlled for directive leadership, achievement-oriented leadership, and coaching to examine whether directive-achieving leadership can explain additional variance above and beyond these relevant Western leadership styles. The same Western leadership measures as in Study 1 were used.

Results

Means, standard deviations, correlations, and reliabilities are presented in Table 5. As employees were nested within supervisors, we performed hierarchical linear modeling to evaluate the hypotheses based on grand-mean centering for all predictors (Hofmann & Gavin, 1998). We tested the mediational hypotheses using the multilevel mediation procedure outlined by Mathieu and Taylor (2007). We followed the recent consensus that mediation effects do not require a significant relationship between the independent and outcome variables (Kenny, Kashy, & Bolger, 1998; Shrout & Bolger, 2002). The PRODCLIN program (MacKinnon, Fritz, Williams, & Lockwood, 2007) developed for multilevel analysis was used to evaluate the significance of indirect effects (e.g., Liu, Chen, & Yao, 2011). In addition, we followed the approach of Preacher and Kelley (2011) to assess the effect size of the indirect effects by implementing the MBESS package for R.

Table 6 summarizes the results for the mediating hypotheses. As shown in Model 1, with demographics controlled for, directive-achieving leadership showed a positive and significant relationship with role clarity (β = .25, p < .01), whereas authoritarian leadership did not (β = .08, *ns*). These results supported Hypothesis 1. As shown in Models 2 and 3, directive-achieving leadership had positive and significant relationships with both cognition- and affect-based trust in leader (β = .28, p < .01 and β = .34, p < .01, respectively), whereas authoritarian leadership did not (β = −.05, *ns* and β = .09, *ns*, respectively). These results supported Hypotheses 3a and 3b, but failed to support Hypotheses 4a and 4b.

Model 5 shows that both role clarity and cognition-based trust in leader were significantly related to job performance (β = .44, p < .01; β = .36, p < .01, respectively), whereas affect-based trust was not (β = −.06, *ns*). The PRODCLIN program showed that the indirect effect of directive-achieving leadership on job performance through role clarity was significant (indirect effect = .11, 95% confidence interval (CI) = [.03, .21]), supporting Hypothesis 2. The indirect effect of directive-achieving leadership on job performance through cognition-based trust in leader was also significant (indirect effect = .10, 95% CI = [.02, .21]), supporting Hypothesis 5a. However, role clarity and cognition-based trust did not mediate the relationship of authoritarian leadership with job performance because authoritarian leadership had no significant relationships with role clarity and cognition-based trust, failing to support Hypothesis 6a. Affect-based trust did not mediate the relationships of both leadership styles with job performance because it had no significant relationship with job performance, failing to support Hypotheses 5b and 6b. As Preacher and Kelley (2011) suggest, the values of .01, .09, and .25 indicate small, medium, and large effect sizes, respectively. The results show that the effect size for the indirect effect of directive-achieving leadership on job performance was .05 via role clarity, and .08 via cognition-based trust, close to a medium effect size.

We repeated the analysis with the additional controls of directive leadership, achievement-oriented leadership, and coaching. Directive-achieving leadership was positively related with role clarity (β = .19, p < .01), which was positively related with job performance (β = .45, p < .01). The mediated relationship between directive-achieving leadership and job performance via role clarity was significant (indirect

Table 5 Means, standard deviations, reliabilities, and correlations—Sample 3

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Sex[a]	.25	.43												
2. Age	30.11	7.95	.40**											
3. Organizational tenure	5.50	6.83	.34**	.82**										
4. Length of reporting relationship with leader	2.25	3.15	.22**	.40**	.54**									
5. Education[b]	.63	.48	.18**	.11	.07	.00								
6. Rank[c]	.37	.48	.19**	.48**	.44**	.26**	.05							
7. Directive-achieving leadership	2.64	.75	−.16*	−.34**	−.38**	−.21**	−.18*	−.21**	(.87)					
8. Authoritarian leadership	2.89	.86	−.05	−.14*	−.05	−.09	−.21**	.04	.29**	(.91)				
9. Role clarity	5.16	.59	−.07	.10	.07	.00	.04	.04	.24**	.13	(.91)			
10. Cognition-based trust	5.10	.90	−.17*	−.18**	−.27**	.00	−.09	−.18*	.31**	.01	.28**	(.78)		
11. Affect-based trust	5.30	1.10	−.13	−.22**	−.19**	−.01	−.07	−.20**	.29**	.13	.43**	.58**	(.90)	
12. Job performance	5.03	1.33	−.16*	−.04	−.06	−.01	−.09	.09	.04	.08	.23**	.26**	.15*	(.94)

$N = 208$. Cronbach's alphas are shown on the diagonal

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

[a] Sex: male = 1; female = 0

[b] Education: college or above = 1; below college = 0

[c] Rank: managers = 1; rank and file employees = 0

Table 6 Effects of leadership styles on subordinate job performance via role clarity and cognition- and affect-based trust—Sample 3

Variable	Role clarity	Cognition-based trust	Affect-based trust	Job performance	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Sex	−.18 (.10)	−.20 (.17)	−.13 (.17)	−.39 (.20)	−.25 (.20)
Age	.01 (.01)	.02 (.01)	−.02 (.02)	.01 (.02)	−.01 (.02)
Organizational tenure	.00 (.01)	−.05* (.02)	−.00 (.02)	−.02 (.02)	−.01 (.02)
Length of reporting relationship with leader	.00 (.02)	.06** (.02)	.05 (.03)	.01 (.03)	−.01 (.03)
Education	.16 (.08)	−.08 (.10)	.05 (.15)	−.17 (.17)	−.20 (.00)
Rank	−.01 (.11)	−.13 (.15)	−.25 (.17)	.40 (.22)	.44* (.21)
Directive-achieving leadership	.25** (.06)	.28** (.10)	.34** (.11)	.02 (.14)	−.17 (.18)
Authoritarian leadership	.08 (.04)	−.05 (.09)	.09 (.09)	.07 (.14)	.06 (.19)
Role clarity					.44** (.18)
Cognition-based trust					.36** (.14)
Affect-based trust					−.06 (.11)
Model deviance	380.90	532.35	629.21	721.17	713.82

N (Employees) = 208; *N* (supervisors) = 74. Unstandardized estimates are reported, with standard errors in parentheses

For the coding of dummy control variables, see Table 5

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

effect = .09, 95% CI = [.02, .18]). However, directive-achieving leadership showed non-significant relationships with both cognition- and affect-based trust.

Discussion

We theorize and provide convincing support for directive-achieving leadership as a new form of hierarchical approach to leadership in Chinese culture. In Study 1, we develop a measure for directive-achieving leadership and lend strong support to its construct validity based on three independent samples. The results supported the three-factor structure of the directive-achieving leadership construct, as well as its distinctiveness from authoritarian leadership and relevant Western leadership concepts. In Study 2, directive-achieving leadership was found to have positive relationships with subordinate role clarity and cognition- and affect-based trust. The leadership style also had a positive indirect relationship with subordinate job performance mediated by role clarity and cognition-based trust. By contrast, authoritarian leadership showed no effects on subordinate role clarity, cognition- and affect-based trust, and job performance. In addition, directive-achieving leadership demonstrated unique predictive power for job performance via role clarity above and beyond the relevant Western leadership concepts, but not via cognition- and affect-based trust. These findings offer several

important implications for understanding the leadership phenomenon in Chinese culture.

Implications on the hierarchical approach to leadership in Chinese culture

Prior studies have found that the hierarchical approach to leadership, which has been studied mainly from the perspective of authoritarian leadership, shows negative effects on subordinate outcomes (Chen & Farh, 2010; Farh et al., 2008). However, some researchers argue that the hierarchical approach to leadership may have positive effects in high power distance contexts (Aycan, 2006; Farh et al., 2008), and preliminary research provides empirical evidence for the positive effects of the strict facet of authoritarian leadership (Chiang et al., 2009; Chou et al., 2010). To substantiate this argument, we theorize a new form of hierarchical approach to leadership based on Confucianism and extend this emerging line of inquiry in three major ways.

First, we develop the construct of and measurement for directive-achieving leadership and provide a theoretical account of its positive effects on subordinates. As a variant of authoritarian leadership, directive-achieving leadership reflects the Confucian juxtaposition of hierarchical control with a training and achieving focus, thus providing a major extension of hierarchical approaches to leadership in Chinese culture. This new leadership concpet, which emphasizes subordinates' achievement, learning, and discipline, is consistent with Confucian ideal of leadership that promotes the growth, performance, and well-being of subordinates (Pellegrini & Scandura, 2008). This positive form hierarchical approach to leadership provides theoretical sophistication of the leadership model in Chinese culture.

Second, this study extends the understanding on the effects of hierarchical, controlling styles of leadership by probing the mechanisms underlying the effects of directive-achieving leadership. On the basis of its conceptualization, we theorize that directive-achieving leadership is conducive to subordinate job performance through its positive effects on subordinates' role clarity and trust in leader. These results shed light on the psychological mechanisms involved, as well as substantiate the conceptual distinctiveness of directive-achieving leadership from authoritarian leadership.

Specifically, our results reveal that role clarity is a robust mediator for directive-achieving leadership, even after controlling for related Western leadership constructs. Role clarity taps the process that subordinates learn and understand their work roles as emphasized in the directive-achieving leadership and provides a good starting point to map out its influencing mechanisms. An interesting future research direction is to explore other variables tapping the learning processes of subordinates under directive-achieving supervision. For example, Chiang et al. (2009) suggest that hierarchical leadership practices emphasizing strict discipline should trigger subordinates' prevention focus and motivate them to work hard and make continuous improvement to avoid potential punishment. Prevention focus, in turn, is found to be positively related to in-role performance and negatively related to deviant behavior (Neubert et al., 2008).

Our findings also reveal that directive-achieving and authoritarian leadership styles have different effects on trust in leader. Directive-achieving leadership has significant and positive relationships with both subordinates' cognition- and affect-based trust in leader. However, the positive effects were overwhelmed in the regression analysis when directive leadership, achievement-oriented leadership, and coaching were controlled for. These findings suggest that, compared with leadership behaviors with an egalitarian, facilitative, and inspirational

nature, the hierarchical approach to leadership are less effective in soliciting subordinates' positive association of leader characteristic and nurturing their socioemotional bonds with leaders (e.g., Chen et al., 2014; Long & Sitkin, 2006). Another inconsistent finding was the absence of the significant effects of authoritarian leadership on cognition- and affect-based trust. This finding is not totally unexpected as Chen et al. (2014) also found that authoritarian leadership did not have a significant relationship with affect-based trust. The authors explained that "since Chinese people respect the authority associated with hierarchical positions, even though they experience negative emotions under authoritarian leadership, their trust level to the leader remains intact" (812). We speculate that this explanation can be applied to cognition-based trust as well. Overall, our research offers new insights into the complex effects of hierarchical approaches to leadership on trust in leader.

Finally, our research significantly extends previous studies by adopting a more rigorous design with multiple datasets and a multi-wave, multi-source study, which provides robust evidence for the positive effects of hierarchical approaches to leadership.

Generalizability of the effects of directive-achieving leadership across cultures

As paternalism is common in high power distance cultures (Aycan, 2006), directive-achieving leadership should be identifiable in cultures that accept high power distance and hierarchical orders. In the cross-cultural literature on parenting behaviors, the juxtaposition of parental control with a training focus shows positive effects in some high power distance cultures, including India (Farver, Xu, Bhadha, Narang, & Lieber, 2007) and Pakistan (Stewart et al., 1999). This directive-achieving dimension could be identifiable in non-Confucian but high-power-distance cultures.

Whether directive-achieving leadership is relevant in low power distance cultures is intriguing. Evidence shows that parental control with a training and achieving focus exerts positive effects among Caucasian Americans (Stewart, Bond, Kennard, Ho, & Zaman, 2002). Aycan (2006) argued that paternalism as an indigenous concept in the East is also relevant in the West. Hierarchy and uneven distribution of power are defining characteristics of organizations; thus controlling leadership practices are not uncommon in organizations in the West. For example, Steve Jobs was well-known for his controlling leadership style and high demand for perfection from his employees (Isaacson, 2012). Interestingly, Pellegrini, Scandura, and Jayaraman (2010) concluded that paternalism with the component of status hierarchy and authority was significantly and positively related to employee organizational commitment in their US sample, which consisted of Caucasian, Hispanic, and African Americans. Directive-achieving leadership may be meaningful and identifiable in the West, although its positive effects may be weaker than those in Chinese culture. We encourage future research to test this postulation for a more comprehensive picture of the effects of hierarchical approaches to leadership across high and low power distance cultures.

Practical implications

Our research provides important practical implications in effectively managing Chinese employees. First, our results reveal that hierarchical leadership is deemed negative by subordinates when it merely focuses on domination but is positive when combined with a training and achieving focus. Managers should avoid managerial practices solely

affirming their power and authority; instead, they should orient their behaviors toward training and performance and clearly explain to subordinates that their high demands are for subordinates' learning and achievement.

Second, our findings highlight that leaders should pay attention to subordinate role clarity and trust to reap the benefits of directive-achieving leadership. On the one hand, directive-achieving leaders should monitor the learning process of their subordinates and help subordinates enhance role clarity by clearly delivering their expectations and instructions. On the other hand, leaders should consider accommodating their leadership styles to enhance subordinate trust by enhancing communication with subordinates to strengthen the perception that the directive-achieving leadership behaviors are for subordinates' own learning and achievement.

Limitations and future research directions

This study has some limitations that warrant further research. First, our model highlights the positive effects of directive-achieving leadership due to its concomitant focus on training and achieving focus. However, such a leadership style may have some drawbacks, which are not explored in this research. For example, previous studies have documented that close-ended leader training behaviors discourage exploration activities (Goodman, Wood, & Hendrickx, 2004) and proactivity (Martin, Liao, & Campbell, 2013). An interesting conjecture is that although directive-achieving leadership helps improve routine job performance, it may generally suppress exploration, and subsequently creative performance.

We further speculate that directive-achieving leadership may have a complex relationship with creative activities based on the theorizing of the dual pathway to creativity model. This model posits that creativity may be achieved by cognitive persistence within a few narrow domains or cognitive flexibility across a wide range of domains (De Dreu, Baas, & Nijstad, 2008; Nijstad, De Dreu, Rietzschel, & Baas, 2010). Directive-achieving leadership may differentially affect these two pathways to creativity. It may reduce cognitive flexibility and hinder exploration, but its sharp focus on task accomplishment reduces process loss, such as digression and tangential activities, and promotes concentration and perseverance. Thus, directive-achieving leadership may promote creative performance through perseverance but may suppress creativity by reducing flexibility. Future studies are encouraged to disentangle this intriguing conjecture and the contingencies for each path to shed new light on the effects of hierarchical leadership practices on employee creativity.

Second, although we validated the positive effects of directive-achieving leadership on subordinate outcomes, this research does not shed light on the dynamics of such positive effects. A longitudinal research has shown that the positive effects of directive leadership decline over time. Lorinkova et al. (2013) reported that directive leadership outperformed empowering leadership in the early stages of team development, but empowering leadership was predictive of performance improvement over time. Different from directive leadership, directive-achieving leadership focuses on learning and achievement and may show a slower decline in effectiveness. In addition, subordinates are expected to learn and develop and may be given more autonomy by directive-achieving leaders overtime. The issue of how the effects of directive-achieving leadership evolve over time presents another interesting future research direction.

Third, our theorizing about the concept of directive-achieving leadership on the basis of Confucianism suggest that this leadership concept may, to some extent, overlap benevolence and morality—the other two dimensions of the paternalistic leadership model that are rooted in Confucianism. However, we did not include these two leadership dimensions in the testing of the construct validity of directive-achieving leadership. We thus encourage future studies to replicate our findings by controlling for these two dimensions of paternalistic leadership.

Fourth, we focus on the main effects of directive-achieving leadership to establish its validity. We encourage future research explore the boundary conditions for the positive effects of directive-achieving leadership. Cultural orientations, such as power distance orientation, may be a plausible moderator. We conjecture that directive-achieving leadership should have stronger positive effects on subordinates with a high degree of power distance orientation because this group of subordinates is more receptive of leaders' instructions (Hofstede, 2001). Moreover, they tend to intrinsically believe that leaders deserve respect, are superior, and make reliable decisions (Javidan, Dorfman, Sully de Luque, & House, 2006). A related future research direction is to extend the study beyond the Chinese cultural context to evaluate the effects of directive-achieving leadership in other cultures. Such research endeavor will not only increase the chances of obtaining substantial variation in individual cultural orientations, but also extend the understanding of the effects of directive-achieving leadership across cultures. In addition, this research focuses on examining the different consequences of directive-achieving leadership and authoritarian leadership. We encourage future research to explore their different antecedents. A possible candidate is leader intent. As Aycan (2006) highlighted, "the issue of intent is the key to distinguish among various forms of paternalism" (455). This line of research endeavor will offer a completer picture of the conceptual differences of these two hierarchical approaches to leadership.

To conclude, our theorizing and examination of directive-achieving leadership contribute to the valuable extension of the hierarchical approaches to leadership, paternalistic leadership, and cross-cultural literature. We encourage scholars to continue the line of research on this novel leadership style and provide a more comprehensive understanding of hierarchical approaches to leadership across cultures.

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