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RESEARCH PAPER

Toxic Leadership and Sexual Harassment: A Systematic Review

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ABSTRACT

Toxic leadership is a type of leadership that has a high-level negative effect on the employee and the organization. There are several negative outcomes of the toxic leadership for the female working under the male toxic leadership. This study aims to investigate how toxic leadership impacts its followers and the overall organization. A systematic review was conducted to identify how toxic leadership affects the behavior of employees and the organization. A systematic review was performed according to the PRISMA diagram present in this study. Out of 1533 papers, only 25 articles were eligible to meet the inclusion criteria of this study. These studies show that toxic leadership has a negative impact on employees and the organization. First, toxic leadership behavior has affect the psychology of the employees over different coping mechanisms, such as sexual harassment, which is one of them. This psychological change has change the employees' behavior. In the end, this long-term behavior has create a negative organizational culture.

| **Keywords:** | Employee Behavior, Employee Psychology, Organizational Climate, Sexual Harassment,Toxic Leadership |

Introduction

Toxic leadership is a type of leadership in an organization in which employees feel themselves in the condition of harassment (Boddy & Croft, 2016). Due to this, employees detach from work and start thinking about switching from the organization, and the organization gradually loses its performance (Kets de Vries, 2004). Toxic leadership is a complex construct that contains the essentials of abusive supervision, egotism, dictatorship, self-promotion, and unpredictable leadership behavior (Alvesson & Einola, 2019). Toxic leadership is a repetitive manner by a leader, administrator, or manager that disobeys the legal interest of the organization by discouraging the organization's goals, responsibilities, resources, effectiveness, and the motivation, welfare, or job satisfaction of lower staff (Cooper, 2016).

Abusive supervision is the central part of Toxic leadership (Milosevic et al., 2020). The subordinate feels a high level of violent vocal and non-vocal behaviors from the supervisor that do not include physical contact. Abusive supervision contains activities that are deliberate to cause damage to personal achievement, in addition to actions that could be measured as unconcern, slightly more than actions undertaken to harm the organization and its employees directly (Camps et al., 2016). Those Leaders who illustrate insulting behaviors are likely to have high levels of self-interest but are less intent in their actions. According to abusive leaders, those persons are considerably more manipulative and calculative when fulfilling their goals. It is, thus, more likely to intentionally impose damage on their path to objective attainment (Punch, 2000).

Destructive leadership is one of the aspects of toxic leadership in which the leader can damage or propose to damage the organization and its followers in two ways (Krasikova et al., 2013). The first way is to motivate the followers to pursue those goals, which

ultimately contrasts with the organization's interest. The second way is that it engages an unrelated influence technique with subordinates apart from an explanation for such actions (Avolio & Locke, 2002). However, toxic leaders are those leaders who are always premeditated in their purpose to act harm in the organization. In other words, their capability and high egotism fuel the deliberate development of destructive goals (Burke, 2016).

Consequently, toxic leaders seem to hold up with other's ability to carry out the task (like the means toxic may hold back an individual's ability to function, therefore being measured as toxic) slightly than successfully direct followers in the direction of negative goals as destructive leaders do or expressively and bodily mistreat them as rude leaders do (Bligh et al., 2007). The behavior of toxic leaders does not affect the performance of employees at the organizational and individual levels (Appelbaum & Roy-Girard, 2007). This research paper aims to recognize the philosophy of Toxic Leadership and the behaviors demonstrated by Toxic leadership. This study aims to identify the origins of toxic behaviors and make people aware of the causes of toxicity and its effect on individuals and the organization's performance.

The role of leadership is significant for any organization because it sets a clear vision and communicates effectively with subordinates (Tsai, 2011). A clear vision gives them a better understanding of organizational direction and makes them realize their roles and responsibilities (Collins & Porras, 2008). When the leadership of any organization becomes toxic, it is not easy to achieve the organization's goals properly (Appelbaum & Roy-Girard, 2007). Under toxic leadership, employees feel harassed by the leaders, which detaches them from work. Finally, this creates a turnover of potential employees and low organizational performance. Organizations not facing toxic leadership problems perform well and have low employee turnover rates (Schyns & Schilling, 2013).

Litrature Review

Toxic leadership is a severe problem that exists in today's organizations. If we discuss toxic leadership it is a type of negative leadership (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005). There are different types of negative leadership: dark, abusive, toxic, etc. Different scholars define toxic leadership differently, but the most common definition of toxic leadership (Yavaş, 2016) is toxic leadership, a style of negative leadership where the leader harms subordinates and the overall organization in the long term. However, toxic leadership prevails in all organizations (Yaghi & Yaghi, 2021). However, from the last decade's literature, it was observed that it mostly spreads in organizations where both males and females work together (Pelletier, 2010). The literature also points out that education and health sector organizations are the highest victims of toxic leaders (George, 2004). The education sector is the most scorching sector where toxic leadership exist. Within the education sector, higher education-like universities are the worst to complain about toxic leadership behavior globally (Karen, 2003). According to a survey, 83% of toxic leadership complaints are from university employees about their leader's toxicity across all education sectors globally (Mitchel, 2009). Researchers have found different negative outcomes for toxic leadership in different organizations (Lipman-Blumen, 2010).

Most scholars have suggested when it comes to education institutes, the major outcomes of toxic leaders are sexual harassment, abusive behavior, and other negative behaviors (James, 2014). According to them, in those organizations where both males and females work together, males occupy most of the leadership positions, and females are their subordinates (Lipman-Blumen, 2010). Whenever they show their negative behavior to their followers, sexual harassment is a key driver for them to harass their female subordinates. Currently, it was observed from the literature that sexual harassment is a major issue for those organizations where males and females are working in the same job setting (Milosevic et al., 2020). However, the problem of sexual harassment is being reported globally across

all countries. In Pakistan, this problem is also a burning issue for different organizations like universities, hospitals, and factories where males and females are working in the same job setting (Denise, 2005). The education sector is the primary sector in Pakistan, where the problem of sexual harassment is being reported continuously (George, 2015).

Several scholars suggest different reasons for sexual harassment in organizational settings. Still, when it comes to the education sector, like universities, researchers mostly point out the leadership behavior responsible for this (Singh et al., 2019). According to them, toxic leadership is the biggest reason to create this environment for their female subordinates to impose their authority on their subordinates (Yaghi & Yaghi, 2021). They consider sexual harassment, emotional abuse and other negative behaviors as tools for toxic leaders to transform their toxicity among their subordinates (Alanezi, 2022). When toxic leaders sexually harass their female subordinates, then as a result of that, they will also show different negative outcomes for the sexual harassment (Anjum et al., 2018). According to the researchers, these negative outcomes are deviant behavior, job dissatisfaction, job stress (Dobbs & Do, 2019), absenteeism, turnover intention, lower mental health (Roter, 2011), low employee morale, job burnout, and lower level of organizational commitment and engagement (Jean, 2005). These are the outcomes for different organizational contexts. If we discuss the severe issues related to toxic leadership and sexual harassment in the context of universities, which is a significant sector to be affected by toxic leadership, are deviant work behavior (Matos et al., 2018), turnover intention, lower level of mental health (Smith & Fredricks-Lowman, 2020) and imposter phenomenon. These negative outcomes are most commonly observed in female students as well as from female faculty members who toxic leaders are sexually harassing in the form of their teachers and other ranked position holders in their universities (Fizza & Sobia, 2020).
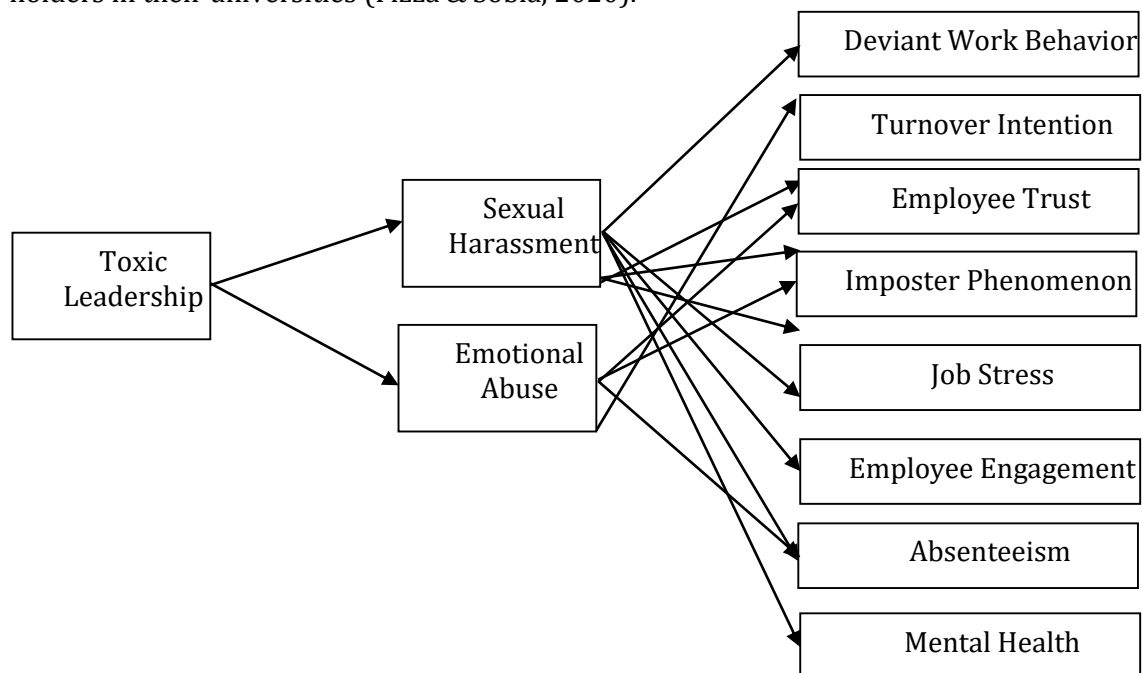

Figure 1: Taxonomical Framework

Methodology (of Systematic Review)

Sources of information

Information for this study should be obtained from Google Scholar, Scopus, Pub Med, and Crossref from 2010 to the latest editions.

Search Strategy

The search strategy of this study is based on the keywords that will be searched in Google Scholar, Scopus, Pub Med, and Crossref. The keywords are leadership, which includes (toxic leadership, abusive leadership, and dark leadership)

Inclusion/exclusion criteria

Only those academic research articles that meet the criteria below will be incorporated into this study.

- Peer-reviewed articles
- Those studies which are measuring the impact of the toxic leadership
- Those studies investigate the consequences of toxic leadership on the organization.
- Those studies investigate the consequences of toxic leadership on the organization's employees.

Quality Assessment

The assessment of the quality of the studies each study must be evaluated based on the following criteria

- The study must be defined or supported by the theoretical background.
- Detailed clarity of the sources used in each study.
- I critically evaluated all aspects of toxic leadership.
- The methodology of the study must be valid and aligned with the study.
- Data used in the study should be transparent.
- The result of the study was consistent with the utilized methodology.

After passing all the articles based on the above criteria, the screened studies were refined through a quality review tool. The quality review tool is the (MMAT) Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool.

Prisma

As mentioned in the search strategy, four search engines, Google Scholar, Scopus, Pub Med, and Crossref, were used to search data for this study on the consequences of toxic leadership from 2010 to 2021. A total of 1533 articles were found from these four search engines based on set criteria. Among these, 343 were initially shortlisted based on their titles. Further filtration was used on these papers to make the data more refined and worthy based on criteria like paper having impact paper four or more than four, which resulted in 42 articles. These 42 articles were passed through the MMAT filtration process, among which 25 remained for the final study. The Prisma diagram below shows all the above processes of filtration.

Categorical Distribution of the Articles

After studying the papers based on the categories, the researcher divided them into the following categories.

Types of Data Used

Table 1 of the data types shows that 25 papers were included in the study. Among these, 20 articles used cross-sectional data, and 5 used longitudinal data for their analysis.

Table 1
Types of Data Used

	Cross-sectional	Longitudinal	Total
No of Studies	20	5	25
Percentage	80%	20%	100%

Types of Study

Table 2 of the Types of Study shows that there were 25 total papers included in this study. Among these, 14 articles were quantitative, seven were qualitative, and the remaining four used quantitative and qualitative methods, which means mixed-method research.

Table 2
Types of Study

	Quantitative	Qualitative	Mix Method	Total
No of Studies	14	7	4	25
Percentage	56%	28%	16%	100%

Areas of Study

Table 3 of the areas of the study shows that a total of 25 papers were included in this study. Five articles were on health sector employees, five were on education sector employees, seven were on mixed organizations, and the rest were on different individual sectors.

Table 3
Areas of Study

	Health Sector	Education Sector	Mix Organization	Others	Total
No of Studies	5	5	7	8	25
Percen age	20%	20%	28%	32%	100%

Sampling Technique Used

Table 4 of the sampling technique shows that 25 papers were included in the study. Different types of sampling techniques were used in various articles to collect the primary data. Among these 25 articles, ten have used convenience sampling, nine have used purposive sampling, three have used random sampling, and two have used snowball sampling. In contrast, the remaining one used multistage sampling.

Table 4
Sampling technique used

	Convenience	Purposive	Random	Multistage	Snowball	Total
No of Studies	10	9	3	1	2	25
Percentage	40%	36%	12%	4%	8%	100%

Methodology Used

Table 5 of the methodology used shows that 25 papers were included in the study. Different research methodologies were used in various articles to analyze the primary data. Among these 25 articles, 11 have used regression analysis; one has used correlation analysis; one has used the T-Test; five have used thematic analysis; one has used the

phenomenological methods; one has used the grounded theory, while the other five have used the mixed methods among these to analyze their data.

Table 5
Methodology used

	Regression	Correlation	T-Test	Thematic	Phenomenological	Grounded Theory	others	Total
No of Studies	11	1	1	5	1	1	5	25
Percentage	44%	4%	4%	20%	4%	4%	20%	100%

Discussion

Toxic leadership

Toxic leadership is a type of leadership in an organization in which employees feel themselves in the condition of harassment (Sim et al., 2021). Due to this, employees detach from work, start thinking about switching from the organization, and gradually lose their performance (Kenneth, 2007). Toxic leadership is a complex construct containing the essentials of abusive supervision, egotism, dictatorship, self-promotion, and unpredictable leadership behavior (Kurtulmuş, 2020). From past literature, toxic leadership has also been known as destructive leadership. Destructive leadership is one of the aspects of toxic leadership in which the leader can damage or propose to damage both the organization and its followers. Some researchers also indicated toxic leadership in the name of dark leadership (Jean, 2005).

Employee Psychology

When toxic leadership is present in any organization, it will directly affect the psychology of its employees (Cheang & Appelbaum, 2015). The prominent psychological factors due to the presence of toxic leadership are sexual harassment (Padilla et al., 2007), harassment, workplace harassment, and emotional abuse (Yaghi & Yaghi, 2021b).

Employee Behavior

When the toxic behavior of the leaders affects the employee's psychology, this will change that employee's behavior (Sunita & Maheshwari, 2014). The prominent behavioral factors in the presence of toxic leadership are the imposter phenomenon, low engagement, absenteeism, turnover intention, low morale, low trust, job dissatisfaction (George, 2010), deviant work behavior and lower mental health (Marcia, 1996).
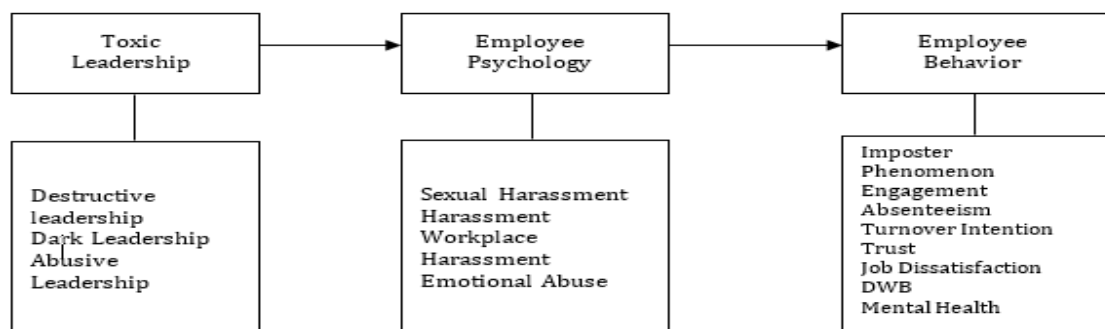
Figure 2: Themantic Graph

Conclusion

Leadership plays an essential role in the performance of the employees of any organization. Suppose the leader's behavior is toxic in the organization. In that case, this behavior will lead the employees towards nonproductive. Toxic leadership is also called destructive leadership, which is closely associated with the productivity level of the employees. Those employees led by toxic leadership are highly complaining about the negative behavior of the toxic leadership, like sexual harassment and emotional abuse. As a result of this behavior, there will be a change in the employee's psychological state; over time, this psychological state will change the employee's behavior. This continuous negative behavior of the employee slowly grabs the overall organizational culture. According to the theoretical knowledge derived by this study concludes that toxic leadership first affects women's psychology through different techniques such as harassment, sexual harassment or workplace harassment. After that, these factors lead the employees towards different negative outcomes such as deviant behavior, turnover intention, imposter phenomenon and lower mental health.

Recommendations

Further researchers are recommended to test the model driven from the systematic review into different georgraphical and organizational context to further increase the generlizabalitiy of the model. It is also suggested that further researcher further enhance the qualittitve inquiry based on this study to expalore more search engines and data bases to further strengthen the model and finds further factors.

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