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Article

The influence of toxic leadership on emotional exhaust and reactive work behavior

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Abstract: Companies are impacted by toxic leadership phenomena, resulting in many dissatisfied employees, low morale, and reduced progress. The fundamental mismatch between good leadership and harmful actions of toxic leaders is the primary cause of the problem. Toxic leadership can also be developed from narcissistic behavior of considering personal interests or using humiliation to maintain power. In this context, employees are negatively affected, resulting in higher stress levels, poorer job satisfaction, and a significant decrease in trust. Therefore, this research aims to explore the impact of toxic leadership and other factors on companies. The sample consists of 187 senior employees in the accounting department who worked in manufacturing companies. The results showed that toxic leadership influences role stress, while role stress affects emotional exhaustion and reactive work behavior. Moreover, future research should be conducted using other samples such as hospital employees or pay attention to other aspects related to role stress.

Keywords: toxic leadership; role stress; emotional exhaustion; reactive work behavior

1. Introduction

Different companies are afflicted by toxic leadership phenomenon, resulting in a trail of disgruntled employees, low morale, and reduced progress. A basic mismatch between good leadership and the harmful actions of toxic leaders is the primary cause of the problem. Toxic leadership can be developed from narcissistic behavior of considering personal interests or using humiliation to maintain power (Lipman-Blumen, 2011). These leaders frequently show a tendency toward micromanagement, a lack of empathy, and an entitlement complex, increasing toxic work environment (Baloyi, 2020).

Toxic leadership has deleterious effects on employees, resulting in higher stress levels, worse job satisfaction, and a significant decline in employee trust (Baloyi, 2020). According to Lipman-Blumen, toxic leaders undermine the morale, confidence, and performance of the employees, and in some cases destroy the careers (Pelletier, 2010). This detrimental impact on productivity and well-being is a serious issue to be considered. Several factors contribute to toxic leadership, such as an unquenchable need for power and authority and perceived challenges to status and control (Singh et al., 2019).

Toxic leaders are psychopaths who use yelling and harsh language (Boddy, 2011a), creating stress and distress among employees (Boddy, 2014; Boddy et al., 2015; Mathieu et al., 2012) as well as retaliating against companies by engaging in counterproductive work behavior (Boddy, 2014). As psychopaths, these leaders

engage in extreme forms of mismanagement, characterized by poor personnel management, lack of direction, and mismanagement of resources (Babiak and Hare, 2006; Boddy et al., 2015). Additionally, employees working for psychopaths receive less instruction, training, and as well as experience injustice (Boddy, 2010a; Boddy, 2010b).

Research on toxic leadership and negative effects on employees' well-being and performance are concerned about the topic. Abuse, self-interest, and manipulation are traits of toxic leadership, which can have effects on employees' motivation, trust, and job satisfaction. Moreover, long-term success may be compromised by the tendency to marginalize subordinates and obsessive focus on counterproductive performance (Appelbaum and Roy-Girard, 2007; Pelletier, 2010; Singh et al., 2019). The occurrence of role stress is also a cause for concern, resulting from the contradictory demands of job, ambiguity, and onerous duties.

There are several evidence regarding the detrimental impacts of toxic leadership on both performance and employee well-being. Toxic leaders frequently engage in belittling and frightening activities that undermine morale and trust, motivated by narcissistic traits and a desire for power and control (Appelbaum and Roy-Girard, 2007). Subsequently, employees may experience increased stress, burnout, and emotional exhaustion (Appelbaum and Roy-Girard, 2007; Baloyi, 2020). A fundamental consequence is role stress, which refers to the psychological strain experienced due to conflicting or ambiguous job demands. Role stress has been connected to a variety of negative outcomes, including emotional exhaustion, burnout, and counterproductive work behavior (Harms et al., 2017).

Employees are affected by the creation of role ambiguity and conflict in prioritizing competing demands. This lack of clarity can lead to chronic work stress due to the struggle to navigate ambiguous expectations. (Vullinghs et al., 2018) In addition, toxic leaders are excessively critical, demeaning, and abusive, which can reduce emotional resources and contribute to feelings of exhaustion.

Emotionally exhausted employees engage in reactive work behavior, such as cyberloafing, wasting time, or acting out in other counterproductive ways to cope with stress and negativity in work environment (Appelbaum and Roy-Girard, 2007; Singh et al., 2019). Research has shown that the relationship between toxic leadership and counterproductive work behavior can be partially explained by the mediating impact of role stress and emotional exhaustion (Omar and Ahmad, 2020). Reactive behavior is a form of negative response to the environment. Individuals are unable to seek and take advantage of existing opportunities and are unaware of responsibilities (Covey, 1997).

Previous research shows that the relationship between job demands and work performance is mediated by several distinct factors, including work participation. Only the association between toxic leadership and work engagement is mediated by role ambiguity, while social support and work engagement are mediated by job instability. Similarly, Lee et al. (2023) emphasizes the unique roles of toxic leadership and team social support in interactions with employees' job expectations, work engagement, and performance. In this context, social support such as perceived manager and support may reduce frontline personnel's emotional exhaustion (Karatepe and Kilic, 2015). According to mainstream research, employee tools, including mindfulness, can reduce

emotional exhaustion and workplace stress (Hülsheger et al., 2013; Li et al., 2018). Frontline employees' emotional exhaustion and job insecurity were found to be positively correlated when supported by employers (Han and Eyoun, 2021).

This research aims to analyze two factors, namely effects of role stress and toxic leadership on reactive employee work and role overload, respectively. There is a reduction in innovative decision-making when employees cannot be extricated from existing problems or pressures. In this context, toxic leaders have psychological influences on employees, causing anxiety, fear and stress. Manipulation tactics are also used to bully employees into carrying out orders for personal success. Therefore, this research aims to expand existing theories in the field of toxic leadership and connect several factors currently ignored. Practical benefits are provided for manufacturing companies to minimize toxic leadership problems influencing employee behavior.

The sample is employees of the accounting department since the employees play an important role in company finances. Compliance with financial rules and regulations is the most important factor to be considered in work of Accounting Staff. This is because financial reports are prepared under applicable standards and tax regulations. In addition, accountants are the likeliest group of professionals to come across psychopaths (69% have come across corporate psychopaths) in relation to fraud (Jeppesen et al., 2016).

2. Literature review

2.1. Social information processing theory

The focus of SIP theory is on individual perceptions of social world, which is formed through interactions with others in a social environment (Grant et al., 2010; Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978). The core assumption of this theory is that workplace conditions and characteristics are constructed through individual and social processes. In this view, the immediate social environment is an important source of information relating to the construction and interpretation of workplace events and conditions. Group-level factors such as leadership style and social support, determine the experience of job demands through social formation.

2.2. Toxic leadership and role stress

The word toxic comes from toxics meaning "poison" (Singh et al., 2018). Schmidt and Hanges (2008) stated that toxic leadership was characterized by narcissistic behavior of considering personal interests as well as engaging in abusive and authoritarian supervision patterns. Padilla et al. (2007) also referred to the concept as toxic behavior. Meanwhile, Schmidt and Hanges (2008) expressed a different view that the labeling was wrong. Toxic leaders can cause employees to be afraid to work harder.

Toxic leadership is not driven by a clear intent to harm companies (Coldwell, 2021) but often stems from a combination of narcissistic tendencies, emotional instability, and a deep need for control and power (Pelletier, 2010). Therefore, this research aims to analyze the complex relationship between toxic leadership and the

concept of role stress, showing the mechanisms used to shape employee experiences. Role emphasis refers to 3 aspects, specifically overload, conflict, and ambiguity. The exposure of employees to toxic behavior, such as verbal abuse, demeaning treatment, and manipulation frequently leads to a profound feeling of injustice in interactions. This perceived lack of exchange of resources and respect can increase the levels of role stress since employees struggle to reconcile professional responsibilities with emotional toll.

According to Singh et al. (2019), a range of problematic behavior, including throwing temper tantrums, often behaving erratically, yelling, using harsh language, and openly asserting employees may be shown by toxic leaders (Pelletier, 2010). This environment contributes to increased role ambiguity, overload and conflict since employees struggle to navigate complex and often interrelated demands.

As discussed by Pollard and Smith, the idea offers a perspective for understanding the broader impact of toxic leadership (Coldwell, 2021). The thriving of desirable leaders can create a culture of fear, distrust, and dysfunction, thereby eroding the foundation of success. Therefore, the interaction between toxic leadership and role stress is a multifaceted and complex phenomenon that requires further investigation.

H1. Toxic leadership influences role ambiguity.

H2. Toxic leadership influences role conflict.

H3. Toxic leadership influences role overload.

2.3. Role stress and emotional exhaustion

Emotional exhaustion and role stress have garnered significant attention within the realm of company behavior and human resource management. Role stress includes various aspects such as ambiguity, conflict, and overload, which can significantly impact well-being and performance. The variable is a physiological and psychological reaction to excessive demands placed on employees (Azuma and Kannadas, 2020). This can arise from a mismatch between an employee's understanding of responsibilities and the actual expectations of the external stakeholders. Emotional exhaustion is a condition marked by feelings of emotional depletion and a lack of personal success that can occur when employees are unable to balance competing demands.

Role stress has detrimental effects on various performance, including job satisfaction, commitment, and employee turnover (Bano et al., 2011). In addition, research shows that the intensity of the variable can vary based on qualification levels and personality traits. The mediating role of emotional exhaustion has been explored in the relationship between role stress and other important outcomes (Asfahani, 2022). For example, emotional exhaustion mediated the link between work-family conflict and turnover intention among faculty members. The presence of workplace relational conflicts has been shown to increase the negative impact of role stress on emotional exhaustion (Asfahani, 2022). Therefore, an improved supportive work environment and positive interpersonal relationships among colleagues can be crucial in mitigating the adverse effects of role stress.

H4. Role ambiguity influences emotional exhaustion.

H5. Role conflict influences emotional exhaustion.

H6. Role overload affects emotional exhaustion.

2.4. Role stress and reactive work behavior

Reactive behavior has the characteristics of being easily bad, blaming others more often, getting angry easily, complaining and failing to make changes when necessary (Covey, 2001). In the field of psychology, the relationship between role stress and reactive work behavior is a topic of significant interest. Role stress has detrimental consequences on employee well-being and performance. For instance, conflict arises when individual faces competing or incompatible demands from various stakeholders, such as customers, supervisors, and employees (Keenan and McBAIN, 1978). Similarly, role ambiguity occurs when an employee is unclear about responsibilities, scope of role, or expectations (Siegall, 2000). These role-related stressors have been connected to a range of negative outcomes, including decreased commitment, increased employee turnover, and reduced performance (Schaubroeck et al., 1989). Therefore, understanding the factors that influence the relationship between role stress and reactive work behavior is crucial in enhancing a productive and engaged workforce.

According to meta-analytic research, role stress is inversely associated with affective commitment, where employees who experience higher levels of the variable do not feel a strong emotional attachment to companies (Morrissette and Kisamore, 2020). Therefore, role stress undermines the desire to remain with companies, potentially leading to increased turnover. In contrast, role is not significantly related to continuance commitment, which refers to the perceived need to stay due to the costs associated with leaving. This distinction shows the importance of differentiating between different forms of commitment when examining the consequences of role stress.

The impact of role stress on employee outcomes may be moderated by various individual and company factors. Research on Indian administrative service employees reported that self-efficacy, motivation, and locus of control were among the moderating factors affecting the relationship between role stress. Therefore, an Indian analysis of employees in the service company reported that personal resources, such as core self-evaluations, acted as a buffer against the detrimental impacts of job pressures on employee performance (Chhabra, 2019). According to the existing literature, role stress is a significant predictor of reactive work behavior, with implications for both employee well-being and performance.

H7. Role ambiguity influences reactive work behavior.

H8. Role conflict influences reactive work behavior.

H9. Role overload affects reactive work behavior.

2.5. Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework of the research is a relationship or connection between one concept and another concept of a problem to be studied. The conceptual framework is useful for explaining completely and in detail about a topic that will be discussed. The conceptual framework in this research can be seen in **Figure 1**.

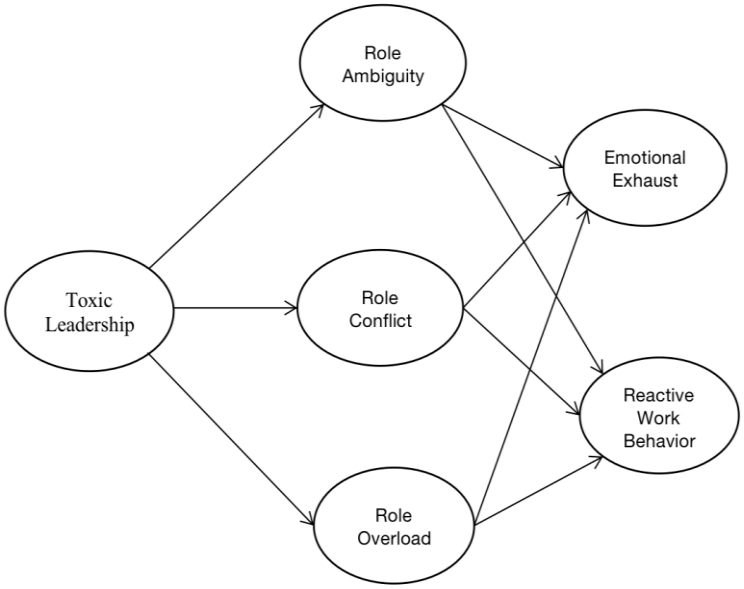

Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

3. Methodology

3.1. Sample selection and data collection

The adopted quantitative research method uses numbers and statistics in the collection and analysis of measurable data. The method collects structured data through measurement instruments such as questionnaires or systematic observations. The population of this research is manufacturing companies in Banten Province. The sample consists of employees who worked in the accounting department of manufacturing companies. The characteristics are employees who have worked for more than 3 years and are considered to have experienced effects of ongoing leadership. The questionnaires use paper sent directly to companies and through online forms. A total of 350 questionnaires were sent within a specified period of one month and the response received was processed for data processing. Partial Least Square (PLS) was used to analyze data and conduct both parametric and non-parametric statistical calculations based on Windows. In addition, PLS estimated the paths between constructs showed in the research model.

3.2. Variable measurement

Toxic leadership was assessed using the 15-item Toxic Leadership Scale (Schmidt, 2008). The Bedford et al. (2022) questionnaire was adapted from Rizzo et al. (1970) to measure role ambiguity (RA) and role conflict (RC). Meanwhile, a traditional six-item scale was used to measure role ambiguity in the survey. A total of 4 of the 8 items on the original scale and Wharton's (1993) six-item scale were used to measure role conflict and emotional exhaustion, respectively. These questions probe respondents' emotions regarding the psychological cost of work (Liu et al., 2015). The theory proposed by Covey (2001) was used to measure factors related to reactive behavior, with 6 scales available for measuring reactive work behavior. In addition, closed questions in the questionnaire were measured using a 5-Likert interval scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

Correlations between item and component scores were used to assess validity and reliability, respectively. The measurement scale validity value of 0.6 was considered sufficient in the early stages of development and 0.7 was the limit value for reliability (Ghozali, 2012).

3.3. Data analysis

The proposed theory is investigated using the partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) (Hair et al., 2011). PLS-SEM works specifically for research aiming to show the main explanatory elements in a target framework (Ringle and Sarstedt, 2016). The software is used to perform the data analysis process, which is divided into two phases, namely the measurement model assessment and the structural model evaluation. Similarly, Cronbach's alpha and AVE must be more than 0.7 and 0.5, respectively (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2014).

3.4. Common Method Bias (CMB) test

CMB test aims to avoid causes of errors in data measurements. A source of error in data measurement is method variance, this issue can be determined using the Single Factor Test method. The principle is to include all items from the construct analysis into one factor to determine the explanation of the variance using a common factor. In this research, there is no single factor that explains more than 50% of the variance due to the absence of CMB.

4. Result

4.1. Descriptive statistics

a) Respondent's gender

Based on **Table 1**, male and female respondents were 89 (48%) and 98 (52%), respectively. Therefore, the sample in this research was dominated by female respondents.

Table 1. Gender.

Information	Frequency (people)	Percent (%)
Male	89	48%
Female	98	52%
Amount	187	100%

b) Respondent's age

Based on **Table 2**, respondents aged 20–30, 31–40, and over 40 years have a frequency of 82 (44%), 77 (41%) and 28 (15%), respectively. Therefore, the sample was dominated by respondents aged 20–30 years.

Table 2. Age.

Information	Frequency (people)	Percent (%)
20–30 years old	82	44%
31–40 years old	77	41%
Over 40 years old	28	15%

4.2. CMB

CMB was assessed through Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values of the inner model. In the current research, the VIF values were lower than 3.33, hence the model was considered free from CMB (Kock, 2015). In this research, all hypotheses have CMB values lower than 3.33. The overall values can be seen in **Table 3**.

Table 3. CMB.

	EE	RA	RC	RO	RWB	TL
EE						
RA	2.070				2.070	
RC	1.584				1.584	
RO	3.076				3.076	
RWB						
TL		1.000	1.000	1.000		

4.3. Measurement model (outer model)

Propagating the relationship between constructs and indicators is achieved through the use of measurement models. In this context, the PLS external model was evaluated based on three parameters, namely compatibility consistency, discriminant validity, and convergence. The correlation between item scores and unique score components is used to assess the convergent validity of the measurement model with reflexive indicators. However, a load value measurement scale of 0.5–0.6 is required in the early phases of development (Ghozali, 2012). As displayed in **Tables 4** and **5** and **Figure 2**, EE, RWB, RC, RA, RO, and TL represent emotional exhaustion, reactive work behavior, role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload and toxic leadership variables, respectively.

Table 4. Outer loading.

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)
EE1 ← EE	0.883	0.884	0.036
EE2 ← EE	0.866	0.866	0.038
EE3 ← EE	0.903	0.904	0.032
EE4 ← EE	0.903	0.904	0.033
EE5 ← EE	0.858	0.859	0.037
EE6 ← EE	0.875	0.876	0.043
RA1 ← RA	0.92	0.919	0.033
RA2 ← RA	0.959	0.96	0.011

Table 4. (*Continued*).

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)
RA3 ← RA	0.936	0.937	0.03
RA4 ← RA	0.89	0.89	0.032
RA5 ← RA	0.933	0.933	0.03
RA6 ← RA	0.934	0.936	0.018
RC1 ← RC	0.897	0.898	0.027
RC2 ← RC	0.89	0.89	0.029
RC3 ← RC	0.799	0.799	0.042
RC4 ← RC	0.918	0.919	0.017
RO1 ← RO	0.929	0.929	0.022
RO2 ← RO	0.885	0.885	0.029
RO3 ← RO	0.848	0.849	0.035
RWB1 ← RWB	0.881	0.881	0.035
RWB2 ← RWB	0.868	0.869	0.037
RWB3 ← RWB	0.885	0.884	0.036
RWB4 ← RWB	0.929	0.93	0.015
RWB5 ← RWB	0.881	0.881	0.025
RWB6 ← RWB	0.901	0.901	0.032
TL1 ← TL	0.902	0.903	0.035
TL10 ← TL	0.844	0.846	0.041
TL11 ← TL	0.794	0.796	0.053
TL12 ← TL	0.923	0.923	0.018
TL13 ← TL	0.869	0.87	0.042
TL14 ← TL	0.948	0.949	0.012
TL15 ← TL	0.867	0.868	0.044
TL2 ← TL	0.912	0.912	0.018
TL3 ← TL	0.868	0.869	0.044
TL4 ← TL	0.895	0.895	0.022
TL5 ← TL	0.877	0.879	0.041
TL6 ← TL	0.782	0.783	0.056
TL7 ← TL	0.801	0.8	0.045
TL8 ← TL	0.886	0.886	0.036
TL9 ← TL	0.937	0.938	0.014

Table 5. AVE and reliability.

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
EE	0.943	0.943	0.954	0.777
RA	0.968	0.970	0.974	0.863
RC	0.899	0.904	0.930	0.770
RO	0.865	0.867	0.918	0.788
RWB	0.948	0.949	0.959	0.794
TL	0.978	0.979	0.980	0.766

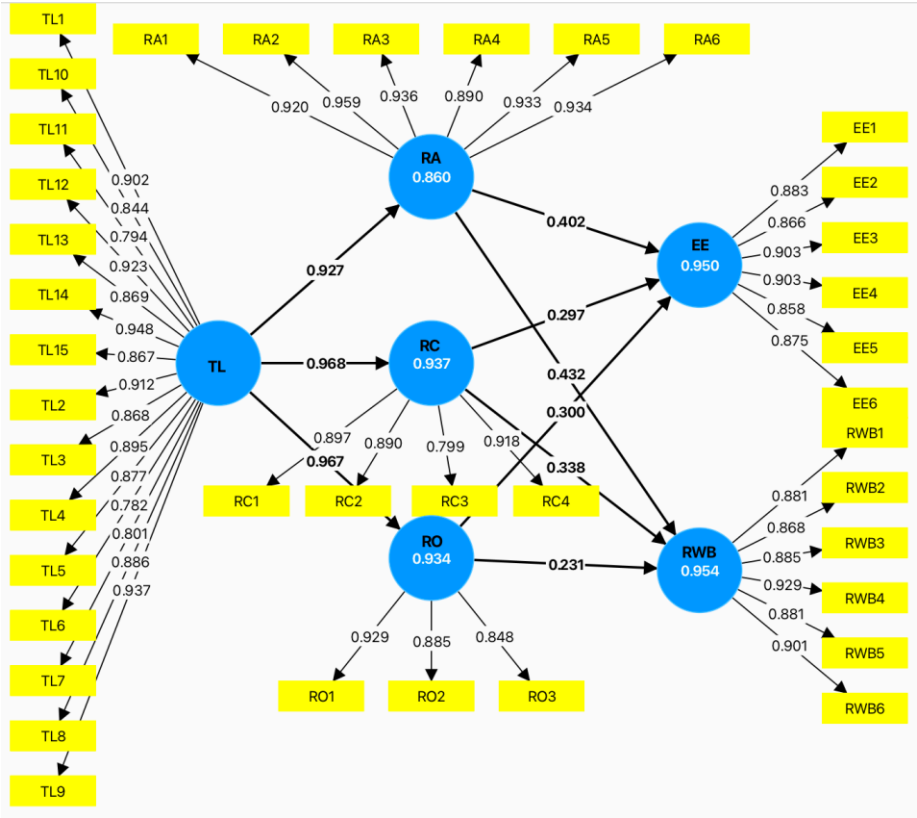

Figure 2. SmartPLS.

4.4. Structural model (inner model)

Ghozali (2012) stated that the inner model provided a substantive theory-based explanation of the relationship between latent variables. Substantial theories, inner relational models, and inner models are other names for inner models. As results being shown in **Table 6**, testing of inner or structural models is carried out to determine the relationship between the constructs. The suggested hypothesis can be accepted or rejected within a range of ± 1.96. This means that when the *t*-statistic value is higher than the *t*-table (1.96), the hypothesis is accepted. However, when the value is lower than the *t*-table (1.96), the hypothesis is rejected.

Table 6. Result inner.

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	*T* statistics (|O/STDEV|)
RA → EE	0.402	0.403	0.079	5.070
RA → RWB	0.432	0.431	0.077	5.623
RC → EE	0.297	0.298	0.109	2.726
RC → RWB	0.338	0.330	0.112	3.018
RO → EE	0.300	0.298	0.084	3.582
RO → RWB	0.231	0.241	0.090	2.573
TL → RA	0.927	0.929	0.015	2.923
TL → RC	0.968	0.969	0.006	5.312
TL → RO	0.967	0.968	0.008	8.645

5. Discussion

Hypothesis 1 states that toxic leadership has positive effects on role ambiguity. The indicators were eliminated since there was no construct correlation of less than 0.5, hence each variable met the convergent validity criteria (AVE value). The data processing shows that toxic leadership has positive effects on role ambiguity. This was shown with an original sample estimate value of 0.927 and a *T*-statistic value of 2.923 greater than the *T*-table of 1.96 since Hypothesis 1 was accepted. A fundamental element in company dynamics that affect the direction, work style, and work culture is pemmican (Einarsen and Nielsen, 2019). However, in certain circumstances, a concept that must provide inspiration, motivation, and support for team members becomes a useful tool (Tepper et al., 2019). The challenges faced by modern companies increasingly show the need for leaders to develop a culture of work that is intuitive, productive, and focused on performance (Nielsen and Einarsen, 2018). During the process of becoming a leader, some may be associated with unhealthy situations, such as controlling, intimidating, or exploiting team members (Schyns and Schilling, 2018). Uncertainty in the distribution of resources within companies can lead to leaders being less inclined to use resources and becoming less approachable when interacting with team members. Lack of confidence in work environment leads to conditions that worsen the ability to perform tasks (Syahfitri and Hermawan, 2019).

Leaders can engender toxic behavior in workplace, such as micromanagement, self-serving decision-making, and abusive supervision. Toxic leaders can impede independent decision-making and create a culture of reliance were employees continuously look to leaders for approval and direction. Role ambiguity results when a leader behaves in a manipulative and unpredictable manner. This can be advantageous for the capacity to retain influence and control over followers. Toxic leaders are that psychopathy is the only personality with well-defined physical correlates in neuroscience; the psychopathic brain is well studied and basically does not process emotion (Blair et al., 2005; Blair, 2001; Blair et al., 1995; Blair et al., 2013) and the emotional poverty of the psychopath explains their lack of empathy with, and care for, their fellow humans. Toxic leaders frequently purposefully encourage role ambiguity to impose control and hold onto authority over employees (Iqbal et al., 2022).

Hypothesis 2 states that toxic leadership has positive effects on role conflict. Based on the research results, indicators were not eliminated since there was no construct correlation of less than 0.5, hence each variable met the convergent validity criteria (AVE value). The data processing shows that toxic leadership has positive effects on role conflict. This was shown with an original sample estimate value of 0.968 and a *T*-statistic value of 5.312 greater than the *T*-table of 1.96 since Hypothesis 2 was accepted. Roles of employees become more limited when preoccupied with fulfilling the demands of the leader rather than juggling contradictory requests. Role conflict may also be increased by toxic leaders who deliberately work to undermine employee independence and capacity for making decisions. Employees in these situations do not manage the intricacies of jobs, which lowers the perception of role conflict. Toxic leadership reduces role conflict by limiting the range of duties assigned to employees but at a high cost to company. However, there are disadvantages to the

beneficial impact of role conflict. According to Baloyi (2020), toxic leaders frequently show actions harmful to companies' long-term viability, such as putting personal agendas ahead of the group. Toxic work environment, lower employee morale, and decreased company performance are detrimental effects considered (Iqbal et al., 2022; Milošević et al., 2019; Qureshi et al., 2022; Singh et al., 2019; Williams, 2018).

Hypothesis 3 states that toxic leadership has positive effects on role overload. Based on the results, indicators were not eliminated since there was no construct correlation of less than 0.5, hence each variable met the convergent validity criteria (AVE value). Data processing shows that toxic leadership has positive effects on role overload. This was shown with an original sample estimate of 0.967 and a *T*-statistic of 8.645 greater than the *T*-table of 1.96 since Hypothesis 3 was accepted. The idea of toxic leaders being motivated by personal interests and a desire for power may unintentionally create an atmosphere for promoting an increased sense of urgency and productivity among subordinates. Employees can be motivated to put in more effort, take on more responsibilities, and put the accomplishment of company objectives ahead of personal well-being by enhancing a sense of perpetual danger and dread of consequences. Several research have reported that narcissism and a craving for control are connected to toxic leadership. Even though this current research suggests that toxic leadership may have a positive impact on role overload in the short term, the long-term consequences must be carefully considered. This supports previous results that working in toxic environment does increase employee workload (Boddy, 2011b). Some detrimental effects, including reduced satisfaction, burnout, and mental health problems, have been related to extended exposure to toxic leadership (Pelletier, 2010; Reed and Bullis, 2009).

Hypotheses 4, 5 and 6 show significant results with *t*-statistic values greater than 1.96. This research supports theories that role stress affects emotional exhaustion but role pressures have a variety of negative effects. Emotional exhaustion is characterized as a situation in which feelings are continuously being depleted and worn out. These phenomena can negatively impact general well-being by causing a decline in company commitment to increase employee turnover intentions and decrease job satisfaction. The totality of research on the subject emphasizes the complicated and multidimensional relationship between role stress and emotional exhaustion. Through comprehension of the processes by which role pressures affect emotional health, companies can create focused interventions to lessen the adverse effects and cultivate a supportive workforce. Emotional exhaustion is caused by task, individual, work, company and social factors (Schaufeli, 2014). This variable refers to the material, psychological, social or company requirements (De Jonge, 2016) associated with certain physiological and psychological costs, such as work stress (Demerouti, 2001) and role ambiguity (Bakker, 2005).

The body of current literature offers a thorough foundation for comprehending this connection. Research reported the multifaceted nature of role stress, including aspects such as role ambiguity, role conflict, and role overload (Bhalla et al., 1991; Yavaş and Babakus, 2011). Role ambiguity can arise when employees lack clarity about job responsibilities, leading to uncertainty and difficulty in meeting expectations. Role conflict occurs when the demands of one role clash with another, creating a state of tension and distress (Miles and Perreault, 1976). Additionally, role

overload, characterized by the perception of excessive workload, has also been shown to contribute to increased levels of stress among employees (Huang et al., 2021; Sales, 1970; Yasmeen and Supriya, 2010).

Hypotheses 7, 8 and 9 obtained significant results. The modern workplace's dynamic character has led to an increased emphasis on the correlation between the well-being of employees and company performance. The influence of role stress on reactive work behavior is an aspect of the relationship interesting for this research. This variable is a complex phenomenon defined by the competing demands and expectations placed on an individual. Role stress is connected to a variety of unfavorable outcomes, including decreased job satisfaction, commitment, and impaired job performance. Conversely, reactive work behavior describes the impromptu and frequently impulsive activities that employees take in reaction to perceived dangers or difficulties. Comprehending the dynamic between the two variables is crucial in cultivating a productive and engaged workforce. Therefore, this research examines the literature available on the relationship between role stress and reactive work behavior to identify important variables and show potential mitigation strategies for the detrimental effects of role stress on employee performance. The transactional framework, which contends that stress results from a perceived mismatch between resources and capacities to satisfy external demands, serves as the theoretical basis. In the context of workplace, role stress is viewed as the result of imbalance, where perceived capacity to successfully carry out obligations is less than the demands and expectations. A variety of detrimental emotional, cognitive, and physiological reactions can result from the condition of disequilibrium. Consequently, these reactions cause employees to act reactively at work in an attempt to diffuse the perceived threat or challenge.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this research was carried out to discuss a model for testing the influence of toxic leadership, role stress, emotional exhaustion and reactive work behavior. The results showed that the entire hypotheses were accepted. In this context, toxic leaders reduced independent decision-making and created a culture of reliance. Role ambiguity was manifested when a leader behaved in a manipulative and unpredictable manner. This could be advantageous for the capacity to retain influence and control over employees. Role conflict could also be increased by toxic leaders who deliberately worked to undermine independence and capacity for making decisions. Employees in these situations had reduced opportunities to manage the intricacies of jobs, and this lowered the perception of role conflict. In addition, toxic leadership reduced role conflict by limiting the range of duties assigned to employees at a high cost to company. Employees were motivated to put in more effort, and responsibilities, as well as put the accomplishment of company objectives ahead of personal well-being by enhancing a sense of perpetual danger and dread of consequences.

Research showed that narcissism and a craving for control were connected to toxic leadership. Even though toxic leadership had a positive impact on role overload in the short term, the long-term consequences must be carefully considered. Role

pressures had a variety of negative effects, such as emotional exhaustion. In this fundamental aspect of burnout, emotional reserves were continuously depleted and worn out. The influence of role stress on reactive work behavior was an important aspect of the relationship considered in this research. Role stress was defined by the competing demands and expectations placed on an individual within company role. This variable was connected to a variety of unfavorable results, including reduced job satisfaction, decreased company commitment, and impaired job performance. In contrast, reactive work behavior described impromptu and impulsive activities to perceive danger or difficulties in the workplace.

The implication obtained from this research was the need for a stricter process when recruiting employees, thereby minimizing human resources with bad characteristics. Meanwhile, companies should also carry out gradual supervision to prevent the development of toxic leadership. These implications provided practical guidance for management teams to minimize toxic leadership actions in reducing employees' perceived stress levels.

This research had limitations since the number of samples filling out the questionnaire was small because employees in the accounting department strictly maintained the confidentiality of leaders. However, the sample size was represented since most of the questionnaires were filled in by employees with long service periods, ranging from 6 to 8 years. Employees were assumed to determine the working conditions within company. In this context, future research should determine other aspects influencing role stress, such as tightening budgets or job insecurity.

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