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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
<p>Toxic Leadership, Innovative Work Behavior, Employees' Resilience & Higher Education Institutions, KP, Pakistan</p>	<p>Toxic leadership is recognized as leader's negative attitude characterized by authoritarian, abusive and self-serving behaviors, that is recognized as a detrimental factor in organizational settings. It can negatively influence the employees' behaviors likewise morale, motivation, commitment and performance in organization. In this drive, employee resilience is expected to play active role in linking toxic leadership and employees' performance. In order to examine these phenomena, like (toxic leadership as predictor), (employees' resilience as mediator) & (employee performance as mediator), data was collected from faculty members hailing from higher institutions in southern region, KP, Pakistan. Research aimed to use survey approach to collect the data, analyze data and to examine hypothesized relationships (association & mediation) among the research variables through different hypotheses as extracted from theoretical framework. The results provide vital information about association and mediation in reaching the desired conclusion. It is suggested higher institutions may use suitable leadership styles so as to inspire employees toward sustainable performance supported by resilience.</p>
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INTRODUCTION

In higher educational context, leadership diverse traits and styles have significant influence upon the behaviors and performance of employees including faculties in order to moralize or demoralize them towards desired outcomes (Khan, Gerald, Islam & Saif, 2023). In this drive, most of leadership styles have positive influence on the employees' behavioral outcomes while some have undesirable influence on employees attitudinal and behavioral responsiveness, wherein autocratic, destructive

and toxic leadership styles are foremost (Getnet & Fujie, 2024). The toxic leadership, restrained over critical behaviors likewise authoritarianism, exploitation and manipulation, have detrimental effects on various employees and institutional outcomes in diverse circumstances (Dahlan, Omar & Kamarudin, 2024). The toxic leaders demoralize employees' self-confidence, create an intimidating working environment and lessens productivity that bring along certain adverse consequences for both the organizations and employees (Zaman, Perez, Anjam, Ghani & Huda, 2023). Similarly, the resilience is widely recognized as the determining factor that can minimize the adverse influences of toxic leadership on employees' performance in institutions thereby promoting the productive working environment (Khan, Khan & Mughal, 2023). The toxic leadership negatively impacts the performance, but resilience mediates this relationship, to sustain high performances despite adverse leadership behaviors.

The existing studies revealed that toxic leadership reduces motivation, and job satisfaction, leading to disengagement and lack of commitment, reduces employees' outcomes and ownership towards the concerned institution (Brouwers & Paltu, 2020). The toxic leadership through diverse measures can lead to increased anxiety, depression and stress that hinders the potentials of employees toward the attainment of desired leading outcomes (Acuña & Male, 2022). The toxic leadership disrupts the team cohesion and trust, thus making it hard for employees (teachers) to work efficiently and effectively thereby showing their undaunted efforts to realize desired tasks (Chin, Ying & Tuckey, 2024). Thus, there is a need for arrangement of trainings and workshops that may focus on building of resilience, coping strategies and stress management in order to inspire teachers to deliver as per required standards (Khan, Khan & Mughal, 2023). The resilient employees are better equipped to manage pressure and sustain their performances despite toxic leadership as teachers have lower inspirations from leaders towards strategic tasks (Rizwan, Bilal, Zia, Rehman & Rehman, 2024). The resilience helps employees, teachers to stay inspired towards assigned responsibilities even though in challenging situations wherein lower inspiration from leadership, higher motivation & assurance from the employees.

The resilient employees are more innovative and adaptable, contributing positively to institution despite the presence of toxic leaders. Toxic leadership in higher educations can severely influence employees' performance, commitment, satisfaction, motivation and psychological health (Arshad, Sun & Desmarais, 2021). Still, building resilience among employees at different levels can help to mitigate these negative effects in institution (Hari, Josua, Arini, Zen & Pramukty, 2024). Thus, by investing in leadership training, supportive policies, and resilience plans, higher institutions can create more productive and positive working environment, thereby enhancing the well-being and performance (Khan, Gerald, Islam & Saif, 2023). The toxic leadership take minimum interest in employees' issues and problems at work on one side, but on the other side, resilient employees take keen interest in assigned tasks despite the absence of leadership (Chin, Ying, Tuckey, 2024). The teachers are always concerned about their teaching and learning activities due to high resilience and show their utmost commitment towards the assigned tasks (Khan, Khan & Mughal, 2023). Similarly, the employees' performance has been considered as building blocks for the institutional development, ultimate reputation and success that leads to sustainable development from different

perspectives. Thus, this study aimed to examine the relationships among these variables in higher educational context.

Objective & Hypothesis

1. To examine the association among the toxic leadership, employees' resilience and employees' performance in higher educational context.
2. To examine the mediator (employees' resilience) in relationship between toxic leadership and employees' performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In modern dynamic environment, leadership plays crucial role in shaping employee performance and institutional outcomes as effective leadership can inspire the employees to show their utmost efforts to realize institutional objectives (Khan, Gerald, Islam & Saif, 2023). The toxic leaders may show inflexible control over academic, administrative decisions, academic freedom and creativity that may create a stressful environment for employees while considering the institutional culture and vision (Acuña & Male, 2022). Toxic leadership through practices of favoritism, intimidation, and discriminatory actions can undermine the trust and morale of the employees (Saleem, Malik & Malik, 2021). The literature revealed that toxic leadership can hinder academic freedom, leading towards lack of intellectual growth and innovation which are leading characteristics of employees in chasing assigned tasks (Wolor, Rofaida, Nurkhin & Rababah, 2022). It is resilience that inspires concerned employees to show their dedications towards assigned tasks to ensure desired outcomes at par to required standards (Khan, Khan & Mughal, 2023). Also, toxic environment can increase absenteeism and reduce job satisfaction and turnover rates and hamper collaboration among the employees at different levels in institutions that leads toward undesirable consequences (Dahlan, Omar & Kamarudin, 2024). Thus, resilience acts as facilitator in linking the toxic leadership and employees' performance.

The resilience nurtures the confidence in employees. abilities to overcome challenges and realize professional goals as resilient teachers can maintain higher standards in teaching & research despite adverse circumstances (Athota, Budhwar & Malik, 2020a). In contrary to toxic leadership, resilient teachers are better equipped to offer consistent guidance and support to students, enhancing their educational experience towards desired outcomes (Susanto, Supardi, Parmenas & Soehadi, 2023). Also, resilient employees are likely to engage in continuous learning & professional developments that can improve their motivation toward performance & contributions toward institution (Marjolein & Hatak, 2022). In this linking, toxic leadership over persistent toxic practices can erode resilience over time that results in demoralization and disengagement of teachers & employees from assigned responsibilities towards strategic objectives (Koç, Bozkurt, Taşdemir & Günsel, 2022). Thus, shared effects of decreased resilience and toxic leadership lead towards significant drops in performances, affecting both institutional and individual successes (Rizwan, Bilal, Zia, Rehman & Rehman, 2024). Similarly, resilient workforces can mitigate some negative impacts of toxic leadership by sustaining their productivity and well-being. Subsequently, the toxic leadership has diverse as well as leading outcomes towards the employees' attitudes and behaviors that may hinder their performance and potential for success.

The toxic leadership is negatively correlated with commitment, job satisfaction and performance in higher educational context due to limited interest of leadership in institutional tasks and due to lack of intellectual stimulation towards employees (Hadadian & Sayadpour, 2018). The resilience empowers employees to develop the positive coping strategies, like seeking support, focusing upon controllable aspects of working format, and engagement in diverse activities (Winwood, Colon & McEwen, 2013). The resilience is found to moderate negative effects of toxic leadership, signifying that building resilience can be protective factor for employees to rescue their professional standing and affiliations in institutions (Kuntz, Malinen & Näswall, 2017b). Higher institutions are required to invest in diverse training programs that promote emotional intelligence and leadership positive behaviors in the concerned institutions. There is a need of leadership that is operative in creating a supportive culture that values teamwork, open communication and mutual respect (Khan, Gerald, Islam & Saif, 2023). In this drive, by understanding these crucial dynamics and realizing supportive strategies, higher education institutions can better navigate the diverse challenges posed by toxic leadership thereby fostering a more resilient and high-performing workforce in institution (Dahlan, Omar, Kamarudin, 2024). The teachers are required to show higher resilience to become the higher performers in institutions.

The toxic leadership leads to low job satisfaction, that directly affects an employee's motivation and performance as dissatisfied and dispirited employees are expected to put less effort and potentials towards assigned tasks (Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser, 2007). Similarly, the exposure to toxic leadership may lead to anxiety, stress, and exhaustion, that can impair the concentration, cognitive functions, and overall work performance in institutions (Krumov, Negruti, Hristova & Krumova, 2016). The toxic leaders may hinder creativity and innovation by creating an environment where employees are exposed to making mistakes and wherein their innovative ideas are opposed by the leadership in diverse circumstances (Pelletier, Kottke & Sirotnik, 2019). The toxic leadership frequently results in the lack of trust and effective communication among team members, that can hamper teamwork and impact negatively the shared performances (Acuña & Male, 2022). Similarly, faculty members, as affected by toxic leadership may become demotivated & disengaged that can interpret towards lower quality in teaching and reduced student engagements, required resilience and learning outcomes (Dahlan, Omar & Kamarudin, 2024). In this connection, toxic leadership lead to mistakes, inefficiencies, and abridged productivity in diverse roles, distressing the institutional performance. Similarly, higher levels of turnovers can result from toxic leadership, leading to loss of talent and knowledge in institutions.

The toxic leadership has inability to retain talented workforces can diminish the competitive edge, institutional reputation, affecting long-term performance, development and success from diverse parameters (Reyhanoglu & Akin, 2020). Conversely, it is resilience that makes the individuals more productive and effective in realizing the different tasks, chasing the objectives and ensuring desired outcomes as per desired standards to compete in contemporary viable environment (Alina & Aledo, 2023). The literature revealed that employee resilience can restrained the negative effects of toxic leadership, signifying that fostering resilience within employees can help in mitigating the diverse performance influences (Khan, Khan & Mughal, 2023). The implementation of diverse leadership

developmental programs is required in higher institutions to promote emotional intelligence and positive leadership behaviors that can reduce incidence of toxic leadership (Khan, Gerald, Islam & Saif, 2023). Also, enforcing policies that promote a healthy work environment and address issues of toxic leadership effectively and improve motivation, commitment and performance of employees in institutions (Dahlan, Omar & Kamarudin, 2024). By addressing diverse linkages & implementing targeted interventions, institutions can better bring about the negative diverse impacts of the toxic leadership on performance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study aimed to examine the existing realities in a native environment by collecting data through instrument, analyzing data through the statistical procedures and extracting desired information to reach conclusion. These are leading parameters that usually comes under positivism approach therefore, positivism is philosophical consideration that is operative behind the current research study (Bryman, 2012). The study was quantitative in nature therefore, survey approach was used to access sample from the population comprising the teachers hailing from the southern region higher institutions, KP, Pakistan. The population is entire elements of research while sample is the representative portion in which researchers are interested and plans to generalize findings (Bryman & Bell, 2011). There were 5-public sector higher education institutions in region with the population (1944), wherein sample (331) was selected for study. Thus, questionnaire was framed in Google Form and distributed via emails and social media channels and thus, 324 questionnaires were recollected and used for analysis. Data collection and analysis important phases in research which have been ensured in this study (Zikmund, Babin, Carr & Griffin, 2010). The questionnaires were adopted from the previous research studies/ the statistical procedures like correlation as well as mediation were used to examine hypothesized relationships among research variables to extract new knowledge & contribute existing knowledge database about issues under study like leadership, resilience and performance.

RESULTS OF STUDY

The results of study based upon examination of research hypotheses to investigate the association and mediation; outcomes are presented in this section in order to understand the nature of desired relationships in particular context. These results offer significant information in reaching conclusion and making decisions.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Toxic Leadership	324	1.20	4.10	2.8114	.69716
Employees Resilience	324	2.30	4.10	3.0586	.44201
Employees' Performance	324	1.10	4.00	3.5346	.80389
Valid N (listwise)	324				

The descriptive statistics provides information in order to describe the research variables in terms of sample-size, minimum and maximum rate of responses, mean and standard deviation wherein the results provide significant information in deciding about description. The results revealed that with

respect to toxic leadership (minimum response rate = 1.20 & maximum response rate = 4.10), (mean = 2.8114) and (standard deviation = .69716), employees' resilience (minimum response rate = 2.30 & maximum response rate = 4.10), (mean = 3.0586), (standard deviation = .44201), and employees' performance (minimum response rate = 1.10 & maximum response rate = 4.00), (mean = 3.5346) and (SD = .80389) that are within the threshold values and thus significantly described the research variables of study.

H1: To examine the association among toxic leadership, employees' resilience and employees' performance in higher educational context.

Table 2 Correlation Analysis

		[1]	[2]
Toxic Leadership [1]	Pearson Correlation	1	-.418**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	324	324
Employees Resilience [2]	Pearson Correlation	-.418**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	324	324
Employees' Performance [3]	Pearson Correlation	-.634**	.704**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	324	324

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The first hypothesis examined the association among the research variables in terms of strength and direction in relationships. The results revealed that toxic leadership is significantly but negatively associated with employees' performance (R= -.634 & .000). Similarly, the employees' resilience is significantly but negatively associated with the toxic leadership (R= -.418 & .000) while employees' resilience is significantly and positively associated with employees' performance (R= -.704 & .000). These results confirmed the clues from existing literature about the diverse nature of associations among the toxic leadership, employees' resilience and employees' performance and thus hypothesis first is accepted.

H2: To examine the mediator (employees' resilience) in relationship between toxic leadership & employees' performance.

Mediation First Step (a)

Table 3 Model Summary (H2)

R	R Square	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.4181	.1748	.1617	81.6459	1.0000	322.0000	.0000

Table 4 Coefficients of Regression

Model	Coefficient	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	3.8039	.0870	43.7096	.0000	3.6327	3.9752
Toxic Leadership	-.2651	.0293	-9.0358	.0000	-.3228	-.2074

Mediation Second & Third Steps (b & c)

Table 5 Model Summary

R	R Square	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.7974	.6359	.2367	215.1812	2.0000	321.0000	.0000

Table 6 Coefficients of Regression

Model	Coefficient	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	1.9061	.2483	7.6775	.0000	1.4177	2.3945
Toxic Leadership	-.4743	.0368	-12.8862	.0000	-.5468	-.4019
Employees' Resilience	.9684	.0679	14.2668	.0000	.8349	1.1020

Predictor: Toxic Leadership, Employees' Resilience, Criterion: Employees' Performance

Mediation Fourth Step (c)

Table 7 Model Summary

R	R Square	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.6340	.4020	.3877	283.4381	1.0000	322.0000	.0000

Table 8 Coefficients of Regression

Model	Coefficient	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	5.5899	.1279	43.7017	.0000	5.3382	5.8415
Toxic Leadership	-.7311	.0434	-16.8356	.0000	-.8165	-.6456

Predictor: Toxic Leadership, Criterion: Employees' Performance

The second hypothesis was hypothesized to examine the mediating role of employees' resilience in linking toxic leadership and employees' performance by using Hayes Process procedure that offer different paths of mediation. The first path of mediation revealed that there are 17.48% changes in the employees' resilience is due to toxic leadership with significant coefficient of determination ($\beta = -.2651$ & P -value = .0000). Second and third paths provides details about indirect linkages among research variables wherein 63.59% change is evident in employees' performance is due to the toxic leadership & employee resilience with significant coefficient of determination like toxic leadership ($\beta = -.4743$ & P -value = .0000), and the employees' resilience ($\beta = -.9684$ & P -value = .0000) that provides significant information and provide the clues towards fourth mediation path to determine direct relationship.

The fourth path of mediation (direct relationship) revealed that there is 40.20% change is evident in employees' performance is due to toxic leadership with significant coefficient of determination ($\beta = -.7311$ & P -value = .0000). Thus, the mediation offered the outcomes of all the four mediation paths and now decision is required that whether it is partial mediation of full mediation. The results of mediation revealed that employees' resilience partially mediated relationship toxic leadership and employees' performance due to decrease in coefficient values from (-.7311) (direct relationship) to (-.4743) (indirect relationship) after inclusion of employees' resilience and mediator. These results also supported the clues from existing literature about the desired relationships among the research

variables in different situations and contexts. Therefore, from these mediation result, hypothesis is partially accepted.

DISCUSSION

The toxic leadership, characterized by diverse behaviors like lack of empathy, trust and inspiration that have significant negative effects on employees' performance (Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser, 2007). In higher institutions, where intellectual engagement and teamwork are crucial, presence of toxic leadership can disrupt administrative functioning and academic practices (Chua & Murray, 2015). The teachers under toxic leadership experience increased anxiety, stress, and emotional exhaustion as psychological distress can impair cognitive functions & diminish work competence, commitment, performance and resilience (Pelletier, Kottke & Sirotnik, 2019). The resilience is ability to recover from adversity, can potentially shield the negative effects of toxic leadership, leading to variations in performance outcomes (Khan, Khan & Mughal, 2023). The toxic leadership reduces satisfaction at workplace thereby creating the hostile working environment, and dissatisfied employees are less inspired and involved, leading towards a decline in their performances (Rizwan, Bilal, Zia, Rehman & Rehman, 2024). The dissatisfaction experiences over toxic leadership discourages the employees from attaining the desired tasks and inspire them to look for better professional opportunities (Hari, Josua, Arini, Zen & Pramukty, 2024). Toxic leaders usually foster competition and uncertainty amid team members, that ultimately disrupting teamwork and collaboration that are indispensable for higher performances. Thus, the toxic leadership has diverse effects upon employees' motivation and performance in institutions.

The resilient employees are usually well equipped to manage stress and maintain their equanimity in face of toxic leadership as their ability to stay calm can help them perform their tasks effectively despite the adverse conditions (Britt, Shen, Sinclair & Klieger, 2016). The resilient individuals tend to reframe negative experiences positively and this cognitive approach can help them to sustain engagement and motivation, so, sustaining their performance (Stokes, Smith, Wall, Moore, Ward & Cronshaw, 2018). Resilient employees have strong social support systems, both outside and within workplace that provide emotional support and practical intelligence, helping them to cope better while maintaining performances (Athota, Budhwar & Malik, 2020a). In this drive, implementing resilience initiatives can equip employees with diverse skills needed to cope with toxic leadership, possibly qualifying its negative effects on performance (Marjolein & Hatak, 2022). Thus, creating an inclusive and supportive work environment can enhance employees' resilience, providing them with essential resources opportunities to withstand toxic leadership (Susanto, Supardi, Parmenas & Soehadi, 2023). The study revealed that toxic leadership has negative association with employees' performance (Khan et al., 2023), the adverse association of toxic leadership with resilience, whereas positive association between employees' resilience and employees' performance. Thus, these results provide significant information in reaching the conclusion of current study based upon current and previous research studies.

CONCLUSION

The research on impact of toxic leadership on employees' performance, mainly in higher education institutions reveals significant diverse outcomes. Toxic leadership practices lead to psychological

distress, increased turnover intentions, reduced job satisfaction, and disrupted team dynamics. Thus, resilient employees in higher institutions show less impact on performance, sustain higher teaching effectiveness and research output, and show lower absenteeism and higher work output even under toxic leadership. Higher institutions can mitigate negative effects of toxic leadership by nurturing resilience over different initiatives and programs, promoting positive leadership behaviors, creating supportive working environments, and providing employees' assistance programs. Thus, investing in resilience-building initiatives, addressing toxic leadership practices are vital for taming employee performance & institutional health in higher education context. By doing so, institutions can ensure productive, motivated & engaged workforce, capable of thriving even in challenging environment. Therefore, the present confirmed undesirable influence of toxic leadership on employees' resilience and performance while positive relationship between employees' resilience and performance as per results of current study. In this linking, some recommendations have been extracted from conclusion of current study.

Recommendation

1. The toxic leadership has adverse relationships with the employees' commitment, motivation and performance as per the clues from previous studies and as per results from the current research study. Therefore, institutions are required to practices of toxic leadership for better outcomes from diverse perspectives.
2. The employees' resilience is important for the institutions in attaining desired and leading outcomes due to employees' readiness for showing their efforts and potentials towards the realization of desired outcomes. Thus, institutions are required to focus more on resilience to ensure the outcome as per desired standards.
3. The employees' performance denotes the utmost commitment and enthusiasm of employees that how to attain the assigned tasks to ensure the sustainable development. The institutions are thus required to emphasized more upon the employees undaunted efforts and motivation to realize the institutional objectives.
4. The future researchers are required to use some other mediators or moderators in linking the toxic leadership and employees' performance in higher institutions as well as other contexts to extract some new information, contribute existing knowledge database about issues under considerations in present research.

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