



Research Paper

Predicting incivility behaviors in the workplace based on toxic leadership In the municipalities of Tehran province

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Receive:

27 September 2024

Revise:

31 October 2024

Accept:

7 December 2024

Published online:

20 December 2024

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to predict incivility behaviors in the workplace based on toxic leadership in the municipalities of Tehran province. This study was in the field of applied research in terms of its purpose and descriptive and correlational in terms of its research method. The statistical population of the study consisted of 544 employees working in the municipalities of Tehran province. 225 people were selected as statistical samples based on the Cochran formula and simple random sampling method. The data collection tools were the standard questionnaires of incivility in the workplace (Cortina et al, 2001) and toxic leadership (Schmidt, 2008). To confirm the validity of the research tools, face and content validity were used, and the validity of the questionnaires was assessed as good. In order to analyze the collected data, the Pearson correlation coefficient test and multiple regression (stepwise) were used by the SPSS statistical software. The findings of the study indicated that there is a positive and significant relationship between toxic leadership and its dimensions (abusive supervision, autocratic leadership, narcissism, ambition, and unpredictability) and incivility behaviors in the workplace. The results of the study showed that the components of unpredictability and abusive supervision are the best predictors of the variable of incivility behaviors in the workplace.

Keywords:

Incivility in the workplace,
toxic leadership,
unpredictability,
abusive supervision.

Please cite this article as (APA): Muostafazadeh, D, Shivani Kariz, M.(2024). Predicting incivility behaviors in the workplace based on toxic leadership In the municipalities of Tehran province. *Journal of human resource management perspective*, 1 (2), 87-102.

Sponsored by: Institute of Samamos Publications	https://www.doi.org/10.22034/jpjhrm.2024.494556.1014	
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Extended Abstract

Introduction

In today's world, human resources are considered the most valuable asset of an organization, and the cost perspective on them is disappearing. Competent human resources are useful and rare for the organization, and they are not easily modeled, imitated, or replaced, and they lead to sustainable competitive advantage (Shokoh & Nikpour, 2019). In addition to positive organizational behaviors such as citizenship behaviors, there is another type of organizational behavior that is called negative behavior in the workplace. These types of behaviors are carried out with the aim of harming people within the organization or the organization itself. Negative behaviors have different scope and intensity, some of them are severe. Many are subtle and small. However, many theorists argue that most negative behaviors in the workplace occur in low frequency and intensity (Ghaedamini Harouni et al, 2023). Covert and subtle forms of misconduct have led to the emergence of a new area of research called workplace incivility. Workplace misconduct ranges from mild behaviors such as ignoring a person to severe behaviors such as violence. Incivility is a type of misconduct that leads to the breakdown and loss of communication and empathy. In the workplace, incivility occurs when norms of mutual respect in the workplace are violated (Amerion, 2017). The study of deviant work behaviors that disrupt organizational norms and threaten the health of the organization and its employees is an important topic. Studies have categorized these behaviors into different categories. These include individual and organizational deviance, constructive and destructive deviance, and production, financial, political, and personal aggression (Tabeli & Bagheri, 2015). Impoliteness is a type of misbehavior that leads to a breakdown and loss of communication and empathy. In the workplace, rude behavior occurs when norms of mutual respect in the workplace are violated. Impoliteness is at the lowest end of the continuum of misconduct in the workplace (Morris, 2019). One of the variables that seems to affect the type of leadership style of employees in the organization is the type of leadership style. One of the issues and problems that most organizations deal with is the issue of leadership and guidance of human resources. In fact, by using leadership styles, managers can have a different impact on these resources as well as on the existence, vitality, and effectiveness of the organization, because leaders and managers, by adopting appropriate styles, can provide a favorable environment to create a sense of hope, strengthen optimism, and reduce worry and anxiety in human resources; but in some organizations, managers neglect to use productive styles or are unwilling to use such styles. The result of such decisions in the long run will cause employee dissatisfaction, and working in the organization will be accompanied by fear, worry, and anxiety for them. One of the undesirable leadership styles is the toxic leadership style (Ghadirzadeh, 2022). Toxic leadership is a process in which a leader regularly uses abusive and anti-subordinate behaviors to dominate his followers and achieve his required goals. Divisiveness, imposing toxic orders on subordinates, inflexibility, aggression and bullying of subordinates, imposing social deprivation on them, forcing them to do hard work, blaming, threatening to fire them, humiliating, hiding, deceiving, stifling dissenting voices and ridicule, ignoring opinions are all characteristics and traits of toxic leaders (Dehghani, 2023). Also, in educational environments, toxic leadership is accompanied by behaviors such as insidious workplace behaviors, workplace aggression, abuse, aggressive behaviors, instability, intimidation, bullying, and absenteeism (Paché, 2022). Given the above assumptions, the main question of the present study is whether incivility behaviors in the workplace can be predicted based on toxic leadership in the municipalities of Tehran province?



Theoretical framework

Toxic Leadership Toxic leadership is defined as a persistent pattern of leadership behaviors that are self-serving and harmful to followers, teams, and organizations. This form of leadership does not simply involve a lack of effective management skills, but rather describes willful aggression or indifference toward followers and the organization. Toxic leadership is premeditated, meaning it is not accidental (Hight et al, 2019). Other definitions of toxic leadership refer to extreme and intentional behaviors such as manipulation, intimidation, and dissent. Typically, not all bad and toxic leadership behaviors are accompanied by positive behaviors in most people. For example, people who present themselves as toxic are often perceived as attractive or charismatic. This phenomenon can make it difficult to identify toxic leaders (Pirayesh & Akbarian, 2018). **Incivility in the Workplace** To better understand behavioral issues, it is useful and valuable to identify the two dimensions of the behavior continuum in question. For this purpose, politeness is discussed first. Politeness is defined in the dictionary as “politeness and good behavior towards others”. Politeness goes beyond formal rules of etiquette and includes paying attention, considering it important, and treating others with respect. When disagreement or disagreement and discussion with others occur (Shamshiri et al, 2018). Politeness can be considered to include taking the time and enthusiasm to engage in substantive discussions and a sincere desire to find common ground. Politeness in the workplace refers to norms of mutual respect and includes behaviors that are considered essential in dealing with others (Hossny et al, 2023).

(Dehghani, 2023) in his research examined the relationship between toxic leadership and employee deviant behavior with regard to the mediating role of managers' self-efficacy and concluded that there was a positive and significant relationship between the components of destructive leadership, including egocentrism and neglect, bullying and threats, and employee deviant behavior, but there was no relationship between the component of abuse and employee deviant behavior. The results of the study (Nazemi, 2023), which examined the role of toxic leadership in deviant behavior and job performance of employees of the Ardabil Engineering System Organization, showed that there is a positive relationship between toxic leadership and the occurrence of employee deviant behavior, and there is a negative and significant relationship between toxic leadership style and employee job performance.

Research Methodology

The research method was descriptive-correlation. The statistical population of the study consisted of 544 staff members working in the municipalities of **Tehran** province. The sample size was determined based on the Cochran formula as 225 people and simple random sampling method was used. The data collection method was library and field. The data collection tools were the standard questionnaires of toxic leadership (Schmidt, 2008) and incivility in the workplace (Cortina et al, 2001). Face and content validity were used to determine the validity of the research tool. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to determine the reliability of the research tools. In order to analyze the collected data, Pearson's correlation coefficient test and multiple regression were used by the SPSS statistical software.

Research Findings

The results of descriptive statistics related to demographic information shown in Table (2) indicated that 74% of the sample members were male employees and 26% of the sample members were female employees. 14% of the sample members were employees with an age range of (20-30) years, 34% of the sample members were employees with an age range of (31-40) years, 37% of the sample members were employees with an age range of (41-50) years, and 15% of the sample members were employees with an age range of (51-60) years. 3% of the sample members were employees with a diploma, 18% of the sample members



were employees with an associate's degree, 39% of the sample members were employees with a bachelor's degree, 37% of the sample members were employees with a master's degree, and 3% of the sample members were employees with a doctoral degree. 36% of the sample members were employees with less than 10 years of work experience, 43% of the sample members were employees with an experience of (11-20) years, and 21% of the sample members were employees with more than 20 years of work experience. Descriptive statistics related to the research variables showed that the highest average of the toxic leadership variable components related to the abusive supervision component with a mean of 23.21 with a standard deviation of 4.009, the lowest average of the toxic leadership variable related to the narcissism component with a mean of 20.91 with a standard deviation of 2.288, the average of the incivility variable in the workplace was 21.67 with a standard deviation of 2.609. The inferential findings of the research showed that both existing components (unpredictability, abusive supervision) can be a good predictor of power (incivility in the workplace). Also, the unpredictability variable has the greatest effect, because for every one unit change in the unpredictability variable (0.395), a unit change in the incivility variable in the workplace is created. Therefore, the research hypothesis that incivility behaviors in the workplace affect The basis of the poisonous leadership in the municipalities of Tehran province is predictable and confirmed.

Conclusion

The main hypothesis is to predict incivility behaviors in the workplace based on toxic leadership in the municipalities of Tehran province. The results of this hypothesis are consistent with and supported by the findings of the study (Dehghani, 2023). The results of the study indicated that there was a positive and significant relationship between the components of destructive leadership, including self-centeredness and neglect, bullying and threats, and deviant behavior and incivility of employees. The result is explained as follows: municipal managers, as one of the most important organizations for the maintenance of cities, have complex duties and responsibilities in achieving urban management. In general, the performance of municipal managers as leaders can lead to an increase in the quality of employee performance in work processes, because the performance results of organizations are closely related to the role of the leader in managing that organization. If the leader does not have the necessary competence and toxic leaders work for themselves or against the goals of their organization, an ineffective environment is created. An environment in which performance and effectiveness are very poor and job dissatisfaction of individuals is high. The first specific hypothesis of the research predicts incivility behaviors in the workplace based on the dimension of offensive supervision. The results of this hypothesis are consistent with and supported by the findings of the study (Nazemi, 2023). The results of the research indicated that there is a positive relationship between toxic leadership and the occurrence of deviant behaviors of employees, and a negative and significant relationship between toxic leadership style and employee job performance. In explaining this hypothesis, it can be stated that leaders encourage others to move beyond their personal interests towards what is best for the group or organization, and by eliminating ineffective patterns of behavior and replacing them with new ones, they help the organization adapt to its environment; therefore, organizational leaders play an effective role in the organization in carrying out their duties to support, guide, and assist the municipality. However, sometimes the leader deviates from his duty by performing inappropriate behaviors and actions and disrupts all equations. The second specific hypothesis of the research predicts incivility behaviors in the workplace based on the dimension of autocratic leadership. The results of this hypothesis are consistent with and supported by the findings of the research (Ghadirzadeh, 2022). He acknowledged in his



research that toxic leadership had a positive and significant effect on turnover intentions and deviant behaviors. The result of testing this hypothesis is explained as follows: Autocratic leadership is known as authoritarian leadership, which is characterized by individual control over all decisions and little input from group members. Autocratic leaders make choices based on their own ideas and judgments and rarely accept ideas from supporters. The third specific hypothesis predicts incivility behaviors in the workplace based on the narcissism dimension. The results of this hypothesis are consistent with and supported by the findings of the research (Ghaedamini Harouni et al, 2023). The results of the study showed that there is a significant negative relationship between social capital and deviant behaviors in the workplace, and there is a significant positive relationship between toxic leadership and deviant behaviors in the workplace, and toxic leadership also moderates the relationship between social capital and deviant behaviors in the workplace. The result is explained as follows: Narcissism is a personality disorder that is considered as a "pervasive pattern of grandiosity, need for admiration, feeling entitled to good things, and lack of empathy." These traits are shown in other definitions of toxic leadership, in which leaders are described as self-serving and act with a sense of self-aggrandizement. The fourth specific hypothesis of the study predicts incivility behaviors in the workplace based on the dimension of ambition. The results of this hypothesis are consistent with and supported by the findings of the study (Karimi, 2021). He concluded that toxic leadership has a negative and significant effect on job satisfaction and the occurrence of deviant behaviors of employees. The result is explained as follows: the ambition of the leader means the manager's attempt to show himself superior in the organization and attribute the positive work of others to himself and abuse the organizational position and put pressure on other employees. For this reason, ambitious people are often drawn to hypocrisy; Because without hypocrisy, their sense of ambition is not saturated. The fifth specific hypothesis predicts incivility behaviors in the workplace based on the dimension of unpredictability. The results of this hypothesis are consistent with and supported by the findings of the study (Morris, 2019). He concluded that the use of toxic leadership causes job dissatisfaction, absenteeism, lack of commitment, and ultimately organizational incivility among employees. The result is explained as follows: unpredictability means performing untimely and inappropriate tasks, behaviors, and actions by the manager and involving the organizational atmosphere with his own volatile mood; Therefore, it can be argued that toxic leaders, by performing untimely and inappropriate behaviors and actions, distort the atmosphere of the organization with their volatile moods, and by performing behaviors that are not under their control, they cause confusion among employees, which leads to dissatisfaction among their employees. Based on the results of the present study, it is suggested that the use of managers with the psychological characteristics of such leaders should be strictly avoided, and for this purpose, valid measures of toxic leadership, such as the Schmidt questionnaire, can be used to detect these characteristics in the management options proposed for organizations. It is suggested that efforts be made through the application of meritocracy, reform of the incentive and punishment system, and supervision and removal of ambiguity from jobs so that if a manager shows a tendency towards toxic leadership, he will not have a means to fulfill his desires. Managers of various municipal departments should focus their efforts on employees' understanding of the fairness of rewards, procedures, and interactions, and trust in the organization and managers, which will lead to greater commitment and satisfaction, less turnover, and ultimately a reduction in incivility in the workplace.