

The Degree of Practicing Toxic Leadership by School Principals and its Relationship to the Level of Psychological Well-being out of Teachers Perspective in public schools

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Abstract

The study aimed to show the degree of school leaders' practicing of toxic leadership, the level of psychological well-being, and the relationship between the two variables from the teachers' point of view in public schools in Riyadh; as they represent the study population. A random sample of (252) male and female teachers was selected. The two researchers designed a questionnaire as study tool consisting of two aspects: First: (toxic practicing); In three fields, the second (psychological well-being); In six fields. The results showed that the degree to which school leaders practice toxic leadership is (low), and that the level of psychological well-being is (high)

Keywords: educational leadership, destructive leadership, psychological well-being, job satisfaction.

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Introduction

First of all, the researches thank Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University represented

by scientific research deanship for providing financial support for this study.

Successful leadership theories have been keen on effectiveness and efficiency to fully

achieve optimal investment of organizations' resources as complete inclusion, that guarantees achieving a harmonious balance between production on one hand and workers on the other hand. Therefore, the theories of the scientific school and the humanist school of management failed because they violated that balance which the contingency leadership theories understood.

Since the school is one of the most important educational institutions in society, the risks of toxic leadership are more evident in the school environment, and teachers are victims of high leaders, as teachers are the most affected by school leadership decisions, and in the context of attention to the psychological conditions surrounding teachers' work in the school environment, it was stressed that attention should be paid to the study of the psychological state of teachers and the factors affecting them from their point of view (Collie, Shapka). Perry, & Martin, 2015).

The role of psychological well-being in the quality of the work environment in educational institutions has been extended by many studies showing positive relationships between the level of individual psychological well-being, and many

variables, including the level of academic achievement, social skills, and career satisfaction (Robertson & Cooper, 2010).

Problem Statement:

As a result of several reasons, the top of which is the absence of specific criteria for selecting leaders in public education schools. Also, the absence of a psychological examination of the appointed leaders before they become in charge. New teachers get shocked by this kind of toxic leadership, that is psychologically and practically devastating. This study was designed to clear the reality and analyze the problem in order to develop solutions that contribute in eliminating or reducing it to avoid its dangerous impact on education.

The theoretical and practical importance of the study:

- The study sheds light on the concept of psychological well-being and its importance, the concept of toxic leadership, and the negative effects and risks of this behavior on the psychological well-being.
- The study contributes to pay the attention of administrative decision-makers in the Ministry of Education to the need of developing criteria for selecting school

leaders, and to put the mental health status in consideration as a criterion for selection.

- The study provides two measures to show the level of psychological well-being and the level of toxic leadership, which can be developed and used in other studies.

Study Objectives:

- Exposing the degree of practicing toxic leadership by school leaders in public education in Riyadh, from the teachers' point of view.

- Testing the relationship between the degree of toxic leadership practiced by school leaders in public education in the Riyadh region and the psychological well-being of teachers from their point of view.

- Detecting whether there are statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the opinions of the study sample due to the following variables (gender, experience, educational stage).

Study Questions:

- What is the degree to which school leaders practice toxic leadership in public education in Riyadh from the teachers' point of view?

- What is the relationship between the degree of practicing toxic leadership in

public education in the Riyadh region and the psychological well-being of teachers?

- Are there statistically significant differences at the significance level ($\alpha=0.05$) in the study sample opinions attributable to the following variables (gender, experience, educational stage)?

Study frameworks:

- Objectivity: toxic leadership and psychological well-being.
- Humanity: male and female teachers.
- Spatial: government schools in the Riyadh region.
- Temporal: Second semester 2019/2020.

Study Terminology:

1. Toxic leadership: It came to light as a term for the first time in 1996 by the scientist Wicker (1996), but until now there is no standard definition for toxic leadership. Some call it "destructive leadership" (Padilla; Hogan & Kaiser, 2007). Blumen (P 292009Blumen,) defines toxic leadership as "a process in which leaders, because of their destructive behavior and/or dysfunctional personal characteristics, generate a serious and lasting toxic effect on individuals, families, organizations and entire communities."

2. Psychological well-being: Ryff (1989) identified it as a concept that represents a multidimensional structure that includes the following psychological dimensions (Kurt &Demirbolat, 2019):

1. Evaluation of the person for himself and his past positively.
2. Professional evolution and continuous development.
3. The belief in the importance of life and that it is a meaningful and significant life.
4. The existence of positive social relationships with others.
5. Managing life effectively, away from interference
6. Making decisions independently.

Theoretical literature and previous studies:

Kusy and Holloway (2009) mentioned that 64% of the respondents in their study reported that they are suffering from working under toxic leadership. Likewise, (94%) of them indicated that they had worked with a toxic leader at some point of their careers.

In a toxic leadership environment, it seems that "yes" people who are both fundamentalists and hypocrites are rewarded

and promoted to leadership positions, while people who fully share their fully mental resources, critical thinking, questioning and inquiry skills are excluded from decision-making and influence positions. Therefore, toxic leadership often causes high regression rates, low productivity, lack of innovation and interdepartmental conflict. (Mehta and Maheshwari, 2013)

There are three consequences of toxic leadership using power and control over intangible capital. The first is at the level of "intellectual capital", which is suffocating creativity. The second is at the level of "relational capital" which is the lack of communication by isolating people and strictly controlling of information. The third is at the level of "organizational structural capital". Productive systems are unlikely to develop under toxic leadership. Under the toxic leaders; Employees have two options: either to „adapt“ to 'leave'. (Wilson-Starks, 2003)

Indicators of toxic leading behavior:

It's not surprising that educational organizations are destroyed by toxic leaders, Goldman (2006) stated that toxic leaders are not alike. A distinction was noticed between several types of toxic leading behavior, the most prominent of which are; **Disabling;**

where they stop the flow of creativity and innovation and highlighting the capabilities of employees and the brilliance of their skills. Also, **passive hostility**; especially for those who disagree with his opinion, even if they were right. As well as **sabotaging the team**; to kill the confidence among them, and to be in control (divide and conquer) or to isolate those who disagree with him from his colleagues and encourage them to communicate with him less often. Among the behaviors of the toxic leader is to **intimidate the target employee**, exaggerate his mistakes, or underestimate and demean his achievements. He also **imposes his domination on his employees** and marginalized their roles in the system. As well as **deceiving** them and using his influence to manipulate them.

Psychological well-being:

The concept of psychological well-being is a major concept in positive psychology, and it expresses the ability of the individual to find the required balance between life events and his individual and social interests, and psychological well-being must be understood within a comprehensive framework for all aspects of an individual's life. Other concepts, including: self-

fulfillment, maturity, and independency. (Isgor&Haspolat, 2016)

McGregor and Little (1989) stated that psychological well-being means, briefly, an appreciation of the value and purpose of life. Waterman (1993) defined it as the ability of the individual to exert the appropriate effort to develop his social and profession character. The psychological well-being is also related to several psychological aspects as The fulfillment of these needs – which are , for example: independency, competence, ability to establish relationships - requires a degree of skills, and these skills in turn are related to the level of psychological well-being of the individual (Rayan and Deci, 2001).

Previous studies:

In terms of toxic leadership, Aubrey, 2012 has studied the effect of toxic leadership, aiming to examine the potential relationship between cause and effect between toxic leaders and harmful cultures that they are nurturing. He concluded that although characteristics may be useful in identifying high leaders, they do not amount to a holistic view and how the organization's culture can contribute to the toxicity of its leaders. Culture is likely to be a key factor in predicting behavior and outcomes.

In a study (Mehta and Maheshwari, 2013) entitled: "Consequence of Toxic Leadership on Employee Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment", the main objective of this study was to search for answers to questions related to leadership behaviors that their conductors see as harmful not only to their psychological well-being but also to the luxury of the institution. The results revealed that there is a correlation between toxic leadership and poor organizational commitment, as well as a correlation between toxic leadership and job dissatisfaction among the employees.

Green (2014) also conducted a research titled "Toxic Leadership in Educational Organizations," focusing on toxic leadership in educational institutions - particularly with regard to its prevalence and types, as well as early characteristics and indicators of detection of its outbreak. The results of the study revealed early warning signs of detecting toxic leadership, most notably is the demoralizing environment. The study recommended the necessity of training a second backup staff of leaders who will participate in the preparation process to choose leaders for schools, colleges and universities in order to be better prepared for effective leadership, and also to assess the possibility to be influenced by toxic

leadership behavior and thus start treating or avoiding them.

As for psychological well-being, Al-Zuabi (2009) conducted a study entitled : "Quality of social work relationships and their relationship to the level of occupational commitment and psychological well-being of employees", which aimed to examine the relationship of the quality of social work relationships (relationship between colleagues, relationship with superiors) to the level of occupational commitment and the level of employee sense of psychological well-being at work, and conducted on 159 employees and workers working in a canned food production plant. The results of the study indicated that social labor relations should be given appropriate attention, given their significant role in a number of organizational and individual outcomes, which are little of a concern for departments, especially industrial ones.

Isgor&Haspolat also conducted isgor&Haspolat, 2016) a Study entitled: Determining levels of psychological well-being and job satisfaction levels in different occupations, which aimed to identify the relationship between job satisfaction and psychological well-being in a number of different functions in the areas of education,

security, justice, health, engineering, manufacturing, and the researchers discussed the differentiation between levels of psychological well-being and job satisfaction through different areas of work, income and service levels, and the results of the study showed a medium positive relationship. Between the level of psychological well-being and the level of job satisfaction, the results also showed a differentiation between levels of psychological well-being and job satisfaction attributable to the variables in the field of work and income level.

Kurt and Demirbolat also conducted a Study entitled: Survey of the relationship perception of psychological capital, psychological well-being and job satisfaction of teachers, the aim of which was to identify the relationship between the perception of psychological capital as an independent variable, and between psychological well-being and job satisfaction as a variable, and between psychological well-being and job satisfaction as a variable, and between psychological well-being and job satisfaction as a variable, and the results of the study showed that the perception of psychological capital was "well" and that their level of functional satisfaction and

psychological well-being was highly achieved. According to the results of the analysis, the study found that the perception of psychological capital of teachers affects job satisfaction and levels of psychological well-being significantly, and that job satisfaction has a partial intermediate role in the relationship between the perception of teachers' psychological capital and their level of psychological well-being.

Comments on previous studies:

The current study agrees with previous studies on the topic of toxic leadership and its relationship to institutional well-being and job commitment job satisfaction as a study (Mehta and Maheshwari, 2013) and (Aubrey, 2012) but it differs from it in the kind of institution as they are related to military institutions while the current study is related to Educational institutions

studies, while consistent with the study (Green, 2014) in the subject, institution and educational field, the advantage of the current study as the study that benefited from the subject of study of military leadership and its application to the field of education in the Arab world. The current study on psychological well-being and in the field (education) also agrees with the study (Kurt &Demirbolat, 2019),

(Isgor&Haspolat, 2016) and (Zoabi, 2009), with which the current study differed in that it dealt with the impact of toxic leadership on psychological well-being

Methodology and procedures:

Statistical criterion:

The five-point Likert scale was used to correct the study tools, by giving each of its items a score out of its five degrees (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree), which are represented digitally as (5, 4, 3, 2, 1) respectively, the following scale was used for the purpose of analyzing the results:

from 1.00-2.33	From 2.34-3.67	From 2.34-3.67
little	medium	large

So, the scale was calculated through the following equation:

$$\frac{\text{max scale (5)-min scale (1)}}{\text{no. Of the items required (3)}} = \frac{5-1}{3} = 1.33$$

Then add the answer (1.33) to the end of each item

Validity of study tool:

To get the indications of the validity of the study tool of the scale, the correlation coefficients of the scale items with the score for the aspect to which they belong in an

exploratory sample from outside the study sample consisted of (40) female and male teachers, and the items correlation coefficients with the tool as a whole ranged between (0.32-0.94), and the following table shows that.

Table (1) Correlation coefficients between items and the total score

Item no.	Correlation coefficients with the tool	Item no.	Correlation coefficients with the tool	Item no.	Correlation coefficients with the tool
1	.88(**)	16	.92(**)	31	.46(**)
2	.76(**)	17	.91(**)	32	.45(**)
3	.75(**)	18	.90(**)	33	.45(**)
4	.73(**)	19	.55(**)	34	.63(**)
5	.86(**)	20	.47(**)	35	.33(*)

Item no.	Correlation coefficients with the tool	Item no.	Correlation coefficients with the tool	Item no.	Correlation coefficients with the tool
6	.92(**)	21	.58(**)	36	.44(**)
7	.92(**)	22	.53(**)	37	.47(**)
8	.94(**)	23	.58(**)	38	.48(**)
9	.87(**)	24	.55(**)	39	.49(**)
10	.94(**)	25	.53(**)	40	.45(**)
11	.92(**)	26	.42(**)	41	.39(*)
12	.93(**)	27	.32(*)	42	.45(**)
13	.90(**)	28	.44(**)	43	.35(*)
14	.94(**)	29	.54(**)	44	.50(**)
15	.92(**)	30	.38(*)	45	.42(**)

* Statistical function at the significance level (0.05). ** Statistical function at the level of significance (0.01).

It should be noted that all correlation coefficients were of acceptable scores and statistically significant, and therefore none of these items were deleted.

Reliability of study tool:

To ensure the reliability of the study tool, the (test-retest) method was used by applying the scale, and re-applying it after two weeks to a group outside the study sample consisting of (40) male/female teachers, and then the Pearson correlation

coefficient was calculated between their estimates on both times.

The reliability coefficient was also calculated using the internal consistency method according to the Cronbach Alpha equation, and Table (2) shows the internal consistency coefficient according to the Cronbach Alpha equation and the return reliability of the aspects and these values were considered appropriate for the purposes of this study.

Table (2) Cronbach-alpha internal consistency coefficient and return reliability coefficient for axes

field	Re-applying reliability	Internal consistency
Toxic leadership	0.91	0.85
Psychological well-being	0.88	0.76

The study sample:

The sample was chosen randomly, and the number of completed analyzed questionnaires was (252), and Table No. (3) shows the distribution of the sample according to the demographic information shown during it:

Table (3) Frequencies and percentages according to the study variables

	groups	frequency	percentage
gender	male	58	23.0
	female	194	77.0
experience	Less than 5 years	36	14.3
	5 years or more	216	85.7
	primary	101	40.1
Educational stage	Middle/preparatory	62	24.6
	secondary	89	35.3
	total	252	100.0

The first question: What is the degree to which school leaders practice toxic leadership in public education in the Riyadh region from the teachers ‘point of view?

To answer this question, the table below illustrates that.

Table (4) the arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the items related to the degree of school leaders’ practice in public education in the Riyadh region of toxic leadership from the teachers’ viewpoint arranged in descending order according to the arithmetic averages

rank	No.	Item	arithmetic averages	standard deviations	percentage
1	1	Excessively practices control and administrative authoritarianism.	2.02	1.467	40.4
2	3	Creates an environment that encourages destructive interactions with subordinates.	1.94	1.456	38.8
3	2	Discourages colleagues who seek to introduce creative initiatives and development.	1.73	1.368	34.6

rank	No.	Item	arithmetic averages	standard deviations	percentage
4	12	Uses behavioral, verbal or suggestive threats, systemic or otherwise.	1.72	1.322	34.4
5	11	Tries to under-estimate colleagues who may not agree with him.	1.69	1.315	33.8
6	8	Causes harm, whether psychologically, morally, or professionally, to those who violate his decisions.	1.67	1.330	33.4
7	5	Destroys the reliability of communication, whether between management and between the work team or between members of the team.	1.66	1.291	33.2
8	4	Destroys virtuous educational values	1.63	1.292	32.6
8	6	Creates a toxic organizational culture that pollutes the work environment and makes it repulsive.	1.63	1.322	32.6
10	16	Neglects the psychological, family, or societal circumstances of his colleagues, especially those who disagrees with him.	1.62	1.259	32.4
11	9	Practices the policy of exclusion with me or with some of my colleagues.	1.61	1.266	32.2
12	10	Tends to have negative comparisons; he destroys the efforts of an enthusiastic colleague by comparing them with the failures of a careless other.	1.60	1.248	32.0
13	15	Tends towards rude and arbitrary behavior in his administrative and personal practices.	1.59	1.229	31.8

rank	No.	Item	arithmetic averages	standard deviations	percentage
13	18	Communicates in a way that lacks civility and mutual respect.	1.59	1.232	31.8
15	14	Tries to erode the employee's self-confidence.	1.56	1.198	31.2
16	7	Harasses colleagues who seek excellence.	1.51	1.182	30.2
17	13	Discredits those who may disagree with him or fear his distinction.	1.50	1.141	30.0
18	17	Mocks behaviors when he tries to treat them with colleagues.	1.48	1.113	29.6
19	19	May use physical violence in extreme cases.	1.17	.715	23.4
20	20	May use harassment in the workplace with anyone sometimes.	1.14	.565	22.8
		Toxic leadership	1.60	1.054	32.0

Table (4) shows that the arithmetic averages ranged between (1.14-2.02), where Item No. (1) which states “Excessively practices control and administrative authoritarianism.” came in first rank with an arithmetic average of (2.02), while Item No. (20) and the text of it: “May use harassment in the workplace with anyone sometimes.”“(colleague, parent / guardian, students ... etc) physically / verbally or directly or by phone / or messages” in the last rank, with an average of (1.14)). The arithmetic mean of toxic leadership as a whole was (1.60) with a (low) degree.

The second question: What is the level of psychological well-being of the study sample?

To answer this question, the table below illustrates that.

Table (5) The arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the items related to the level of psychological well-being arranged in descending order according to the arithmetic means

rank	No.	item	arithmetic averages	standard deviations	percentage
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rank	No.	item	arithmetic averages	standard deviations	percentage
1	38	Colleagues trust me and I trust them	4.53	.795	90.6
2	43	I feel confident, self-respect and positive in the work environment.	4.47	.899	89.4
3	39	I can easily form friendships and personal relationships with others in the work environment.	4.44	.856	88.8
4	26	I am good at managing my professional and life responsibilities in an appropriate manner.	4.42	.887	88.4
5	44	I took advantage of my mistakes in the past, and making them do not prevent me from feeling good about myself.	4.40	.912	88.0
6	32	I feel hopeful about the future.	4.36	.986	87.2
7	37	I feel happily discussing with colleagues at work.	4.27	1.018	85.4
8	28	I enjoy trying everything new in life and work.	4.17	1.073	83.4
9	33	I enjoy creating and working on future plans.	4.15	1.020	83.0
10	21	I express my opinions with confidence, even if there a disagreement	4.10	1.255	82.0
11	34	I have a clear vision of everything I intend to do in the future.	3.96	1.030	79.2
12	42	I feel I had a lot of positive opportunities during my career.	3.91	1.124	78.2
13	29	I constantly feel challenges that require new roles at work.	3.84	1.236	76.8
14	24	I trust the correctness of my decisions, regardless	3.68	1.340	73.6

rank	No.	item	arithmetic averages	standard deviations	percentage
		of the majority opinion.			
15	23	I am trying to make my views more matching the prevailing views in (work).	3.45	1.409	69.0
16	25	I am ready to convince leaders disagreeing that my decisions are correct thanks to the leadership style in my school.	3.42	1.329	68.4
17	30	I feel confused about situations involving new experiences that are not familiar with me.	2.77	1.354	55.4
18	31	I am concerned about any change in the work environment.	2.72	1.389	54.4
19	22	I feel difficult to express my opinion on controversial issues at work.	2.41	1.460	48.2
20	27	It's difficult to satisfyingly arrange my life	2.36	1.397	47.2
21	40	It's difficult to express my professional problems to others.	2.21	1.302	44.2
22	41	I can't find anyone sharing the same interests and opinions.	2.11	1.278	42.2
23	45	I am disappointed with the level my achievement.	1.76	1.187	35.2
24	36	I have nothing new to offer.	1.58	1.036	31.6
25	35	I feel all my goals were a waste of time.	1.57	1.097	31.4
		Psychological well-being	3.40	.456	68.0

Table (5) shows that the arithmetic averages ranged between (1.57-4.53). Item No. (38), which states "colleagues trust me and trust them," came first with an arithmetic average of (4.53), while Item No. (35) And it states, " I feel all my goals were a waste of time." ranked last, with average

score of (1.57). The arithmetic mean of psychological well-being as a whole was (3.40) with a (high) degree.

The second question: What is the relationship between the degree of school leaders’ toxic practice?

To answer this question, Table (6) illustrates that.

Table (6) Pearson correlation coefficient for the relationship between toxic leadership and psychological well-being

		psychological well-being
Toxic leadership	Correlation coefficient C	.154(*)
	Statistical significance	.014
	No.	252

* Statistical function at the significance level (0.05). ** Statistical significance at the level of significance (0.01).

The fourth question: Does the strength of the relationship between the degree of school leaders “practicing toxic leadership and the psychological well-being of teachers differ from their point of view according to the

following variables (gender, experience, and educational level)?

To answer this question, as shown in the table below.

Table (7) correlation coefficients between the degree of school leaders’ toxic practice leadership and the psychological well-being of teachers according to gender, experience, and educational stage and G-test for the difference between correlation coefficients

		R	No.	L	Statistical significance
gender	male	.113	58	0.36	0.718
	female	.167(*)	194		

experience	Less than 5 years	.055	36	0.612	0.540
	5 years or more	.168(*)	216		
Educational stage	primary	.119	101	0.227	0.820
	middle	.082	62		
	primary	.119	101	0.812	0.417
	secondary	.235(*)	89		
	middle	.082	62	0.93	0.352
	secondary	.235(*)	89		

Recommendations:

Through the results of the study and its conclusions, the following recommendations were reached:

- The two researchers recommend decision-makers that the study tool to be applied when appointing school principals, as part of the psychological examination of appointed leaders before they take over.
- Conducting more research that examines the relationship between leadership and personality-related variables such as job satisfaction, loyalty to the organization, teachers "motivation, identity, and other variables related to teachers" performance that contribute to students' achievement.

Study Summary:

The study revealed the risks of toxic leadership in the school environment, as it caused a decrease in productivity, lack of innovation, and the outbreak of conflict between members of the institution, and the need to pay attention to studying the psychological state of teachers which are related to a number of psychological needs, given that meeting those needs requires a certain amount of . Therefore, the study emphasizes on the need of the administrative decision-makers in the Ministry of Education to develop criteria for selecting school leaders, and considering the mental health status as one selection criteria.

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