



## Understanding the Consequences of Toxic Leadership In the Business Sector: An Empirical Study in Saudi Arabia

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### Abstract

*Toxic leadership behavior has garnered increasing attention in organizational research due to its detrimental effects on employee well-being and organizational performance. The purpose of the study is to investigate the consequences of toxic leadership in Saudi Arabia and aims to find the relation that exists between 8 constructs: toxic leadership and organization trust, toxic leadership and employee engagement, organization trust and job satisfaction, organization trust and organization commitment, organization trust and employee engagement, employee engagement and job satisfaction, employee engagement and organization commitment, job satisfaction, and organization commitment. The research was conducted in the labor market of Saudi Arabia, encompassing both the public sectors and private sectors. The research uses A web-based questionnaire with 211 respondents was used to collect data, and data was analyzed through SPSS and AMOS. The results of the study show that toxic leadership has an inverse relationship with organizational trust and employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment.*

**Keywords:** Toxic Leadership, Business Sector, Saudi Arabia.

### Introduction

Toxic leadership is a combination of managerial practices and organizational dynamics that result in negative and harmful consequences in a business environment. Numerous studies have demonstrated how some local executives' indirect conflict management techniques can affect employee morale among local workers as well as their counterparts back home. Research on the attitudes and values that these leaders employ and uphold, though, that have detrimental effects at the managerial level appears to be lacking.

Several interviews conducted with a randomized sample of respondents in multiple Saudi Arabian-based businesses have revealed that some foreign CEOs adopt a quasi-colonial governor role as a style of leadership. This was accomplished through the application of negative arguments, which are the only means to make improvements that are deemed acceptable, in the control and command management approach.

### Background and Rationale

Toxic Leadership is a growing phenomenon, which continues to get attention from ethicists, industrial and organizational psychologists as well as in media outlets due to the undesirable outcomes that ensue after leaders are entrusted to run organizations. As acknowledged by many authors, the academic discourse regarding toxic leadership is still lagging, with less written about proactive leaders who serve ethically and deliver significant growth and development to their teams. Little or no specific attention has been given to

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the business leaders in the Middle East, and the relatively more academically developed countries; to understand their leadership style and influence on employee behaviors and organizational growth.

Based on the management literature, toxic leadership is considered a behavioral disorder and has significant negative inferences on organizations. This negative impact extends to employee performance, job satisfaction, turnover, and retention. It further entails a myriad of psychological consequences such as work-life conflicts, job stress, emotional draining, anxiety, disrupted social relations, and increased bullying instances among employees. This is concerning because, to achieve the objectives of the company, employees should thrive in relationships that are encouraging, cooperative, and, most importantly, conducive to mutual progress. As previously mentioned, the business sector is a major source of future leaders. Theoretically, it is supposed to help people grow and acquire the abilities needed to lead in various industries. The aforementioned worries, however, imply that the business community might serve as a breeding ground for toxic leaders who have obvious detrimental effects for the duration of their careers, whether in or out of the business world. There is a gap in the knowledge, which complicates efforts to intervene in the creation, the sustenance, and the growth of business leaders who will serve with integrity. This study seeks to address this gap by understanding the consequences of toxic leadership in the business sector in Saudi Arabia this research is structured as follows. The first section describes and discusses the importance and the objectives of the research. The second section reviews the literature and develops the research hypotheses the third section offers the research methodology for testing the relationships between research variables and the fifth section provides future research directions. The concluding section focuses on the managerial implications.

### ***Research Objectives***

This research aims to offer a more comprehensive understanding of the impact that toxic leadership has on employees' engagement, organizational trust, Job Satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Limited empirical research on the connection between toxic leadership and outcomes connected to the workplace is necessary for a more thorough analysis of toxic leadership from an academic perspective. This is necessary, especially for the business sector in Saudi Arabia, This kind of toxic leadership research is needed because, as of yet, no Saudi studies have attempted to evaluate the effects of toxic leadership on organizational commitment in the Saudi Arabia context. That is why such a study has been developed. This study will bridge this gap by understanding the consequences of Toxic Leadership in the Business Sector in Saudi Arabia and adding a contribution to the existing literature. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to examine the following relationships

- To identify the relationship between Toxic Leadership and Employee Engagement
- To identify the relationship between Toxic Leadership and Organizational Trust
- To identify the relationship between Organizational Trust and Employee Engagement
- To identify the relationship between organizational trust and job satisfaction
- To identify The relationship between organizational trust and organizational commitment
- To identify the relationship between employee engagement and job satisfaction
- To identify the Relationship between Employee Engagement and Organizational Commitment
- To identify The Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment

### **Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

Leaders wield significant influence over employees' job security and work roles, and toxic leadership can manifest in various detrimental ways within the leader-employee relationship. For instance, toxic leaders may exploit their authority to foster discord among employees, employing authoritarian, disparag-

ing, and ridiculing behavior that undermines autonomy and job satisfaction. Research indicates that dysfunctional leadership, such as toxic leadership, exerts a more detrimental impact on work engagement, job satisfaction, and burnout compared to functional leadership (Serrano & Reichard, 2011). In contrast, positive and supportive leadership behaviors motivate employees, fostering productivity, engagement, and enthusiasm for their work. When toxic leaders maintain positions of power within organizations, they wield authority that stifles open communication and hampers productivity. The dominance of these leaders in decision-making processes intimidates employees, hindering their personal and professional growth while creating obstacles to achieving organizational goals. Toxic leadership traits breed job insecurity and role ambiguity among employees, leading to diminished work engagement and a depletion of energy, resilience, and perceived significance in their roles. Conversely, the presence of supportive team dynamics plays a crucial role in fostering work engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2008). Team social support acts as a buffer against work-related stressors, bolstering employees' motivation and resilience. When employees feel valued and supported by their peers, their sense of insecurity and ambiguity regarding their roles diminishes, as the collective support received helps mitigate the negative effects of challenging circumstances. Additionally, such social support enhances employees' perceived ability to cope with workplace demands, thereby preventing disengagement and maintaining their commitment to their work (Lee et al., 2024). Employees working under toxic leadership often feel a lack of control over their circumstances, as toxic leaders tend to dominate the dynamics of the working relationship. This domination may manifest through extreme work monitoring, withholding resources or information essential for task completion, and failing to acknowledge employees' contributions. Additionally, toxic leaders demonstrate a lack of concern for employees' well-being, contributing to a negative organizational culture characterized by self-serving motives and workplace bullying behavior (Lee et al. 2024). Employees subjected to toxic leadership may experience attacks on their self-esteem, leading to decreased self-confidence and self-efficacy, which in turn, negatively influences job performance. This erosion of self-esteem and efficacy further exacerbates the detrimental effects of toxic leadership on employees' psychological well-being and organizational effectiveness. This research aims to study the consequences of toxic leadership in the context of Saudi Arabia according to the following research model.

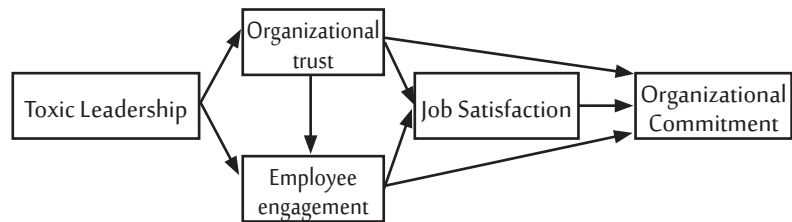


Figure (1) the Study Model

### ***Hypothesis Development***

#### **1- The Relationship between Toxic Leadership and Employee Engagement**

Toxic leadership, as defined by Lipman-Blumen (2005), involves destructive behaviors and dysfunctional qualities that inflict serious and enduring harm on individuals, teams, and organizations. Employee engagement involves "the harnessing of organizational members' selves to their work roles where they employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances" (Jabeen & Rahim, 2020). Research shows that toxic leadership has a negative impact on employee engagement in the sense that engagement is a positive behavior that ignites enthusiasm and propels positive outcomes for both employees and organizations. Engaged employees have a strong sense of dedication to their organization and are willing to exert extra effort in their work roles, resulting in increased task performance (Jabeen & Rahim, 2020). Toxic leadership is defined by behaviors such as excessive control, unattainable demands, and public denigration. These behaviors elevate employees' stress levels and result in burnout. Elevated levels of stress and burnout have a substantial impact on individuals' vitality and passion for their jobs, resulting in a lack of involvement.

When exposed to toxic leadership, employees often experience diminished job satisfaction due to feelings of non-appreciation, lack of support, and unfair treatment. The decline in job satisfaction diminishes motivation, which is an essential element of engagement.

*H1: It is expected that Toxic leadership has a significant negative effect on employee engagement.*

## **2- The Relationship between Toxic Leadership and Organizational Trust**

Organizational trust is defined as behaving candidly, fairly, empathetically, and pragmatically in interactions in and outside the organization. It instills confidence in organizational members regarding workplace conduct and protocols, even in challenging circumstances, fostering positive expectations about organizational practices. Erdal & Budak (2021) assert that toxic leadership behaviors not only damage intra-organizational communication but also diminish organizational trust and commitment, reduce productivity, foster rumors, poison the organizational climate, and contribute to employee turnover. As such, the negative behaviors exhibited by toxic leaders have a significant impact on employees' levels of organizational trust. Furthermore, employees' commitment to the organization plays a crucial role in shaping organizational trust. Behery et al. (2018) find that there is a noteworthy negative correlation between toxic leadership behaviors, including abusive supervision, authoritarian leadership, unpredictability, and affiliation-oriented Organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs). However, the sub-scales of narcissism and self-promotion within toxic leadership did not exhibit significant relationships with either affiliation-oriented or challenge-oriented OCBs. Of particular significance is the strong and positive correlation observed between challenge-oriented OCB and followers' trust. This suggests that when employees engage in behaviors aimed at overcoming challenges and improving organizational effectiveness, they tend to inspire trust among their peers. This trust is likely to foster a positive work environment and enhance organizational dynamics.

Showing favoritism, engaging in discriminatory behavior, and administering unfair treatment are frequently associated with toxic leadership. Employees develop a cynical attitude towards the leadership and, consequently, the organization when they perceive decisions and actions as lacking merit or fairness. This feeling of inequity undermines trust.

*H2: It is expected that Toxic leadership has a significant negative effect on organizational trust.*

## **3- The Relationship between Organizational Trust and Employee Engagement**

Enhancing trust within an organization fosters better collaboration and teamwork. Employees who have confidence in their colleagues and leaders are more inclined to collaborate, exchange information, and assist one another. Efficient collaboration improves employee involvement by establishing a nurturing and unified workplace atmosphere.

Organizational trust plays a pivotal role in facilitating knowledge exchange, thereby enhancing employee engagement. This finding underscores a direct and positive relationship between organizational trust and employee engagement. Additionally, research has indicated that trust enables employees to fulfill their job responsibilities and fosters a sense of duty towards their organization. Scholars often interpret this relationship through the lens of social exchange theory, which posits that when employees perceive fair treatment from the organization, they are inclined to reciprocate such treatment (Alshaabani et al., 2022).

*H3: It is expected that organizational trust has a significant positive effect on employee engagement.*

## **4- The relationship between Organizational Trust and Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction refers to the extent of positive feelings an employee has about their job and workplace (Arter et al. 2017). Managers' trustworthy conduct within the organization cultivates trust among employees towards both their managers and the organization's practices. This, in turn, elevates employee job sat-

isfaction. Organizational trust emerges as a crucial element for enhancing the well-being of organizational members, fostering job satisfaction, and ensuring long-term organizational stability (Arter, 2017).

Trust inside an organization cultivates positive relationships between employees and management. Establishing trust among employees, their leaders, and colleagues fosters enhanced collaboration, mutual respect, and a conducive work environment. Establishing positive relationships is crucial for increasing job satisfaction.

*H4: It is expected that organizational trust has a significant positive effect on job satisfaction.*

#### 5- **The relationship between Organizational Trust and Organizational Commitment**

Organizational commitment is conceptualized as a bond or connection between an individual and the organization and represents the extent to which an individual identifies with and actively participates in a specific organization (Bastug et al. 2016). Organizational trust plays a pivotal role in shaping an organization's identity, fostering stability, and nurturing satisfaction among its members. It catalyzes organizational harmony, mitigating negative conflicts, and bolstering effective problem-solving. The cultivation of organizational trust yields numerous benefits for both the organization and its employees. In environments where organizational trust is cultivated, employees exhibit high morale and loyalty, manifesting in positive interactions with the organization, peers, and supervisors. The correlation between organizational trust and organizational commitment is substantial, representing a cornerstone for organizational prosperity. Trust emerges as a fundamental determinant in fostering organizational commitment, serving as a bedrock for the allegiance individuals have toward their organizations (Rahman et al., 2021). Trust within an organization fosters stronger and more constructive interactions between employees and their leaders. When employees have confidence in their bosses and colleagues, they feel more satisfied with their job and have a stronger sense of being part of the organization, which in turn enhances their commitment to the organization.

*H5: It is expected that organizational trust has a significant positive effect on organizational commitment.*

#### 6- **The Relationship between Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction**

Organizations that prioritize employee engagement often experience success in terms of job satisfaction. Key components and drivers of employee engagement include transformational leadership, transactional leadership, employee communication, organizational communication, and employee involvement. Job satisfaction, in turn, comprises intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction. Organizations play a crucial role in fostering employee engagement at work, and to fulfil this responsibility, they can focus on these drivers of engagement to effectively drive engagement levels (Soon, 2015). The recognition of their contributions and accomplishments also amplifies their contentment. Engagement cultivates a favorable work atmosphere characterized by cooperation, assistance, and reciprocal esteem. An affirmative atmosphere enhances job satisfaction by fostering a sense of appreciation and inclusion among employees, who perceive themselves as integral members of a unified team.

*H6: It is expected that employee engagement has a significant positive effect on job satisfaction.*

#### 7- **The Relationship between Employee Engagement and Organizational Commitment**

The widely accepted definition of organizational commitment describes it as "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization." This commitment is characterized by a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization, and a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization. Commitment is demonstrated through an employee's willingness to work effectively within the organization and their intention to remain in the organization without seeking opportunities elsewhere (Hanaysha, 2016). We can understand employee engagement as "the extent to which an individual is atten-

tive and absorbed in the performance of his or her roles” or a positive and satisfying work-related attitude characterized by three dimensions: vigor, absorption, and dedication. Hanaysha (2016) expects engaged employees to experience these characteristics emotionally, physically, and cognitively. According to Hanaysha (2016), employee engagement has a significant positive effect on organizational commitment. Job satisfaction has a positive correlation with employee commitment to their employer. Engaged employees demonstrate a willingness to exert additional effort in their work, resulting in an increased sense of achievement and connection with the aims of the organization. By exerting more effort, individuals develop a deeper sense of dedication to the organization as they witness the tangible effects of their work.

*H7: It is expected that employee engagement has a significant positive effect on organizational commitment.*

### 8- The Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment

Job satisfaction is often cited as a precursor to organizational commitment. Conversely, research also suggests that organizational commitment can lead to increased job satisfaction. Ultimately, there exists a reciprocal relationship wherein job satisfaction influences organizational commitment, and vice versa. In essence, job satisfaction and organizational commitment are intertwined and can be viewed as mutually reinforcing constructs (Mohammed & Eleswed, 2013). Employees with high organizational commitment are inclined to voluntarily exert maximum effort for the advancement of the organization. Job satisfaction is identified as one of the factors influencing organizational commitment. When employees are content with their roles in the work environment, they often perceive a sense of alignment with the organization and actively engage in company activities. Employees’ perception of the organization and their sense of belonging positively correlate with their job satisfaction. Content personnel are more inclined to dedicate effort and vigor to their task. As employees recognize the significance of their contributions to the organization’s success, their motivation is heightened, leading to a greater level of dedication.

*H8: it is expected that job satisfaction has a significant positive effect on organizational commitment.*

## Methodology

### Sample and Data Collection:

The participants consisted of employees from various organizations across different industries. The sample was diverse in terms of demographics, including age, gender, education level, and job roles. Participants were recruited through various channels, such as organizational emails, online platforms, and personal contacts. Inclusion criteria included being employed in an organization and being able to understand and respond to the survey questions. A total of 211 participants completed the survey, responding to all items included in the questionnaire. Data collection was conducted anonymously to ensure participants’ confidentiality and encourage honest responses.

### Measures Descriptive

Statistics tools were used to summarize the characteristics of the sample and the distributions of variables. Correlation analysis was performed to examine the relationships between toxic leadership and organizational commitment, trust, job satisfaction, and employee engagement. Statistical software, SPSS was used for data analysis and AMOS. A five-point Likert scale, from strongly disagree

**Table (1) Demographic Characteristics**

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	128	60.7
	Female	83	39.3
Total		211	100
Years of experience	less than 5 years	32	15.2
	5 -10 years	62	29.4
	10 - 15 years	49	23.2
	15 - 20 years	28	13.3
Total	20 years and more	40	19
Age	20 -30 years	46	21.8
	30 -40 years	99	46.9
	40 -50 years	52	24.6
	more than 50 years	14	6.6
Total		211	99.9

to strongly agree, was used to measure each variable. The 25 items that made up the questionnaire were all taken directly from accurate and dependable questionnaires that had been utilized in earlier research. It included validated scales to measure the constructs of toxic leadership, organizational commitment, trust, job satisfaction, and employee engagement. Participants responded to items using the Likert scale.

- 1- **Toxic Leadership:** was measured using a nine-item measure based on the work of Schmidt (2014): "My current supervisor drastically changes his/her demeanor when his/her supervisor is present", "My current supervisor publicly belittles subordinates"
- 2- **Organizational Trust:** was measured using three questions created by Schmidt (2014): "The values of this organization reflect the values of its members", "This organization is loyal to its members".
- 3- **Employee Engagement:** was measured using the four-item scale established by White (2022): "At my job, I use my greatest personal strengths." "I feel personally engaged in my work."
- 4- **Job Satisfaction:** was measured with three questions based on White (2022): "I am committed to this organization.", and "Overall, I like my job".
- 5- **Organizational Commitment:** was measured using the six-item scale created by Von Bacho & P Orlando (2023): "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization", "I feel as if this organization's problems are my own."

**Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the characteristics of the sample and the distributions of variables. Correlation analysis was performed to examine the relationships between toxic leadership and organizational commitment, trust, job satisfaction, and employee engagement. Statistical software, SPSS, was used for data analysis and AMOS.

**Reliability Analysis**

The reliability analyses were performed for several scales, including Toxic leadership, Organizational Trust, Employee engagement, Job Satisfaction, and Organizational Commitment. The Cronbach's alphas for these scales were 0.981, 0.866, 0.748, 0.689, and 0.912, respectively. These high alpha values indicate that the scales are reliable.

- 1- **Means and standard deviations.**

**Table (2) The Variables Reliability Test Results**

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of items
Toxic Leadership	.981	9
Organizational Trust	.866	3
Employee Engagement	.784	4
Job Satisfaction	.689	9
Organizational Commitment	.912	6

**Table (3) The Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations between the Research Variables**

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Toxic Leadership	Organization Commitment	Organization Trust	Job Satisfaction	Employee Engagement
Toxic Leadership	3.15	.97	211	1				
Organization Commitment	3.37	.96	211	-.365**	1			
Organization Trust	3.33	.99	211	-.333**	.719**	1		
Job Satisfaction	3.80	.80	211	-.346**	.741**	.684**	1	
Employee Engagement	3.75	.78	211	-.287**	.548**	.385**	.628**	1

Table (3) presents the means, standard deviations, and the correlation between the research variables. Toxic leadership fit has a mean score of 3.15 and a standard deviation of .97. Organization commitment has a mean of 3.37 and a standard variation value of .96. The mean value for organization trust is 3.33, and its standard deviation is .99. Job satisfaction has a mean value of 3.80 and a standard deviation of .80. employee engagement has a mean value of 3.75 and a standard deviation of .7. has a mean of 3.37 and a standard variation value of .96. The mean value for organization trust is 3.33, and its standard deviation is .99. Job satisfaction has a mean value of 3.80 and a standard deviation of .80. employee engagement has a mean value of 3.75 and a standard deviation of .7.

### 2- The Correlation between the Variables

The findings reveal notable correlations among the constructs examined. Toxic leadership exhibits negative correlations with organizational commitment (-.365\*\*), organizational trust (-.333\*\*), job satisfaction (-.346\*\*), and employee engagement (-.287\*\*), all of which are statistically significant at the 0.01 level. These results suggest that higher levels of toxic leadership are associated with lower levels of organizational commitment, trust, satisfaction, and engagement. Conversely, organizational commitment demonstrates strong positive correlations with organizational trust (.719\*\*), job satisfaction (.741\*\*), and employee engagement (.548\*\*), indicating that higher levels of commitment are associated with higher levels of trust, satisfaction, and engagement within the organization. Similarly, organizational trust exhibits strong positive correlations with job satisfaction (.684\*\*) and employee engagement (.385\*\*).

Furthermore, job satisfaction and employee engagement also demonstrate a strong positive correlation (.628\*\*). These significant correlations underscore the importance of positive organizational factors in fostering a healthy work environment and employee well-being.

### 3- Testing the Research Model Fit

The model fit statistics in Table 4 and Table 5 indicate a generally good fit for the proposed model. The CMIN/DF value of 2.101 suggests an acceptable fit, indicating that the model adequately explains the observed covariance. Additionally, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) of 0.996, Incremental Fit Index (IFI) of 0.996, and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) of 0.979 all exceed the recommended threshold of 0.95, indicating a strong fit. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) value of 0.039 falls below the cutoff of 0.08, further supporting the model's adequacy. Moreover, the Normed Fit Index (NFI) of 0.992 and the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) of 0.992 both suggest a good fit, as they exceed the threshold of 0.90. The adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) of 0.994 also indicates a favorable fit.

**Table (4) Results of the Model Fit**

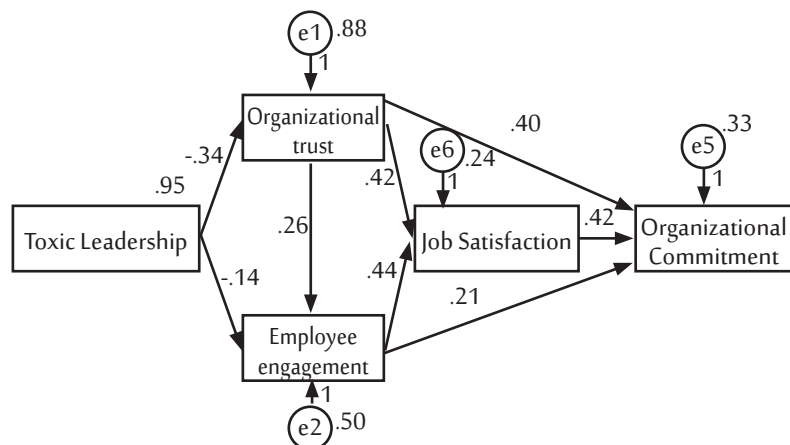
Statistics	RMR	GFI	AGFI	CFI	RMSEA
Results	.021	.992	.944	.996	.000

**Table (5) Path Analysis of the Proposed**

Hypothesis	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
H1 Org_Trust ← Toxic_lead	-.341	.067	-5.114	***
H2 E_Engage ← Org_Trust	.256	.052	4.903	***
H3 E_Engage ← Toxic_lead	-.143	.053	-2.683	***
H4 Job_Sati ← E_Engage	.439	.047	9.345	***
H5 Job_Sati ← Org_Trust	.419	.037	11.342	***
H6 Org_Comm ← E_Engage	.207	.065	3.190	***
H7 Org_Comm ← Org_Trust	.399	.054	7.341	***
H8 Org_Comm ← Job_Sati	.424	.080	5.301	***

According to the direct relationships shown in Table (5) and Figure (2),

According to the direct relationships shown in Table (5) and Figure (2), toxic leadership is negatively related to organizational trust ( $\beta = -.341, P < 0.01$ ), supporting H1. toxic leadership is negatively related to employee engagement ( $\beta = -.143, P < 0.01$ ), supporting H3. organizational trust is positively related to employee engagement ( $\beta = .256, P < 0.01$ ), supporting H2. Organizational trust is positively related to Job satisfaction ( $\beta = .419, P < 0.01$ ), supporting H5. Organizational trust is positively related to organizational commitment ( $\beta = .399, P < 0.01$ ), supporting H7. Employee engagement is positively related to Job



**Figure (2) The Antecedents and Consequences of Toxic Leadership**



satisfaction ( $\beta = .439, P < 0.01$ ) supporting H4. Employee engagement is positively related to organizational commitment ( $\beta = .207, P < 0.01$ ), supporting H6. Job satisfaction is positively related to organizational commitment ( $\beta = .424, P < 0.01$ ), supporting H8.

## Discussion

Testing hypothesis one shows that highly toxic leadership leads to lower levels of employee engagement. Toxic behavior in the workplace can manifest as an excessive focus on self-gratification, leading to the infringement of others' rights, abuse of control, bullying, and exploitation. Such detrimental behavior exhibited by toxic leaders can have adverse effects on employees' morale and creativity (Mehta, 2014). The correlation between toxic leadership and employee engagement is predominantly adverse, as toxic leadership behaviors result in a substantial decline in employee engagement. Malicious leaders frequently establish a climate characterized by apprehension and skepticism. When it comes to sharing their thoughts, worries, or errors, employees may feel insecure, fearing negative consequences or mockery. The absence of psychological safety hinders employees from wholeheartedly participating in their work since their first concern is self-preservation rather than making a constructive contribution to the organization. Malicious bosses frequently cultivate a competitive or antagonistic work atmosphere, which can harm team dynamics and hinder collaboration. A toxic environment that fosters competition or distrust among employees negatively affects team collaboration and cooperation. Efficient cooperation is a critical catalyst for involvement and its absence results in greater disinterest. The same is true for the second hypothesis, which suggests that as toxic leadership increases, organizational trust decreases. Erdal & Budak (2021) assert that toxic leadership behaviors not only damage intra-organizational communication but also diminish organizational trust and commitment, reduce productivity, foster rumors, poison the organizational climate, and contribute to employee turnover. As such, the negative behaviors exhibited by toxic leaders have a significant impact on employees' levels of organizational trust.

The results on organizational trust and engagement, satisfaction, and commitment all show a positive correlation; Toxic leadership and organizational trust have an inverse connection, meaning that the existence of toxic leadership behaviors usually leads to a substantial decrease in organizational trust. Organizational trust refers to the level of confidence that employees have in the honesty, ability, and dependability of their leaders and the organization as a whole. Toxic leadership erodes trust through a variety of important means. Toxic leaders frequently display traits such as deceitfulness, absence of openness, and incongruity in their conduct and choices. When employees witness such behaviors, their belief in the legitimacy of their leaders diminishes. This doubt spreads to the organization, as executives embody the organization's principles and honesty. Establishing trust is fundamentally dependent on effective communication. Toxic leaders commonly employ communication methods that are dismissive, disrespectful, or manipulative. This lack of effective communication fosters an atmosphere of ambiguity and apprehension, leading employees to have a lack of confidence not only in the leaders but also in the information they share. Therefore, accepting hypotheses 3, 4, and 5 serves as a bedrock for the allegiance individuals have towards their organizations. According to social exchange theory, managers who exhibit high levels of trust in their staff are more likely to invest in their development, support their professional growth, promote them, and involve them in managerial activities. Consequently, employees are more inclined to reciprocate with dedication and trust (Alomran, et al., 2022). According to the relationship between organizational trust and employee engagement, the third hypothesis is strong and positive. When employees have trust in their organization and their managers, they are more inclined to be actively involved, driven, and dedicated to their work. This article provides an in-depth analysis of how organizational trust positively impacts employee engagement. Having confidence in the organization and its leaders results in increased job satisfaction. When employees have confidence in their leaders, they perceive their contributions as acknowledged and esteemed, which in turn enhances their drive to excel. Intrinsic motivation is a crucial catalyst for employee engagement.

Trust cultivates a perception of psychological security, wherein employees feel secure enough to articulate their viewpoints, exchange ideas, and undertake ventures without fear of negative consequences. This atmosphere fosters unrestricted exchange of ideas, original thinking, and imaginative expression, all of which are essential elements of active engagement. Alshaabani et al. (2022) state that trust enables employees to fulfill their job responsibilities and fosters a sense of duty towards their organization. In addition, the relationship between organizational trust and job satisfaction in the fourth hypothesis is highly interconnected. Organizational trust is a crucial factor in influencing the degree of job satisfaction among employees. When employees have confidence in their organization, they hold the belief that policies, procedures, and judgments are just and impartial. Fairness is crucial for job satisfaction as it guarantees impartial and prejudice-free treatment of employees. According to Arter et al. (2017), managers' trustworthy conduct within the organization cultivates trust among employees towards both their managers and the organization's practices, which in turn elevates employee job satisfaction. According to the results of this study, Organizational trust and commitment closely intertwine, with a high level of trust within an organization leading to a greater level of commitment among personnel. When employees have confidence in their organization, they experience a sense of stability in their positions and prospects within the company. This level of security cultivates a more profound emotional connection to the organization, augmenting their dedication as they have faith in their company's steadfastness and dependability. Employees who have confidence in their organization are more inclined to synchronize with its values and mission. This alignment fosters a sense of common objective and allegiance, resulting in enhanced organizational commitment. Employees experience a sense of belonging to a collective entity, which enhances their commitment to the organization. According to Rahman et al. (2021), trust emerges as a fundamental determinant in fostering organizational commitment. Organizational commitment and trust play critical roles in maintaining high-performance levels within organizations and achieving desired outcomes.

The findings of Hypotheses 6 and 7 confirm a positive correlation between employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. According to Kim-Soon (2015), organizations that prioritize employee engagement often experience success in terms of job satisfaction, and Hanaysha (2016) finds that employee engagement has a positive correlation with organizational commitment.

According to the results of this study, the relationship between employee engagement and job satisfaction is intricately linked, with both factors mutually affecting and strengthening each other. Although they are separate ideas, they frequently intersect and enhance the overall health and effectiveness of personnel in an organization. Committed employees derive meaning and intention from their jobs. When employees are highly engaged and dedicated, they are more likely to experience job satisfaction, as it corresponds with their values and objectives. Increased levels of engagement positively influence motivation and performance. Engaged employees frequently feel fulfilled by their work, resulting in increased job satisfaction. In the seventh hypothesis, the relationship between employee engagement and organizational commitment is robust and mutually beneficial. Both ideas, productivity, and employee retention, are essential for achieving organizational success because they have a major influence on total organizational performance. Engaged employees frequently cultivate a strong emotional bond with their organization because they perceive their work as important and satisfying. This emotional connection leads to increased affective commitment, in which employees experience a true sense of commitment and connection to the organization. Engaged employees typically exhibit higher job satisfaction, a critical element in cultivating organizational commitment. The study's results confirm the eighth hypothesis, which aligns with Mohammed & Eleswed's (2013) findings of the intertwining of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Specifically, employees with high organizational commitment are more likely to voluntarily exert maximum effort for the organization's advancement. Organizational commitment and job satisfaction have a significant impact on each other, creating an intricate connection. Increased job satisfaction frequently results in a more profound

emotional attachment to the organization. Employees who experience positive sentiments towards their employment and form an emotional attachment to the organization positively correlate with job satisfaction. Employee job satisfaction has a significant impact on their perception of the organization's worth and their position within it.

## Limitations and Future Directions

While this study provides valuable insights into the impact of toxic leadership on employee engagement, organizational trust, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment in Saudi Arabia, it is essential to acknowledge certain limitations and offer suggestions for future research. **First**, this study is subject to response biases like all social desirability, it would be more beneficial to examine how cultural factors influence the prevalence and impact of toxic leadership, taking into account cultural differences in leadership norms and employee responses. Applying the focus groups or interviews will help to gain a deeper understanding of employees' experiences with toxic leadership and its impact on organizational outcomes. **Second**, with only 211 samples of our study compared to the large number of employees in the nation, the sample size may not be entirely representative of the larger population, which could limit how broadly the results can be applied. **Finally**, it would be beneficial if the cross-cultural dimensions of toxic leadership and its effects on employee performance in various global contexts were explored in the future. Overall, while the present study contributes to our understanding of toxic leadership's impact on organizational commitment in Saudi Arabia, future research should address these limitations and explore additional dimensions of this complex phenomenon (Pizzolitto, E., et al., 2023).

## Managerial Implications

This study outlines the implications of Toxic leadership, Organizational trust, employee engagement, and job satisfaction on organizational commitment in Saudi Arabia. The results of this study demonstrate that, in Saudi organizations, organizational commitment is strongly and significantly correlated with employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational trust. CEOs, managers, and upper management ought to give these predictors great priority as a result. Furthermore, this study offers factual support to the organization's top management, demonstrating that toxic leadership will have a negative impact on work satisfaction, employee engagement, and organizational commitment. As a result, managers need to implement a variety of tactics to guard against toxic leadership.

- Select and promote managers carefully. Beginning with the procedure for choosing and vetting leaders. To prevent selecting the next leader who produces toxins, the employee search and selection committee, which is in charge of hiring, selecting, and promoting staff, needs to be able to identify individuals who may be dangerous.
- Creating an ethical and toxic-behavior-free workplace culture. That helps the employees who are more susceptible to their work be happier and increase their engagement.
- Fostering positive relationships and two-way communication by encouraging group decision-making and candid dialogue between subordinates and superiors.
- Utilizing a confidential whistleblower route so that subordinates can report the toxic leader's mistakes.
- Providing stress management and self-resilience training to staff members can help them better control their emotions and strengthen their defenses, which will assist them avoid engaging in toxic behavior.
- Promoting a healthy work-life balance using wellness initiatives, flexible work arrangements, and mental health assistance that keeps workers engaged and helps avoid burnout.

- Putting in place a system of incentives and recognition that values both individual and group efforts can significantly boost morale. Ranging from simple acknowledgments in team meetings to formal award programs. This may increase transparency and Job satisfaction.
- Offering chances for career advancement, like workshops, training courses, and defined career pathways, can make workers feel appreciated and committed to their jobs. As a result, staff engagement increased.
- Creating a culture that emphasizes collaboration, ethical behavior, and mutual respect can improve both morale and engagement.
- Building a structure of ongoing supervision and intervention is essential to preventing the problems and negative consequences of toxic leadership.

## Conclusion

This study offers valuable insights into the detrimental effects of toxic leadership on organizational commitment, trust, job satisfaction, and employee engagement. For academic research and practical application. Toxic leadership represents a critical challenge that organizations must address to safeguard their success and the well-being of their employees. This pattern of behavior, characterized by intimidation, marginalization, and degradation of subordinates, has far-reaching and detrimental effects on both individuals and the organization as a whole. Toxic leadership is a multifaceted issue with various manifestations, from abusive supervision to destructive leadership styles. The impact of toxic leadership extends beyond the workplace, affecting employees' personal lives and their overall sense of well-being. It erodes organizational trust, fosters a negative work environment, and diminishes employee engagement, all of which have profound consequences for organizational commitment. Employees subjected to toxic leadership are more likely to exhibit deviant behavior, reduce organizational trust; lower the employees' engagement, and decrease the level of job satisfaction these outcomes not only harm the individual but also undermine the organization's long-term success. Addressing toxic leadership requires a multifaceted approach. The findings of this study underscore the importance of addressing toxic leadership behaviors in organizations to foster a positive work environment and enhance employee well-being and productivity. Despite its limitations, the study lays the groundwork for future research aimed at understanding the underlying mechanisms and developing effective interventions to mitigate the negative consequences of toxic leadership. Ultimately fostering healthy leadership practices is essential for improving the performance of organizations and the well-being of employees alike.

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