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Toxic Leadership and Turnover Intention: Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction

Elif BAKKAL¹, Berna SERENER², Nursel Aydintug MYRVANG³

Abstract

This study aims to test the model that evaluates the effect of toxic leadership on job satisfaction and turnover intention as well as understand if job satisfaction of nurses and hospital employees has a mediating effect between toxic leadership perceptions (self-seeking, negative state of mind, selfishness, in appreciativeness) and turnover intention. The data of this study were obtained by questionnaire method from a total of 658 healthcare personnel in three public and three private university hospitals in Istanbul, Turkey. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was applied to test the structure established after the exploratory factor analysis. Structural Equation Model (SEM) was used for testing hypotheses. Sobel test was used to validate the mediating variables. According to the Sobel test, the mediator effect of job satisfaction is found to be statistically significant between self-seeking and turnover intention ($z = -2.34$, $SE = .017$, $p < .050$), the mediator effect of job satisfaction is found to be statistically significant between inappreciativeness and turnover intention, and the mediator effect of job satisfaction is found to be statistically significant between negative state of mind and turnover intention ($z = -2.01$; $SE = .012$, $p < .050$).

Keywords: job satisfaction, health care, leadership, personnel turnover, toxic leadership, turnover intention, mediating role.

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Introduction

In scientific research on leadership and leadership behavior, considerable attention has been paid to leadership styles associated with successful leadership and what specific behaviors contribute to that leadership style. Along with this, there has been a focus on understanding the consequences and nature of nonfunctional, harmful leadership. One reason for this scholarly interest is that the destructive behavior of leaders has negative effects on the loyalty, productivity, motivation, health, and happiness of employees (Goldman, 2011).

Hospitals are complex organizations that offer a variety of services that require different specialties and employees with different characteristics. Excessive workloads, ambiguous working conditions, and nonergonomic working environments cause many negative effects, such as increasing stress levels of the hospital staff. Researchers have stated that an excessively stressful environment in healthcare institutions may cause negative behaviors, leading to a focus on how system dynamics and organizational culture play a role in exhibiting toxic behaviors (Abdollahzadeh, Asghari, Ebrahimi, Rahmani, & Vahidi, 2017). In a study conducted in Turkey on toxic behavior, Doty, & Fenlason, (2013) examined toxic leadership behaviors in healthcare institutions and noted that the most severe toxic leadership type was narcissist leadership (Doty & Fenlason, 2013). In a subsequent study, different types of toxic conditions were defined, including a toxic workplace, abusive management, and mobbing at work. In this study, it was observed that a toxic working environment consisted of four variables: the toxic behavior of colleagues, the toxic behavior of managers, toxic social building factors, and a toxic climate (Taştan, 2017). In his study on the development and effects of toxic leadership on organizations, Veldsman found that one out of every five leaders is toxic and that toxic leadership is an increasing phenomenon worldwide (Veldsman, 2016).

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses Development

In recent years, scientific research on leader and leadership models have been focused on understanding the nature and consequences of destructive and non-functioning leadership. In 2004, Barbara Kellerman in her book *Bad Leadership* categorizes an incompetent, rigid, uncontrollable, insensitive, corrupt, and narrow-minded leader as a prime example of bad leadership (Kellerman, 2004). Lipman-Blumen's study in 2005 entitled *The Allure of Toxic Leaders*, shows that followers activate toxic leaders and that toxic leaders are also produced by being tolerated in the organizations where they exist (Lipman-Blumen, 2006). According to a national study conducted by Kusy and Holloway (Kusy & Holloway, 2009), toxic people thrive only in toxic systems. This study states that the system dynamics and organizational culture have a role in promoting these toxic behaviors. According to

studies conducted by Zellars, Tepper, and Duffy (Zellars, Tepper, & Duffy, 2002) and Webster Beehr, and Love (Webster, Beehr, & Love, 2011), toxic leadership has negative impacts on turnover, job dissatisfaction, and organizational commitment.

Job satisfaction includes all emotions and attitudes of the employees in relation to their work. Positive emotions and attitudes toward work constitute job satisfaction, and negative emotions and attitudes constitute job dissatisfaction (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014). Leadership and job satisfaction are the basic elements that determine the extent to which an organization can reach its goals. Job satisfaction is influenced by leadership behaviors (Robbins, Judge, & Campbell, 2017), and leadership style influences various factors such as job satisfaction, turnover intention, and job performance (Hajdukova, Klementova, & Klementova, 2015) discipline, responsibility, as well as lower power, fluctuation, lack of staff and so on. The aim of this paper is to determine the level of satisfaction with selected factors through the research of employees' job satisfaction. The factors of job satisfaction were divided into three dimensions—requirements and benefits of labour, status and relationships in the workplace and organizational settings. The theory of job satisfaction indicates a very strong relationship between employee age and its relationship to work (satisfaction with aspects of the work, (Oztug & Bastas, 2012). As a result of research on leadership, which is a subject of increasing interest day by day, conducted on administrative nurses, nurses and health personnel (Ahmad, Adi, Md Noor, Rahman, & Yushuang, 2013), it was found that job satisfaction is decisive in the relations of administrative staff and nurses and moreover nurses, who define their relations with administrative nurses as a negative relationship, experience job dissatisfaction (Mohammed, Alawneh, Ahmad, & Siron, 2015). There is an inverse and significant relation between toxic leadership and job satisfaction (Schmidt, 2008).

Based on this discussion, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H1. Dimensions of toxic leadership perceptions adversely affect job satisfaction.

H1a. Self-seeking behavior adversely affects the job satisfaction.

H1b. Inappreciativeness adversely affects the job satisfaction.

H1c. Selfishness adversely affects the job satisfaction.

H1d. A negative state of mind adversely affects the job satisfaction.

To understand the course which leads employees to leave their jobs and decrease the turnover rates, the managers should recognize the leadership behaviors prominent in their organizations. There are many studies in the literature that examine the influence of leadership styles on the intention of staying or quitting jobs (De Gieter, Hofmans, & Pepermans, 2011). However, toxic leadership is a new subject in the field of health of services in Turkey and there is only one study on the effect of toxic leadership on turnover intention (Leupold, Ellis, & Valle, 2013). This subject is important and takes precedence in terms of attracting the

attention of hospital management and administrative nurses to this matter so that they develop the necessary strategies. When the relevant literature is examined, it was determined that negative leadership styles increase turnover intention (Roche, Duffield, Dimitrelis, & Frew, 2015). There is a meaningful and positive relationship between evil leadership and turnover intention (Northouse, 2010). Accordingly, the following hypothesis has been developed:

H2. Dimensions of toxic leadership perceptions are negatively related to the turnover intention.

H2a. Self-seeking behavior adversely affects the turnover intention.

H2b. Inappreciativeness adversely affects the turnover intention.

H2c. Selfishness adversely affects the turnover intention.

H2d. A negative state of mind adversely affects the turnover intention.

As stated in the literature, job satisfaction, which is one of the determinants of organizational effectiveness, has significant effects on turnover intention (Choi, Cheung, & Pang, 2013) (Kuo, Lin, & Li, 2014) (Han, Trinkoff, & Gurses, 2015). The high turnover rate of healthcare employees has become a global problem (Cortese, 2012). It is important to determine the reasons for employees' turnover intention in an attempt to reduce the rate of turnovers, to strengthen employees' organizational commitment, and to develop strategies that increase business effectiveness. Based on the literature, the following hypothesis has been developed:

H3. There is a negative relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention.

In the literature, the relation between toxic leadership and job satisfaction, as well as the relation between toxic leadership and turnover intention has been studied separately. In the studies conducted, it was stated that toxic leadership reduces job satisfaction and increases turnover rates. However, there has been no study to determine whether job satisfaction is a mediating variable between toxic leadership and turnover intention, or not. The following hypothesis has been developed considering the fact that toxic leadership may reduce job satisfaction and as a result, may influence the turnover intention.

H4. Job satisfaction is a mediator in the effect of toxic leadership perceptions on turnover intention.

H4a. Job satisfaction is a mediator in the effect of self-seeking behavior on turnover intention.

H4b. Job satisfaction is a mediator in the effect of inappreciativeness on turnover intention.

- H4c. Job satisfaction is a mediator in the effect of selfishness on turnover intention.
H4d. Job satisfaction is a mediator in the effect of a negative state of mind on the turnover intention.

These four hypotheses constitute the conceptual model that presents the direct and indirect effects of toxic leadership on both job satisfaction and turnover intention shown in *Figure 1*.



The model tests the mediated relationship of job satisfaction, between toxic leadership and turnover intention.

Methodology

Study design

This is a cross-sectional descriptive study that aimed to investigate the effects of the toxic leadership of healthcare employees on the turnover intention and the mediating effects of job satisfaction.

Setting and sample

A total of 664 hospital personnel consisting of 71 administrative nurses and 298 nurses participated in this study. The participants work at hospitals that are located in the European part of İstanbul, which is the most crowded city in Turkey. The study used convenient sampling technique to identify hospitals. This study was conducted in three university hospitals and three public hospitals affiliated with the Secretary General of the Association of Public Hospitals, of Turkish Public

Hospitals Institution in the Bakırköy District, between September and November 2017. University hospitals and public hospitals operate with at least 100 beds in central Istanbul.

Measurement

The data were collected using a questionnaire to gather the demographic information, as well as responses to a Turkish translation of the Toxic Leadership Scale (TLS) (Schmidt, 2008), the Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (Weiss, Dawis, England, & Lofquist, 1967), and a turnover intention scale (Rosin & Korabik, 1995).

Demographic information

The portion of the questionnaire collecting demographic information includes characteristics such as age, gender, educational status, duty at the institution, duration of work in the health sector, and duration of work at the institution.

Toxic leadership

In the measurement of perception of toxic leadership, data collection tools were adapted from Andrew A. Schmidt's "Development and Validation of the Toxic Leadership Scale." The study's validity and reliability were adapted for use in Turkey by Celebi, Güner, and Yıldız (Celebi, Güner, & Yildiz, 2013) and Schmidt (Schmidt, 2008). The scale developed by Celebi et al. is considered valid and reliable for the healthcare sector. The scale consists of 30 items and it examines four sub-dimensions of toxic leadership, such as inappreciativeness (11 items), self-seeking (nine items), selfishness (five items) and negative mental state (five items).

In the study conducted by Schmidt (Schmidt, 2008), five dimensions stated as self-promotion, abusive supervision, unpredictability, narcissism and authoritarianism were applied and in the study of Celebi et al. (Celebi et al., 2013), conducted in the education sector in Turkey, four dimensions described as self-seeking, selfishness, incompetence and negative moods, were applied. The abusive, narcissistic, and self-promotional dimensions stated in the study of Schmidt (Schmidt, 2008) coincide with the dimensions of self-seeking and selfishness in the study of Celebi et al. (Celebi et al., 2013).

Job satisfaction

It has been internationally validated and tested and is used to measure the job satisfaction of hospital employees. The scale of the Minnesota Job Satisfaction Scale, consisting of 20 questions and associated with job conditions and job satisfaction, was developed by Weiss, Davis, England, and Lofquist (Weiss et al.,

1967). This scale, which has two dimensions—internal and external satisfaction. Minnesota Job Satisfaction Scale is a Likert-type scale with points between 1 and 5. Scale rating assesses such as: 1 point; not satisfied at all, 2 points; not satisfied, 3 points; indecisive, 4 points; satisfied, 5 points; very satisfied.

There are two sub-factors of the scale in the related literature. This study used the job satisfaction scale in general.

Turnover intention

In order to determine the intentions to remain in their positions, a turnover intention scale developed by Rosin and Korabick (Rosin & Korabik, 1995) was used. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the scale is 0.93. A five-point Likert-type scale was used in the evaluations, ranging from 1 to 5, with (1) absolutely disagree, (2) disagree, (3) partially agree, (4) agree, and (5) absolutely agree.

Data analysis

First, in the analysis phase of the research with a total of 658 participants, the descriptive statistic related to the demographic information of the participants was given. The data were then analyzed by applying the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) through AMOS to test the structure established after the exploratory factor analysis. After defining descriptive statistics for the mean factor variance, they were tested by Structural Equation Model (SEM) for testing hypotheses. The Sobel test was used to validate the mediating variables. All analysis was conducted in SPSS 24.0 and AMOS 24.0 statistical programs.

Results

Results give descriptive statistical information on the demographic characteristics of participants, participating in the survey. According to results, it was determined that among the participants 26.1% were male and 73.9% were female. 36.2% of all participants were in the age range of 20–30 years, 46.8% in the age range of 31–40 years, and 17% in the age range of over 40 years; 46.2% were working in private universities, 53.8% in public universities; 23.9% have college, 36.3% undergraduate, 11.4% post graduate, and 19.1% PhD degrees; 16.3% are working as specialist doctors, 9.9% as responsible nurses, 45.3% as nurses, 17% as administrative staff, 11.6% as other staff; those working in the health sector, 20.1% have been working for 5 years and less, 28.1% for 6–10 years, 27.8% for 11–15 years, 13.2% for 16–20 years, 10.8% for 21 years and above; those have been working in the current organization, 18.2% have been working for 0–1 years, 53% for 1–5 years, 18.7% for 6–10 years, 10.0% for 10 years and more.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

The exploratory factor analysis started with 30 items and the total correlation for all items was examined. Table 1 shows that, item-total correlation is used in the improvement of Cronbach's Alpha value and items with an item correlation value less than 30 are discarded.

Table 1: Explanatory Factor Analysis

	Inappreciativeness	Self-seeking	Negative State of Mind	Selfishness
In5	.798			
In2	.737			
In3	.720			
In6	.707			
In4	.660			
In1	.611			
In7	.594			
In9	.566			
In10	.562			
S5		.743		
S4		.695		
S7		.659		
S2		.658		
S6		.639		
S3		.591		
S10		.563		
S8		.525		
Nss2			.771	
Nss1			.758	
Nss3			.738	
Nss4			.615	
Se3				.725
Se2				.710
KMO			.971	
Bartlett's Test			12328.017	
Total Explained Variance Load			71.714	

S: Self-seeking, Nss: Negative state of mind, In: Inappreciativeness, Se: Selfishness, KMO: Kaiser Meyer Olkin

As a result of the analysis, items with an item-total correlation score of less than 30 and higher item load in more than one dimension and with the difference between the loads less than 10 are also subtracted. In this regard, a total of seven items are removed from the analysis. The remaining 23 items were analyzed again. KMO with .971 value is determined to be highly significant. In explanatory factor analysis, principal components analysis is used. The varimax rotation technique is utilized because the number of samples is great enough and there is no correlation between factor loading. As a result of analysis, four sub-dimensions are formed. As a result, a total of 23 items were scaled in four sub-dimensions. The total declared total variance load of the four sub-dimensions are found to be 71.7%.

Common Method Variance Analysis

Often the collection of the data from a single source or the use of measurement tools with different structures at the same time leads to various problems with the method (Yang, Olsen, Ranby, Goings, & Carolina, 2017). A Common Method Variance (CMV) analysis was performed via the introduction of a common latent factor into the model, which is assumed to be intrinsic to the data collection methodology. The Common Method Variance analysis resulted in an X^2 and DF values of 1775.604 and 400.0, respectively, for both the unconstrained and zero constrained models, with $p < .001$. The chi-square test for the zero constrained model was significant. The results obtained show that there is no problem of common method variance in the study.

Reliability

Findings related to the reliability coefficients of the dimension "Inappreciativeness," from the first sub-dimension, is .938. The reliability coefficients of the dimension "Selfishness," from the second sub-dimension, is .830. The reliability coefficients of the dimension "Self-seeking," from the third sub-dimension, is .934. The reliability coefficients of the dimension "Negative state of mind," from the fourth sub-dimension, is .882. The job satisfaction total reliability coefficient is .969. The total reliability coefficient of leave work scale is .753. It can be said that both the sub-dimensions of the scale and the reliability of the whole scale are high in this data.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is analyzed with the help of AMOS to test the structure after the explanatory factor analysis. Confirmatory Factor Analysis is performed to test whether a previously defined structure has been verified

as a model. Statistical tests confirmed the fit criteria. They included CMIN/df (Relative Chi Square Index) (4.293), significant level of the chi-square value (0.0000), RMSEA (The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) (0.0071), CFI (Comparative Fit Index) (0.920), GFI (Goodness-Of-Fit Index) (0.846), SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual) (0.064).

In this study, as a result of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis, items with low load value are not found. As a result of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis the correlation matrix obtained from 25 items is used as data. Since the above compliance values are at the desired level, no modifications have been made to the analysis. As it can be seen in the table, it is determined that all compliance values are acceptable.

Average Explanatory Variance

The correlation of the variables is shown in *Table 2*.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Average Explanatory Variance and Information on Correlations of Variables

Variables	Mean	SD	AVE	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Inappreciativeness	2.74	1.11	0.876	1					
2 Selfishness	2.44	1.21	0.813	.700**	1				
3 Self-seeking	2.56	1.12	0.844	.831**	.748**	1			
4 Negative state of mind	2.55	1.12	0.680	.718**	.688**	.798**	1		
5 Job Satisfaction	3.12	1.06	0.951	-.726**	-.683**	-.691**	-.658**	1	
6 Turnover Intention	3.04	1.02	0.845	.349**	.334**	.392**	.278**	-.333**	1

p* < .05; *p* < .01; SD: Standard Deviation, AVE: Average Variance Extra

According to these results, it is determined that there is a high correlation relation between the variables. It has been determined that there is a negative correlation between the toxic leadership sub-dimensions: inappreciativeness,

selfishness, self-seeking and job satisfaction. It is also determined that there is a negative correlation between turnover intention and job satisfaction.

Structural Equation Model

In order to test hypotheses in the study, it is analyzed with the aid of SEM AMOS. According to SEM model compliance values, CMIN/df (3.11), CFI (.916), NFI (.881), GFI (.822), SRMR (.08), RMSEA (.057) met the fit criteria.

According to the findings of the analysis, hypotheses H1a, H1d, H2a, H2b, H2c, H2d, and H4c were rejected, whereas hypotheses H1b, H1c, H3, H4a, H4b and H4d were accepted. In the case of a mediator effect, verification of whether this effect is statistically significant should be tested via the Sobel [31] test to see if it is a meaningful mediator variable. According to the Sobel test, the mediator effect of job satisfaction is found to be statistically significant between self-seeking and turnover intention shown as in Table 3 ($z = -2.34, SE = .017, p < .050$).

Table 3: Hypothesis tests with SEM

Hypotheses	Estimate	S.E.	P	Hypothesis result
H1a. Self-seeking → Job satisfaction	-.342	.331	.301	Not supported
H1b. Inappreciativeness → Job satisfaction	-.532	.120	***	Supported
H1c. Selfishness → Job satisfaction	.259	.104	.013	Supported
H1d: Negative state of mind → Job satisfaction	-.089	.222	.687	Not supported
H2a. Self-seeking → Turnover Intention	.284	.216	.188	Not supported
H2b. Inappreciativeness → Turnover Intention	.091	.101	.370	Not supported
H2c. Selfishness → Turnover Intention	-.071	.081	.384	Not supported
H2d: Negative state of mind → Turnover Intention	.057	.170	.737	Not supported
H3. Job satisfaction → Turnover Intention	-.193	.044	***	Supported
H4a. Self-seeking → Job satisfaction → Turnover Intention	.096	.052	.034	Supported
H4b. Inappreciativeness → Job satisfaction → Turnover Intention	.306	.069	.001	Supported
H4c. Selfishness → Job satisfaction → Turnover Intention	-.061	.041	.081	Not supported
H4d. Negative state of mind → Job satisfaction → Turnover Intention	-.541	.068	***	Supported

S. E.: Standard Error

According to the Sobel test, the mediator effect of job satisfaction is found to be statistically significant between inappreciativeness and turnover intention ($z = -2.60, SE = 0.018, p < 0.010$). According to the Sobel test, the mediator effect

of job satisfaction is found to be statistically significant between negative state of mind and turnover intention ($z = -2.01$; $SE = 0.012$, $p < 0.050$).

Discussion

Both job satisfaction and turnover intention were the major determinants when we were analyzing the effects of toxic leadership on the total sample, in hospitals.

Tate (Leadership, Thoroughgood, Tate, Sawyer, & Jacobs, 2012) stated in his study that toxic leadership reduces job satisfaction. As a result of our study which as well supports the study of Tate (Leadership et al., 2012) it was found that there is a negative correlation between the sub-dimensions of toxic leadership, namely inappreciativeness, selfishness and job satisfaction. The study of Kusy and Holloway (Kusy & Holloway, 2009), which found that when their self-respect feeling was attacked, the employees' self-confidence as well as their individual performances would decrease, is another study that supported our work in which the sub-dimensions of toxic leadership, namely inappreciativeness, selfishness and self-seeking have negative correlations with job satisfaction.

Managers can decrease turnover intention through analyzing the causes of employee stress and initiating actions to reduce the stress. It is beneficial to an organization to increase employee job satisfaction and decrease employee turnover. Employees who feel conflicted about which job responsibility they are to handle at any given time results in a lack of job satisfaction, which often results in turnover intention (Reukauf, 2018). In addition, Wang, Y. , Li, Z. , Wang, Y. and Gao, F. (Wang, Li, Wang, & Gao, 2017) and Saeed, Waseem, Sikander, and Rizwan (Saeed & Rizwan, 2014) proved that job satisfaction has a direct and negative relation on turnover intention.

Mehta and Maheshwari's (Mehta & Maheshwari, 2013) research indicating that employees encountering toxic leaders tend to get away from that toxic environment and quit work, is compatible with our study where it was found that job satisfaction has a statistically significant intermediary effect between inappreciativeness and turnover intention.

Despite the strong aspects of this study, it has some limitations. For example, the data were self-reported, thereby carrying a risk of recall bias; the attitude and response of the participants would be affected by social desirability. Also, since this study is the first one done in this area, it would be beneficial to replicate it with different employees in a new sample group. In addition, new findings can be obtained by supplementing the questionnaire with personality scales and stress scales.

This study is a guide to the effects of healthcare managers' toxic leadership behaviors on healthcare services management. It shows that administrators who exhibit toxic behaviors damage organizations by increasing turnover intentions and

reducing job satisfaction of the personnel. It can serve as a guide for administrative nurses to review their own leadership styles and become aware of the effects of other toxic leaders in healthcare organizations.

Conclusion

The focus of the study was on the mediating effect of job satisfaction between toxic leadership dimensions and turnover intention (hypothesis 4), with the results of the study indicating a valid mediating role of job satisfaction between three toxic leadership dimensions (self-seeking, inappreciativeness, negative state of mind) and turnover intention. As a result, it can be claimed that toxic leaders negatively affect the job satisfaction of health care employees and thus lead to turnover. Effort should be put into purging the hospitals from the managers having the potential of toxic behavior and the methods of coping with those managers, who have these characteristics, should be determined. Considering that research on toxic leadership in Turkish health institutions are insufficient, researching the characteristics of toxic leaders as well as the effects of toxic environment on employees, is of paramount importance.

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