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TECHNOLOGY, ISLAMABAD



**Impact of Toxic Leadership on
Counterproductive Work Behaviors: The
Mediating Role of Psychological Distress and
Moderating Role of Perceived Organizational
Support**

by

Almeera Ali Raja

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment for the
degree of Master of Science

in the

**Faculty of Management & Social Sciences
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This thesis is dedicated to my parents, sisters and my tayya who supported me through every phase of life. Without their support this journey wouldn't have been possible.



CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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Perceived Organizational Support**

by

Almeera Ali Raja

(MMS231008)

THESIS EXAMINING COMMITTEE

S. No.	Examiner	Name	Organization
(a)	External Examiner	Dr. Khurram Shahzad	Riphah Int. Islamabad
(b)	Internal Examiner	Dr. Robina Yasmin	CUST, Islamabad
(c)	Supervisor	Dr. S. M. M. Raza Naqvi	CUST, Islamabad

Dr. S. M. M. Raza Naqvi

Thesis Supervisor

March, 2025

Dr. S. M. M. Raza Naqvi
Head
Dept. of Management Sciences
March, 2025

Dr. Arshad Hassan
Dean
Faculty of Management & Social Sci.
March, 2025

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(Almeera Ali Raja)

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate how toxic leadership affects employees' counterproductive work behaviors. The world's top companies have been demonstrating a strong concern for the welfare of their employees. The study focused on the education sector in particular, as toxic leadership seemed to be a bigger factor in stress and worker mental health. According to the study, psychological distress acts as a mediator in the relationship between variables, such as toxic leadership and counterproductive work behavior. The study also examined the moderating effects of perceived organizational support on psychological distress and counterproductive work behavior. To collect data, non-probability sampling was used. Google forms were used for the online data collection. The findings from a sample of 273 workers in the education sector shed light on how toxic leaders affect worker conduct. The collected data was examined using correlation and regression analysis. The data analysis was done using SPSS PROCESS HAYES. The results showed that psychological distress acted as a mediating factor in the positive relationship between toxic leadership and counterproductive work behaviors among employees. Additionally, the results showed that perceived organizational support may not be a moderator of the relationship between psychological distress and counterproductive work behavior as hypothesized in the literature. Future directions and limitations were also discussed.

Keywords: Toxic leadership; Counterproductive Work Behaviors; Perceived organizational support; Psychological distress.

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Abbreviations

CWBs	Counterproductive Work Behaviors
PD	Psychological Distress
POS	Perceived Organization Support
SET	Social Exchange Theory
TL	Toxic Leadership

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Since every action can have severe effects on the organization, behavior directed at both individuals and the organization is included in the definition of counterproductive work behavior. Counterproductive work behaviors are a broad concept. This study would specifically examine the effects of toxic leadership on counterproductive work behavior. CWBs describes deliberate employee behavior aimed at hurting the company or its workers (Fox, Spector, & Brunet, 2001). Examples include theft, absenteeism, rumors, and sabotage (damaging projects or equipment).

The phenomenon of leadership is examined in order to raise employee performance and productivity. While few studies are interested in the negative aspects of leadership, previous studies have concentrated more on the positive aspects of leadership, emphasizing the ways to strengthen the bond between a leader and their followers. The field of leadership achieves its importance by examining how it affects the success of organizations. In these situations, bad and dark leaders have a bad influence on the outcomes of the organization. When a leader exhibits positive traits like competence, vision, integrity, and perseverance, they can lead effectively and improve employee performance (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Conversely, when a leader exhibits negative traits like self-promotion, manipulation, and domineering

behavior, employees perform poorly (Schmidt, 2008). A leadership style becomes toxic when it is made up of a number of unfavorable traits (Lipman-Blumen, 2005). Webster, Farnsworth, Liao, and Ellis (2016) assert that toxic leadership can be detrimental to the organization as a whole in addition to its followers. TL describes a pattern of leader behaviors that include undermining employees, acting unethically, being abusive, and generally being detrimental to the organization (Tepper & Raffini, 2003). It can include actions such as claiming credit for the work of others, bullying, micromanaging excessively, or establishing unreachable and unrealistic goals (Ashforth, 1994). According to earlier research, it may lead to negative outcomes like a decline in motivation, performance, and engagement at work, as well as a rise in monetary losses, absenteeism, and work-related deviance (Morris, 2019).

In the context of toxic leadership (Einarsen, Hoel, & Zapf, 2007) or dark leadership (Paulhus and Williams, 2002), the term toxic leadership is frequently used. Although theorists have not defined toxic leadership specifically, some researchers have labeled it as bad or harmful, particularly when it comes to followers (Lipman-Blumen, 2005). These leaders are charged with influencing followers in a way that lowers motivation and performance, thereby increasing stress levels (Kurtulmu, 2020). This indicates that stress and anxiety are brought on by the employees' mental health declining under toxic leadership. Which ultimately results in employees' CWBs as a form of retaliation. When workers are in psychological distress, they believe that the organization is not caring about them or taking responsibility for them (Zhao et al., 2007). As a result, workers may become less focused and perform worse at work.

According to Cropanzano, Byrne, Pape, and Moffitt (2001), psychological distress is a condition of mental and emotional strain marked by anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion. Psychological distress can be greatly exacerbated by toxic leadership (Einarsen et al., 2007). An employee's capacity to manage demands and frustrations at work may be negatively impacted by this distress, which may lead to a higher probability of engaging in CWB (Hülshemann et al., 2018). The negative emotional state that workers experience as a result of work-related stress is known as psychological distress. Burnout, depression, and anxiety symptoms

are among them (Leiter & Maslach, 2005). According to Tepper and Raffini (2003) study, toxic leadership may play a major role in employees' psychological suffering. Employee responses to toxic leadership can be influenced by the degree of support an organization offers. POS is the extent to which workers believe the company values their success and offers them the tools they need to achieve. A positive work environment, helpful supervisors, and training accessibility are a few examples of this (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sulin, 1986). According to research by (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), high level of perceived organizational support can lessen the detrimental effects of stress on worker conduct. Strong organizational support networks, like supportive work relationships or access to employee assistance programs, can help employees manage stress and lessen the detrimental effects of toxic leadership on CWB and psychological distress (Leiter & Maslach, 2005).

Because workplace interactions are perceived as instantaneous, multiple factors are actually occurring simultaneously. Establishing a healthy work environment is crucial for evaluating performance in the academic setting, and what could be more crucial than having instructors concentrate on their instruction and abstain from harmful deviant behavior? Therefore, the main objective of this paper is to comprehend the different ways that counterproductive workplace behaviors occurs.

1.2 Gap Analysis

Although the literature currently in publication indicates a negative correlation between toxic leadership and counterproductive work behaviors (Tepper, 2017), there is a glaring knowledge vacuum regarding the precise mechanisms that cause counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs) in an organization when toxic leadership is present (Shahnawaz et al., 2022).

The effect of TL on organizational and employee outcomes in various contexts has been the focus of numerous studies (Wolor, Ardiansyah, Rofaida, Nurkhin, & Rababah, 2022; Sim & Tuckey, 2023). The relationship between TL and CWBs in Pakistan's public clinic area is the main focus of Kayani et al. (2021). However, the basic factors that influence this relationship are still not well understood

(Farghaly Abdelaliam & Abou Zeid, 2023). Given the paucity of research on these variables, this study is unique.

Psychological distress is one potential mechanism for the connection between toxic leadership and CWBs. Tension, depression, and emotional exhaustion can result from TL creating an unpleasant and unwelcoming work environment (Asha & Snigdha, 2019). These depressing emotions may then serve as a catalyst for engaging in CWBs as a stress-reduction technique or as a release of discontent (Duffy, Ganster, & Harris, 2012). A more nuanced understanding of the relationship between toxic leadership and counterproductive work behavior can be gained by looking at psychological distress as a mediator. The mediating function of psychological distress in the relationship between TL and CWBs will be investigated in this study.

Furthermore, the impact of toxic leadership can be influenced by organizational factors. The detrimental effects of toxic leadership on psychological distress and CWBs may be mitigated by high levels of perceived organizational support, where workers feel valued and appreciated by the company (Cropanzano et al., 2001). Important insights into organizational elements that can mitigate the detrimental effects of toxic leadership can be gained by examining organizational support as moderators.

Although earlier studies have shown that toxic leadership and counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs) are positively correlated, contextual factors continue to play a critical role in this relationship. Examining how organizational context can either amplify or diminish the influence of toxic leadership traits on employee behavior is crucial, according to (O'Boyle, Forsyth, Banks, & McDaniel, 2012). It is crucial to take into account how individual perceptions of organizational context may impact the manifestation of toxic leadership in CWBs, since employees function within a particular organizational context.

According to Caesens, Marique, Hanin, and Stinglhamber (2016), workers who believe that their company is supportive perform better, act more pro-actively, miss fewer days of work, and have fewer plans to leave. Employee attitudes and behaviors can be positively impacted by perceived organizational support primarily because it instills a sense of duty in the workers to repay the organization. Few

studies link perceived organizational support to negative work outcomes, such as counterproductive work behavior, despite the organizational literature being replete with studies that link perceived organizational support to positive organizational outcomes, such as work engagement (Kou, 2012), job satisfaction, and job commitment. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on this area. This study's primary goal is to investigate this gap.

1.3 Problem Statement

Numerous individuals have been observed to exhibit counterproductive work behaviors at their place of employment (Morris, 2019). These deviant behaviors can include destroying property, abusing time, money, or information, stealing, engaging in unsafe behavior, being absent, producing substandard work, acting inappropriately both verbally and physically, and more. Understanding the types of CWBs that are most likely caused by toxic leadership is crucial because it can guide targeted interventions to lessen their detrimental effects on employee morale and organizational productivity (Farghaly Abdelaliem & Abou Zeid, 2023).

In organizational settings, toxic leadership has grown in concern (Schmidt, 2008). Toxic leaders foster a hostile workplace that has a detrimental effect on workers' psychological health, job satisfaction, and general productivity (Tepper, 2007). The increase in counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs), which are detrimental to both organizations and employees, is a major effect of toxic leadership (Mackey, McAllister, Ellen, & Carson, 2021).

Even though previous studies have shown a connection between toxic leadership and CWBs, little is known about the underlying mechanisms underlying this relationship. One important mediating factor in this relationship might be psychological distress (Meier & Spector, 2013). Workers who are exposed to toxic leadership frequently feel more distressed, and as a coping strategy, they may engage in disengaged or retaliatory workplace behaviors (Boddy, 2014).

Moreover, this relationship may be moderated by perceived organizational support (POS). By giving workers material and psychological resources, a high level of POS may mitigate the negative effects of toxic leadership and lower the risk of

CWBs (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). On the other hand, low POS might make toxic leadership's detrimental effects worse, increasing psychological distress and workplace deviance (Kurtessis et al., 2017).

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions are the main focus of this study:

Research Question 01:

- What relationship existed between employees' counterproductive work behaviors and toxic leadership?

Research Question 02:

- Does the link between toxic leadership and counterproductive work behavior get mediated by psychological distress?

Research Question 03:

- Does perceived organizational support moderate the relationship between psychological distress and counterproductive work behaviors?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The following goals are the focus of this research study:

- To investigate the relationship between toxic leadership and CWBs.
- To investigate how psychological distress functions as a mediator between TL and CWBs.
- To investigate how perceived organizational support influences the relationship between CWBs and psychological distress.

1.6 Significance of the Study

There are important theoretical and practical ramifications to this study. This study advances our knowledge of the application of social exchange theory to

toxic leadership situations. It investigates the precise processes by which workers respond to unfavorable social interactions with toxic bosses, which eventually result in CWBs. As suggested by Kayani and Alasan (2021), this study contributes to a better understanding of situational factors that can lessen the negative effects of toxic leadership by looking at organizational support as moderators. This information can help researchers studying leadership create more complex theoretical frameworks. Employers can change the behavior of their staff by offering them a lot of support. The study integrates key theoretical frameworks, including social exchange theory to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay between toxic leadership, psychological distress, and CWBs.

The creation of focused interventions can be guided by an understanding of the mechanisms underlying CWBs' reactions to toxic leadership. Practically speaking, the results of this study can offer insightful information to companies looking to enhance their leadership styles and promote a more salubrious workplace. The study can guide the creation of focused interventions to address the negative effects of toxic leadership by determining the moderating influence of organizational support and the mediating role of psychological distress. To lessen the negative effects of toxic leaders, for example, organizations can put strategies in place to improve psychological well-being, encourage positive leadership behaviors, and establish supportive work environments. (Lee & Kim, 2020)

1.7 Supporting Theory

The benefits and drawbacks of interpersonal relationships are examined by a theoretical framework known as Social Exchange Theory (SET). Despite being called a single theory, it is better understood as a group of related theoretical models. In every interpretation of social exchange theory, social interactions are seen as a series of exchanges between two or more individuals. Resources are exchanged through reciprocity, where one party typically responds to the other's actions, whether positive or negative (Cropanzano et al., 2017).

The framework offered by Social Exchange Theory (SET) is useful for comprehending the mechanisms underlying employees' CWBs. According to the Social

Exchange Theory, a cost-benefit analysis directs social interactions. People assess the costs and rewards in relationships with the goal of minimizing expenses and maximizing benefits. According to organizational behavior, workers trade their loyalty, hard work, and abilities for benefits like pay, recognition, and a supportive workplace.

”Social trade involves activities dependent upon the compensating responses of others, which over time accommodate commonly and compensating exchanges and connections” is the pitch of social exchange theory (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). By fostering a hostile and unjust workplace, leaders who engage in toxic behaviors transgress the fundamental tenets of SET. These actions, which are marked by mistreatment, deceit, or a lack of trust, come at a high cost to workers. Employees might feel anxious, stressed, and less motivated (Asha & Snigdha, 2019). One could argue that the negative interaction with toxic leadership is the cause of this psychological distress. Social exchange theory can help explain how psychological distress affects employee performance and how toxic leadership causes them to retaliate by engaging in counterproductive work behavior.

According to SET, people are more inclined to cut back on their contributions or take actions meant to bring an exchange relationship back into balance when the perceived costs exceed the benefits. Psychological distress may serve as a mediator in this situation. High levels of distress among employees brought on by toxic leadership may cause them to feel less committed to the company and resort to counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs) as a means of expressing discontent or recovering from perceived losses (Cropanzano, Byrne, LePine, & Prussia, 2002). An individual may anticipate a fair and appropriate relationship between themselves and the organization. In addition, people will behave in accordance with the awards they received (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). The employee shows whether the psychological needs have been met in this way. Employees’ mental health suffers when they believe that their work is not appreciated and that they are not receiving enough care. Because of this, employees become less dedicated to their work, which results in unproductive work practices.

Support from the organization is also very important. The reciprocity norm in the social exchange relationship is strengthened when workers believe that the

company values and cares for them (Cropanzano et al., 2001). This perceived organization support may lessen psychological distress and CWBs by mitigating the harmful effects of toxic leadership.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Toxic Leadership

According to Pelletier (2010), toxic leadership is the specific and persistent behavior of a supervisor, administrator, or leader that subverts the organization's goals and stifles the sincere enthusiasm of the group. According to Aasland et al. (2010), toxic leadership can take many forms, such as working against the objectives of the organization, mistreating subordinates, engaging in other illegal behavior, etc. According to Steele (2011), constructive leaders employ impact, influence, and responsibility, while destructive leaders employ dominance, pressure, and control.

Threatening and intimidating behavior is typically linked to toxic leadership and can put subordinates in a worse situation. In their study, Singh et al. (2018) investigated how toxic leaders constantly look for ways to undermine and demoralize their followers. Instead of being regular, well-planned tyrant managers, toxic leaders are untrustworthy, unruly colleagues who engage in risky behaviors that jeopardize the organization's future and the professional development of their subordinates (Schmidt, 2008). Toxic leaders can act in a variety of ways, but they always intentionally harm others or advance their own interests at the expense of others. These leaders may present themselves as legends, or vice versa, to further muddy the waters. These toxic leaders don't treat their subordinates harshly when they reject them.

2.2 Psychological Distress

An emotional state that reflects repulsive emotions and unwelcome experiences is known as psychological distress. When people struggle in their daily lives or are unable to handle specific issues, it is a stressful situation (Kessler et al., 2002). Numerous elements, such as social, professional, personal, and environmental factors, have been identified as antecedents of psychological distress (Arvidsdotter et al., 2016). For instance, disparities in wealth and authority, divorce, infertility, and mental illness could all be significant contributors to psychological distress (Ross, 2017).

The term "psychological distress" describes unpleasant or negative emotions brought on by specific life events. Anxiety, depression, stress, low motivation, bafflement, withdrawal, hopelessness, and distraction are all included under the general term of psychological distress in this study. Since cognitive function is linked to psychological distress, anxiety, or depression, the threatened employee's brain shuts down complex thought processes and concentrates on emotions instead.

In addition to impairing focus and the capacity for original thought, the distracted and upset mental state will result in confusion, low motivation, and withdrawal behavior.

2.3 Counterproductive Work Behaviors

Any voluntary action by staff members that could endanger the organization or violate the rights of stakeholders is considered CWB (Dalal, 2005). This pertains to a broad range of specific behaviors, including theft, absenteeism, sabotage, and interpersonal violence, and it somewhat overlaps with related concepts like aggression, workplace retaliation, and rudeness (Spector et al., 2006).

Observable damage, as opposed to non-observable antecedents like intention to cause harm, deviance, or social norms, is what unites CWBs.

CWB is a well-established topic in organizational research and encompasses a wide range of employee behaviors (Fox & Spector, 1999). From minor infractions to

serious ones, CWB covers a wide range of severity. Certain CWB subsets, such as anger, workplace aggression, narcissism, and retaliatory behaviors, are associated with the reasons behind the behaviors.

2.4 Perceived Organization Support

Eisenberger et al. created the idea of perceived organizational support in 1986. It explains how the worker views the organization's dedication to their well-being. Employee perceptions of how much the company values their contributions and cares about their well-being are referred to as perceived support from the organization. A social exchange relationship that arises from interactions between the organization and its employees is known as perceived organizational support (Eisenberger et al., 1986). According to Zacher and Winter (2011), researchers have often highlighted the significance of a possible role for employees' perceptions of organizational support. According to Eisenberger et al. (1986), a variety of elements, including organizational rewards—which are given to staff members in the form of cash, credit, encouragement, and appreciation—have an impact on how supportive they perceive their employers to be. These awards all demonstrate how valuable employees are. Reacting appropriately to employees' errors, suggestions, and performance is another noteworthy way to communicate with them (Mitchell et al., 2012). It is crucial to remember that POS relies on how employees view the organization's actions. Therefore, the organization's actions are what shape the employees' perceptions. Organizational culture (the general ambiance and values of the workplace), leadership actions (the conduct of managers and executives, which communicates the organization's values), and HR practices (the manner in which the organization handles hiring, promotion, and other personnel matters). Because workplace interactions are perceived as instantaneous, multiple factors are actually occurring simultaneously. Establishing a healthy work environment is crucial for evaluating performance in the academic setting, and what could be more crucial than having instructors concentrate on their instruction and abstain from harmful deviant behavior? Therefore, the main objective of this paper is to comprehend the different ways that counterproductive work behaviors occur.

2.5 Toxic Leadership and Counterproductive Work Behaviors

A Counterproductive work behavior refers to any way of behaving, deliberate or otherwise etc., displayed by representatives that conflicts with the association's advantages (Fox & Spector, 2005). There is a deeply grounded negative connection between toxic leadership and employee well-being and productivity. Past investigations have counterproductive work behavior as a gloomy feeling of supporters or representatives that is expected to mischief or harm the association. This survey investigates the speculation that toxic leadership decidedly affects counterproductive work behavior (CWBs) in representatives.

Toxic leadership incorporates a scope of negative ways of behaving showed by leaders, including tormenting, micromanagement, and assuming praise for others' work (Lian et al., 2014). These ways of behaving establish a threatening workplace described by dread, doubt, and low confidence (Webster et al., 2016). Representatives exposed to such treatment might feel a feeling of feebleness and disdain (Hofmann and Sergio, 2020). Research proposes that toxic leadership can set off a pattern of cynicism inside an association.

At the point when representatives feel affronted, underestimated, and focused on because of their leader's activities, they are bound to take part in CWBs (Manaa, 2017). These ways of behaving can take different structures, including Creation aberrance - Lessening work exertion, enjoying inordinate reprieves, or low quality work (Fox, Spector, & Brunet, 2019). Abusive supervision - Hollering, annoying, or compromising associates or subordinates (T.-H. Kim & Shapiro, 2008). Harm - Purposely obstructing crafted by others or the association (Lim & Tai, 2014).

CWBs further dissolve trust and collaboration inside the group, establishing a more toxic climate and possibly prompting expanded turnover (T.-H. Kim & Shapiro, 2008). This endless loop can essentially influence authoritative execution and employee well-being.

The term toxic leadership is much of the time seen under the shadow of disastrous leadership (Einarsen et al., 2007) or dark leadership (Paulhus and Williams, 2002).

The toxic leadership isn't expressly characterized by the scholars however is frequently alluded to as hurtful or terrible exceptionally with respect to devotees by not many of the scientists (Lipman-Blumen, 2005). Such leader are blamed for impacting devotees in way that increments feelings of anxiety by lessening inspiration and execution (Kurtuluş, 2020). They might have also cold-heartedness which makes them idle to the others which over the long haul hurt the subordinates (Paulhus, 2014). Such leader moreover show threatening and torturing practices, and they in like manner will overall partake in unscrupulous and exploitative decisions whenever it regards to be required (Webster et al., 2016). Toxic leaders furthermore attack the certainty of their aficionados, and delegates report that they are despised freely (Dobbs and Do, 2019). These factors subsequently expanding pessimism among supporters raises pressure among them prompting reprisal in type of counterproductive work behavior.

Toxic leadership possibly invigorates a poisonous and damaging environment (Mehta & Maheshwari, 2013) by ascending the association stepping stool, where those leader become all the more remarkable and powerful. This concentrate likewise saw that any types of terrible ways of behaving from leaders, including toxic ways of behaving, would set off the rise of counterproductive behavior. Under a distressing circumstance and assets are inadequate with regards to, workers could fight back against their chiefs by showing counterproductive behavior (Lian et al., 2014). Albeit most investigations have shown the destructive impact of bad leadership on worker results (Mackey et al., 2021), distinct nations and societies showed a few conflicting outcomes. For example, high influence distance individuals could endure their chief's abuses and are bound to move toward the pioneers (Peltokorpi, 2019) despite the fact that they actually showed a goal to leave the association (Richard, Boncoeur, Chen, & Ford, 2020).

Toxic leadership ways of behaving prompts deviations in the association's current circumstance, retaliatory action from subordinates, estrangement of subordinates, decreased work accomplishment, and physical and mental pressure. Besides, toxic leaders don't feel great about their subordinates; on their part, they are presented to by and large hatred, which prompts an expansion in cynicism among the subordinates, which increments tension among them and ultimately prompts vengeance

as counter-productive work ways of behaving (Kayani and Alasan, 2021).

MacLennan (2017) noticed that any type of awful way of behaving from leaders, including harmful ways of behaving, can prompt counter-productive behaviors. Thusly, in upsetting circumstances or without even a trace of resources, representatives can fight back against their chiefs by showing counter-productive behavior. Kayani and Alasan (2021) presumed that toxic leadership meaningfully affects counter-productive work ways of behaving from a review directed on 355 medical caretakers in open area clinics in Pakistan. An exploration concentrate by Justin (2016) directed on an example of 197 clinical, nursing and research center workers in Nigerian public medical clinics presumed that there is a positive huge connection between's toxic leadership and counter-productive behavior. [Aydinay, Karaköyünlü, and Ceylan \(2021\)](#) utilized relapse investigation discovered that when the level of representatives' view of damaging authority expanded by one unit, counter-useful work ways of behaving expanded by 0.382 units. They likewise represented that horrendous authority represents 14% of the adjustment of counter-productive work ways of behaving from a review was led on an example of 486 representatives working in the help area in the fields of (training, wellbeing, lodgings, retail exchange, and data) in Mersin, Turkey.

One more review directed by [Manaa \(2022\)](#) decided the impact of toxic leadership on counter-product work behavior and the goal to go home among a haphazardly chosen test of 357 representatives of the Egyptian Drug Exchanging Organization utilizing connection examination and relapse investigations. There was an immediate and massive impact of toxic leadership on every one of the 5 elements of counter-productive work behavior (misuse, creation aberrance, harm, burglary, withdrawal), and the goal to go home.

The (for [Occupational Safety & Health, 1999](#)) illustrated a few work conditions that might add to pressure, which can thusly improve the probability of toxic leadership behaviors and ensuing employee distress for example the board Style, Relational Connections, and so forth.

The board Style: Unfortunate correspondence, absence of specialist cooperation in navigation, and an absence of family-accommodating strategies can establish an unfriendly and unsupportive workplace. This can add to sensations of frailty and

hatred among workers, possibly prompting poisonous initiative ways of behaving from bosses trying to apply control or make up for their own serious insecurities. Relational Connections: An unfortunate social climate described by absence of help or help from collaborators and managers can encourage sensations of separation, doubt, and disdain. This can add to the improvement of toxic leadership behaviors, as people might turn to harmful or manipulative strategies to keep up with power or make up for their own sensations of frailty.

These work conditions, by establishing an environment of stress and disappointment, can add to the development of toxic leadership behavior and their ensuing adverse consequence on employee well-being and hierarchical results.

Authority massively affects workers' results in any association. Constructive leadership emphatically influences representatives, while destructive leadership causes counterproductive work behaviors (CWB). Hattab et. al. (2022) intended to explore the impact of poisonous initiative on workers' CWB through the job of turnover aim by utilizing the mental agreement hypothesis. The members were enlisted utilizing different enrollment techniques, for example, online enlistment and graduated class organizations. Subsequent to dropping a few members who neglected to finish the three-wave information assortment strategy, 457 reactions were utilized for the last information investigation. The members came from different public associations in Indonesia (for example clinics). The outcomes observed that the impact of toxic leadership on workers' CWB was mediated by the job of turnover expectation. Under a toxic leader, workers could plan to leave the associations and commit CWB as the representatives saw the psychological agreement break.

Kayani, et. al., (2021) centered the conceptualizations of toxic leadership and breaks down the connection between toxic leadership and counterproductive work behaviour (CWB). The chose test for research contained 355 medical caretakers serving in open area of Pakistan and poll was utilized as an examination device. Discoveries of the information uncovered that toxic leadership is having a positive critical relationship with CWB. The consequences of the review expounded that organizations should enlighten unquestionably to administrators about the hostile results achieved by harmful oversight, and may join rules or ways to deal with

rebuke toxic practices. Given the counterproductive effect of toxic leadership, more data is solely required in regards to reasons for harmful administration and the paper finished up with proposals for future exploration and activity.

The examination predominantly upholds the speculation that toxic leadership has a significant positive impact on CWBs. leaders, who display negative ways of behaving make a favorable place for hatred and dissatisfaction, eventually prompting representative activities that can harm the association. So we propose;

H1. Toxic leadership has a significant positive impact on counterproductive work behavior.

2.6 Toxic Leadership and Psychological Distress

There is an unmistakable agreement inside hierarchical brain science research that toxic leadership unfavorably affects employees. This survey inspects the speculation that toxic leadership positively affects psychological distress among employees. toxic leadership includes a scope of disastrous ways of behaving that establish a persistent pressure climate portrayed by dread, nervousness, and insecurities (Einarsen et al., 2007). Representatives exposed to such treatment frequently experience profound weariness, pessimism, and a feeling of decreased viability, which are center parts of burnout (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001).

Research exhibits a strong connection between toxic leadership and different types of psychological distress. Studies have shown that employees working under toxic leaders are bound to encounter side effects of uneasiness, misery, and post-awful pressure problem (PTSD) (Vardi & Wiener, 2009; Schaubroeck, Peus, & Hayes, 2012). Moreover, the steady strain and cynicism related with poisonous initiative can prompt sensations of powerlessness, low confidence, and challenges concentrating (Ashforth, 1994). These psychological impacts can fundamentally influence representatives' very own lives, pouring out over to their connections and generally speaking prosperity (Zapf, Einarsen, & Hoel, 2010).

As indicated by Asha and Snigdha (2019), psychological distress has been perceived because of toxic leadership. Sociology writing characterizes psychological

distress as a close to home condition with sadness and nervousness side effects (Mirowsky and Ross, 2002). As per ? (?), individuals with psychological distress could change from sound levels to tension, despondency, dispiriting, surliness, animosity, and decreased character. Of that sort, abstract states can demolish people close to home strength and influence their capacity to appreciate life and adapt to agony, duplicity, and distress (Rose & Mechanic, 2002).

Toxic leaders can strain and lessen their subordinates' close to emotional well-being through private impact. Toxic leaders impede their subordinates' psychological well-being by terrorizing, infringement, shame (Webster et al., 2016). Toxic leaders fabricate a toxic work environment climate and feature negative qualities that influence psychological well-being prosperity, like hostility, tension, and gloom. Moreover, Lipman-Blumen (2005) depicts toxic leadership as a singular methodology that spotlights on private interest and prompts serious worker execution, motivation, profession improvement, and wellbeing.

A review was led to look at the effect of toxic leadership on academic staff's psychological distress in the Malaysian setting (Omar & Ahmad, 2020). The multistage testing procedure consolidated group examining and a straightforward irregular examining including scholastic staff from a state funded college in Malaysia. In light of the primary model's normalized way coefficients from the PLS results, toxic leadership significantly impacted employees' psychological distress. The exact examination discoveries address the hole in the general group of writing with respect to toxic leadership.

A concentrate by (Leodoro & Labrague, 2024) utilized cross-sectional review to assemble information from 285 Filipino crisis medical caretakers, utilizing 4 approved measures found toxic leadership had a direct positive effect on psychological distress. The review discoveries featured the negative impact of toxic leadership behaviors on the overall psychological well-being of emergency nurses. What's more, this study recognized work-family struggle as a system that made sense of what the toxic leadership behavior of medical caretaker chiefs meant for the psychological well-being of crisis medical attendants.

To look at the presence of toxic leadership in financial area of Pakistan Khurram and Naeem led a concentrate in (2020). Through random sampling technique six

traditional private and public banks were chosen in view of quantitative methodology. Altogether, 393 members finished a self-fulfillment organized survey in light of willful cooperation. Results upheld the presence of toxic leadership in financial area of Pakistan because of which turnover expectation increments. Toxic leaders additionally appeared to have negative impact on psychological wellbeing and employee engagement.

Different exploration studies have exactly demonstrated the relationship between leaders' behavior and their employees' psychological wellbeing. For example, abusive leaders go about as a wellspring of psychological distress for their subordinates (Tepper, 2000). An association having corporate mental cases as pioneers experience more struggles in light of the fact that such leaders go about as a harasser for the subordinates which brings about decline of employee well-being (Boddy, 2014). Pelletier (2010) has contended that a leader is proclaimed to be toxic when subordinates are viewed as mentally upset by the leader's behavior eventually making a delayed profound harm to them. Leadership style impacts employees' psychological wellbeing because of the impact of leader part backing and relationship (Hudson, 2013). Van Katwyk, Fox, (Spector et al., 2006) have recognized that the wellbeing is impacted by the positive and gloomy feelings workers experience in regards to various work qualities. Consequently, leaders by offering social help and connection establish a positive climate for their employees which thusly can decidedly impact their wellbeing. Alternately, leaders who neglect to give such steady climate to their employees adversely impact their wellbeing as they cause psychological distress among them (Bhandarker & Rai, 2019).

"Studies on work environment animosity have distinguished different structures, like tormenting, harmful null, and provocation, featuring the scope of sketchy demonstrations people might display (Neuman & Baron, 2005). These ways of behaving, especially when shown by managers, comprise harmful initiative, which can negatively affect workers.

Toxic leadership establishes a threatening and upsetting workplace, essentially adding to representative mental pain. This distress emerges from the difficult and compromising nature of these encounters, given bosses' command over angles basic to employee' work lives (Tepper, 2007). Research discoveries highlight the

impeding effect of toxic leadership on employee behavior. While certain investigations have demonstrated the way that representative responses can be helpful (Tepper, 2007), many have exhibited that toxic leadership incites disastrous responses from representatives, including an extensive variety of counterproductive work behaviour (CWBs) like non-attendance, harm, and diminished efficiency (Tepper, Henle, Lambert, Giacalone, & Duffy, 2008).

Durrah, Alkhalaf, and Sharbatji (2023) look at how toxic management style styles can prompt both psychological and physical withdrawal of workers in the medical services area. The quantitative methodology was utilized in the examination. The examination results show an immediate impact of toxic leadership style on psychological behaviors in medical clinics and wellbeing focuses in France.

The exploration predominantly upholds the speculation that toxic leadership positively affects psychological distress in employees. At the point when leaders display toxic behavior, they establish a persistent pressure climate that can prompt a scope of negative psychological results. This provides the grounds for hypothesis 2:

H2. Toxic leadership has a significant positive impact on psychological distress.

2.7 Psychological Distress and CWBs

Employee well-being is pivotal for organizational achievement. At the point when employee experience psychological distress, described by emotional and mental strain, it can negatively influence their work behavior. This literature looks at the hypothesis that psychological distress positively affects counterproductive work behavior (CWB).

Lipman's toxic leadership theory hypothesis depends primarily on the idea of misbehavior, like the destructive and abusive leadership that both concerned violent conduct. It additionally incorporates activities against the well-being of the organization and the devotees. Toxic leadership and employee relations can likewise be viewed as a reverse relationship (Wu & Hu, 2009). The qualities, demeanor,

and behavior of a leaders impact devotees' prosperity as a result of the connection. At the point when the leader shows a harmful commitment, the employees feels useless and belittling, showing a horrible showing (Ozlem, Ugurluoglu, Kahraman, & Keziban, 2017). From the get-go specialists portrayed CWBs in everyday terms with covering qualities in like manner, and various related yet unmistakable develops (Spector et al., 2006). The essential quality of CWB is that the demonstration is deliberate and not unplanned, and that the worker settles on a cognizant choice to act in such a way that is planned to cause mischief or damages by intentional activity (Spector et al., 2006).

CWBs can emerge from different existing circumstances either in the culprit or circumstance and can incorporate individual employee qualities and the attributes of the work environment (Fox & Spector, 2005). A few examiners concentrate on the qualities of the culprit while some emphasis on the people in question, but others concentrate on the unique exchange between the two (Fox & Spector, 2005). Fox and Spector showed that variables related with work pressure like an absence of control, extreme responsibilities, unfortunate relations with colleagues and bosses, and work/family clashes are connected to harmful behavior.

"Previous research has exhibited a connection between psychological distress and counterproductive work behavior (CWBs). For instance, studies have shown that people encountering elevated degrees of occupation nervousness, a center part of mental misery, are bound to take part in CWBs like non-attendance (Muschalla & Linden, 2014).

Moreover, people with elevated degrees of psychological distress frequently experience work disappointment (Bücker, Furrer, Poutsma, & Buyens, 2014). This disappointment can rouse representatives to take part in CWBs for the purpose of decreasing their dissatisfaction or communicating their discontent (Zhang & Deng, 2016). Furthermore, psychological distress can negatively affect employee conscientiousness, an essential figure working environment execution Bruce and Lynch (2011). Low scruples, portrayed by characteristics like untrustworthiness and absence of steadiness, is major areas of strength for an of CWBs, including non-attendance and contemptibility (Salgado, Moscoso, & Berges, 2013). These discoveries recommend serious link between psychological distress and CWBs. By

disabling emotional regulation, lessening position fulfillment, and sabotaging honesty, psychological distress can essentially improve the probability of employee taking part in counterproductive behavior.”

Özüdoğru, Görener, and Toker (2024) investigated how psychological capital affected CWB while taking procrastination and work alienation among hospital staff into account as mediating factors. The study discovered that higher levels of procrastination and work alienation were linked to lower psychological capital, which in turn caused higher CWB. This implies that procrastination and feelings of alienation, which are signs of psychological distress, are factors that lead to unproductive workplace behaviors.

The effects of workplace ostracism on CWB among Pakistani healthcare workers were investigated by (Kundi & Badar, 2024). According to the study, ostracized employees were more likely to believe that their relational psychological contracts had been broken, which in turn caused them to participate more in CWB. This research emphasizes how social exclusion-related psychological distress contributes to unfavorable workplace behaviors.

Research reliably shows an association between work stress and negative employee outcomes, including psychological distress (Demerouti et al., 2001) and CWB (Neuman and Wrathall, 2009). Psychological distress can appear as uneasiness, discouragement, and profound fatigue, which can impede a representative's all's capacity to adapt to work requests successfully (Wright and Cropanzano, 2000). CWB includes a scope of ways of behaving that deliberately prevent organizational objectives or prosperity (Fox, Spector, & Brunet, 2017). Models incorporate non-attendance, cyberloafing, taking organization assets, or relational hostility towards associates. These ways of behaving can essentially disturb work environment efficiency and assurance. On the other hand, employees who see that their associations esteem their administrations and commitments are bound to feel esteemed and connected with, which can assist with alleviating psychological distress and diminish the probability of CWBs.”

Ambrose et al. (2002) recognized five expected thought processes in employee engagement to counterproductive work behaviour (CWBs): weakness, authoritative dissatisfaction, assistance of work, weariness/tomfoolery, and bad form. Frailty -

employees might participate in CWBs for of recapturing control or applying impact when they feel weak inside the organization. Organizational Dissatisfaction - Hindered objectives, neglected assumptions, and saw disparities can prompt disappointment and profound pain, which might appear in CWBs. Help of Work - A few employee might participate in CWBs as an apparent easy route or workaround to accomplish work objectives, regardless of whether those activities disregard organizational principles. Weariness or Fun - now and again, CWBs might be performed for entertainment or to mitigate fatigue. Treachery - Employee who feel unjustifiably treated by the organization might take part in CWBs as a type of reprisal or to communicate their disappointment. These thought processes, especially feebleness, authoritative disappointment, and shamefulness, can altogether add to mental pain, like annoyance, harm, disdain, and nervousness. This trouble, thus, can improve the probability of participating in CWBs, including employee's withdrawal ways of behaving like superfluous truancy, lateness, and taking part in non-business related discussions (Edger and Eisenberger, 2008).

At the point when employees see the organization neglecting to address their issues or disregarding the psychological agreement (Rousseau, 1995), they might participate in CWB as a type of reprisal. Psychological distress can elevate these sensations of infringement, improving the probability of CWB. A concentrate by Mama and Li (2019) tracked down that emotional exhaustion, a critical part of psychological distress, essentially anticipated CWB among employees. Additionally, research by Aubé et al. (2009) showed a positive relationship between psychological well-being and CWB. These finding recommend that employees encountering psychological distress are bound to take part in counterproductive behavior.

Past examination has recognized different workplace stressors that can add to counterproductive work behavior (CWBs). These stressors incorporate organizational limitations, unmanaged clashes, work over-burden, and an absence of independence and backing Fox et al. (2001) While certain stressors are substantial (e.g., hierarchical limitations), others, similar to absence of independence and backing, address the shortfall of urgent assets. At the point when representatives experience stressors, they might encounter pessimistic close to home responses like displeasure, disappointment, nervousness, and burnout. These negative feelings,

aggregately alluded to as psychological distress, can fundamentally influence an individual mental and emotional functioning, making it harder to adapt really to working environment challenges.

In accordance with the stress model (Lazarus, 1999; Lazarus and Folkmann, 1984), individual evaluate stressful circumstances, and these examinations can set off gloomy feelings. At the point when these negative feelings are not successfully made due, they can appear in different ways, including CWBs.

Kelly et al. (2006) fought that psychological distress enlarges psychological and cognitive separation from work. Individuals who experience the ill effects of incivility from their managers will foster more cynical perspectives prompting counterproductive work behavior.

The hypothesis that psychological distress has a significant and positive impact on counterproductive work behavior is still supported by recent empirical research. [Striler, Shoss, and Jex \(2021\)](#) study from 2021 looked at the connection between CWB and different stressors for temporary employees. The results showed that a higher frequency of CWB was linked to psychological distress, which was exacerbated by organizational constraints, interpersonal conflict, and economic hardship. Further contributing to CWB were interpersonal conflict and job insecurity, which were associated with moral disengagement. This study emphasizes how psychological distress can lead to harmful behaviors at work.

This survey features the potential for psychological distress to be a huge supporter of CWB. Understanding this relationship can illuminate work place intercessions to advance employee well-being and decrease CWB. So we propose the following hypothesis;

H3. Psychological distress has a significant positive impact on counterproductive work behavior.

2.8 Psychological Distress as a Mediator

There is developing acknowledgment of the negative impacts of toxic leadership on employee well-being and organizational performance. This audit investigates

the speculation that psychological distress mediates the connection between toxic leadership and counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs). Toxic leadership incorporates a scope of pessimistic behavior displayed by leaders, that establish a persistent pressure climate portrayed by dread, tension, and insecurities (Einarsen et al., 2007). Research proposes that toxic leadership straightforwardly adds to psychological distress in employees. Employees exposed to such treatment frequently experience profound fatigue, skepticism, and sensations of diminished viability, which are center parts of burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). Furthermore, the consistent tension and cynicism related with poisonous authority can prompt side effects of uneasiness, sadness, and, surprisingly, post-awful pressure problem (PTSD) (Vardi and Wiener, 2009; Schaubroeck et al., 2012).

Psychological distress can essentially influence a person's mental and profound working, making it challenging to adapt to working environment requests successfully (Hülshemann et al., 2018). Representatives encountering misery might see CWBs as a method for suddenly erupting against their stressors or as a strategy for dealing with especially difficult times to mitigate their close to home weight (Bowling and Beehr, 2000).

At the point when leaders show toxic behavior, representatives experience expanded pressure and emotional strain. This trouble, thusly, turns into a critical element driving them to participate in CWBs. The examination proposes that psychological distress plays a pivotal intervening job in the connection between toxic leadership and CWBs. Lim and Tai (2014), uncovered that uncivil way of behaving from individuals upgrades psychological distress, subsequently at last impacting the work space and antagonistically influencing position execution. PD has additionally been related with the ominous exhibition of mental obligations (Takao et al., 2006).

Toxic leadership, frequently described by pretentious and manipulative ways of behaving, are probably going to break the psychological contract. This break can essentially affect employee well-being, prompting psychological distress, like uneasiness, dissatisfaction, and outrage. Supporting this speculation, Naeem and Khurram (2020) found that subordinates' psychological well-being is adversely and fundamentally connected with Toxic leadership. Their examination showed that

representatives encountering toxic leadership display expanded feelings of anxiety, a vital part of psychological distress. Besides, Penney and Spector (2005) laid out a positive relationship between bad affectivity and counterproductive work behavior (CWBs). This lines up with the proposed intervening job of psychological distress, as the pessimistic feelings emerging from psychological distress can drive employees to take part in CWBs for of adapting to their disappointment and disappointment. Hameed et. al., (2017) uncovered that psychological distress controlled because of the outer elements like incivility on piece of their subordinates drives them to take part in counterproductive work behavior as a retaliatory component. employees likewise frequently utilize such behavior as a survival technique to manage their work place pressure.

Beehr and Glazer (2005) featured that stressors, especially those beginning inside the organizational setting, can fundamentally affect employee well-being. These stressors, like work weakness, weighty jobs, and unfortunate administration styles, can establish a threatening and requesting workplace.

Toxic leadership, described by oppressive, manipulative, and shifty ways of behaving, addresses a huge organizational stressor. It can create a scope of negative psychological responses in representatives, including tension, melancholy, and burnout. These psychological responses, aggregately alluded to as psychological distress, can altogether affect employee well-being and generally speaking position execution.

Beehr and Glazer (2005) underscore the tremendous expenses related with employee stress, influencing both individual well-being and organizational effectiveness. toxic leadership, by making a profoundly unpleasant and mentally requesting workplace, straightforwardly adds to employee distress.

This trouble, thus, can prompt a scope of unfortunate results, including diminished work fulfillment, diminished efficiency, and expanded non-appearance.

Social exchange theory, which perspectives work connections as a progression of proportional trades among employees and their associations (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005), gives important experiences into the effect of mental agreement breaks on employee behavior.

This theory accentuates that solid work connections are based upon common commitments and assumptions. Rousseau (1995) contends that psychological agreements address these understood arrangements among employees and their organization. At the point when these agreements are penetrated, for instance, when employees feel that authoritative commitments are broken or that their commitments are underestimated, it can have critical adverse results for employee well-being.

Naeem, Fizza; Khurram, Sobia, (2020) found that, a leaders displaying toxic uniqueness makes it challenging for employees to remain, subsequently, expanding their goal to leave their work. The concentrate likewise expressed that, there was a critical and negative relationship of toxic leaders with their employee psychological wellbeing. This addresses that within the sight of harmful pioneers the mental prosperity of workers will decline. Therefore, abused employees respond against their bosses by taking part in CWB, this will prompt higher quit plan and lower staff execution. This puts extra monetary weight on associations for enrollment and preparing of new staff.

Supporting this hypothesis, Naeem and Khurram (2020) found that subordinates' psychological well-being is negatively and essentially connected with toxic leadership. Their exploration showed that employees encountering toxic leadership display expanded feelings of anxiety, a vital part of mental misery. Moreover, Penney and Spector (2005) laid out a positive relationship between negative affectivity and counterproductive work behavior (CWBs). This lines up with the proposed mediating role of psychological distress, as the negative feelings emerging from psychological distress can drive employee to participate in CWBs for of adapting to their disappointment and frustration.

Toxic leadership, with its attention on personal circumstance and dismissal for worker needs, frequently prompts infringement of the psychological contract. This break can set off negative feelings and psychological distress in employees, improving the probability of counterproductive work behavior. Toxic leadership establishes an unpleasant climate, prompting mental trouble in workers. This misery then, at that point, improves the probability of employees taking part in counterproductive behavior at work. Understanding this mediating impact can assist associations with creating methodologies to relieve the adverse consequences

of toxic leadership and advance employee well-being. So the literature open the grounds for a mediation hypothesis;

H4. Psychological distress mediates the relationship between toxic leadership and counterproductive work behaviors.

2.9 Perceived Organizational Support as a Moderator

Psychological distress incorporates a scope of pessimistic profound states, including tension, gloom, and persistent pressure. These encounters can fundamentally hinder a individual capacity to adapt to work environment requests successfully (Hülshemann et al., 2018). Research recommends a reasonable connection between psychological distress and improved probability of taking part in CWBs. People encountering psychological distress might see CWBs as a method for blowing up against their stressors or as a strategy for dealing with especially difficult times to mitigate their close to home weight (Bowling and Beehr, 2000).

Although there is ample evidence linking psychological distress to CWBs, new research indicates that perceived organizational support (POS) may serve as a moderating factor, potentially lessening the detrimental effects of psychological distress. According to this hypothesis, psychological distress may have a less negative impact on CWBs when workers feel that the organization is supporting them.

Perceived organizational support alludes to how much employees see the organization thinks often about their well-being and gives resources to assist them with succeeding (Eisenberger et al., 1986). This help can come in different structures, including: Boss help - Having a steady manager who shows compassion and offers direction (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Fair treatment - Feeling that the organization treats employees decently and reliably (Cropanzano et al., 2002). Work-life balance - Having adaptable work game plans and arrangements that advance well-being (Allen, 2001). At the point when employee see solid organizational help, they feel esteemed and are bound to participate in good survival strategies when

confronted with psychological distress (Cropanzano et al., 2002). Furthermore, assets given by the organization can assist them with overseeing pressure and further develop their general well-being, decreasing the probability of falling back on CWBs. The proposed moderation model recommends that psychological distress doesn't have a consistently solid relationship with CWBs. At the point when organizational help is high, the negative consequence of distress on CWBs is debilitated. Employees who feel upheld are much improved prepared to deal with their profound state and track down better ways of adapting to work environment challenges. Alternately, low organizational help might fuel the inconvenient impacts of distress, prompting an improved probability of CWBs.

Work environment stressors, like job vagueness, work imperatives, weighty responsibility, and incivility (Kern and Grandey, 2009), can set off psychological distress in employee. POS directs the connection between psychological distress and CWBs by impacting the degree to which employees experience and adapt to psychological distress. High POS goes about as a defensive component, moderating the negative consequence of stressors on employee well-being and decreasing the probability of CWBs. On the other hand, low POS intensifies the effect of stressors, expanding the gamble of psychological distress and ensuing CWBs.

The moderating function of POS in this relationship is supported by research findings. As an illustration, research by Ma et al. (2019) showed that when employees felt that their organizations supported them, they were less likely to participate in CWBs.

The association between CWBs and distress was substantially stronger when POS was low, on the other hand, indicating that perceived organizational support may lessen the negative effects of stress on behavior at work. Additionally, POS plays a particularly important role during organizational transitions or crises, when workers are more susceptible to stress (Biron et al., 2013).

High level of POS are related with positive employee results like diminished turnover goals (Edwards and Peccei, 2015), expanded organizational citizenship conduct (Chiang and Hsieh, 2012), and upgraded organizational responsibility (Allen and Shanock, 2013). On the other hand, low POS is related with expanded commitment in CWBs (Pseudonym et al., 2013).organizational help assumes a critical

part in directing the connection between psychological distress and CWBs. organization that focus on employee well-being and offer sufficient help can establish a more certain workplace, diminishing the risk of CWBs emerging from psychological distress. By understanding this moderating impact, organization can foster procedures to further develop employee well-being and cultivate a more useful and positive work environment.

In organizational settings that are particularly vulnerable to stress, like times of crisis or organizational transition, the moderating function of POS is also noticeable.

According to [Biron, Bamberger, and Belogolovsky \(2013\)](#), even though employees were under more stress during organizational upheaval, they were less likely to participate in CWBs if they felt that their organization supported them. However, workers were more likely to engage in negative behaviors, like poorer job performance and higher absenteeism, if they felt that their company was not supporting them during these trying times.

Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) embodies when employees are upheld by the organization embodying equity, rewards, fitting position conditions and supervisory help then relationship between work environment incivility and CWB weakens as employees are certain that the decency and adherence to the approaches of the organization alleviate the possibilities of workplace misbehavior. Consequently, these employees attempt to respond consequently through ideal treatment. The apparent organizational help and reasonableness in the methods of the association guarantee them to disregard the uncivil way of behaving of others and this doesn't heighten to counter working conduct consequently.

Justice and treating everyone fairly are two important factors that determine an organization's support. According to research, workers who feel that management is treating them unfairly or that rewards are not being distributed fairly are more likely to act in ways that are counterproductive in order to deal with the perceived injustice ([Terry, 2020](#)). When workers are psychologically distressed, for example, the absence of justice within the company can intensify their negative emotional states, leading them to act in ways such as sabotage, absenteeism, or even retaliation ([Wagner & Hollenbeck, 2010](#)). Employees are less likely to use CWBs,

however, when they believe they are treated fairly, even under pressure, because they believe the company cares about their welfare. Therefore, POS and organizational justice can complement each other to lessen the effects of psychological distress.

Alagarsamy, Zia, and Kaur (2024) examined the relationship between COVID-19-related fear and workplace deviance, taking into account POS as a moderating variable and workplace phobia as a mediating factor. Their results suggested that organizational support can lessen the negative effects of psychological distress on employee conduct, as POS weakened the positive association between workplace phobia and deviant behaviors.

Similarly, using POS as a moderating factor, (S. M. Kim & Jo, 2024) investigated how job stressors affected CWB. According to the study, POS exacerbated the relationship between job insecurity and increased CWB through increased organizational cynicism. This surprising discovery suggests that high POS could unintentionally encourage bad behavior in some situations, perhaps as a result of staff members abusing organizational support.

The function of organizational climate is another aspect of this relationship. Even in the absence of official support programs, employees' perceptions of support can be improved by fostering a positive organizational climate that values mutual respect, trust, and fairness (Einarsen et al., 2007).

Employees are more likely to stay engaged and refrain from negative behaviors, even when they are in distress, when they believe that the organization as a whole values their contributions and well-being. This emphasizes how crucial it is to establish a supportive and trusting work environment as a safeguard against the detrimental impacts of psychological distress. Therefore we hypothesize:

H5. Perceived organization support moderates the relationship between psychological distress and counterproductive work behavior in such a way that this relation will be weaker when perceived organization support is high and vice versa.

2.10 Conceptual Framework

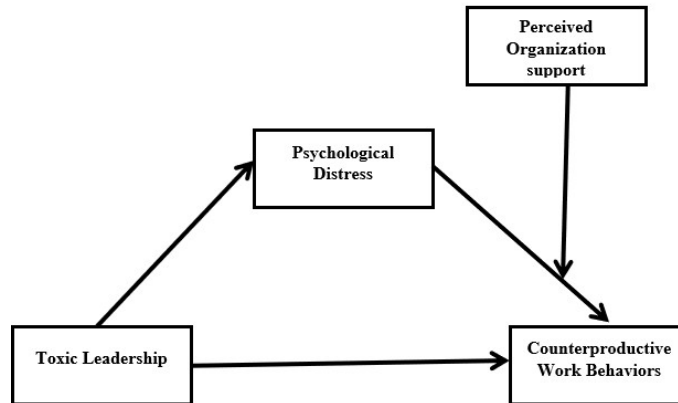


FIGURE 2.1: Research Model

The conceptual framework of this study explores the detrimental effects of toxic leadership on employee behavior, specifically focusing on the mediating role of psychological distress and the moderating roles of personality and organizational support. Employees exhibit CWB as a defense when they face negative and inappropriate treatments from their leadership. This affects their mental well-being causing stress and anxiety. However, with strong organization support the negative outcomes of this relationship can be reduced.

2.11 Summary of Hypotheses

TABLE 2.1: Research Hypotheses

Sr.	Hypotheses Statement
H1	Toxic leadership has a significant positive impact on counterproductive work behavior.
H2	Toxic leadership has a significant positive impact on psychological distress.
H3	Psychological distress has a significant positive impact on counterproductive work behavior.
H4	Psychological distress mediates the relationship between toxic leadership and counterproductive work behaviors.
H5	Perceived organization support moderates the relationship between psychological distress and counterproductive work behavior. In such a way that this relation will be weaker when perceived organizational support is high.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

The different research approaches used in the current study are examined in this section. The variables being examined are supported by strong theoretical frameworks, which form the basis of the methodology used. The population, sample, instrumentation, data analysis techniques, statistical tools used for analysis, and research design are all included in the methodology. The robust theoretical foundations of the variables under study serve as the foundation for the investigation's methodology. Important topics covered in this chapter include demographics, the systematic data collection process, and the variety of tools used to guarantee the reliability and validity of our study.

3.1 Research Design

The research design provides comprehensive details regarding operationalization, population targeting, and sample selection for the study. Furthermore, the metrics utilized, the data analysis techniques, and the statistical instruments utilized for analysis. Data from different individuals was collected at a single point in time for analysis.

3.1.1 Research Philosophy

This research study adheres to a positivist research philosophy. This philosophical stance assumes that reality is objective and exists independently of the researcher.

This means that the phenomena being studied have an objective existence and can be observed and measured in a neutral and unbiased manner. Knowledge was generated through empirical observation and measurement. The primary focus was on collecting quantifiable data through systematic methods such as surveys. The research process should be objective and value-free. The researcher's personal biases and values should not influence the research process or the interpretation of findings.

The study concentrated on variables that can be measured with validated scales, such as psychological distress, CWBs, and perceived organizational support. To find patterns and relationships between variables, data was gathered objectively using methods like surveys and then analyzed using statistical techniques. The study tested particular hypotheses regarding the relationships between variables, including the moderating effect of perceived organizational support and the mediating role of psychological distress. This study attempts to produce objective and verifiable knowledge regarding the relationship between psychological distress, CWBs, and the moderating role of perceived organizational support by embracing a positivist research philosophy.

3.1.2 Research Approach

The research methodology used in this study is deductive. This method is distinguished by a top-down procedure in which preexisting theories or hypotheses serve as the basis for research. To develop particular hypotheses regarding the relationships between variables, the study is well-versed by accepted theories, like, social exchange theory. The main goal was to use empirical data collection and analysis to test these pre-established hypotheses. In order to obtain empirical evidence that either confirms or disproves the hypotheses derived from the current theories, data was gathered using quantitative techniques, such as surveys. The predictions made by the current theories are either confirmed or refuted. Questionnaires were selected as a reliable method for data collection. The study employs a hypothetical-deductive approach, where hypotheses derived from existing literature are tested through empirical analysis to validate or refute proposed relationships.

3.1.3 Research Strategy

According to the notion of the "research strategy," there are many different types of research strategies, including surveys, action research, experimental research, interviews, case study research, and thorough literature reviews. When selecting a strategy, the specific data needed for the study and its intended goals must be taken into account. This research employs a survey-based approach to investigate the relationship between toxic leadership, psychological distress, and counterproductive work behaviors, while examining the moderating role of perceived organization support.

3.1.4 Choice of Method

There are several ways to carry out the research within the framework and methodology. Approaches that are multi-, mixed-, or mono-method are all feasible. The mono-method was chosen because it only uses one study approach and is simpler to organize and implement. The research question can be adequately addressed with just one strategy. It allows for a more focused investigation.

3.1.5 Time Horizon

The cross-sectional research design was utilized in this study. All of the data was collected at a single point in time because this study only uses one time horizon. This approach is effective for examining the relationships between variables over a specified time period.

By collecting data from participants at a single point in time, this study aims to capture a snapshot of the current relationships between the variables under investigation within the study population. This design enables efficient data collection and analysis in a relatively short period of time.

3.1.6 Target Population

The population is all of the people, teams, and groups that the researcher works with to collect data. Employees, especially teachers, at educational establishments

in the Rawalpindi district provided the primary data. The necessary authorizations were supplied by each institute's management. The study's target audience consisted of teachers who were currently employed by these organizations. The population is expected to be perfect for our study given the features of our research variables. Following their invitation to participate in the survey, each respondent provided their informed consent. Throughout the process, confidentiality and anonymity were ensured for each respondent. A cover letter outlining the objectives of the research was included with the questionnaires to provide background information on the study's objectives.

3.2 Data Collection

This study uses convenience sampling a subset of non-probability sampling techniques to obtain quantitative data. This study used a questionnaire to collect data from college and school staff, primarily teachers. Data was collected using online questionnaires that were distributed electronically.

A user-friendly and secure online survey platform, such as Google Forms, was employed. The questionnaire's validated scales were used to measure each variable. Participants were recruited using a range of strategies, such as departmental announcements, email invitations, and collaboration with college and school administrators. Participants received a unique link to the online survey. The survey was given a reasonable amount of time to be completed. Reminders were sent to participants to encourage participation. Employees of particular institutions were personally asked to participate in the survey.

3.2.1 Population and Sample

The target population for this study was all teachers working in all public and private educational establishments, such as schools and colleges in the Rawalpindi district, due to the study's emphasis on the education sector. Estimating the necessary sample size and ensuring representativeness become difficult when the population's precise size is unknown. When the population is poorly defined or

difficult to reach, it can be challenging to create a thorough and accurate sampling frame. Considering the possibly reasonably large and inadequate population, the convenience sampling approach is suitable.

3.2.2 Sample Size

The number of observations the researcher decides to include in his study determines the sample size. The intended level of statistical power and the intricacy of the research question are two of the many variables that determine the ideal sample size. Results from larger samples are generally more trustworthy. A sample size of about 384 was deemed ideal based on calculations made using the formula that had been validated to determine the sample size of an unknown population. Nonetheless, a total of 273 useful responses were obtained and analyzed, representing a 73% response rate.

Calculation of sample size:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \cdot p \cdot (1 - p)}{e^2}$$

In the formula:

n = Required sample size

Z = Z score (for 0.95 confidence level z-score is 1.96)

p = proportion of population

p = Error Term

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \cdot 0.5 \cdot (1 - 0.5)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{3.8416 \cdot 0.25}{0.0025}$$

$$n = \frac{0.9604}{0.0025}$$

$$n = 384$$

The quantitative methodology of this study made use of questionnaires. To collect data, these surveys were sent to the population sample via email and Google Forms. A sample is merely a small representation of the entire population. The population of Rawalpindi, the main district of Pakistan, is the subject of this study. Data questionnaires were given to each of them. The data was analyzed using SPSS to yield the desired statistical results. Appendix A displays the questionnaire used to gather the data.

3.3 Sampling Technique

A representative sample was chosen from the target population using a sampling technique that is generally referred to as non-probability sampling. In non-probability sampling, samples are chosen according to non-random standards, frequently impacted by the researcher's discretion or practicality. Non-probability sampling is frequently used by researchers who want to carry out exploratory, pilot, or qualitative research. It is used by researchers who are under time or financial pressure to complete their work. The study's target population consisted of workers from various educational institutions in Pakistan. This group includes people who are vulnerable to toxic leadership and its consequences. The number of employees in the aforementioned sector is unknown. When dealing with an unknown population size, convenience sampling is often the most feasible and practical sampling method. Convenience sampling is the most widely used technique for deriving conclusions from quantitative research studies that include the entire population. Given our time and resource constraints, it is also the most effective strategy for our research project. The process of selecting readily available and accessible participants is known as convenience sampling. When dealing with an unknown population, where it may be challenging or impossible to establish a comprehensive sampling frame, this is extremely beneficial. It is often the most practical and cost-effective method for researchers because recruiting volunteers saves time and money.

3.4 Reliability of scales

An item is considered to have high reliability when tests show that it consistently produces the same results over time. Scale reliability is the capacity of a scale to produce consistent results when analyzed repeatedly.

A reliability test employing Cronbach alpha was used to show the variables' internal reliability. It proved that there is a relationship between the variables. A specific set of constructions computed below that threshold are considered less reliable, whereas a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.7 or greater is considered consistent.

The construct's alpha values in this study are as follows. Psychological distress (.924), perceived organizational support (.945), toxic leadership (.914), and counterproductive work behavior (.904). These numbers indicate a high level of internal consistency and suggest that the elements that make up each construct are generally closely related.

TABLE 3.1: Scales Reliability

Variables	No of item	Cronbach's alpha
Toxic Leadership	8	.914
Counterproductive Work Behaviors	11	.904
Psychological Distress	10	.924
Perceived Organization Support	8	.945

3.5 Data Analysis Techniques

Utilizing SPSS software, the gathered data was examined. Numerous statistical tests, including regression, correlation, moderation, and mediation, were used to access and examine the data. Correlation analysis was used to look at the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Concurrently, regression analysis was employed to look into the connections between the variables.

3.5.1 Analytical Tools and Techniques Used

The data was examined using a variety of statistical techniques, including regression analysis, descriptive analysis, correlation analysis, and reliability testing. The statistical software SPSS, version 29.0, was used to conduct all necessary statistical tests and calculations. Cronbach's alpha was computed to assess the internal reliability of the scales.

3.6 Instrumentation

The term "instrumentation" refers to the tools and techniques used to systematically and dependably gather data. A self-administered questionnaire designed to assess the research variables serves as the primary instrument in this study.

An essential component of the instrumentation are the scales or items used to measure each distributed verifiable and sample characteristic. The questionnaire needs to be well-written to ensure that it is clear, concise, and easy to read. To improve the reliability of study results, it is essential to have clear objectives, appropriate questions or measures, instrument piloting to identify and fix any issues, and validity and reliability evaluation.

Well-designed instrumentation facilitates the collection of high-quality data and enhances the integrity and rigor of the study findings. Therefore, meticulous attention to detail and methodological rigor are necessary when developing instrumentation for research.

3.6.1 Measures

Four major variables are examined in this study: Perceived organization support (POS), psychological distress (PD), toxic leadership (TL), and counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs). A five-point Licker scale, with 1 denoting strong disagreement and 5 denoting strong agreement, was used to measure every study variable. Responses to each item are recorded on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree).

3.6.1.1 Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB)

A seven item scale by Bennett and Robinson (2002) is adopted to measure CWB. The deviant behaviors expressed by employees are measured through this scale. One sample item is “I’ve taken additional or a longer break than is acceptable at my workplace”.

3.6.1.2 Toxic Leadership

A shortened version of the original TL scale by Schmidt (2008) was adopted from Saqib and Arif (2017) to measure Toxic Leadership. One sample item includes “My Supervisor denies accountability for errors done by his unit”. This scale measures the negative and violent behavior of leadership as experienced by the employees.

3.6.1.3 Psychological Distress

In order to measure the PD experienced by the employees a ten item scale by Kessler et al. (2002) is adopted. One sample item is “I feel tired out for no good reason”. This scale measures the psychological wellbeing of the employees.

3.6.1.4 Perceived Organizational Support

OS is measured using a shortened version of the eight item scales by Eisenberger et al. (1986). One sample item is “My organization cares about my opinion”. This scale measures the level of support employees get from their organization.

TABLE 3.2: Scales

Variables	Source	No of items
Toxic Leadership	Schmidt (2008)	8
Psychological Distress	Kessler et al. (2002)	10
Counterproductive Work Behaviors	Bennett and Robinson (2000)	7
Percieved Organizational Support	Eisenberger et al. (1986)	8

3.6.2 Sample characteristics

The study looked at several demographic factors to better understand the characteristics of the sample. These factors included the age, gender, income, position, work history, and employment status of the individuals under examination. Analyzing these factors can reveal crucial details about the range of backgrounds and experiences that comprise the sample group.

3.6.2.1 Gender Characteristics

There are substantially more female employees than male employees, despite the fact that this study attempted to ensure gender equality. According to Table 3.3, which shows the ratio of male to female employees, 34.1% of all respondents were men, but the majority, 65.9%, were women.

TABLE 3.3: Frequency by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	cumulative
Male	90	34.1	34.1
Female	180	65.9	100
Total	273	100	

3.6.2.2 Income Levels

Income data was gathered in predetermined ranges to guarantee respondent accessibility, offering a straightforward and organized method of obtaining this crucial demographic data. According to Table No. 3.4, the majority of respondents earned between 21,000 and 30,000.

This group of respondents makes up 44% of the total population's sample of respondents. Additionally, the results showed that 21.6% of the respondents earned between 31 and 40k. 8.8% of respondents had incomes between \$41,000 and \$50,000 while, 13.9% of respondents had incomes over 51,000.

TABLE 3.4: Frequency by Income

Income	Frequency	Percentage	cumulative
Below 20,000	32	11.0	11.7
21 – 30,000	120	44.0	55.7
31 – 40,000	59	21.6	77.3
41 – 50,000	24	8.8	86.1
51 – 60,000 and above. . .	38	13.9	100
Total	273	100	

3.6.2.3 Age Group

Age data was collected in ranges so that it would be easily accessed by respondents. One demographic that respondents sometimes find painful to disclose in a friendly manner is age, which is imitated. Table No. 3.5 demonstrates that the majority of respondents are between the ages of 31 and 38, meaning that 32.6% of the respondents were in this age range. About 23.1% of the sample's respondents are between the ages of 23 and 30; 13.9% are between the ages of 39 and 46; and 24.9% are between the ages of 47 and 54 and older.

TABLE 3.5: Frequency by Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative
Less than 22	15	5.5	5.5
23 – 30	63	23.1	28.6
31 – 38	89	32.6	61.2
39 – 46	38	13.9	75.1
47 – 54 and above	68	24.9	100
Total	273	100.0	

3.6.2.4 Job position

Respondents' position or role details were categorized for clarity in order to guarantee accessibility. Being aware of professional roles is a crucial demographic component. The majority of responders are junior teachers, as indicated in Table No. 3.6. 53.8% of the sample population as a whole consists of individuals

assigned to junior teaching positions. Twenty-two percent of the respondents are teachers, sixteen percent work in administration or management, and six percent are assistant teachers.

TABLE 3.6: Frequency by Job Position

Job Position	Frequency	Percentage	cumulative
Administration/Management	45	16.5	16.5
Junior Teacher	147	53.8	70.3
Teacher	62	22.7	93.0
Assistant Teacher	19	6.9	100
Total	273	100	

3.6.2.5 Job status

Job status data was collected in categories so that it could be easily accessed by respondents. One important demographic is employment status. The majority of respondents have permanent jobs, as indicated in Table No. 3.7. 60.4% of the total respondents are included in this sample segment. 17.9% of respondents are contractual employees, while 21.6% of respondents are visiting employees.

TABLE 3.7: Frequency by Job Status

Job Status	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative
Permanent	165	60.4	60.4
Visiting	59	21.6	82.1
Contractual	49	17.9	100
total	273	100	

3.6.2.6 Work Experience

To learn more about the experiences of the respondents, various forms of experience time have been identified. This makes it simple for each respondent to determine how long they have worked in the field in question. Table No. 3.8 indicates that most respondents had experiences ranging from one to five years. This indicates that 49.5% of the entire sample falls within this range. Nonetheless, 19.4% of those surveyed had six to ten years of experience. 13.6% of those

surveyed had less than a year's experience. 9.9% of those surveyed had between 11 and 15 years of experience. However, 7.7% of all respondents had more than 16 years of experience.

TABLE 3.8: Frequency by Work Experience

Work Experience	Frequency	Percentage	cumulative
Less than 1 year	37	13.6	13.6
1 – 5 years	135	49.5	63.0
6 – 10 years	53	19.4	82.4
11 – 15 years	27	9.9	92.3
16 – 20 years and above	21	7.7	100
Total	273	100	

Chapter 4

Result and Analysis

Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, moderation, and mediation were used to examine the results pertaining to each variable using software such as SPSS.

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

Using a variety of statistical techniques, descriptive statistics provide an overview of the observed details extracted from the data. SPSS was used to compute descriptive statistics for each variable, including psychological distress, counterproductive work behavior, toxic leadership, and perceived organizational support. Table 4.1 below shows the results of the means and standard deviations that were computed using SPSS. Greater agreement among respondents is indicated by higher mean values, whereas greater disagreement is indicated by lower mean values.

TABLE 4.1: Descriptive Analysis

Variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	STD
TL	273	1	5	4.0	.81
PD	273	1	5	3.4	.87
POS	273	1	4.8	2.2	1.3
CWB	273	1	5	3.9	1.0

Table 4.1 displays data about the variables; the standard deviation is 0.81 and the mean value of the independent variable (toxic leadership) is 4.0. The dependent

variable, counterproductive work behavior, has a mean value of 3.9 and a standard deviation of 1.0. The mean score for the moderator (perceived organizational support) is 2.2, and the standard deviation is 1.3. The mediator's (psychological distress) mean is 3.4, and its standard deviation is 0.87.

4.2 Control Variables

For the control variables, an ANOVA test was conducted using SPSS. One-way ANOVA was used to determine whether or not demographic factors affected the dependent variable. Since no variable was discovered to be under control, the project was successful in this instance. A p-value of less than 0.05 indicates a statistically significant difference between the means. The data show that there is no significant relationship between any of the demographic variables, with p-values greater than 0.05. As a result, our main goal is to observe the relationships and outcomes that the model predicted. Independent testing of the suggested correlations was made possible by the study's conclusion that none of the demographic factors significantly affected the dependent variable.

TABLE 4.2: One Way ANOVA

Control Variables	F	Sig.
Gender	3.45	0.06
Age	1.56	0.15
Income	1.89	0.11
Job status	1.75	0.17
Job position	0.64	0.62
Work experience	1.32	0.26

4.2.1 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis provides definitive evidence of the relationship between variables. Positive signals show that the variables are moving in the same direction, as opposed to negative signals, which show that the variables are moving in the

opposite direction. Additionally, the "r" value indicates the degree of correlation between the variables. A weak correlation is indicated by a Pearson Coefficient value range of 0.1 to 0.3, a moderate correlation by a value range of 0.3 to 0.5, and a high correlation by a value greater than 0.5. The correlation coefficient illustrates many effects.

The analysis of correlation table 4.3 indicates a positive relationship between toxic leadership and counterproductive work behavior, with a correlation of 0.527** at $p < 0.00$. This suggests that higher levels of toxic leadership are associated with counterproductive work behavior. Psychological distress is a mediating factor between toxic leadership and counterproductive work practices. The correlation between toxic leadership and counterproductive work practices. The correlation between psychological distress and toxic leadership is 0.573** at $p < 0.00$. It suggests a good relationship. It implies that there is a correlation between high psychological distress and toxic leadership. Additionally, perceived organizational factors moderate the relationship between psychological distress and counterproductive work behavior. The correlation coefficients between psychological distress and counterproductive work behavior are $r=0.708^{**}$ at $p < 0.00$. It suggests that these are positively correlated. Furthermore, counterproductive work behavior and perceived organizational support are negatively correlated with $r = -0.666 < 0.00$.

TABLE 4.3: Correlation Analysis

Variables	TL	CWB	PD	POS
Toxic Leadership	1			
Counterproductive Work Behavior	.527**	1		
Psychological Distress (Med)	.573**	.708**	1	
Perceived Organization Support	-.478**	-.666**	-.496**	1

Overall, table 4.3 demonstrates a positive correlation between toxic leadership and psychological distress as well as counterproductive work behavior. All other variables, however, are negatively and reciprocally correlated with perceived organizational support.

4.3 Regression Analysis

The study used regression analysis, specifically multiple regression, to look into the underlying causes of the observed relationships between the variables. Unlike correlation analysis, which only looks for correlations, regression analysis allows researchers to evaluate the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable while controlling for other variables. The study made use of Hayes (2013). Regression analysis employs a variety of methods and resources, including the full scale (Hayes & Preacher 2014), which is examined for moderation and mediation using SPSS.

Table 4.4 offers a comprehensive overview of our findings, along with the significance levels of the proposed hypotheses. It provides important information such as regression coefficient values, significance values, standard errors (S.E.), and the lower and upper limits of the confidence interval (LLCI and ULCI, respectively).

The table displays both direct and indirect relationships, with a focus on mediation. The analysis of mediation and moderation was conducted using Hayes' model 14.

Hypothesis 1: Toxic leadership has a significant positive impact on counterproductive work behavior.

According to the regression analysis for hypothesis 1, there is a significant positive correlation between toxic leadership and counterproductive work behavior. The p-value is .00, while the regression coefficient, or β value, is 0.13. The relationship is significant, as indicated by the 0.02 p-values, and the positive sign coefficient β shows a positive relationship. It implies that a rise in toxic leadership will have a direct impact on unproductive workplace conduct. These results support the acceptance of hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 2: Toxic leadership has a significant positive impact on psychological distress.

Regression analysis shows how psychological distress and toxic leadership are related. There is a positive correlation between the two variables, as indicated by the positive sign of the coefficient $\beta=.61$. Additionally, this link's p-value is 0.00,

indicating that the relationship is significant. Thus, these findings support the validity of hypothesis 2.

TABLE 4.4: Direct and Indirect Effect

Direct Effect	B	S. E	P	LLCI	ULCI
TL \rightarrow CWB	0.13	0.06	0.02	0.01	0.25
TL \rightarrow PD	0.61	0.05	0.00	0.50	0.71
PD \rightarrow CWB	0.26	0.10	0.01	0.05	0.48
Indirect Effect	B	S.E		LLCI	ULCI
TL \rightarrow PD \rightarrow CPW	0.24	0.10		0.01	0.42

Hypothesis 3: Psychological distress has a significant positive impact on counterproductive work behavior. The results indicate that this association has a positive regression coefficient ($\beta = 0.26$) with a p-value of 0.00. This indicates a positive correlation between psychological distress and counterproductive work behavior. The correlation between psychological distress and counterproductive work behavior validates the acceptance of hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 4: Psychological distress mediates the relationship between toxic leadership and counterproductive work behaviors.

Toxic leadership and counterproductive work behaviors are linked, according to the regression analysis's results, which also show a p-value of 0.00 for psychological distress and a β value of 0.24.

The positive figure implies that toxic leadership and counterproductive work behaviors are mediated by psychological distress.

It suggests that in situations where psychological distress is present, positive relationships will be strengthened. In this case, a significant positive correlation between the variables is indicated by the p-value of 0.00, which supports hypothesis 4.

Given that the upper and lower limits point in the same direction, it is even more likely that the hypothesis has been validated.

4.4 Moderation Analysis

Hypothesis 5: Perceived organization support moderates the relationship between psychological distress and counterproductive work behavior. In such a way that this relation will be weaker when perceived organizational support is high.

The results suggest that there is a stronger relation between psychological distress and counterproductive work behavior when there is perceived organizational support. The direction of the moderating impact of perceived organizational support does not align with the hypothesis suggested in literature. For Int1, the coefficient is 0.08.

TABLE 4.5: Moderation Effect

(Moderator Variable: POS)	B	S,E	LLCI	ULCI
Int-1 Psychological Distress				
*Perceived Organizational Support	.0806	.0364	.0202	.1635

According to the positive coefficient ($B = 0.0806$), the positive correlation between PD and CWB gets stronger as POS rises. This suggests that higher POS levels will strengthen the relationship between PD and CWBs which is against the hypothesis in the literature. Since zero is not included in the confidence interval (0.0202 to 0.15635), the moderation effect of perceived organizational support (POS) is statistically significant. This indicates that the relation between psychological distress (PD) and counterproductive work behavior (CWB) is significantly moderated by POS, however, in the opposite direction as opposed by the hypothesis. This suggests that the relationship between PD and CWB may be strengthened rather than weakened by higher POS. The positive coefficient defies the hypothesis's predicted direction, even though the moderation effect is statistically significant. POS seems to improve the relationship rather than deteriorate it.

4.5 Summary of Hypotheses

This is a thorough synopsis of the hypothesis based on the statistical findings of the data gathered for the research. This synopsis demonstrates the accepted

hypothesis. All of the suggested relationships were shown to be valid and true by the analysis except H5.

TABLE 4.6: Research Hypotheses

Hyp.	Statement	Results
H1	Toxic leadership has a significant positive impact on counterproductive work behavior.	Accepted
H2	Toxic leadership has a significant positive impact on psychological distress.	Accepted
H3	Psychological distress has a significant positive impact on counterproductive work behavior.	Accepted
H4	Psychological distress mediates the relationship between toxic leadership and counterproductive work behaviors.	Accepted
H5	Perceived organization support moderates the relationship between psychological distress and counterproductive work behavior. In such a way that this relation will be weaker when perceived organizational support is high and vice versa.	Not Supported

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion

This chapter is broken up into three main sections: the first looks at the results of the hypotheses; the second looks at their theoretical and practical implications; and the third looks at the study's limitations and makes recommendations for more research. Every one of the five tested hypotheses turned out to be accurate. In the first section, we will discuss the key findings from our investigation, offering a comprehensive analysis of the validated theories and their applicability to the body of existing knowledge. In addition to emphasizing the contributions our study made to the ongoing scholarly discourse, this analysis examines how our findings confirm or refute established theories. By talking about these aspects, we intend to provide a more thorough understanding of the study's importance and the broader framework within

5.1.1 Toxic Leadership and Counterproductive Work Behaviors

Hypothesis No 1: Toxic leadership has a significant positive impact on counterproductive work behavior.

The purpose of this study was to examine how toxic leadership affects counterproductive work behavior (CWB), and the findings provide compelling evidence that

toxic leadership significantly improves CWBs. This result is consistent with earlier studies that showed how toxic leadership negatively impacts a range of employee outcomes (Ashforth, 1994).

The study's findings offer strong proof that toxic leadership fosters a hostile and dehumanizing workplace that has a detrimental effect on workers' well-being. According to the research, toxic leaders damage employee trust, lower morale, and cultivate feelings of resentment and rage through their abusive, manipulative, and exploitative actions (Kurtulmuş, 2020). These negative feelings can then show up as a variety of CWBs, including workplace aggression, sabotage, and absenteeism. This study adds to the expanding manuscript of research on the detrimental effects of toxic leadership. The results emphasize how crucial it is to address toxic leadership in organizations by showing a strong positive correlation between toxic leadership and CWBs.

The results emphasize the value of reciprocal exchange in professional relationships, which is consistent with social exchange theory. The unspoken psychological agreement between toxic leaders and their followers is frequently broken. They fall short of their leadership responsibilities by acting abusively or exploitatively, which makes workers feel unfairly treated and betrayed. Resentment can show up in CWBs as a result of this betrayal of trust, which damages the social exchange relationship.

5.1.2 Toxic Leadership and Psychological Distress

Hypothesis No 2: Toxic leadership has a significant positive impact on psychological distress.

The findings clearly showed a strong and favorable correlation between these two constructs, thereby confirming the hypothesis. In line with previous research that emphasizes the detrimental effects of abusive and exploitative leadership styles, this finding offers vital empirical support for the detrimental effect of toxic leadership on employee well-being (Tepper, 2000).

A hostile and stigmatizing work environment is produced by toxic leadership, which is characterized by actions like manipulative, intimidating, and abusive

supervision. Employee trust is damaged, morale is lowered, and feelings of fear, anxiety, and resentment are encouraged in this toxic workplace. According to the current research, employees' psychological distress levels are directly impacted by these unpleasant experiences (Durrah et. al., 2023).

The well-being and work performance of employees can be greatly impacted by psychological distress, which includes a variety of negative emotions like anxiety, depression, and burnout. It may result in lower productivity, higher absenteeism, and lower job satisfaction.

The study's conclusions highlight how psychological distress plays a crucial mediating role in the detrimental effects of toxic leadership. Through its detrimental effects on employee mental health, it shows that toxic leadership not only directly affects employee well-being but also indirectly contributes to unfavorable outcomes.

The framework offered by social exchange theory (SET) is useful for comprehending this relationship. According to SET, social interactions entail people exchanging resources like respect, encouragement, and rewards. Employees in a leader-follower relationship anticipate being treated fairly, receiving support, and having opportunities to advance in return for their contributions to the company.

By definition, toxic leaders transgress the fundamental principles of social interaction. They abuse their position of authority, act abusively, and neglect their responsibilities as leaders. Employees feel unfairly treated and betrayed as a result of this violation of the psychological contract, which is the unspoken agreement between a leader and their followers.

Employees feel negative emotions like anger, resentment, and frustration when they believe their leader is not carrying out their responsibilities and is instead fostering a hostile and demoralizing work environment (Khurram and Naeem, 2020). These negative feelings play a major role in psychological distress, which includes burnout, depression, and anxiety. To put it simply, toxic leadership interferes with the process of social exchange, which has detrimental emotional and psychological effects on workers.

5.1.3 Psychological Distress and Counterproductive Work Behaviors

Hypothesis No 3: Psychological distress has a significant positive impact on counterproductive work behavior.

The study's findings, which showed a strong and favorable correlation between these two constructs, validated this theory. The results offer important empirical support for the detrimental effects of psychological distress on employee behavior and are consistent with previous studies that demonstrate the detrimental effects of negative affect on worker performance and well-being (Fox et al., 2001).

An individual's emotional and cognitive functioning is greatly impacted by psychological distress, which includes a variety of negative emotions like anxiety, depression, and anger. High psychological distress greatly impairs an employee's capacity to manage challenges at work, uphold constructive interpersonal relationships, and carry out their duties (Bruce and Lynch, 2011).

The idea that psychological distress plays a significant mediating role in the relationship between workplace stressors and CWBs is empirically supported by this study. Employees who are experiencing high levels of psychological distress are more likely to participate in CWBs as a way to express their frustration, cope with their negative emotions, or find a way to release their emotional discomfort (Özüdoğru et al., 2024). For instance, workers who are anxious might be more likely to miss work or avoid social situations with their coworkers. Acts of aggression or sabotage against coworkers may be more common among those who are angry or resentful.

The framework offered by social exchange theory (SET) is useful for comprehending this relationship. Employees give their talents, energy, and loyalty to the workplace in return for benefits like competitive pay, room for advancement, and a positive work atmosphere.

Employee psychological distress interferes with the process of social exchange. An employee's capacity to carry out their duties can be hampered by negative emotions like anxiety, depression, and rage, which can result in lower output and possibly more mistakes. These unpleasant feelings can also have a detrimental effect

on relationships with others, resulting in disputes with coworkers and superiors and ultimately fueling CWBs.

For instance, a worker who is anxious might find it difficult to focus, which could result in mistakes in their work. Frustration and possibly defensive or aggressive actions toward coworkers may follow from this. In a similar vein, a depressed employee may distance themselves from others, which can hinder communication and teamwork and ultimately affect team performance and contribute to CWBs. The social exchange process is essentially disrupted by psychological distress because it makes it more difficult for employees to carry out their duties and uphold positive interpersonal relationships. This makes them more likely to use CWBs as a way to cope with their negative emotions or to express their discontent.

5.1.4 Psychological Distress as a Mediator

Hypothesis No 4: Psychological distress mediates the relationship between toxic leadership and counterproductive work behaviors.

The findings clearly confirmed this hypothesis, showing that psychological distress plays a key mediating role in this relationship. This research shows how toxic leadership negatively affects employee well-being and emphasizes the significance of comprehending the underlying mechanisms that underlie this relationship.

The best way for social exchange theory to explain this relationship is to show how toxic leaders frequently violate the psychological contract, which leads to poor employee outcomes. Employees feel unfairly treated and betrayed when they believe their boss is not carrying out their responsibilities and is instead fostering a hostile and dehumanizing work environment.

The social exchange relationship is weakened by this betrayal of trust, which results in unpleasant feelings and psychological suffering. Workplaces with toxic leadership are extremely stressful and psychologically taxing due to their abusive, manipulative, and exploitative behaviors (Naeem and Khurram, 2020). Employees who are exposed to ongoing stress experience a range of negative emotional reactions, such as anxiety, depression, anger, and frustration. These unpleasant feelings make up psychological distress, which is a crucial mediating factor in the

connection between CWBs and toxic leadership. The cognitive and emotional functioning of an employee is greatly undermined by psychological distress. High levels of anxiety, for instance, can seriously impair an employee's capacity to focus, make wise decisions, and communicate with coworkers. Depression can also result in feelings of apathy, withdrawal, and hopelessness, which can worsen job performance and raise the risk of disengagement.

Maladaptive coping strategies can also result from psychological distress. Employees may turn to CWBs as a coping mechanism when they are experiencing ongoing stress and negative emotions. Absenteeism, sabotage, hostility toward coworkers, and withdrawal from work-related activities are a few examples of these behaviors. Employees may view CWBs as a means of expressing their discontent with the state of affairs, venting their frustrations, or regaining control.

To put it simply, toxic leadership produces a demanding workplace that causes psychological suffering. Employee functioning is subsequently hampered by this distress, which also raises the possibility that employees will use CWBs as a coping mechanism for the unpleasant feelings and frustrations they encounter at work (Hameed et al., 2017).

5.1.5 Perceived Organizational Support as a Moderator

Hypothesis No 5: Perceived organization support moderates the relationship between psychological distress and counterproductive work behavior. In such a way that this relation will be weaker when perceived organizational support is high and vice versa.

The purpose of this study was to examine the potential moderating effect of perceived organizational support (POS) in the association between counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs) and psychological distress. In particular, it was predicted that POS would reduce the favorable correlation between CWBs and psychological distress. The predicted moderating effect of POS was not statistically significant, despite the fact that the results showed a significant positive relationship between psychological distress and CWBs. POS significantly moderate the relation between PD and CWBs but not as suggest in the moderation hypothesis.

An employee's ability to think and feel is greatly hampered by psychological distress. For instance, workers' capacity to focus, make wise decisions, and communicate with coworkers can all be seriously hampered by high anxiety levels. Depression can also cause feelings of apathy, withdrawal, and hopelessness, which can worsen job performance and raise the risk of disengagement. These negative emotional states can show up as a variety of CWBs, including sabotage, aggression toward coworkers, withdrawal from work-related activities, and absenteeism.

A useful framework for comprehending the moderating function of perceived organizational support (POS) is offered by social exchange theory (SET). Workers give their time and talents in return for benefits, encouragement, and equitable treatment. High POS levels show staff members that the company values their contributions and is concerned about their welfare. In addition to strengthening the social exchange relationship, this promotes reciprocity and trust.

The unanticipated discovery of this research suggests that higher perceived organizational support levels may unintentionally increase employees' engagement in counterproductive work behaviors when they are experiencing psychological distress (S. M. Kim & Jo, 2024). This unexpected outcome could be explained by the fact that workers in high distress may view organizational support as an extra source of pressure or a duty to return the favor, which could exacerbate stress or guilt and ultimately result in more CWB (Hobfoll, S. E., 1989). On the other hand, distressed workers with high POS might feel safer and less afraid of possible consequences, which would allow them to act more freely (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2015).

However, a small range of POS scores in the sample could be the cause of the observed lack of moderation in this study particularly. The moderating effect of POS might not have been noticeable if the majority of employees thought that the organization supported them. The relationship between POS and CWBs might have been complicated by unmeasured factors. The true moderating effect of POS may have been obscured by individual differences, such as personality traits (e.g., conscientiousness, emotional stability) or job demands, which may have affected both POS perceptions and CWBs. The observed relationships may have been attenuated by measurement error or by the specific measures used to evaluate

POS, psychological distress, and CWBs, which may not have fully captured the subtleties of these constructs.

The results of this study cast doubt on the widely held belief that POS is a universally effective safeguard against unfavorable work outcomes. They contend that POS plays a more intricate and situation-specific role, especially when it comes to interacting with personal psychological states like distress. To better understand how and why POS may have this unexpected amplifying effect on the PD-CWB relationship, future research should examine underlying mechanisms, such as organizational culture, employee coping strategies, and the perceived quality of support. In summary, although POS considerably moderates the association between PD and CWB, the effect's direction deviates from the initial theory. This emphasizes the need for a more thorough investigation of the relationships among workplace behavior, employee well-being, and organizational support. Important new information about the negative effects of toxic leadership on worker satisfaction and organizational effectiveness is provided by this study. The results offer a more thorough comprehension of the intricate interactions between these variables by clarifying the mediating function of psychological distress and the moderating function of perceived organizational support. These results have important ramifications for companies looking to enhance worker happiness and foster a more upbeat and effective workplace.

5.2 Research Implications

This research study has its implications both theoretical and practical. Some of those will be discussed in this section.

5.2.1 Theoretical Implications

This study deepens our understanding of the mechanisms through which toxic leadership impacts employees by investigating the relationship between toxic leadership and counterproductive work behavior with mediating and moderating variables. Existing theoretical models on employee behavior and leadership may be

improved as a result of the findings. For example, it could draw attention to how psychological distress plays a crucial mediating role in Pakistan's toxic leadership-counterproductive work behavior relationship.

This research offers significant theoretical insights into the intricate relationship among psychological distress, toxic leadership, and counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs). The study shows that toxic leadership causes negative emotional reactions in workers and is a major source of workplace stress. Together, these unpleasant feelings—collectively known as psychological distress—act as a crucial mediator, connecting toxic leadership to further CWBs. By showing how psychological contract violations—which are frequently committed by toxic leaders—can result in unfavorable employee outcomes, the findings support social exchange theory. In order to promote employee well-being and avoid CWBs, the study emphasizes the significance of preserving a constructive and encouraging social exchange between supervisors and subordinates in the education sector.

Despite the lack of evidence for the proposed moderating effect, the study nevertheless offers important new information about the connection between CWBs and psychological distress. These two variables have a strong positive correlation, which emphasizes how crucial it is to address employee well-being and reduce psychological distress at work.

The results highlight how crucial it is to implement ethical leadership development programs that emphasize building strong bonds between leaders and followers, encouraging moral decision-making, and helping leaders become more emotionally intelligent. Organizations can lessen the prevalence of toxic leadership and its negative effects as CWBs among teachers by giving leaders the abilities and competencies they need to foster a positive and encouraging work environment. To sum up, this study offers insightful theoretical understandings of the intricate relationships among POS, CWBs, psychological distress, and toxic leadership. The results have important ramifications for employee welfare, organizational culture, and leadership development. Organizations can put strategies in place to lessen the negative effects of toxic leadership and foster a more positive and productive work environment for everyone by knowing the mechanisms through which it affects employee outcomes.

5.2.2 Practical Implications

For businesses looking to enhance worker well-being and create a happy, productive workplace, this study has important practical ramifications. Organizations can utilize the study's findings to create focused leadership training programs that emphasize moral conduct, compassion, and clear communication. Institutions can lessen the possibility of toxic leadership developing by providing leaders with the resources they need to create productive workplaces. Educational establishments can put tactics into place to improve workers' perceptions of resources, opportunities for advancement, and fairness. This can involve offering chances for professional growth, supplying sufficient resources, and cultivating a positive work environment.

Employee engagement and well-being may suffer under toxic leadership. Education institutions can boost employee morale, lower attrition, and increase overall productivity by tackling the underlying causes of toxic leadership and fostering a positive work environment. The results of the study can guide early intervention tactics to spot possible cases of toxic leadership early on and deal with them before they get out of hand. In addition to offering assistance to employees who are suffering adverse effects, institutions can set up procedures for reporting and resolving issues regarding leadership conduct.

Education institutions can lessen the negative effects of toxic leadership by putting these doable strategies into practice and fostering a healthier, more productive workplace. The development of morally sound and capable leadership abilities should be given top priority in educational institutions. Enhancing self-awareness (helping leaders understand their own leadership styles and how they affect others), encouraging ethical decision-making (highlighting the significance of moral behavior, equity, and respect in all interactions with employees), and improving communication and interpersonal skills (improving leaders' capacity to communicate effectively, forge strong bonds with others, and foster a positive and encouraging work environment) are some ways to accomplish this.

In order to improve the wellbeing of their teachers, educational institutions must put in place comprehensive programs that address their physical and mental health

needs. Programs for stress management (providing tools like yoga, mindfulness training, and employee assistance programs to help staff members deal with stress and enhance their emotional health), employee appreciation (recognizing and rewarding teachers' contributions to show appreciation for their efforts), and fostering a supportive work environment (promoting an inclusive, equitable, and respectful culture where staff members feel appreciated and supported) are a few examples of this. Encourage an environment where teachers feel free to voice their concerns and ask for help, where there is open communication and feedback.

All institutions must understand that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to support. Negative effects could result from merely raising perceived organizational support without taking into account the needs and psychological states of specific employees. Employers should concentrate on adjusting their support systems to the unique stressors and coping skills of their staff members. It is essential that leaders receive training on how to spot psychological distress symptoms and comprehend the potential advantages and disadvantages of support. Instead of adding pressure or expectations for reciprocity, support programs should be created to actually reduce stress. Offering confidential counseling services, mental health resources, and flexible work schedules, for instance, can offer significant support without placing undue pressure on staff members.

All educational institutions can adopt more successful support strategies by creating an atmosphere where workers feel free to talk about their mental health issues in an open and stigma-free manner. One way to lessen the unintended effects of perceived organizational support on counterproductive work behavior is to promote psychological safety, encourage frequent check-ins, and train leaders in mental health awareness.

By producing new information about leadership behavior, including toxic leadership behavior within their organization, this study will help managers. Therefore, assist them in identifying toxic tendencies in leaders before they have a significant detrimental effect. Furthermore, it will highlight the need to identify individuals who may exhibit deviant behaviors and substandard work performance, as well as to develop strategies to help staff members become more productive and less likely to participate in CWBs. Organizations can lessen the detrimental effects of

toxic leadership, foster a more upbeat and encouraging work environment, and enhance employee productivity and well-being by concentrating on these real-world applications.

5.2.3 Limitation of the Study

Although this study offers insightful information about the connection between CWBs, psychological distress, and toxic leadership, it is crucial to recognize some of its limitations. This study is limited in its context of generalizability. The results of this study cannot be generalized to the whole population because of the small sample size. The study design prevents conclusive findings regarding causality, even though it offers evidence for the proposed relationships between variables. While the findings suggest that toxic leadership leads to psychological distress, which in turn leads to CWBs, it is possible that reverse causation or other unmeasured factors may be influencing the observed relationships. The observed relationships may have been inflated due to common method bias brought about by the use of self-report measures for all variables. Attempts were made to reduce item overlap and common method bias by utilizing scales from various sources. However, it is impossible to completely rule out the possibility of common method bias.

Because the sample may not be entirely representative of the population in the education sector, the convenience sampling technique may have introduced some degree of sampling bias. This could restrict how broadly the results can be applied to different groups and situations. This study also failed to support the hypothesized moderating impact of POS.

The small sample size could be one possible reason for this. Future research could work with a broader sample size to prove this relation. This study may not fully capture the complexity of the factors influencing CWBs and employee well-being because it concentrated on a small number of variables.

These relationships may also be significantly influenced by other elements, including team dynamics, organizational culture, and individual differences (such as personality traits).

5.2.4 Future Directions of Research

This study offers a useful starting point for further investigation into the intricate relationships among psychological distress, toxic leadership, POS, and counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs). Numerous research directions can be investigated in the future. Convenience sampling was combined with non-probability sampling in this study; other sampling strategies or probability sampling may be used in future research. Future studies should use longitudinal designs to look at the temporal order of events and changes in variables over time in order to create a stronger causal link between variables. For instance, a longitudinal study could monitor how exposure to toxic leadership affects employee psychological distress and CWBs over time. The academic staff was the research's target population.

Future studies can look into the effects of toxic leadership in a variety of organizational settings, including the technology, healthcare, and manufacturing sectors. There was only one method used to collect the data for this study. However, a variety of data collection techniques could also be employed. It is of great importance for new researches to study why and under what conditions POS does not moderate the relationship between PD and CWBs.

The moderating effect of additional organizational elements, such as team dynamics, organizational culture, and employee demographics (e.g., cultural background), can be investigated in future studies. Future research could also reasonably focus on how individual differences, like personality traits, emotional intelligence and resilience, can moderate the relationship between toxic leadership and employee outcomes. In order to improve employee well-being and lessen the effects of psychological distress, it could also be very thoughtful to investigate the role of interventions such as stress management techniques.

Future studies can better understand the intricate relationships between psychological distress, toxic leadership, and CWBs by exploring these paths. They can also create practical solutions to lessen the detrimental effects of toxic leadership in the workplace. The choice and measurement of variables should be carefully considered in future research to guarantee the use of reliable and valid measures that appropriately capture the subtleties of each construct.

5.2.5 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the complex relationship between counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs) and toxic leadership (TL), with an emphasis on the moderating effect of perceived organizational support and the mediating role of psychological distress. The results highlight the detrimental effects that toxic leadership has on workers, frequently resulting in increased psychological distress, which in turn raises CWB participation. This is consistent with earlier studies that show how toxic leadership negatively affects workplace relationships and worker well-being.

The mediating function of psychological distress, which clarifies the process by which toxic leadership encourages CWBs, is a significant finding of this study. Workers under toxic leadership frequently experience increased stress, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion, which makes them more likely to engage in disengaged or retaliatory behaviors that are harmful to the effectiveness of the company. These results underline how important it is to address psychological distress in organizational settings in order to reduce CWBs and improve workplace harmony in general.

However, the statistical analysis did not support the moderating role of perceived organizational support in the relationship between psychological distress and CWBs, which was unexpected. This implies that although organizational support is generally advantageous for workers, in the setting of toxic leadership, it might not be a substantial buffer against the detrimental effects of psychological distress on CWBs. The results show that other factors might be involved in reducing these negative effects, underscoring the need for more investigation into different moderating factors.

The study concludes by offering insightful information about the negative consequences of toxic leadership and highlighting the significance of psychological health in reducing workplace deviance. In order to foster a positive and healthy work culture, organizations need to be aware of the long-term effects of toxic leadership and take proactive measures. Even though psychological distress on CWBs may not be directly mitigated by perceived organizational support, creating a positive

work environment is still essential for lowering workplace deviance and raising employee engagement levels.

Organizations looking to advance highly motivated employees and meet performance targets must comprehend the intricate interactions among toxic leadership, psychological distress, perceived organizational support, and counterproductive work behaviors. Organizations can encourage employees to adopt highly effective work behaviors and help build a stronger workplace by fostering an atmosphere of moral leadership, equitable treatment, and support.

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Appendix A

CAPITAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
ISLAMABAD

Questionnaire

Dear respondent,

I am a student of MS Management Sciences and doing research on the topic of “Counter Productive Work Behavior”. You are requested to spare some time out of your busy schedule and answer a few questions. I would be thankful if you answer this questionnaire, it would only take you 10-15 minutes. Your answers will be treated with complete confidentiality and will be entirely anonymous. If you are interested in the findings of this research or have any questions regarding this, feel free to contact;

Regards,

Almeera Ali Raja

MS Research Scholar

Email: Almeerara9@gmail.com

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS**Please Choose the Appropriate Answer.****1. Gender:**

- A. Male B. Female

2. Income:

- A. Below 20,000 B. 21-30,000 C. 31-40,000 D. 41-50,000
E. 51-60,000 F. 61-70,000 G. 71-80,000 H. Over 80,000

3. Age:

- A. Less than 22 B. 23-30 C. 31- 38 D. 39 – 46
E. 47 – 54 F. 55 – 62 G. Over 62 years

4. Job Status:

- A. Permanent B. Visiting C. Contractual

5. Position:

- A. Administration/Management B. Junior Teacher C. Teacher
D. Assistant Teacher

6. Years of job experience with current Organization:

- A. Less than 1 year B. 1-5 C. 6-10 D. 11-15 E. 16 – 20
F. 21 – 25 G. Over 25 years

Scale: Responses to each item are measured on a five-point scale with the anchors labeled:
(1) Strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither disagree nor agree, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree

Section A**COUNTER PRODUCTIVE WORK BEHAVIOR****Please keep your current job in mind while answering these questions.**

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I've taken additional or a longer break than is acceptable at my workplace. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. I come in late to work without permission. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. I littered my work environment. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. I cursed at someone at work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. I called in sick when actually I was not. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

6.	I lost my temper while at work.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I neglected to follow my boss's instructions.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I left work early without permission.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I leave my work for someone else to finish.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I acted rudely toward someone at work.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I put little effort into my work.	1	2	3	4	5

Bennett, R. J., & Robinson, S. L. (2000). Counterproductive work behavior scale.

Section B

TOXIC LEADERSHIP

Please keep your current manager/supervisor in mind while answering these questions.

1.	My Supervisor denies accountability for errors done by his unit.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	My Supervisor accepts credit for accomplishments that are not his own..	1	2	3	4	5
3.	My Supervisor speaks negatively about subordinates to other coworkers.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	My Supervisor demeans subordinates in public	1	2	3	4	5
5.	My Supervisor has unknown motive for expressing rage towards subordinates	1	2	3	4	5
6.	My Supervisor thrives on praise and individual acclaim.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	My Supervisor invades the privacy of subordinates.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Even under exceptional circumstances, organizational policies are rigidly enforced	1	2	3	4	5

Schmidt, A. (2008). Toxic Leadership Scale.

Section C

PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS

Please keep your current job in mind while answering these questions of self-assessment.

1.	I feel tired out for no good reason.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I feel nervous.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I feel so nervous that nothing could calm me down.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I feel hopeless.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I feel restless or fidgety.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I feel so restless that I could not sit still.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I feel depressed.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I feel that everything was an effort.	1	2	3	4	5

9. I feel so sad that nothing could cheer me up.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I feel worthless.	1	2	3	4	5

Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10), 2003.

Section E

ORGANIZATION SUPPORT

Please keep your current/last organization in mind while answering these questions

1. My institute cares about my opinion.	1	2	3	4	5
2. My institute really cares about my well-being	1	2	3	4	5
3. My institute strongly considers my goals and values.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Help is available from my institute when I have a problem.	1	2	3	4	5
5. My institute would forgive an honest mistake on my part.	1	2	3	4	5
6. If given the opportunity, my institute would take advantage of me. ®	1	2	3	4	5
7. My institute shows very little concern for me. ®	1	2	3	4	5
8. My institute is willing to help me if I need a special favor.	1	2	3	4	5

R=reverse coded questions.

Eisenberger et al. (1986) shortened perceived organizational support scale.