

The oxymoron of our times: Exploring how dysfunctional organisational leadership can serve as a catalyst for employee growth

Inusah Abdul-Nasiru¹, Eric Delle^{2*}, Robert Mensah³, and Daniel Ofori³

Abstract

Despite the evidence from prior studies indicating that toxic leadership behaviour may potentially impede employee outcomes, research on the potential association between this leadership behaviour and employee growth has received limited scholarly and practitioner attention. Based on the Conservation of Resources theory, we argue that employees may undergo growth in the face of adversity. We investigated the direct impact of toxic leadership behaviour on posttraumatic growth stress, as well as the potential mediating effect of employee resilience and emotional intelligence on toxic leadership and posttraumatic growth stress, respectively. An anonymous and confidential online survey approach was utilised, and a total of 942 participants voluntarily completed it once. The participants were recruited from a diverse range of occupational contexts within the Ghanaian work context. The measures were found to be psychometrically sound in the study. The hierarchical multiple regression analysis suggests that toxic leadership behaviour, emotional intelligence, and resilience functions as a significant positive predictor of posttraumatic growth stress. Toxic leadership was associated with reduced resilience and emotional intelligence among employees, and toxic leadership behaviour impacted posttraumatic growth stress through emotional intelligence and resilience. The theoretical and practical implications of the findings have been discussed.

Article History: 20 March 2026

Accepted 18 August 2026

Keywords: toxic leadership behaviour, posttraumatic growth stress, resilience, emotional intelligence.

¹ Department of Organisation & Human Resource Management, University of Ghana Business School, UG, Ghana,

² Department of Psychology, School of Social Sciences, University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana

³ Methodist University College, Accra, Ghana

***Corresponding author:** Department of Psychology, University of Ghana, P. O. Box LG 84, Legon, Ghana
Email: edelle@ug.edu.gh

Introduction

Leadership is an integral part of work organisations. Leadership provides the inspiration and strategic direction that organisations need to achieve greater levels of productivity and competitive advantage. Extensive studies have been conducted in the field of leadership (Alvesson, 2020; Lemoine et al., 2019), highlighting organisational and employee-related consequences of leadership (e.g., Cummings et al., 2018; Dunst et al., 2018; Eva et al., 2019; Hughes et al., 2018). However, a significant proportion of these studies appear to present a one-sided narrative of leadership, emphasising the positive and inspirational aspects of leadership (e.g., Akinyele & Chen, 2024; Harris & Jones, 2018), yet recent evidence across various occupational contexts and sectors including healthcare (Reslan et al., 2025), government (Hattab et al., 2022; Mergen & Ozbilgin, 2021), corporate organisations (Rasool et al., 2021; Semedo et al., 2022), and education (Acuña & Male, 2024; Green, 2014; Smith & Fredericks-Lowman, 2020) has reignited academic and practitioner interest in toxic and dysfunctional leadership behaviour in the work context.

Researchers studying dysfunctional leadership argue that toxic leadership is a reality in many work contexts (Dobbs & Do, 2019; Stringer et al., 2023). Toxic leadership refers to those self-interest oriented and negative leadership behaviours that have the potential to cause serious and lasting harm (e.g., psychological, physical, loss of productivity, etc.) to individuals, groups, organisations, and communities (Lipman-Blumen, 2005; Whicker, 1996). This leadership behaviour can have detrimental consequences for individuals and organisations, and these effects often persist even after the leader has left the organisation (Reed, 2004; Ortega, 2017). Toxic leadership behaviour potentially creates a toxic work environment. Given this, toxic leadership has been found to undermine job satisfaction (Acuña & Male, 2024), organisational and affective commitment (Acuña & Male, 2024; Paltu & Brouwers, 2020; Reslan et al., 2025) employee morale and motivation (Sippio, 2023), and innovative work behaviour (Reslan et al., 2025). Similarly, studies have associated toxic leadership to increased amotivation and controlled regulation (Semedo et al., 2022), turnover intentions and extrinsic job satisfaction (Paltu & Brouwers, 2020), and long-term stress-related consequences such as burnout and depression (Ervasti & Kivimäki, 2023), posttraumatic stress disorder and suicide (Porath, 2015; Roza, 2024).

Previous studies in the African context have associated toxic leadership behaviours to bullying and manipulation (Abdulai, 2021; Baloyi, 2020), pay satisfaction (Dartey-Baah et al., 2023), and job satisfaction, commitment, and turnover intentions (Paltu & Brouwers, 2020). While scholarship on toxic leadership is burgeoning, literature on toxic leadership and employee outcomes, particularly posttraumatic growth stress, remains dearth. Drawing on previous empirical studies, including the African-based evidence, our study investigates the complex relationship between toxic leadership behaviour and

posttraumatic growth stress in the Ghanaian context. Our study contributes to extant literature in several important ways. First, a body of research has demonstrated that toxic leadership behaviours have been shown to exert detrimental effects on employee work performance (Lee et al., 2024), psychological safety in the workplace (Khan et al., 2021), and well-being (Cakiroglu & Unver, 2023). However, employees' response to stressful environments varies. According to Webster et al. (2014), toxic behaviours such as intimidation, bullying, manipulation, arrogance, and micromanaging have the potential to divert employees' attention from their work, thereby leading to diminished levels of performance and organisational productivity (e.g., Srikanth, 2020). However, employees who choose to disregard the toxic behaviours exhibited by their immediate supervisors and instead prioritise their own work performance may achieve higher levels of success. Therefore, the potential for toxic leadership behaviours to be positively associated with posttraumatic growth stress stems from the possibility that employees prioritise enhancing their productivity levels over addressing the toxic behaviours exhibited by their leaders.

Researchers in the field of leadership argue that the relationship between leadership behaviours and employee outcomes is explained by underlying processes or mechanisms (e.g., Akinyele & Chen, 2025; Fisher et al., 2021; Paltu & Brouwers, 2020). In addressing this call, we argue that *employee resilience* defined as "the capacity of employees to utilise resources to continually adapt and flourish at work, even when faced with challenging circumstances (Kuntz et al., 2016, p. 460) - and *emotional intelligence* defined as an individual's ability to perceive and understand the emotions of oneself and others, as well as the expression, regulation, and utilisation of one's own emotions (Mayer et al., 2008) - provide the motivational pathways through which toxic leadership impacts posttraumatic growth stress. Regarding our second contribution, we posit that employees who are emotionally intelligent may interpret toxic leadership behaviour as a threat. In accordance with COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989), it is posited that emotional intelligence functions as a critical protective resource (Mancini et al., 2024), providing a cushion for individuals against the deleterious effects of toxic leadership behaviours. Consequently, emotional intelligence can function as a protective mechanism in a toxic work environment, enabling employees to disengage from the manipulative, undermining, and abusive behaviours exhibited by toxic leaders. Employees who possess high emotional intelligence may be able to circumvent the potential negative effects that toxic leadership behaviours can have on them. As indicated by extant literature, emotional intelligence has been identified as a pivotal underlying mechanism in a variety of psychological outcomes, including harm avoidance (Athota & O'Connor, 2014), psychological health problems (Jacobs & Wollny, 2022), and life satisfaction (Szcześniak & Tulecka, 2020). Finally, we draw on COR theory to argue that employee resilience might mediate the relationship between toxic leadership behaviour and posttraumatic growth stress. Specifically, the present

study posits that employees who exhibit resilience possess the capacity to adapt and demonstrate work-related growth by effectively managing the constraints and stressful environment engendered by toxic leadership (Braun et al., 2017; Caniëls & Baaten, 2019; Stokes et al., 2019). Furthermore, resilience endows employees with the capacity to persist in challenging and unfavourable environments, including toxic settings (e.g., Braun et al., 2017; Kuntz et al., 2016; Stokes et al., 2019). The hypothesized relationship in our study is shown in the figure below

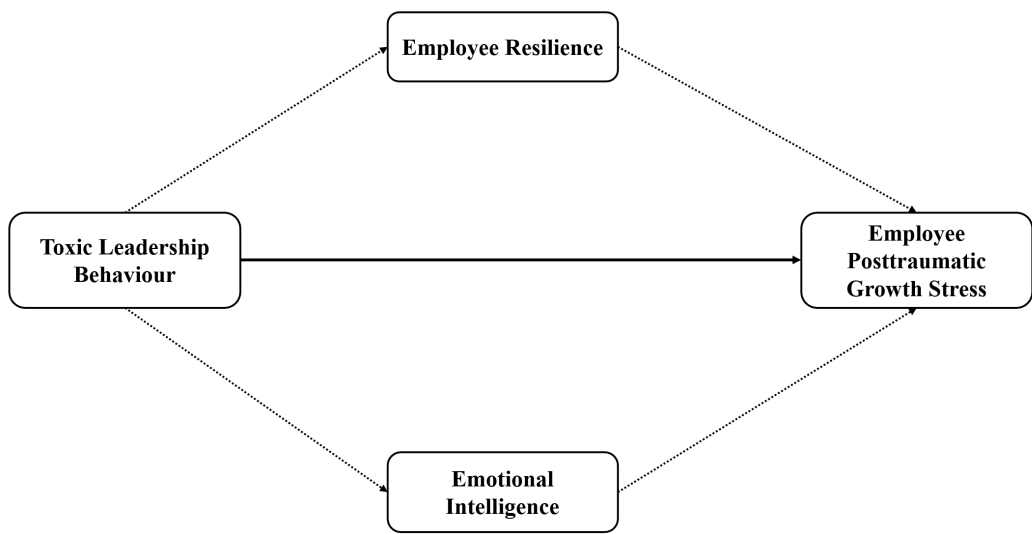


Figure 1: Hypothesised relationship among study variables

Theory and hypothesis development

Theoretical Framework

Understanding why toxic leadership might produce growth in some employees and not others require theoretical tools that can account for how people manage their psychological resources and the calculations they make when navigating difficult leadership conditions. To explain the intricate relationship between toxic leadership behaviours and employee posttraumatic growth stress, we employed the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory as a framework. The fundamental premise of the COR theory is that individuals are driven to acquire, safeguard, and maintain possession of valuable resources, encompassing psychological, emotional, and social (Hobfoll, 1989). The loss or threat of these resources can lead to elevated stress levels. Applied to the context of

toxic leadership, COR theory positions toxic leadership as a significant resource threat. This type of leadership behaviour drains employees' psychological energy, erodes their sense of security, and places ongoing demands on their emotional and cognitive reserves. Notably, COR theory posits the possibility of resource gain following adversity. When individuals possess sufficient resources to withstand the initial depletion, the very struggle with resource loss can become a catalyst for growth. Thus, as a theoretical mechanism, COR explains how posttraumatic growth stress becomes possible under toxic leadership. Resilience and emotional intelligence are not merely protective factors; they are the psychological resources that determine whether the pathway to growth remains open or is foreclosed entirely.

Toxic leadership behaviour and employee posttraumatic growth stress

The prevailing narrative within the domain of toxic leadership literature portrays such leadership as a source of harm, a perspective that is supported by considerable evidence. Toxic leadership behaviours deplete employee resources, erode trust, and establish conditions that are psychologically detrimental to navigate (Mackey et al., 2021; Schyns & Schilling, 2013). However, the question of whether harm is the sole outcome of toxic leadership remains less settled because the adversity engendered by toxic leadership can catalyse a different outcome, particularly growth-related outcomes, such as posttraumatic growth. This thinking aligns with a fundamental premise of COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989). In the face of substantial resource threats, employees do not merely absorb the loss; they demonstrate resilience by adapting and mobilizing resources, often drawing on previously untapped resources and developing new ones in the process. Hobfoll (1989) acknowledged that resource loss, while potentially distressing, has the potential to initiate a cycle of resource gain, particularly when individuals can derive meaning from their adversity. This phenomenon aligns with the concept of positive psychological development, which occurs not merely because of confronting challenging circumstances, but through the process of navigating them (Henson et al., 2021). Maitlis's (2020) research has demonstrated that this phenomenon is applicable to a wide range of workplace challenges, including instances of substandard and abusive management practices. Moreover, employees who can process and make sense of their experience under a toxic leader, rather than being permanently overwhelmed by it, may emerge with stronger adaptive capacities, greater self-awareness, and more robust professional identities (Kaye-Tzadok & Icekson, 2022; Nishi et al., 2016). Similarly, Ashforth and Reingen's (2014) research demonstrates how organisational dysfunction can, paradoxically, give rise to adaptive collaboration and relational resilience among those confronted with it. However, studies connecting toxic leadership behaviour with employee posttraumatic growth stress are scarce. Consequently, we formulate this

research question:

H₁: How is toxic leadership behaviour related to employee posttraumatic growth stress?

Toxic leadership behaviour and employee resilience

The COR theory provides the foundational logic for understanding how toxic leadership affects employee resilience. Toxic leadership, characterised by persistent abuse, manipulation, and the erosion of subordinate autonomy, function as chronic resource threats. Employees operating under such conditions face continuous demands on their psychological reserves, leaving fewer resources available for sustaining the adaptive capacity that resilience represents (Bardoel et al., 2014; Hobfoll, 1989). The deleterious effects of toxic leadership on employees are likely to manifest over time, manifesting in the form of cumulative depletion of psychological energy, a diminution of security, and the erosion of relational trust. These effects are likely to impede, rather than enhance, employees' capacity to recover from adversity. This expectation is corroborated by empirical evidence. Khan et al. (2024) demonstrate that toxic leadership generates significant strain among employees, which in turn compromises employees' ability to function effectively under pressure. Franken et al. (2023) similarly demonstrate that leadership conditions that are unsupportive and demanding systematically undermine the psychological conditions under which resilience is maintained. Ahmad et al. (2021) demonstrate that workplace bullying, a behaviour central to toxic leadership, erodes the relational and personal resources on which resilience depends. Collectively, these findings imply that exposure to toxic leadership is associated with a decline in employee resilience, as the continuous resource deficit impedes employees' capacity to maintain adaptive functioning. Consequently, we hypothesise that:

H₂: Toxic leadership behaviour relates negatively to employee resilience.

Employee resilience and employee posttraumatic growth stress

According to the COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989), the adaptive functioning of employees is contingent upon the presence of personal resources, such as resilience. In the absence of personal and job resources, employees may experience a state of distress due to the overwhelming nature of their daily professional obligations, which can impede their ability to demonstrate excellence in their work. Consequently, individuals with a high degree of resilience are better equipped to process challenges and work demands in a constructive manner, as opposed to being overwhelmed by them (Bardol et al., 2014; Hobfoll, 1989). This theoretical perspective aligns with a body of empirical evidence.

Nishi et al. (2016) provide longitudinal evidence that pre-existing resilience predicts subsequent positive development among healthcare workers, suggesting that resilient individuals are more likely to derive a developmental benefit from their experience of adversity. This notion is corroborated by Henson et al. (2021) in their systematic review, which identified resilience as one of the most consistent individual-level predictors of posttraumatic growth across occupational contexts. Maitlis (2020) extends this reasoning to the context of everyday workplace adversity, positing that resilience is the pivotal psychological resource that determines whether employees can transition from being overwhelmed by difficult conditions to developing through them. Thus, employees who exhibit high resilience are not merely less adversely affected by adversity; they are more capable of converting it into growth. Consequently, we hypothesise that:

H₃: Employee resilience relates positively to posttraumatic growth stress.

Employee resilience as an underlying mechanism

We contend that resilience might provide the strategic pathway through which toxic leadership behaviour engenders posttraumatic growth. Based on the COR theory, we argue that toxic leadership behaviour depletes the psychological resources that constitute resilience, and this depletion in turn constraints the extent to which employees can engage in the growth-oriented processing that posttraumatic growth requires (e.g., Hobfoll, 1989). However, as a pathway, resilience may provide the specific mechanism through which toxic leadership enhances employee development. Rather than acting on posttraumatic growth stress directly, toxic leadership may operate partly by undermining the very psychological capacity, resilience, which makes growth possible. Employees exposed to toxic leaders are not only harmed in the immediate sense; they are systematically stripped of the resource reserves that would enable them to respond to adversity constructively. Franken et al. (2023) demonstrate this indirect logic clearly, showing that leadership conditions shape employee outcomes partly through their effects on resilience-related capacities. Ahmad et al. (2021) similarly find that resilience mediates the relationship between adverse leadership conditions and employee outcomes. On this basis, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₄: Employee resilience significantly mediates the relationship between toxic leadership and posttraumatic growth.

Toxic leadership behaviour and emotional intelligence

Within the COR framework, emotionally intelligent functioning requires psychological stability, reflective capacity, and sufficient cognitive bandwidth to accurately perceive

and regulate emotional experience (Mayer et al., 1997). Toxic leadership environments, characterised by unpredictability, intimidation, and the persistent threat of humiliation, create conditions that are fundamentally incompatible with this kind of regulated emotional processing. Under sustained resource pressure, the very capacities that constitute emotional intelligence, emotional awareness, regulation, and strategic use, may become increasingly difficult to access and deploy. Accordingly, Miao et al. (2017) demonstrate that occupational stress and emotional demands compromise employees' emotional regulatory functioning over time, suggesting that chronic exposure to toxic leadership conditions may progressively diminish the emotional intelligence employees are able to bring to their work. Similarly, Coban (2022) makes this connection explicit, arguing that toxic organisational environments deplete the psychological resources on which emotionally intelligent behaviour depends. Thus, we hypothesise that:

H₅: Toxic leadership behaviour relates negatively to employee emotional intelligence.

Emotional Intelligence and posttraumatic growth stress

The connection between emotional intelligence and posttraumatic growth stress lies in the processes of emotional regulation and meaning making. Posttraumatic growth does not emerge automatically from adversity; it requires cognitive and emotional processing through which individuals make sense of their experience, integrate it into their self-understanding, and identify pathways for development (Henson et al., 2021; Maitlis, 2020). Thus, emotionally intelligent individuals are better equipped to exhibit transformational growth under adversity and stress. Emotional intelligence is a crucial psychological or person resource that allows individuals to interpret and work effectively in volatile and stressful environments without feeling overwhelmed (Coban, 2022). Importantly, Nunes and Palma-Moreira (2024) indicate that aspects of emotional intelligence, such as emotion regulation and emotion use shaped how employees responded to stressful environments. From a COR perspective, emotionally intelligent employees are more capable of redirecting the stress associated with emotionally demanding work environment into adaptive outcomes, managing their investment in an unfavourable exchange in ways that preserve rather than deplete their resources over time. This regulatory capacity creates the psychological space within which growth-oriented processing becomes possible. Consequently, we hypothesise that:

H₆: Emotional intelligence is positively associated with post-traumatic growth.

Emotional intelligence as an underlying mechanism

Given that emotionally intelligent individuals adapt well to stressful environments, we contend that emotional intelligence might serve as an important underlying mechanism

in the relationship between toxic leadership and posttraumatic growth stress. Toxic leadership depletes the emotional regulatory resources that emotional intelligence represents, and this depletion in turn constrains employees' capacity for the meaning-making and adaptive reframing that posttraumatic growth stress requires. However, emotional intelligence concerns the moment-to-moment regulation of emotional experience through which growth-oriented sense-making, such as posttraumatic growth stress becomes possible. For instance, Miao et al. (2017) demonstrate that emotional intelligence mediates the relationship between occupational stressors and employee outcomes across a range of contexts. Additionally, Nunes and Palma-Moreira (2024) found that emotional intelligence dimensions mediate behavioural responses to toxic leadership. Within the COR framework, this mediated pathway captures how resource loss cascades. Illustratively, toxic leadership first undermines the emotional regulatory capacity employees need to process their experience constructively, and this loss of emotional intelligence-related resources then forecloses the possibility of growth for those who can least afford it. Based on the COR, we hypothesise that:

H₇: Emotional intelligence significantly mediates the relationship between toxic leadership behaviour and posttraumatic growth stress.

Methods

Research design

We utilised cross-sectional survey design to collect data on all the main variables (e.g., toxic leadership behaviour, employee resilience, emotional intelligence, and employee posttraumatic growth stress) from the same participants at a single point in time. We collected data from different organisations on the main variables and demographic factors (e.g., gender, level of education, age, job experience, and employment status of the participants, and analysed them to have a snapshot view of the complex relationship that exist between toxic leadership behaviour and employee posttraumatic growth stress.

Sample and sampling approach

The study consisted of 942 participants working in various organisations in Ghana who completed our anonymous and confidential survey on toxic leadership behaviour, employee resilience, emotional intelligence, and posttraumatic growth stress. Participants who had worked under their immediate supervisor for at least a year completed the survey. The sample was heterogeneous and diverse, as the participants were drawn from both public and private sector organisations. Additionally, data were collected from participants of varying educational qualification, gender, and work tenure. In terms of gender, the study consisted of 53.2% female employees, with average work tenure of 6.383

years ($SD = 6.353$). Additionally, the average age of the sample was 33.35 years ($SD = 8.495$) and tenure under immediate supervisor of 3.0 years ($SD = 2.625$). Furthermore, analysis of employment status indicates that 70.9% of the sample were on permanent employment contract.

Procedure for data collection

The ethical aspect of this research was approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Ghana Business School. In addition to this, we discussed our study with Human Resource Managers of various organisations. This was done to gain institutional approval and support for the study, and to agree on how the survey would be administered. Based on these discussions, an online survey approach was agreed upon, and HR facilitated the administration of the online survey via approved online platforms of their organisations. The participants completed an anonymised and confidential survey, responding to questions measuring toxic leadership behaviour, employee resilience, emotional intelligence, and employee posttraumatic growth stress at a single point in time. Further, the participants answered questions on demographic factors, such as gender, level of education, age, job position, and work tenure. We provided instructions to guide the participants in completing the survey independently.

Measures

Toxic Leadership Behaviour

In this study, we employed the 30-item toxic leadership behaviour scale recently developed and validated for nurse managers (Labrague et al., 2020) to measure the toxic leadership behaviours of immediate supervisors. All the items on this scale were anchored on a 7-point scale, with the responses ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. A sample item on the scale was “my immediate supervisor takes a stand against his/her subordinates without listening to them first”. The toxic leadership behaviour scale was found to be psychometrically appropriate in this study. We assessed the construct reliability and validity (i.e., convergent and discriminant) of all the scales. The Average Variance (AVE) and Maximum Shared Variance (MSV) values are used to determine convergent and discriminant validity, respectively. AVE value ≥ 0.50 indicates convergent validity and discriminant validity is achieved when the MSV value is below the AVE value (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2010). Specifically, the construct reliability coefficient ($CR = 0.974$), and validity estimates: Average Variance Extracted ($AVE = 0.558$) and Maximum Shared Variance ($MSV = 0.040$) values were within acceptable threshold. Thus, convergent and discriminant validity was achieved as the AVE value was ≥ 0.50 and MSV value was less than the AVE value (Hair et al., 2010).

Employee Resilience

We employed the recently developed and validated 9-item employee resilience scale (Näswall et al., 2019) in the work context to measure resilience in our study context. Because of validity concerns, only 5 items were retained for statistical analysis in our study. A sample item retained was “*I effectively collaborate with others to handle unexpected challenges at work.*” the 5-items were found to be valid and reliable in the current study. The scale was found to be reliable and valid as construct reliability coefficient ($CR = 0.839$), $AVE = 0.512$ and $MSV = 0.416$ are acceptable.

Emotional Intelligence

We employed the Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale developed and validated by Davies et al. (2010) to measure emotional intelligence in the work context. The participants were instructed to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each of the 10-items. A sample item on the scale was “*I know why my emotions change.*” A higher score was indicative of higher levels of emotional intelligence. The scale was found to be reliable and valid as construct reliability coefficient ($CR = 0.733$), $AVE = 0.478$ and $MSV = 0.416$ are acceptable. Although the AVE value (0.478) is less than 0.50, it is not significantly lower than 0.5 (Stenholm & Renko, 2016; Yu et al., 2020). Therefore, convergent validity is achieved.

Employee posttraumatic growth stress

We measured employee posttraumatic growth stress with 10-items (Cann et al., 2010) anchored on a 6-point Likert scale. The responses ranged from 0 = I did not experience this change as a result of my crisis to 5 = I experienced this change to a very great degree as a result of my crisis. A sample item on the scale was “*I changed my priorities about what is important in life.*” The employee posttraumatic growth stress scale was found to be reliable and valid as construct reliability coefficient ($CR = 0.915$), $AVE = 0.519$ and $MSV = 0.018$ are acceptable.

Demographic Information

We collected data on some individual difference factors, such as gender, level of education, work tenure, tenure under supervisor, and sector of work. We developed a single question for each demographic variable. For example, gender was operationalised as male versus female. Thus, participants were instructed to indicate their gender by indicating either male or female.

Data analysis

We cleaned and processed our online survey data for statistical analysis. The data cleaning and processing were done in excel before exporting the dataset to SPSS version 31 for our quantitative analysis. The data analysis followed a two-stepped approach, that is, preliminary analyses and hypothesis testing (Gerbing, 1988). Our preliminary analyses included normality testing using skewness and kurtosis values, outlier analysis, bivariate correlation, and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) (for validity and reliability estimates). Results for normality testing revealed that, except for the kurtosis value for employee resilience, which was 3.514, the skewness and kurtosis values for toxic leadership, emotional intelligence, and posttraumatic growth stress were within the acceptable range of ± 2 (Bryne, 2010). However, given the large sample size of our study ($n = 942$), the kurtosis value of employee resilience scale would not pose any challenge to the results (Elliott & Woodward, 2007; Pallant, 2007). Additionally, we conducted CFA to determine the psychometric soundness of the scales in the current study. Finally, bivariate correlation was performed to ascertain the association between the main variables.

We conducted CFA to determine the construct validity of our measures, namely, toxic leadership behaviour (30-items), posttraumatic growth stress (10-items), emotional intelligence, and employee resilience. Three CFAs were performed. Specifically, 4-factor measurement model and two (2) 3-factor measurement models. The 4-factor measurement model consisted of toxic leadership behaviour, employee resilience, emotional intelligence, and posttraumatic growth stress (CFI = 0.893, TLI = 0.887, RMSEA = 0.057). The 3-factor measurement models were separated by emotional intelligence and employee resilience. We tested two separate mediation effects model – a model involving employee resilience as a mediator (CFI = 0.892, TLI = 0.887, RMSEA = 0.060) and another involving emotional intelligence as a mediator (CFI = 0.892, TLI = 0.886, RMSEA = 0.062). Some items on employee resilience and emotional intelligence were removed, as they affected the validity of the scales. However, all the items measuring toxic leadership behaviour and posttraumatic growth stress were retained, while only 5-items and 3-items were retained for employee resilience and emotional intelligence, respectively. The 4-factor and 3-factors CFA models produced acceptable fit indices. As we collected data on all our variables from a single source simultaneously, common method bias could potentially undermine the results of our study (Podsakoff et al., 2024; Podsakoff et al., 2003). Post hoc analysis via Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted to determine whether common method bias was an issue. All the items measuring the main variables were constrained to a single unrotated factor and tested via principal axis factoring method in SPSS version 31 for IBM. The single factor generated a variance of 35.38%, which is lower than the threshold of $\geq 50\%$. This indicates that all

the items explained less than 50% of the variance, suggesting that common method bias is not present.

Results

Correlation between variables

The Pearson Product-moment correlation test was used to analyse the bivariate association between the main variables. The results in Table 1 indicate that toxic leadership behaviour was negatively associated with emotional intelligence ($r = -.136$, $p < .05$) and employee resilience ($r = -.164$), but positively with posttraumatic growth stress ($r = .091$, $p < .05$). Emotional intelligence was found to relate positively with employee resilience ($r = .482$, $p < .05$) and posttraumatic growth stress ($r = .094$, $p < .05$). Finally, employee resilience was positively associated with posttraumatic growth stress ($r = .121$, $p < .05$).

Table 1: Zero-order correlation results of study variables ($n = 948$)

#	Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1.	Toxic leadership behaviour	2.5907	1.328	-			
2.	Emotional intelligence	4.088	0.617	-0.136***	-		
3.	Employee resilience	4.223	0.652	-0.164***	0.482***	-	
4.	Posttraumatic growth stress	2.484	1.347	0.091**	0.094**	0.121***	-

Note: *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$. SD = standard deviation

Mediation analysis

We tested two separate mediation effect models in the study. First, we tested the indirect effect of employee resilience on the nexus between toxic leadership behaviour and posttraumatic growth stress; and finally, we investigated the indirect effect of emotional intelligence on the relationship between toxic leadership behaviour and posttraumatic growth stress. Process Macro version 4.2 (Hayes, 2022) was used to facilitate the analysis. The indirect effects of employee resilience and emotional intelligence on the relationship between toxic leadership behaviour and posttraumatic growth stress were tested using the bias-corrected confidence interval test at the 95% level, bootstrapping with resampling at 5,000. The indirect effect is statistically significant when there is no zero between the lower and upper bound values of the bias-corrected confidence intervals (MacKinon et al., 2007; Shrout & Bolger, 2002).

Mediation effect of employee resilience

The results in Table 2 indicate that toxic leadership behaviour significantly and positively predicted posttraumatic growth stress, $b = 0.116$, $SE = 0.033$, BCa CI [0.051, 0.181],

$p < .001$, supporting hypothesis 1. Additionally, toxic leadership behaviour was a significant negative predictor of employee resilience, $b = -0.081$, $SE = 0.016$, BCa CI $[-0.112, -0.050]$, confirming hypothesis 2. Also, it was observed that employee resilience significantly and positively predicted posttraumatic growth stress, $b = 0.289$, $SE = 0.067$, BCa CI $[0.157, 0.422]$, confirming hypothesis 3. Furthermore, the results indicate a statistically significant total effect, $b = 0.093$, $SE = 0.033$, BCa CI $[0.028, 0.157]$, $p = .005$. Finally, our hypothesis that toxic leadership behaviour impacts posttraumatic growth stress through employee resilience was supported (hypothesis 4). Specifically, we found a statistically significant indirect effect, $b = -0.023$, $SE = 0.007$, BCa CI $[-0.038, -0.012]$, as there is no zero between the lower and upper bound values of the bias-corrected intervals (MacKinnon et al., 2007; Shrout & Bolger, 2007).

Table 2: Hierarchical multiple regression results of the mediation effect of resilience

Models	Estimate	SE	95% CI	
			LL	UL
Direct effects				
Toxic leadership -> Resilience	-0.081***	0.016	-0.112	-0.050
Toxic leadership -> Posttraumatic growth stress	0.116***	0.033	0.051	0.181
Resilience -> Posttraumatic growth stress	0.289***	0.067	0.157	0.422
Indirect effect				
Toxic leadership -> Resilience -> Posttraumatic growth stress	-0.023	0.007	-0.038	-0.012
Total effect	0.093**	0.033	0.028	0.157

Note: CI = confidence interval; LL = lower level; UL = upper level.

Mediation effect of emotional intelligence

The results in Table 5 indicate that toxic leadership behaviour significantly and negatively predicted emotional intelligence, $b = -0.063$, $SE = 0.015$, BCa CI $[-0.093, -0.034]$, $p < .001$. This outcome supports hypothesis 5. Moreover, emotional intelligence was found to significantly and positively predict posttraumatic growth stress, $b = 0.236$, $SE = 0.071$, BCa CI $[0.096, 375]$, $p = .001$, confirming hypothesis 6. Finally, toxic leadership was found to significantly impact posttraumatic growth stress through emotional intelligence, $b = -0.015$, $SE = 0.006$, BCa CI $[-0.028, -0.005]$, confirming hypothesis 7.

Table 3: Hierarchical multiple regression results of the mediation effect of emotional intelligence

Models	Estimate	SE	95% CI	
			LL	UL
Direct effects				
Toxic leadership -> Emotional intelligence	-0.063***	0.015	-0.093	-0.034
Toxic leadership -> Posttraumatic growth stress	0.108**	0.033	0.043	0.172
Emotional intelligence -> Posttraumatic growth stress	0.236**	0.071	0.096	0.375
Indirect effect				
Toxic leadership -> Emotional intelligence -> Posttraumatic growth stress	-0.015	0.006	-0.028	-0.005
Total effect	0.093**	0.033	0.028	0.157

Note: CI = confidence interval; LL = lower level; UL = upper level.

Discussion

The present study sought to examine a question that had not yet been resolved: whether toxic leadership, which has been widely established as a source of organisational and psychological harm, can also be associated with employee growth, and if so, through what mechanism. The findings corroborate this possibility while concomitantly unveiling substantial negative indirect effects, thereby complicating any unambiguous interpretation of toxic leadership as a potential growth catalyze, especially from a direct effect perspective. Importantly, our empirical evidence demonstrates that employees in Ghanaian organisations appear to develop through the adversity of toxic leadership. Specifically, the empirical results indicate that perception of toxic leadership behaviour was associated with higher levels of posttraumatic growth stress, confirming hypothesis 1. This outcome aligns with the COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989), and with previous studies (Bardoel et al., 2014; Henson et al., 2021; Maitlis, 2020). This result is salient, as it demonstrates the possibility that when employees encounter adversity – for example, a toxic environment created by leaders – that they cannot readily avoid or escape, some of them respond by cognitively and emotionally processing the experience in ways that can facilitate growth (Henson et al., 2021; Maitlis, 2020), thereby, supporting the intricate connection between toxic leadership behaviour and posttraumatic growth stress. This result is plausible in the Ghanaian context, where cultural and institutional conditions, a high-power distance, deference to authority, and limited institutional recourse, which may engender the prevalence of toxic leadership are pronounced (Abdulai, 2021; Ibrahim et al., 2024). These conditions in the Ghanaian work context are not merely a setting; they influence the experience of toxic leadership in ways that can increase the pressure for adaptive meaning-making. Moreover, in situations where structural constraints limit

available options for departure, the psychological imperative to make sense of one's circumstances may intensify correspondingly (Abdulai, 2021; Ibrahim et al., 2024). This complexity can give rise to conditions under which posttraumatic growth becomes not just a possibility but, for some employees, an imperative.

Additionally, the findings reveal that toxic leadership behaviour was associated with lower levels of employee resilience (Hypothesis 2). This empirical finding corroborates previous studies indicating that toxic leadership behaviour depletes the psychological resource reservoir of employees, hindering their adaptive capacity to respond (Bardoel et al., 2014; Hobfoll, 1989), as well as cause significant strain among employees, thereby compromising their ability to function effectively under stress (e.g., Ahmad et al., 2021; Franken et al., 2023; Khan et al., 2024). Similarly, the study found that toxic leadership behaviour was associated with lower levels of emotional intelligence (Hypothesis 5). This outcome corroborates the fundamental premise of the COR (Hobfoll, 1989), which stipulates that toxic work environments can deplete personal resources that individuals possess (Hobfoll, 1989). This theoretical understanding aligns with previous empirical findings that emotionally demanding work environments can compromise the emotional regulatory functioning of employee's overtime, hindering the capacity of the employee to work effectively in such a context (e.g., Coban, 2022; Miao et al., 2017).

Furthermore, our findings indicate that employee resilience was associated with higher levels of posttraumatic growth stress, supporting hypothesis 3. This empirical finding corroborates previous studies indicating that resilience was a vital protective resource that employees can leverage in stressful work environments to grow (Henson et al., 2021; Nishi et al., 2016). Similarly, we found that emotional intelligence was associated with increased posttraumatic growth stress, confirming hypothesis 6. This finding suggests that employees with high emotional intelligence can make sense of their work environment, including stressful work environment, by identifying opportunities for career development (Henson et al., 2021; Maitlis, 2020). Emotionally intelligent employees function well in stressful work environments because they can regulate and understand their own emotions, leading them to function well in such a context (Nunes & Palma-Moreira, 2024).

Importantly, our findings indicate that the presence of toxic leadership engenders a reduction in resilience and emotional intelligence. This suggests that toxic leadership behaviour depletes personal resources, which are crucial for adaptation on stressful work environment, especially the one created by toxic leaders. However, resilience and emotional intelligence were associated with higher levels of employee posttraumatic growth stress. Together, the findings suggest that while the resources (i.e., resilience and emotional intelligence) employees need to transform adversity into growth are depleted by adversity itself (i.e., toxic leadership behaviour), the boosting effects of resilience and emotional intelligence act as underlying psychological mechanisms, fostering

employee growth under adversity. These significant indirect effects do not contradict the positive effect of toxic leadership behaviour on posttraumatic growth stress; rather, they coexist in a state of productive tension. The combined patterns of findings indicate that employees' growth, despite the adverse impact of toxic leadership on their psychological foundations, is a phenomenon that can be explained by the combined pattern of findings. This is because the direct stimulus toward growth and the indirect depletion of growth-enabling resources operate concurrently, exerting opposing forces. The net result is growth that is real but constrained, more limited than it would be if the psychological resources sustaining it were not concurrently being depleted, and increasingly fragile the longer the toxic conditions persist. The pathway serves to concretise the logic of COR theory (cf. Hobfoll, 1989). According to the COR theory, toxic leadership constitutes a chronic resource threat that perpetually depletes employees' psychological energy, undermines the resources available for adaptive functioning (Bardoel et al., 2014; Hobfoll, 1989). This compounded challenge is further exacerbated by the complexity of the situation. In essence, employees are being compelled to develop resilience through the face of challenges, yet their capacity to do so is being diminished. This outcome extends the work of Franken et al. (2023), who demonstrated that supportive leadership fosters resilience, thereby facilitating outcomes. Conversely, this study reveals that toxic leadership undermines resilience.

The logic of the indirect effect of emotional intelligence is theoretically distinct, yet structurally analogue. Emotional intelligence is not a general psychological resource, but rather a specific capacity through which employees perceive, regulate, and adaptively use their emotional experience. Posttraumatic growth can be conceptualised as a process of making meaning, and the formation of meaning necessitates a specific type of regulated emotional engagement (Henson et al., 2021). Our findings indicate that toxic leadership erodes this capacity, and the emotional regulatory tool employees need most to grow from adversity is itself being eroded by adversity (Coban, 2022). This outcome is rarely documented in the extant literature, as our study is likely the first to examine emotional intelligence as a mediating mechanism in the toxic leadership-posttraumatic growth stress relationship.

Theoretical contributions

Theoretically, our findings contribute to the advancement of knowledge regarding the COR theory, as they demonstrate that individuals may experience growth in the face of adversity. Significantly, our study contributes to the existing theoretical framework by proposing that resource loss, an inherently stressful event, can serve as a catalyst for cycles of resource gain. This phenomenon occurs particularly when individuals can draw on their remaining reserves and engage in meaning-making activities (Hobfoll,

1989). Furthermore, the present study corroborates the prospective repercussions of resource loss on psychological growth. Specifically, the study demonstrates that toxic leadership can erode personal resources, including resilience and emotional intelligence. Concurrently, such losses in resources can impede psychological growth. However, a resource gain (in the form of resilience and emotional intelligence) can foster growth under stress, as observed in this study, making resilience and emotional intelligence as important pathways through which employees experience growth under a toxic leader. The study's contribution to the body of research on toxic leadership in Sub-Saharan Africa is noteworthy, particularly given the paucity of literature in this area. The Ghanaian setting is not merely a replication context with different participants. The cultural and institutional characteristics of this region give rise to leadership dynamics that are likely to differ from those observed in Western or East Asian research. The current findings suggest that these characteristics influence both the propensity for posttraumatic growth and the extent of resource depletion. This observation renders Ghana an analogue settings particularly compelling candidates for future research endeavours. These locations offer not only a platform for generalizability testing but also a fertile ground for further theoretical development.

Practical implications for workplace practice

The findings of this study carry substantial implications for work practice. Firstly, employees can demonstrate authentic adaptive capacity in circumstances that are not conducive to growth. In essence, employees may achieve professional advancement within toxic work environment by leveraging their psychological resources. Secondly, exposure to toxic work environments has the potential to diminish personal resources, including resilience and emotional intelligence. This can result in a loss of resources, which can potentially hinder growth. This suggests that the continuous exposure to a toxic work environment may inevitably lead to a loss to personal resources over time. Therefore, it is incumbent on managers and leaders to cultivate work environments that is conducive to professional growth, as employees may face limitations in their long-term development if they operate in a toxic work environment. Finally, organisations must encourage the development of personal resources, particularly resilience and emotional intelligence, as they have the potential to facilitate growth among employees.

Limitations and future directions

Notwithstanding the substantial empirical findings, our study is not without limitations. Firstly, the present study demonstrates that toxic leadership behaviour was associated with elevated levels of posttraumatic growth stress. While the occurrence of this effect is probable, the investigation was conducted using a cross-sectional data. Furthermore,

we identified substantial indirect effects, wherein employee resilience and emotional intelligence significantly mediated the impact of toxic leadership on posttraumatic growth stress. Despite the statistically significant findings and the conceptual coherence of the study, future research should consider using a three-wave repeated measures longitudinal design to more accurately track employee's exposure to toxic leadership and its facilitation of growth. The causal modelling approach offers a compelling narrative, particularly given the clarity of this outcome. A further limitation of the study is the reliance on self-report measures across all variables. However, Harman Single-factor test results suggest that common method bias is not a major concern in this study. The present study is limited to Ghanaian organisations, which restricts the generalization of the findings to other contexts. Furthermore, the toxic leadership scale, which was originally developed for nurse managers, demonstrating strong performance in this study. However, there is a compelling argument for the development of measures tailored specifically for Ghanaian or broader African organisational context, as opposed to adapting measures from other regions. Furthermore, the longitudinal approach would assist in ascertaining whether the equilibrium between the direct growth effect and the indirect depletion effects shifts as exposure to toxic leadership accumulates, and whether there is a threshold beyond which growth becomes effectively impracticable. A subsequent line of inquiry pertains to the potential of interventions targeting resilience and emotional intelligence in disrupting the depletion cycle, as opposed to merely offering a temporary respite. The investigation of these questions is pertinent, as it would assist in ascertaining the extent to which employees can remain in a toxic environment and maintain productivity.

Conclusion

The behaviours of leaders can either create an inspiring or undermining work environment for employee growth. Our empirical results are grounded in the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory. Importantly, the study demonstrates that while toxic leadership can deplete personal resources of employees, such as employee resilience and emotional intelligence (that is, mediators), it tended to facilitate the transformative growth of employees (that is, posttraumatic growth stress). These findings demonstrate that some employees can thrive in stressful work environments (that is, toxic environments) created by their leaders due to personal resources, such as resilience and emotional intelligence. Resilience and emotional intelligence were associated with increased in posttraumatic growth stress, suggesting that personal resources are crucial for transformative growth under stressful conditions. Consequently, resilience and emotional intelligence served as separate mediating mechanism through which toxic leadership behaviour positively predicted employee posttraumatic growth stress among employees in the Ghanaian work context. In short, our findings align with the Conservation of Resources (COR) perspective that personal resources can serve as important pathways through which

stressful work environments (i.e., toxic environment) impact employee transformative growth.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

This research was funded by the University of Ghana Business School.

ORCID

Eric Delle  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6572-905X>

Inusah Abdul-Nasiru  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4407-7953>

Robert Mensah <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-8021-2412>

Daniel Ofori <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7974-304X>

References

- Abdulai, M. (2021). The culture of toxic organisational leadership in Sub-Saharan Africa: Why contexts matter. In A. Örtenblad (Ed.), *Debating bad leadership: Reasons and remedies*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Acuña, K. B., & Male, T. (2024). Toxic Leadership and Academics' Work Engagement in Higher Education: A Cross-Sectional Study from Chile. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 52(3), 757–773. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17411432221084474>.
- Ahmad, S., Islam, T., Sohal, A. S., Wolfram Cox, J., & Kaleem, A. (2021). Managing bullying in the workplace: a model of servant leadership, employee resilience and proactive personality. *Personnel Review*, 50(7/8), 1613–1631. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-06-2020-0470>
- Akinyele, A.I., & Chen, Z. (2025). Dark clouds of leadership: Causes and consequences of toxic leadership. *International Studies of Management & Organisation*, 55(4), 476–503. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00208825.2024.2442185>
- Alvesson, M. (2020). Upbeat leadership: A recipe for – or against – “successful” leadership studies. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 31(6), 101439. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2020.101439>.

- Ashforth, B. E., & Reingen, P. H. (2014). Functions of dysfunction: Managing the dynamics of an organisational duality in a natural food cooperative. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 59(3), 474–516. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0001839214537811>
- Athota, V. S., & O'Connor, P. J. (2014). How approach and avoidance constructs of personality and trait emotional intelligence predict core human values. *Learning and Individual Difference*, 31, 51–58. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2013.12.009>
- Bardoel, E. A., Pettit, T. M., De Cieri, H., & McMillan, L. (2014). Employee resilience: An emerging challenge for HRM. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*, 52(3), 279–297. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1744-7941.12033>
- Braun, T., Hayes, B., DeMuth, R., & Taran, O. (2017). The development, validation, and practical application of an employee agility and resilience measure to facilitate organisational change. *Industrial and Organisational Psychology*, 10(4), 703–723. <https://doi.org/10.1017/iop.2017.79>
- Cakiroglu, C. O., & Unver, T.G. (2023). Toxic leadership, mental well-being and work engagement among nurses: A scale adaptation study and structural equation model approach. *Journal of Health Organisation and Management*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JHOM-10-2022-0291>.
- Caniëls, M.C.J., & Baaten, S.M.J. (2019). How a learning-oriented organisational climate is linked to different proactive behaviors: The role of employee resilience. *Social Indicators Research*, 143(2), 561–577. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-018-1996-y>
- Canne, A., Calhoun, L.G., Tedeschi, R.G., Taku, K., Vishnevsky, T., Triplett, K.N., & Danhauer, S.C. (2010). A short form of the Posttraumatic Growth Inventory. *Anxiety, Stress & Coping*, 23(2), 127–137. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10615800903094273>
- Cummings, G.G., Tate, K., Lee, S., Wong, C.A., Paananen, T., Micaroni, S.P.M., & Chatterjee, G.E. (2018). Leadership styles and outcome patterns for the nursing workforce and work environment: A systematic review. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 85, 19–60. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2018.04.016>
- Coban, C. (2022). The dark side of leadership: A conceptual assessment of toxic leadership. *Business Economics and Management Research Journal*, 5(1), 50–61. <https://dergipark.org.tr/bemarej>
- Davies, K.A., Lane, A.M., Devonport, T.J., & Scott, J.A. (2010). Validity and reliability of a brief emotional intelligence scale (BEIS-10). *Journal of Individual Difference*, 31(4), 198–208. <https://doi.org/10.1027/1614-0001/a000028>

- Dobbs, J.M., & Do, J.J. (2019). The impact of perceived toxic leadership on cynicism in officer candidates. *Armed Forces & Society* 45(1), 3–26. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X17747204>.
- Dunst, C.J., Bruder, M.B., Hamby, D.H., Howse, R., & Wilkie, H. (2018). Meta-analysis of the relationships between different leadership practices and organisational, teaming, leader, and employee outcomes. *Journal of International Education Leadership*, 8(2), 1–45. <http://www.jielusa.org/>
- Ervasti, J., & Kivimäki, M. (2023). *The Links between Exposure to Work-Related Psychosocial Risk Factors and Cardiovascular Disease*. June 01, 2024. https://osha.europa.eu/sites/default/files/Links-exposure-work-related-psychosocial-risks-at-work-and-cardiovascular-diseases_EN.pdf.
- Eva, N., Robin, M., Sendjaya, S., van Dierendonck, D., & Liden, R.C. (2019). Servant leadership: a systematic review and call for future research. *Leadership Quarterly*, 30(1), 111–132. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2018.07.004>
- ischer, T., Tian, A.W., Lee, A., & Hughes, D.J. (2021). Abusive supervision: A systematic review and fundamental rethink. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 32(6), 101540. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2021.101540>.
- Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(1), 39–50. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3151312>
- Franken, E., Plimmer, G., & Malinen, S. (2023). Growth-oriented management and employee outcomes: employee resilience as a mechanism for growth. *Leadership & Organisation Development Journal*, 44(5), 627–642. <https://doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-01-2023-0022>
- Green, J.E. (2014). Toxic leadership in educational organisations. *Education Leadership Review*, 15(1), 18–33.
- Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2010). *Multivariate Data Analysis* (7th ed.). Pearson.
- Harris, A. and Jones, M. (2018). The dark side of leadership and management. *School Leadership & Management*, 38(5), 475–477. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2018.1509276>.
- Hattab, S., Wirawan, H., Salam, R., Daswati, D., & Niswaty, R. (2022). The effect of toxic leadership on turnover intention and counterproductive work behaviour in Indonesia public organisations. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 35(3), 317–333. <https://doi.org/10.1108/iJPsm-06-2021-0142>

- Henson, C., Truchot, D., & Canevello, A. (2021). What promotes post traumatic growth? A systematic review. *European Journal of Trauma & Dissociation*, 5(4), 100195. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejtd.2020.100195>
- Hobfoll, S. E. (1989). Conservation of resources: a new attempt at conceptualizing stress. *American Psychologist*, 44(3), 513–524. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.44.3.513>
- Hughes, D.J., Lee, A., Tian, A.W., Newman, A., & Legood, A. (2018). Leadership, creativity, and innovation: a critical review and practical recommendations. *Leadership Quarterly*, 29(5), 549–569. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2018.03.001>
- Ibrahim, H., Abdulai, M., Iddrisu, S., & Konlan, I. (2024). Society and organisational leadership: Investigating the sociocultural construction of toxic and constructive leaders in Ghana. *International Journal of Cross-Cultural Management*, 24(1), 167–184. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14705958241237698>
- Jacobs, I., & Wollny, A. (2022). Personal values, trait emotional intelligence, and mental health problems. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 63, 155–163. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sjop.12785>
- Khan, M.R., Khan, H., Jan, S.A., Javad, A., & Khattak, A.U. (2021). Mediating effects of employee commitment in relationship between toxic leadership and employees' performance. *Humanities & Social Sciences Reviews*, 9(4), 56–64. <https://doi.org/10.18510/hssr.2021.949>.
- Khan, I. U., Siddique, M., & Mughal, Y. H. (2024). Impact of toxic leadership on employees' performance: To what extent employees' resilience matters. *Journal of Social Research Development*, 5(2), 109. <https://doi.org/10.53664/JSRD/05-02-2024-09-108-118>
- Kaye-Tzadok, A., & Icekson, T. (2022). A phenomenological exploration of work-related post-traumatic growth among high-functioning adults maltreated as children. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 1048295. <http://doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1048295>
- Kuntz, J.C., Näswall, K., & Malinen, S. (2016). Resilient employees in resilient organisations: flourishing beyond adversity. *Industrial and Organisational Psychology: Perspectives on Science and Practice*, 9(2), 456-462. <https://doi.org/10.1017/iop.2016.39>
- Labrague, L. J., Lorica, J., Nwafor, C. E., Bogaert, P., & Cummings, G. G. (2020). Development and psychometric testing of the toxic leadership behaviors of nurse managers (toxbh-nm) scale. *Journal of Nursing Management*, 28(4), 840–850. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jonm.13008>

- Lee, M.C.C., Sim, B.Y.H., & Tuckey, M.R. (2024). Comparing effects of toxic leadership and team social support on job insecurity, role ambiguity, work engagement, and job performance: A multilevel mediational perspective. *Asia Pacific Management Review*, 29(1), 115–126. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apmr.2023.09.002>.
- Lemoine, G.J., Hartnell, C.A., & Leroy, H. (2019). Taking stock of moral approaches to leadership: An integrative review of ethical, authentic, and servant leadership. *Academy of Management Annals*, 13(1), 148– 187. <https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2016.0121>.
- Lipman-Blumen, J. (2005). The allure of toxic leaders: why followers rarely escape their clutches. *Ivey Business Journal*, 69(3), 1–8. www.iveybusinessjournal.com
- Mackey, J. D., Ellen III, B. P., McAllister, C. P., & Alexander, K. C. (2021). The dark side of leadership: A systematic literature review and meta-analysis of destructive leadership research. *Journal of Business Research*, 132, 705–718. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.10.037>
- Mancini, G., Özal, Z., Biolcati, R., Trombini, E., & Petrides, K. V. (2024). Trait emotional intelligence and adolescent psychological well-being: a systematic review. *International Journal of Adolescence & Youth*, 29, 2292057. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2023.2292057>
- Maitlis, S. (2020). Posttraumatic growth at work. *Annual Review of Organisational Psychology and Organisational Behavior*, 7(1), 395–419. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-012119-044932>
- Mayer, J. D., Salovey, P., & Caruso, D. R. (1999). Emotional intelligence meets traditional standards for an intelligence. *Intelligence*, 27(4), 267–298. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-2896\(99\)00016-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-2896(99)00016-1)
- Miao, C., Humphrey, R. H., & Qian, S. (2017). A meta-analysis of emotional intelligence and work attitudes. *Journal of Occupational and Organisational Psychology*, 90(2), 177–202. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.12167>
- Näswall, K., Malinen, S., Kuntz, J., & Hidliffe, M. (2019). Employee resilience: development and validation of a measure. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 34(5), 353-367. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JMP-02-2018-0102>
- Nishi, D., Kawashima, Y., Noguchi, H., Usuki, M., Yamashita, A., Koido, Y., & Matsuoka, Y. J. (2016). Resilience, post-traumatic growth, and work engagement among health care professionals after the Great East Japan Earthquake: A 4-year prospective follow-up study. *Journal of Occupational Health*, 58(4), 347–353. <https://doi.org/10.1539/joh.16-0002-OA>

- Nunes, S., & Palma-Moreira, A. (2024). Toxic leadership and turnover intentions: The role of burnout syndrome.. *Administrative Sciences*, 14(12), 340. <https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci14120340>
- Ortega, A. (2017). *Academic Libraries and Toxic Leadership*. Cambridge MA: Chandos Publishing.
- Paltu, A., & Brouwers, M. (2020). Toxic leadership: Effects on job satisfaction, commitment, turnover intention and organisational culture within the South African Manufacturing Industry,” *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, 18, 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajhrm.v18i0.1338>.
- Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J. Y., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003), “Common method biases in behavioral research: a critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *The Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88(5), 879–903. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.88.5.879>
- Rasool, S. F., Wang, M., Zhang, Y., & Samma, M. (2020). Sustainable work performance: the roles of workplace violence and occupational stress. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(3), 912. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17030912>
- Reed, G. (2004). Toxic leadership. *Military Review*, 67–71.
- Reslan, F. B., Hassanie, S., Uludag, O., Boukarroum, S., & Ai Maalouf, N. J. (2025). Toxic work environment: the impact of toxic leadership and workplace bullying on employees’ innovative work behavior and affective commitment. *Cogent Business & Management*, 12(1), 2498068, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2025.2498068>
- Semedo, C. S., Salvador, A., Dos Santos, N. R., Pais, L., & Mónico, L. (2022). Toxic leadership and empowering leadership: Relations with work motivation. *Psychology Research and Behavior Management*, 1885-1900. <https://doi.org/10.2147/PRBM.S340863>
- Schyns, B., & Schilling, J. (2013). How bad are the effects of bad leaders? A meta-analysis of destructive leadership and its outcomes. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 24(1), 138–158. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2012.09.001>
- Shrout, P. E., & Bolger, N. (2002). Mediation in experimental and nonexperimental studies: new procedures and recommendations. *Psychological Methods*, 7, 422–455. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1082-989X.7.4.422>
- Stenholm, P., & Renko, M. (2016). Passionate bricoleurs and new venture. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 31(5), 595-611. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2016.05.004>

- Stokes, P., Smith, S., Wall, T., & Moore, N. (2019). Resilience and the (micro-)dynamics of organisational ambidexterity: implications for strategic HRM. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 30(8), 1287-1322. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2018.1474939>
- Stringer, D., Hurlbert, J., Boswell, M., & Barfoot, S. (2023). Defining toxic leading for the Air Force. *Air & Space Operations Review*, 2(4), 23–36.
- Szcześniak, M. and Tulecka, M. (2020). Family functioning and life satisfaction: the mediatory role of emotional intelligence. *Psychological Research and Behaviour Management*, 13, 223–232. <https://doi.org/10.2147/PRBM.S240898>
- Webster, V., Brough, P., & Daly, K. (2014). Fight, flight or freeze: common responses for follower coping with toxic leadership. *Stress Health*, 32(4), 346–354. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smi.2626>
- Whicker, M.L. (1996). *Toxic Leaders: When Organisations Go Bad*. Westport, Conn.: Quorum Books, p. 30.
- Yu, X., Li, Y., Su, Z., Tao, Y., Nguyen, B., & Xia, F. (2020). Entrepreneurial bricolage and its effects on new venture growth and adaptiveness in an emerging economy. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 37, 1141–1163. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10490-019-09657-1>