

Leader-Member Exchange Quality as Mediator between Toxic Leadership and Organizational Learning in Pakistani Private Banks

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Abstract

The twenty-first century is shaded with numerous scams that linked to the leadership decisions. Such incidents raise the questions on the ability and intentions of the leadership. It's been years that leadership is being studied and majority of scholars just focus on the constructive side of the leadership but the darkest and negative traits or behaviours of leaders are not studied. One such behaviour is toxic leadership. The available literature identifies that investigation related to toxic leader and organizational learning with the mediating role of leader-member exchange quality is limited. The study is cross-sectional in nature and convenient sampling technique was employed to collect the data from the individual bankers working in banking sector of Islamabad. A total of 211 responses were used for the study. The descriptive statistics, correlation, linear regression and process macro v4.0 by Andrew F. Hayes were employed for the data analysis. The study findings justify that toxic leadership damages the process of organizational learning and leader-member exchange quality mediates the relationship between toxic leadership and organizational learning. The study further discusses the implications for the banks and practitioners to deal effectively with the toxicity of leaders at different levels.

Keywords: *Toxic Leadership, LMXQ, Mediation Effect of LMXQ, Organizational Learning*

1. Introduction

The twenty-first century is shaded with a list of hideous scams that are linked to leadership decisions. Such incidents raise questions about the ability and intentions of the leadership and whether the leaders were intentionally involved or these are the results of their negligence, inability to manage, and incompetence (Sing, Sengupta & Dev, 2018). Leadership has been an interesting, attractive, and important topic for academicians as well as business personnel. It's been years that leadership is being studied and majority of scholars but the darkest and most negative traits or behaviors of leaders not studied (O'Hara, 2015). The dark side of the leadership such as destructive leadership, narcissistic leadership, toxic leadership or abusive leadership has received great attention in the past decade despite this attention and work done, this field is still scattered and there is a need of deep understanding to the after effects of toxic leadership on the organizational outcomes (Scheffler & Brunzel, 2020). Toxic leadership is the leadership behavior that brings down the morale, efficiency and effectiveness of subordinates. Although there are only 8-10% toxic leaders which is relatively small number as compared to constructive leadership behavior but still presence of only one toxic leader can pollutes the

whole organization and the negative consequences can trickle down to the bottom level of the organization. The toxic leader or leadership is unavoidable and put to an end as it is a threat to organizational level outcomes as well as results in individual burn outs (Singh et al., 2019). Toxic leader intentionally or unintentionally by their destructive behavior brings a serious damage and harm the organization and the people, which in long run costs huge amount to the organizations in terms of individual and organizational performance, efficiency, production and damage to healthy culture and environment of organization. Moreover, the organizations are not prepared or may be on purpose reluctant to address such leaders till the time the cost associated with the damage covers a huge proportion (Vreja, Balan & Bosca, 2016). Negative behaviors are like a double-edged sword and these behaviors in the work environment not only negatively affect employees but they also cost considerable amount to the organizations thus it is important to examine these behaviors and their various consequences (Zhong & Robinson, 2021).

Banking sector is considered one of the most important sectors of service industry which has major part in the economic growth of any country (Pahi, Hamid & Khalid, 2016; Khosa, Ishaq & Kamil, 2020; Asrar-ul-Haq & Kuchinke, 2016), due to the increased workload, excessive deadline, huge paperwork and along with all these responsibilities banker has to deal with the public as well which makes the banking sector more challenging and demanding sector (Khan, 2014; Shah et al., 2018). According to Asrar-ul-Haq and Kuchinke (2016) manager's behaviours towards their subordinate is one of the reasons of challenges being faced by Pakistani banks i.e., turnover intentions and there is an indeed need to implement effect leadership to cope up with such challenges to minimize the effects of these evil outcomes. Toxic leadership has been practiced in banking sector of Pakistan which is one of the reasons to raise the intentions to leave the organization resulting is the loss of organization in terms of valuable knowledge leaving from the organization's repository (Naeem & Khurram, 2020; Jabbar et al., 2020). In the context of Pakistan, one of the emerging concepts of study is toxic leadership (Naeem & Khurram, 2020). Impacts of toxic leadership on individual level outcomes has been more studied in the banking sector of Pakistan (Asrar-ul-Haq & Anjum, 2020; Naeem & Khurram, 2020; Jabbar et al., 2020; Anjum & Ming, 2018) and only few studies are there on the organizational level outcomes such as organizational learning and organizational performance (Saqib & Arif, 2017a; Saqib & Arif, 2017b). Moreover, it has been evident that followers get influenced by their leaders so the effective leadership becomes necessity in the service sector as it is an important entity which contributes in the economy (Asrar ul Haq & Kuchinke, 2016). Further, Dulebohn et al. (2012) highlighted that in the non-western culture where power distances occur in cultures the research related to LMX and its influence on leadership outcomes is lacking. To fill the existing gap this study investigates the relationship of toxic leadership with organizational learning through the mediating role of leader-member exchange quality.

This study will give the more insight on the toxic leadership effects and destruction it brings to the organizations and its employees and the losses associated with toxic leadership. This study will provide the importance to the management of the corporate sector to notice the presence of toxicity in the leadership and try to eliminate this workplace cancer. Moreover, this study will be an addition to the existing literature in terms of Pakistani context and helps in generalizing the impacts of toxic leadership on organizational learning.

2. Literature review

2.1 Toxic leadership

The concept of toxic leadership is first defined by the Whicker (1996). Lipman-Blumen (2005) work on toxic leadership got the first-time great attention in leadership literature. She defined toxic leadership as set of negative and damaging behaviors and dysfunctional personal

qualities or characteristics associated with the leader that cause harm to individuals and organizations. It's a costly phenomenon that results in the destruction of individual, groups, organizations, and even the whole country. Leet (2011) defined toxic leadership as individuals which are deliberately practiced to harm other people in the group or organization, he further clarifies that these behavior on non-physical. Goldman (2006; 2012) in his study based on the theory of emotional contagion explained that a leader's toxicity will affect the other employees and it trickles down to the bottom of the organization which results in polluting the whole organizational environment. Toxic leadership is a multi-facet construct (Sing et al., 2019; Lipman-Blueman, 2010; Schmidt, 2008). Toxic leadership holds a broad gamut as it does not only include what actually they are but also how people perceive them. They explained toxic leader as those who are narcissist, self-promoting leaders, authoritative leaders, and abusive leaders. They are aggressive towards their employees, they stop or make hurdles in the learning process of their employees, bullying their employees and they take all the control by themselves to promote and gain their self-interest (Singet al., 2019). According to Lipman-Blumen (2010) explains the set of destructive behaviors if a leader posse one or more behaviors among these will be considered as toxic leader i.e., deliberately undermining their followers, demeaning, seducing, marginalizing, intimidating, demoralizing, disenfranchising, incapacitating, imprisoning, torturing, terrorizing or killing them or making their followers to believe that the leader is the only one who can save them.

Schmidt (2008) defined five dimensions of toxic leadership that are abusive supervision, authoritarian leadership, narcissism, self-promotion, and unpredictability. Furthermore, Kilic and Günsel (2019) also list these dimensions as the most prominent among all others. Naseer et al. (2016) conducted a study in the telecom, banking, and education sector of Pakistan and found that despotic leaders have injurious effects on the individuals and organizational level outcomes under high leader-member exchange and high perceived organizational politics. This study is thus based on sets its boundaries on the definitions and taxonomy provided by Schmidt (2008; 2014). Five dimensions are defined as:

2.1.1 Narcissism

Narcissistic leaders are defined as one who lacks the empathy for his followers, disrespect the abilities and efforts put by others and who develops his or her moral image (Schmidt 2008; 2014).

2.1.2 Abusive Supervision

Abusive supervision is defined as verbal and non-verbal behaviors deliberately used to harm people without any physical contact, they even publicly demonstrate these behaviors and reminds employees about their past mistake publicly (Schmidt, 2008; 2014).

2.1.3 Authoritarian Leadership

Authoritarian leadership is defined as controlling the work environment and subordinates and to limit them from taking decision and discussing new ideas, such leaders demand full obedience from their subordinates (Schmidt, 2008; 2014).

2.1.4 Self-Promotion

Self-promotion is defined as the behaviors or activities that are used by the leader to build his or her moral image in front of others to gain personal benefits and objectives (Schmidt 2008; 2014).

2.1.5 Unpredictability

Unpredictability is defined as the spontaneous change in the mood of a leader which laid employees in difficulties judging and following the leader (Schmidt 2008; 2014).

2.2 Organizational learning

Argyris & Schon (1978) developed the concept of organizational learning. Crossan, Lane & White (1999) has major contributions to this concept, he explained that continuous learning is major key to the organizational adaptability, responsiveness, and to cope up with the change. Lant (2000) further explained that learning can results from the creation of knowledge, retention of knowledge and sharing of knowledge at all levels of the organization. Crossan et al. (1999) argue that organizational learning is a multilevel process begins with individual learning, that leads to group learning, and that then leads to organizational learning. These levels, they argue, are connected by bidirectional processes that involve both the creation and application of knowledge. More specifically, they describe four processes that connect individual learning to organizational learning: intuiting, interpreting, integrating, and institutionalizing. Schilling and Kluge (2009) defined organizational learning as the process of organizational initiatives taken for collective learning in which individual as well as group level experiences are incorporated in the organizational routines, structure and processes, which in turn benefits the future learning of the organization's members. Gilaninia et al. (2013) linked leadership with the organizational learning by arguing that leaders are responsible to create such an environment in which all the members act as a learner, a teacher and as a leader as well. The sociological viewpoint on organizational learning was given by Clegg (1999) this perspective on organizational learning depends on the relationship of employees working in that organization.

2.3 Leader-Member Exchange Quality

Graen & Uhl-Bien (1995) defined LMX quality as the quality and nature of interpersonal relationship between among leader and his or her followers. Leader-member exchange theory emphasis on the social exchange phenomenon depending on the relationship between the leader and followers (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975). According to LMX theory there is a dyadic relationship formed between leader and each subordinate. According to Pelletier (2012) LMX is relevant concept in understanding the leadership toxicity reactions as there are certain expectations linked when leader-member involves in social exchange. It is evident from the literature that there are two types or qualities of LMX relationship between leader and follower one is high exchange relationships and second is low quality exchange relationship (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Yukl, 2012). LMX relationships are developed by the leaders initially when a leader perceives his or her follower as dependable, skilled, capable and agreeable than that follower will experience high quality relationship with the leader and become a part of leader's in-group (Sparrowe & Liden, 2005). These in-group members experience more rewards than those who has low exchange relationship with the leader (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Joo and Ready (2012) explained that number of organizational outcomes depends on the quality of leader-member exchange relationship and the quality of leader-member exchange relationship will influence the number of resources, efforts, information and social support that will exchange between the leader and his or her followers.

2.4 Toxic leadership and Organizational Learning

OL is a complex and broad phenomenon (Crossan et al., 1999; Gupta & Thomas, 2001). Four processes namely intuiting, interpreting, integrating and institutionalizing are needed to connect individual learning to the organizational learning (Crossan et al., 1999). Moreover, Schilling and Kluge (2009) examined the barriers to organizational learning which includes employee's mind-set, their skills, motivation, group dynamic and culture etc. and suggest that to overcome these barriers effective leadership is required. Organizational learning and leadership are connected with each other (Joo, 2010; Amy, 2008; Raes et al., 2012). Hardworking employees will probably maintain distance from the managers or bosses who depicts narcissistic behaviors (Asrar-ul-Haq & Anjum, 2020). Vera and Crossan (2004) argued

that how leadership of different types can create an environment that promotes organizational learning.

Toxic leadership is linked with organizational learning by many scholars (Morrison, 2014, Lawrance et al., 2005; Schilling & Kluge, 2009; Lee, Kim & Yun, 2018). Emotions and political behaviors can cause hindrance to organizational learning process (Vice & Saleem, 2004; Lawrence et al., 2005). According to Liao et al. (2019) narcissist leaders use impression management to maintain their positive image in organizations and managers desire to maintain a positive image is one of the barriers to the process of organizational learning (Schilling & Kluge, 2009). Hence, the first hypothesis is:

H₁: Toxic leadership has a negative impact on organizational learning.

2.5 Toxic leadership and leader-member exchange quality

In the past few decades, leader-member exchange is one of the dominant paradigms in leadership studies. In this domain, many researchers have focused on the antecedents and outcomes of leader-member exchange relationship quality (Fatima et al., 2020). According to LMX theory, if employees perceive that leader put positive efforts for them, they reciprocate the same which will develop a positive exchange relationship among them. Contrary to this if employees perceive that the leader acts and interested only in benefiting him or herself this can develop a negative or low exchange relationship among themselves. The literature related to a potential interaction between LMX and toxic leadership is limited (Bell, 2017; Chi & Lo, 2003). Chi and Lo (2003) examine the employees' justice perception of co-workers' punitive events in Taiwan, the result of the study indicates that employees who experience low LMX quality perceives that justice does not prevail and the members of out-group consider punishment as unfair treatment with them. Results of the study conducted by Pelletier and Bligh (2008) showed that employees will not acknowledge those leaders who they perceive involved in favoritism. Furthermore, Scandura (1999) members of leader's out-group will feel discrimination and they probably raise their voice or express their injustices rather than those who falls in in-group. Pelletier (2012) also found that members of out-group are more likely to express their issues and unjust treatment rather than member of in-group. Pelletier (2012) concluded that the high exchange relationship between toxic leader and follower will asserts negative impact beyond the individual level outcomes. Fatima et al. (2020) concluded that employee who experience low quality LMX will view their leader as not reliable person which may ruins leader image and integrity within and outside the organization. Hence the second hypothesis is:

H₂: Toxic Leadership has a negative impact on leader-member exchange quality.

2.6 Leader-Member exchange quality and Organizational Learning

Due to global competition and technological innovation organizations becomes flatter, complex and demanding. In such scenario employees demand and need more support and power to decision making from their leaders (Joo, 2012). Over a period of time, in organizations employees and leaders develop a certain exchange relationship known as leader-member exchange and the quality of such relationships varies from employee to employee (Liao et al., 2019). The quality of leader-member exchange relationship has substantial effects on the organizational outcomes (Chris & Umemezia, 2019; Koçoğlu, Gürkan & Aktas, 2014). Schilling and Kluge (2009) explain the barriers of high LMX quality such as lack of recognition, fear, lack of support from leader, leader's involvement in promoting his or her self-image, forced change, lack of communication etc. Yukl (2012) explained that the hindrance in the flow of information upwards and downward in the organization can lead to considerable negative effects on organizational learning and performance. Moreover, the political culture and the competition among groups to acquire resources and power in the organization is barrier to information dissemination which ultimately stop the organizational

learning (Seo, 2003). Islam et al. (2013) investigate the relationship of organizational learning culture, leader-member exchange quality, and organizational commitment and turn over intention of employees in the banking sector of Pakistan, they found that organizational learning culture, LMXQ and organizational commitment are linked with each other. Presence of high quality LMX relationships will enable and motivate employees to go beyond their formal responsibilities which will leads towards organizational effectiveness (Ilies, Nahrgang & Morgeson 2007). Hence the third hypothesis is:

H₃: Leader-member exchange quality has a positive impact on organizational learning.

2.7 The mediating role of leader-member exchange quality between toxic leadership and organizational learning

There is a scarcity of literature related to LMX involvement with dark side of leadership, limited number of researchers Lian et al. (2012); Naseer et al. (2016); Pelletier (2012); Xu et al. (2015); Bellou & Dimou (2021); Meng, Tan, & Li (2017); Valle et al. (2019) have examined the consequence of negative leadership when LMX quality is involved. Lian et al. (2012) examined how LMX interact between abusive supervision and follower's need satisfaction and organizational deviance behavior, findings suggest that there is a negative relationship between abusive supervision and need satisfaction when there the quality of LMX is high. Moreover, Naseer et al. (2016) examined the linkage between despotic leadership, LMX and follower behaviors such as organizational citizenship behaviors and creativity and the results of the study depicts that there is a significant negative relation in the presence of high LMX between despotic leadership and followers' behaviors. Hence the third hypothesis is:

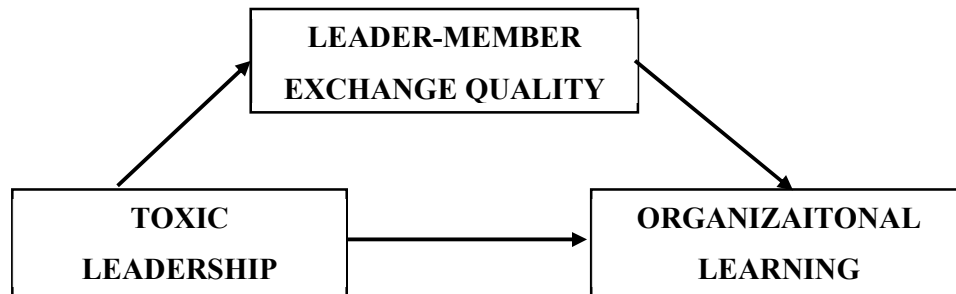
H₄: Leader-member exchange quality mediates the relationship between toxic leadership and organizational learning.

2.8 Underpinning Theories

Based on the literature review the study identified the theory of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) as the principal theory and LMXQ to explain and develop the hypotheses in this study. The relationships established between leaders and their followers depends on social exchanges between them (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Settoon, Bennett, & Liden, 1996). Similarly, this study considers social exchange as one of the main sources between TOXL, leader-member exchange relationships and organizational learning. Social exchange theory explains that these behaviors and relationships are dependent on the continuous exchange of rewards between leaders and members. The application of social exchange theory can be seen in an organizational context as well, where monetary compensation like pay is direct rewards while performance pay, bonuses, and other socio-economic benefits are considered as in-direct rewards.

The scholars of LMXQ contend that leaders and their subordinates interact together and develop and maintain their relationships through exchanges in the form of physical and non-physical motivational factors like reward and emotional displays. Furthermore, LMXQ theory discusses the underlying mechanism between in-group and out-group relationships with leader (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). A limited number of researchers Bellou & Dimou (2021); Vriend et al. (2020); Meng et al. (2017); Lian et al. (2012); Naseer et al. (2016); Pelletier (2012); Valle et al. (2019) and Xu et al. (2015) have examined the involvement of LMX with dark side of leadership and its effects on various individual and organizational outcomes. LMXQ in relation to the toxic leadership was first studied by Pelletier (2012) he examined the involvement of LMXQ in the relationship between toxic leadership and followers' outcomes. This study is based on the studies like Pelletier (2012), Naseer et al. (2016); Xu et al. (2015), considers the interaction of LMXQ between TOXL and organizational learning as an important phenomenon to investigate.

Figure 1. Research Model



3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Purpose

The study will follow the positivist research paradigm and the research approach would be quantitative, and data will be collected from individual bankers, using self-administered questionnaires. This study will adopt deductive approach. The study is cross sectional in nature and data was collected from individual bankers working in private banks of Islamabad. Estimated population was about 2400 employees working in private banks of Islamabad. For this population frame Kotrlik and Higgins (2001) estimated the sample size should be minimum 200. Table 1 illustrates the responses received from each bank.

3.2 Data Collection Method

The data was collected by self-administrative questionnaire and convenient sampling technique was employed. The questionnaire was developed in google forms for convenience and google form link with the employees working in banking sector of Islamabad and requested them to fill in the form making sure that they are well aware of the nature, context and intentions of the research purpose. A total of 214 responses were recorded and after scrutinizing the data 3 responses were duplicate (e.g., fill by same respondent twice) hence removed and total 211 responses were used for the study to reach the conclusions, furthermore, as all the questions of the survey were marked to fill mandatory hence all the 211 responses were answered properly. Moreover, the research setting of this study will be non-contrive and the interference of researcher will be minimal to eliminate the biasness of researcher as per the requirements of the research.

3.3 Instrumentation

TOXL scale was adapted from the study of Schmidt (2008). He provided five dimensions to measure the TOXL behavior that are Abusive Supervision; Authoritarian Leadership; Narcissism; Self-promotion and Unpredictability. OL 8 item scale was adapted from the study of Spicer and Sadler-Smith (2006) and Garcia-Morales, Lorenz-Montes and Verdu-Jover (2007). LMXQ 7-item scale was adapted from the study of Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995). The five-point Likert scale was used from strongly disagree as 1 to strongly agree as 5.

4. Results

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The respondents' demographic information revealed that majority of the respondent lies in the age group of 20 to 29 years, which is 67.8%, while only one respondent was from the age group of 60. Male representation in the sample was 58.8%, whereas female representation was 41.2% of the total sample. Graduate respondents were 45%, 29.4% possess Post Graduate degree

while undergraduate respondents were only 25.6% of the total respondents. 61.6% respondents were permanent employees, while contractual employees were only 38.4% of the total number of respondents. Middle level employees were 41.2%, and 34.1% of portion in the total number of respondents was occupied by junior level employees. Senior level employees represent only 24.6% portion in the total responses received. Respondents with job experience less than 2 years were 38.9%, and 29.9% of portion in the total number of respondents are occupied by the employee with experience of 2-5 years. Only 14.7% of total number of respondents have job experience more than 10 years.

Figure 2. Responses Received from Banks

S. #	Bank Name	No. of Branches	No. of Employees	Responses Received	R-Rate %
1	Allied Bank	13	104	17	16.35
2	HBL	25	200	21	10.50
3	UBL	85	680	33	4.85
4	MCB	26	208	14	6.73
5	Askari Bank	40	320	23	7.19
6	Faysal Bank	10	80	7	8.75
7	Meezan Bank	25	200	29	14.50
8	Habib Metro Bank	10	80	14	17.50
9	JS Bank	17	136	11	8.09
10	Sonari Bank	12	96	6	6.25
11	Summit Bank	9	72	4	5.56
12	Silk Bank	7	56	11	19.64
13	AL Baraka	9	72	19	26.39
14	Samba Bank	4	32	5	15.63
	Total	292	2,336	214	

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

The results in figure 3 predict that the mean values for organizational learning and LMXQ are high, >3.0 and approaching to 4.0 whereas the mean value is low i.e., 2.47 for the TOXL behaviors. The values of Skewness and Kurtosis are also in between ± 1 , confirming the normal distribution of data according to the criterion set by (Morgan et al., 2019).

Figure 3. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness Statistic	Std. Error	Kurtosis Statistic	Std. Error
OL	211	1.00	5.00	3.6207	.86581	-.288	.167	-.394	.333
LMXQ	211	1.00	5.00	3.4868	.85130	-.169	.167	-.467	.333
TOXL	211	1.00	5.00	2.4772	.97573	.267	.167	-.640	.333

Note: N= 211, Min= Minimum value, Max= Maximum value, Mean= Measure of central tendency and Std. Deviation= Standard Deviation

4.3 Harmon's One-factor Test for CMB

The results in figure 4 illustrate that the data is not subjected to CMB as the variance by single factor recorded is 40.438% which is less than the cut-off value i.e., 50%.

Figure 4. Harmon's One-factor Test

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	18.197	40.438	40.438	18.197	40.438	40.438
2	5.194	11.542	51.980			
3	2.289	5.087	57.068			
4	1.712	3.805	60.872			
5	1.120	2.490	63.362			
6	1.016	2.257	65.619			
7	.933	2.074	67.693			
8	.879	1.954	69.647			
9	.827	1.837	71.484			
10	.754	1.676	73.159			
11	.741	1.648	74.807			
12	.690	1.534	76.341			
13	.645	1.432	77.773			
14	.627	1.394	79.168			
15	.581	1.292	80.460			
16	.551	1.224	81.683			
17	.540	1.200	82.883			
18	.498	1.106	83.988			
19	.477	1.060	85.048			
20	.456	1.013	86.061			
21	.438	.974	87.035			
22	.424	.942	87.978			
23	.410	.912	88.890			
24	.395	.879	89.768			
25	.373	.830	90.598			
26	.343	.763	91.362			
27	.311	.691	92.053			
28	.305	.679	92.732			
29	.291	.646	93.378			
30	.280	.623	94.001			
31	.260	.578	94.579			
32	.237	.528	95.106			
33	.235	.522	95.629			
34	.222	.494	96.122			
35	.205	.456	96.579			
36	.193	.429	97.007			
37	.186	.414	97.421			
38	.179	.398	97.818			
39	.175	.388	98.206			
40	.160	.356	98.563			
41	.156	.348	98.910			
42	.145	.322	99.232			
43	.123	.274	99.506			
44	.120	.268	99.774			
45	.102	.226	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

4.4 Correlation Analysis

Correlation is a tool for understanding the relationship between two quantities (Lindley, 1990). The coefficient of correlation value ranges between +1 to -1, where value approaching to +1 indicates strong positive relation and value approaching to -1 indicates strong negative relation,

value 0 indicates that there exists no relation between observed variables (Schober, Boer & Schwarte, 2018). Table 4 results predicts that there is a significantly negative relation between TOXL and OL, $r=-0.20$ and $p<0.05$. The relation between LMXQ and OL is significantly positive at ($r=0.42$, $p<0.05$) whereas, the relation between TOXL and LMXQ is significantly negative at ($r=-0.46$, $p<0.05$).

Figure 5. Pearson Correlation

	OL	LMXQ	TOXL
OL	1		
LMXQ	.421**	1	
TOXL	-.200**	-.462**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.5 Direct effect of TOXL on OL (H₁)

Linear regression was employed to predict organizational learning based on the presence of TOXL in the banking sector of Islamabad. A significant regression equation was found with $F(1,209) = 8.687$, $p<0.05$, with an R^2 of 0.040. Organizational learning will decrease by 17.7 percent for each unit increase in TOXL, ($\beta = -0.177$; $p<0.05$). The results supported the first hypothesis of the study. The results are illustrated in table 5.

Figure 6. Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized		Sig.
	β	Std. Error	β	t	
(Constant)	4.060	.160		25.363	.000
TOXL	-.177	.060	-.200	-2.947	.004

a. Dependent Variable: OL

4.6 Direct effect of TOXL on LMXQ (H₂)

Linear regression was employed to predict Leader-Member Exchange Quality based on the presence of TOXL in the banking sector of Islamabad. A significant regression equation was found with $F(1,209) = 56.849$, $p<0.05$, with an R^2 of 0.214. LMXQ will decrease by 40.3 percent for each unit increase in TOXL, ($\beta = -0.403$; $p<0.05$). The results supported the second hypothesis of the study. The results are illustrated in figure 7.

Figure 7. Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized		Sig.
	β	Std. Error	β	t	
(Constant)	4.486	.142		31.500	.000
TOXL	-.403	.054	-.462	-7.540	.000

a. Dependent Variable: LMXQ

4.7 Direct effect of LMXQ on OL (H₃)

Linear regression was employed to predict OL based in the presence of LMXQ in the banking sector of Islamabad. A significant regression equation was found with $F(1,209) = 44.917$, $p<0.05$, with an R^2 of 0.177. OL will increase by 42.8 percent for each unit increase in LMXQ, ($\beta = -0.428$; $p<0.05$). The results supported the third hypothesis of the study. The results are illustrated in table 7.

Figure 8. Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized		t	Sig.
	β	Std. Error	β			
(Constant)	2.129	.229			9.296	.000
LMXQ	.428	.064	.421		6.702	.000

a. Dependent Variable: OL

4.8 Mediation analysis of LMXQ between TOXL and OL (H4)

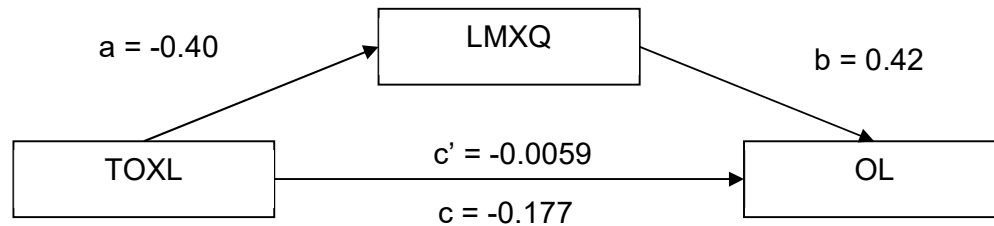
Regression analysis was employed to evaluate the mediating effect of LMXQ between TOXL and OL, with the help of Hayes process macros v4.0, model 4. The results showed that TOXL significantly predicts the hypothesized mediating variable, LMXQ, i.e., the path “a” is significant with $\beta = -0.40$, S.E = 0.053, $p < .001$. The mediator LMXQ, significantly predicts the OL, i.e., the path “b” is significant with $\beta = 0.42$, S.E = 0.072 and $p < .001$. These results justify that the independent variable should predict the mediating variable, and in addition to this, the mediating variable should predict the dependent variable significantly.

Figure 9. Mediation effects of LMXQ between TOXL and OL

	IV	DV	B	SE	t-value	P-Value	LLCI	ULCI
1	TOXL	LMXQ	-0.403	0.0535	-7.539	0.000	-0.508	-0.298
2	LMXQ	OL	0.424	0.0722	5.884	0.000	0.282	0.566
3	TOXL	OL	-0.0059	0.0630	-0.094	0.924	-0.1301	0.1182
			Effect	SE	T-value	P-Value	LLCI	ULCI
Total Effect			-0.177	0.060	-2.94	0.0036	-0.295	-0.058
Direct Effect			-0.0059	0.063	-0.094	0.924	-0.130	0.118
Indirect Effect					Effect	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
					-0.171	0.0402	-0.255	-0.098
R ²						1	2	3
						0.213	0.176	0.039
F-Statistics						56.84	22.35	8.686
P-Value						0.000	0.000	0.0036

The mediation test results further elucidate that the total effect of independent variable; TOXL on dependent variable; OL, i.e., the path “c” is significant with $\beta = -0.177$, SE = 0.060 and $p < 0.05$. In addition, the path “b” is found significant with $\beta = 0.424$, SE = 0.072 and $p < 0.05$, furthermore, the direct effect of IV on DV i.e., path c' , in the absence of mediator were found insignificant with $\beta = -0.0059$, SE = 0.063 and $p > 0.05$. The indirect effect of TOXL on OL in the presence of mediating variable LMXQ is significant with $\beta = -0.171$, Boot SE = 0.040, Boot LLCI = -0.255 and Boot ULCI = -0.098. Hence, confirming the partial mediation of LMXQ between TOXL and OL. The results are depicted in table 8, partially supported hypothesis 4 of the study.

Figure 10. Mediation model LMXQ between TOXL and OL



Summary or research hypothesis and their results are represented in Table 9.

Figure 11. Summary of Results

Hypotheses		Direction	Results
H ₁	TOXL → OL	Negative	Supported
H ₂	TOXL → LMXQ	Negative	Supported
H ₃	LMXQ → OL	Positive	Supported
Mediation Effect			
H ₄	TOXL → LMXQ → OL	Negative	Partially Supported

5.1 Discussions

The study hypothesized that impact of TOXL on OL is negative. The study results elucidate that TOXL has statistically significant negative impact on OL, and supported the first hypothesis of the study. These results are also reported and found by the studies of scholars like (Schilling and Kluge, 2009). According to Lawrence et al. (2005) the leaders in the organizations uses their power and indulge in politics to gain their personal advantages and promote their self-interest which acts as a barrier to organizational learning. The results of the study and literature available gives enough space to raise a point that to remain in power and to achieve personal gain the toxic leaders create hindrance in the learning of individuals, sharing and processing of knowledge, which leads to impact organizational learning negatively. Also, the use of impression management by leaders and managers to build their specific image in their subordinates or followers to gain resources, power and personal advantages makes employees perceive such leaders as toxic and selfish which ultimately stop them to share the knowledge and information which create hindrance in organizational learning.

In the Pakistani banking sector, Asrar-ul-Haq (2014) concluded that the transformational leadership lack and leadership inefficiency causes many problems, hence suggested to improve the leadership quality which leads to the improvement in OL and organizational performance in the banking sector of Pakistan. The study results advocate that there is a significant negative impact of TOXL on OL. Therefore, the study calls for the attention of research community to investigate other variables like organizational politics, organizational processes and HR interventions that may strengthen or weaken the TOXL and OL relationship. Therefore, the development of such culture and working environment is needed through the effective leadership in the banking sector of Islamabad to promote and make OL activities more effective.

The study hypothesized based on extensive literature review that TOXL behaviors impact LMXQ negatively. The results revealed that TOXL behaviors have significant negative impact on the leader-member exchange quality and hence, the second hypothesis of this study is supported. The scholars like Liao et al. (2019) found that when leaders exercise impression management to gain personal advantages and narcissistic leaders when try to build the self-image, the employees perceive such leaders as selfish and this will lower down the trust and affiliation of followers with their leader which then ultimately lower down the LMXQ of employees and leaders. According to Scandura (1999) those employees who are in leader's out-group will feel discrimination and they probably raise their voice or express their injustices rather than those who falls in in-group. The results of the study and literature advocate that the employee reciprocate the same as they receive from their leaders or organizations. The results of the study illustrated that the employees who exercise high LMXQ with their leader do not see their leader as toxic and this high LMXQ influences subordinates to indulge in unethical behaviors too. The results depict that the LMXQ is of high value in the banks of Islamabad that might be because employees feel not comfortable in disclosing the actual feeling and their perception about their leaders. Other possible reason might be the age group of the respondents as the majority respondent were between the ages of 20-29 years, probably they cannot feel such behaviors due to workload, their age group or may be because they are in their initial phase of career that they do not perceive their manager or leader as toxic. The research community should investigate the in-group members behavior and perceptions and out-group members behavior and perceptions about their manager separately to explain this linkage in better way.

The study hypothesized that LMXQ positively impact the organizational learning. The study results elucidate that LMXQ is significantly positively impacting the organizational learning and supported the third hypothesis of the study. These results are in line with the previous studies like Liao et al. (2019); and Yukl (2012) who concluded that the quality of leader-member exchange will leads to undesirable negative consequence towards organizational learning and performance. Furthermore, Schilling and Kluge (2009) explained that fear, lack of communication between followers and leaders, lack of support and involvement of leader in the building the self-image will act as a barrier to high LMXQ. The results of the study advocate that in banking sector of Islamabad the organizational learning is above average or high because of the high LMXQ. So, the study argues that if the factors that contributes toward low LMXQ are controlled the employee will feel high LMXQ with their leaders and that will affect the organizational learning in a positive way.

The study hypothesized that LMXQ acts as a mediator between toxic leadership and organizational learning. The results confirmed the partial mediation of LMXQ between TOXL and OL and supported the fourth hypothesis of the study. The previous studies like Schilling and Kluge (2009); and Yukl (2012) explained the barriers to OL as lack of upward and downward flow of information, lack of recognition of efforts, fear, lack of support and involvement of leaders' in promoting themselves and their image for the gain of self-interests. Joo and Ready (2012) explained that LMXQ affects number of organizational outcomes and LMXQ influences the resources, information, efforts and support that will exchange between the followers and leaders. The results revealed that LMXQ when high will lower down the effects of toxic leadership because employees do not perceive their leader as toxic person because of good communication and trust between them. Good communication, trust and high LMXQ is needed for the organizational learning to be carried out effectively. Moreover, the extensive literature is not available on the mediation role of LMXQ between TOXL and OL, these finding will pave way for other researcher to study the mediation role of LMXQ between the darker side of leadership and organizational learning.

5.2 Implications for Theory

The study based on social exchange theory and Leader-member exchange theory which believed that the relation between the leader and his/her followers depends on the rewards and nature of exchanges between them. A limited number of literature is available on the involvement of LMXQ between TOXL and OL and this study contribute to the existing literature by studying the mediating role of LMXQ between the toxic leadership behavior and its impact of organizational learning. The study explained that the LMXQ mediates the relationship between TOXL and OL. The study contributed theoretically to the literature of toxic leadership, organizational learning and LMXQ.

5.2.1 Implications for Banks

Top management in banks should consider the consequence of toxic leadership and the huge cost associated with these consequences and incorporate such strategies, plans and processes to address the presence of toxicity in the leaders to minimize its effects to the maximum. The study suggests that it is important for banks to introduce processes and procedures such as implementation of such mechanism where employees can report the abusive behavior, bullying and self-impression management of leaders to the organization, and implement strategies that will increase the quality of relationship between leaders and their follower.

5.3 Implications for Human Resource Management

Human Resource Department majorly involves in the development and implementation of the policies, so various recommendations based on the study are provided:

a. Recruitment and Selection Process

Toxic leaders show destructive and dysfunctional behaviors and such behaviors may get notices in the start or later at any time in the organization (Schmidt, 2008; 2014). These behaviors may get strengthen over time (Laguda, 2021). The authors recommend the Human Resource departments to implement such strategies and processes in their recruitment and selection procedures that can identify the toxic nature of the leaders while hiring them. Authors like Mumford et al. (1992) formed many measures that can identify the individual's toxic nature behaviors. Based on the work of different scholar this study suggests HR departments to include such procedures that can identify the negative and destructive behaviors in the individual to exclude such candidate from the hiring process.

b. Dealing with Existing Toxicity of Leaders

The author recommends the HR departments to introduce such channel or procedures where employees can report the abusive behavior, bullying and toxicity of their leader in full confidence and anonymity. Moreover, a survey or communication platform to be incorporate to trace the existing toxicity in the organization. As suggested by the authors like (Radzi et al. 2020; Sorensen et al. 2018) assistance programs for employees should be initiated to assist those individuals that may get impacted by the toxicity of their leader to maximize their performance and contribute towards their emotional wellbeing.

c. Training and Development of Leadership

The study recommends to implement the training programs for the leaderships with the objective to develop the ethical practices and positive leadership styles as also suggest by (Ross, Matteson, Sasso, & Peyton, 2020). According to Aqqad, Obeidat, Tarhini and Masa'deh (2019) through these development programs employees and leaders will able to recognize each other expectation and emotions which lead to the conflict resolution. The study recommends the banks to initiate such development and training programs that can enable leaders to practice the positive leadership styles that contributes towards the overall better performance and the better working environment of the bank.

5.4 Future Recommendations and Limitations

This study only includes one mediating variable between TOXL and OL, the author suggests inclusion of other potential variables in the model to get better understanding of the TOXL phenomenon. This research, studied TOXL on five dimensions as advocated by (Schmidt, 2008; 2014). Future research should study the impact of these individual dimension on OL through a mediating role of LMXQ for better and in-depth understanding of phenomenon and to understand which dimension is more detrimental for the OL. Future researchers should take Human Resource department intervention as a mediator variable (Robert & Vandenberghe, 2020) or organizational politics (Schilling & Kluge, 2009) to better understand the TOXL detrimental effects in the workplace and to increase the awareness and importance of eliminating the toxicity from the organizations.

The study is cross-sectional in nature and acquire data at a single point of time. Longitudinal research needs to be conducted to confirm the relationship between the variables of the study. Second, the data was collected from the private bank employees working in Islamabad, Pakistan, future researchers should collect data from multiple industries like (hotel industry, educational institutions, health sector, public sector and telecom industry etc.) and from multiple cities of the Pakistan to generalize the results in different industries and cultures. Third, the study used mono method to gather data, future researchers should employ mix method to collect data for the better understanding of the facts.

5.5 Conclusion

The study provides empirical support in presenting the negative consequences on organizational learning that results from toxic behaviors of leaders. We continue the legacy of previous researchers to study the dark side of leadership and its effects on the organizational learning through the mediating role of Leader-member exchange theory which was not extensively studied yet. In this regard, the study results revealed that presence of toxic leaders in the organization and the negative behaviors of leaders causes the employees to exhibit avoidance behavior which lowers the LMXQ between leaders and their followers which results in the hindrance of information flow across the organization and the sharing of knowledge which acts as a barrier to organizational learning processes and ultimately lead towards the loss of organizational level learning. Hence, both the low LMXQ due to the toxicity of leader and leader's negative behaviors results in the loss of OL. The study findings give a clear picture that LMXQ is an important factor to study to determine the nature and significance of relation that exists between toxic leadership behaviors and organizational learning and the high will be the LMXQ, the high will be the OL.

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