

UNDERSTANDING THE EFFECTS OF TOXIC LEADERSHIP ON EXPATRIATES' READINESS FOR INNOVATION: AN UZBEKISTAN CASE

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ABSTRACT

Ever-growing business challenges emphasize the necessity for organizations to develop a competent workforce to achieve more stable and inclusive growth. Therefore, this study explored the ever-growing interest in expatriate workers to support organizational competitiveness. This study focuses on Uzbekistan, as its growing competitiveness is pressurizing leader-follower dyads and organizational innovation capabilities to improve productivity, reduce costs, and become more profitable. Workplace environments can be sensitive towards leadership behaviours that can adversely affect expatriates' readiness for innovation. Therefore, this research study addressed the gap in empirical evidence within the leadership literature relevant to the interplay between toxic leadership and expatriates' readiness for innovation. This qualitative descriptive study employed an explorative phenomenological cross-sectional design (n=10) into expatriates' real-life experiences to understand the effects of toxic leadership on their readiness for innovation. The findings from the phenomenological study suggest that toxic leadership can adversely affect expatriate's readiness for innovation.

Keywords: toxic leadership, phenomenology, innovation, expatriate, Uzbekistan

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INTRODUCTION

Uzbekistan, after years of isolation, is progressively addressing its economic challenges and exploiting its inherent strengths as a resource-rich market by positioning itself as a stronger player in the global economy (Bland, 2019; Global Markets, 2019). Consequently, dynamic and growing business environments

are inspiring expatriate mobilization through ever increasing assigned and self-initiated expatriation.

Hence, this study as the first empirical attempt in Uzbekistan explored the effect of toxic leadership on self-initiated and company assigned expatriates' readiness for innovation. Expatriate assignments can offer an exciting

international opportunity and cross-cultural adventure with several advantages that can include personal development, international job mobility, career advancement, skill acquisition, and financial benefits (O'Donohue, Hutchings, & Hansen, 2018). Conversely, expatriate experiences can attract several drawbacks that manifest in for example social and family tension, culture shock, unfair treatment, bullying, stress, ill-treatment, loss of status, job insecurity, and a high degree of uncertainty (Andresen, Bergdolt, Margenfeld, & Dickmann, 2014; AlMazrouei & Zacca, 2015).

The implications point to the sensitivity of the relationship between expatriate follower and direct supervisor. Therefore, to lead organizations responsibly is vital as leadership can favorably or unfavorably affect workplace climates, productivity, turnover intentions, and innovative work behaviors (Service & Guess, 2015; Metha & Maheshwari, 2013; Schyns & Schilling, 2013, Service and Kennedy, 2012, Service, 2012).

With the foregoing statements, it is indeed interesting to thresh out and explore the contextual influences of toxic leadership practices that can affect well-being, performance, and innovative work behaviors among expatriates.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This section includes two parts and explores the concepts that include toxic leadership and innovation. Each part states the importance and implications when exploring the concepts relevant to an expatriate context within an organization.

Toxic Leadership

Social sciences tend to take a one-sided view of leadership by focusing primarily on its positive aspects (Aasland, Einarsen, Hetland, Matthiesen, Nielsen, & Skogstad, 2014; Haynes, Hitt, & Campbell, 2015; Schyns & Schilling, 2013). Thus, contextual influences such as innovation can be particularly sensitive to toxic leadership practices that can affect followers' well-being, motivation, and innovative work behaviors (Çekmecelioğlu & Özbağ, 2014; Goffin

& Mitchell, 2010; Tepper, Moss, & Duffy, 2011; Tidd & Bessant, 2009).

Boundaries and Toxic Characteristics

A unified definition for toxic leadership is not representative within the leadership literature that could clarify boundaries and toxic characteristics (Grandy & Starratt, 2010; Shaw, Erickson, & Harvey, 2011). However, in this study, we selected three appropriate toxic leadership constructs based on their potential relevance to the present phenomenological study within an expatriate context (Einarsen, Aasland, & Skogstad, 2007; Goldman, 2008; Krasikova, Green, & LeBreton, 2013).

Construct One

"The systematic and repeated behavior by a leader, superior or manager that violates the legitimate interest of the organization, by undermining and/or sabotaging the organization's goals, tasks, resources and effectiveness, and/or the motivation, well-being or job satisfaction of subordinates" (Einarsen et al., 2007, p. 208).

Construct Two

"Leader toxicity is an insidious and pernicious spreading of negative emotional contagion – a toxic process accelerated by highly destructive and dysfunctional leadership behavior. In a circular fashion, the diffusion of dysfunction perpetuates organizational systems causing high levels of toxicity, and in turn create new pockets of dysfunction" (Goldman, 2008, p. 245).

Construct Three

"Volitional behavior by a leader that can harm or intend to harm the leader's organization and/or followers by (a) encouraging followers to pursue goals that contravene the legitimate interest of the organization and/or (b) employing a leadership style that involves harmful methods of influence with followers, regardless of justifications for such behavior" (Krasikova et al., 2013, p.3). Therefore, terminology that signifies negative perceptions about leadership such as abusive, destructive,

bad, deviant, inept, dysfunctional, divisive, and unethical enters the lexicon of toxic leadership and apply interchangeably.

Construct Evaluation

Firstly, Einarsen et al. (2007) emphasize that enduring destructive leadership behaviors could adversely affect outcomes for both follower and the organization. Therefore, leaders' misuse of power can adversely affect followers' job satisfaction, commitment, and morale (Inyang, 2013; Schyns & Schilling, 2013). Furthermore, dysfunctional behaviors cause workplace distress by undermining and/or sabotaging the well-being and autonomy of followers. As expatriate followers need to be confident, enthusiastic, and competent in highly competitive environments, toxic leadership can adversely affect followers' performance (AlMazrouei & Zacca, 2015; Krasikova et al., 2013).

Secondly, Goldman's (2008) conceptualization of toxic leadership underlines the character flaws of destructive leaders who are incompetent to develop self- and social awareness to manage their own and others' emotions. Toxic leaders can be inept to develop trusting, supportive, engaging, and healthy interpersonal relationships (Holton & Bøllingtoft, 2015). Furthermore, the implications emphasize that distress and harm can cause the continuous spreading of negative emotional contagion within the workplace. Additionally, harmful emotional negativity could continue to last even after a toxic incident occurred (Goldman, 2008). Consequently, such harmful emotional contagion can cause followers severe distress that can adversely affect followers' work behaviors towards innovation.

Expatriates exposed to toxicity might not be able to change jobs that easily due to insecurities, lack of support, or financial responsibilities (Rosenbusch & Cseh, 2012). Therefore, workplace distress could last for long periods that can negatively affect expatriates' motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational competitiveness (Schyns & Schilling, 2013; Too & Harvey, 2012). Thus, job dissatisfaction and toxic workplaces can decrease productivity and

increase followers' turnover intentions (Sergio & Rylova, 2018).

Thirdly, Krasikova et al. (2013) concur with the harmful consequences that destructive leadership can produce within the workplace. In addition, Krasikova et al. emphasize leaders' intentions to harm can involve pre-meditated devious intents, thoughts, and actions that can cause serious distress and or financial losses. Thus, the implications emphasize that in an expatriate environment, such as Uzbekistan, where trusting and collaborative teamwork are of paramount importance, the intention to harm can irreversibly damage leader-follower dyads.

Furthermore, by reviewing the preceding constructs of toxic leadership, corresponding toxic characteristics include (a) an underlying neglect for the well-being of followers that can be abusive, manipulative, and harmful, (b) micro-management that suffocate followers, (c) overly self-centeredness, and (d) lack of emotional intelligence (Dabke, 2016; Einarsen et al., 2007; Godkin & Allcorn, 2011; Goldman, 2008).

Similarly, Thoroughgood, Padilla, Hunter, & Tate (2012) suggest common toxic leadership characteristics that can include, for example, (a) over control, manipulation, intimidation, and force, rather than inspiration and collaboration, (b) behaviors that are seldom absolute or entirely destructive (c) leaders' behaviors which can include both bad and good characteristics, (d) toxicity that can compromise the quality of life (e) behaviors which can cause distraction from goal achievement, and (f) behaviors which can fuel the toxic interplay between dysfunctional leaders, susceptible followers, and corrupt environments ([i.e., toxic triangle], Padilla, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2007).

These implications emphasize the destructiveness of the toxic triangle to leader-follower dyads and to organizational performance. Thus, toxic leadership as a physical or verbal, passive or active, indirect or direct phenomenon can adversely affect individuals, groups, and organizations (Haynes et al., 2015; Hershcovis & Reich, 2013; Tepper et al., 2011).

Innovation

Demanding business environments in Eurasian countries necessitate ongoing innovation to cope with competitive market demands. Consequently, innovation emerges as a vital characteristic associated with success (Tidd & Bessant, 2009). However, despite the vital importance of innovation, the degree of innovation within Uzbekistan is still low (Khasanovna, 2019). These implications emphasize that the focus on innovation as a strategic business driver necessitates follower participation and responsive leadership (Calabrese & Costa, 2015; De Spiegelaere, Van Gyes, De Witte, Niesen, & Van Hootegem, 2014; Gomes, Curral, & Caetano, 2015; Service, 2012). Correspondingly, responsive leadership embraces disciplined, transparent, compassionate, trustworthy, sociable, and proactive behaviors to develop innovative organizations (Millier & Bellamy, 2014). Furthermore, ongoing action and reflection are required from organizational leaders to support organizational learning and development (Bowerman, 2018).

In addition, for multinational organizations to develop and sustain market competitiveness requires a clear competitive strategy, result-oriented, motivated, informed, future-oriented, and a competent expatriate workforce to embrace effective innovation (Hoffman, 2018). Innovation can relate to something totally new or towards the improvement of existing ideas, products, processes, procedures, and services. Technological innovation is a major driver of economic growth, value creation, productivity, and competitiveness. Therefore, the global arena will not accommodate non-innovative organizations to survive over prolonged periods of time (Goffin & Mitchell, 2010).

Thus, for innovation to survive, followers need to feel inspired, confident, and competent to participate in driving innovative initiatives. Correspondingly, employees' innovative work behaviors can enhance effective decision-making and organizational competitiveness (Sergio & Rylova, 2018). A positive and enthusiastic state of mind is necessary to drive innovative organizational competitiveness (Abdullatif, Johari, & Adnan, 2016; Al-Madadha & Koufopoulos, 2014).

Similarly, a supportive work environment can encourage employees to cope better with organizational demands, while practicing teamwork, pursuing their collective goals, managing, and resolving conflict (Sergio, Ormita, Dungca, & Gonzales, 2015). Therefore, to encourage followers' readiness for innovation, leaders have a responsibility to uphold ethical principles and moral intentions that can encourage and sustain ethical intentionality in the workplace (Millier & Bellamy, 2014).

However, a paucity of scholarly studies exists regarding the relationships between toxic leadership and innovation (Calabrese & Costa, 2015; Holton & Bøllingtoft, 2015). Historically, leadership research primarily examined the influence of leadership on job satisfaction and motivation (Bhatnagar, 2012; Çekmecelioğlu & Özbağ, 2014). Therefore, the current research study addresses the theoretical and empirical gaps by adding to the body of leadership knowledge relevant to the interplay between toxic leadership and innovation within an expatriate context.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In contemporary organizations, toxic leadership, an understudied phenomenon, can be a prevalent destructive reality by causing vast financial losses, workplace distress, and follower disengagement (Eesley & Meglich, 2011; Mowchan, Lowe, & Reckers, 2015). Empirical research suggests that the base rate of leaders exhibiting destructive behaviors can be as high as 80%, which can cost organizations millions in lost productivity (Aasland et al., 2014; Krasikova et al., 2013). With this in mind, the following objectives were raised:

- To determine expatriates' view of the effects of toxic leadership on their readiness for innovation.
- To determine emerging themes from expatriates' views regarding the effects of toxic leadership on their innovative work behaviors.

METHODOLOGY

Sampling

To address saturation of data relevant to the phenomena of interest, homogenous, non-probability, and purposive sampling as opposed to random probability sampling was applied, to conduct the in-depth semi-structured interviews. Furthermore, non-probability sampling was applied, as the objective was to pursue saturation of qualitative data rather than to maximize statistical numbers (Creswell, 2014). Furthermore, homogenous instead of heterogeneous sampling was applied, as the former included participants with previous experiences of the phenomena of interest that afforded richer descriptions of the targeted population's lived experiences.

Purposive sampling incorporated specific criteria that participants had to meet at the time of selection. Thus, criteria sampling supported the purposive, non-probability, and homogenous sampling strategy by identifying potential participants who met specific selection characteristics. Hence, the following criteria applied: (a) had experience working with or reporting to a destructive organizational leader for at least two years in Uzbekistan, (b) prepared to participate anonymously, transparently, and voluntarily in English by sharing their lived experiences concerning the phenomena of interest, and (c) answer pre-qualifying questions to ascertain participants' suitability and intention to participate.

The Uzbekistan context is viewed as business-friendly that embraces a developing infrastructure, capable workforce, and the support of a competitive operating cost structure. Additionally, the government emphasizes the significance of attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) to sustain economic growth and transformation (Bland, 2019).

The targeted population included expatriate working professionals, on a long-term mission in supervisory positions, across diverse industries that included organizations within the textile, manufacturing, and industrial sectors. General characteristics of the multinational organizations encompassed small to medium size enterprises as permanent establishments with objectives to drive sustained competitiveness by blending

headquarter management conformance and innovative performance. Participants' sample included six (60%) males and four (40%) females, within the age range 25–52, and representing European and Russian ethnicities.

Data Collection Method

The study included 10 face-to-face semi-structured interviews to explore the phenomena of interest within an expatriate context in Uzbekistan. Moreover, the semi-structured interviews suited the ontological and epistemological qualitative research paradigm, as an insider's idealistic and subjective view applied to obtain saturation of quality authentic data. Therefore, the focus was on specific characteristics of the targeted population. By exploring the multiple realities of a small number of expatriates who had previously experienced the phenomena of interest, we could gain rich descriptions of their lived experiences to enhance understanding of the phenomena of interest. The open-ended interview questions took inspiration from a validated survey instrument, the Destructive Leadership Questionnaire ([DLQ], Shaw et al., 2011). The DLQ identifies toxic or dysfunctional leadership behaviors by asking subordinates and peers to identify specific destructive behaviors a leader exhibit.

Data Analysis Method

Thematic analysis embraced verbal protocol analysis to identify appropriate emerging themes from the interview data as expressed in the dialogue by the participants. A tentative a priori codes framework based on the DLQ applied and informed the data analysis in exploring the stated research objectives. The semi-structured interviews encouraged verbal protocol analysis as participants were encouraged to think aloud, while reflecting and sharing their real-life experiences relevant to the phenomena of interest. The researchers examined the verbal protocols, identified emerging themes, and compared them to the a priori codes, as shown in appendices 1 to 4. Data analysis pursued a rigorous, non-linear, attentive, systematic identification, and clustering of data into common themes

ensuring minimized bias to enhance trustworthiness of the study. Furthermore, as part of the verbal protocol analysis, three experts reviewed the mapping of the interview data and concurred on the alignment of emerging themes and a priori codes. The data analysis framework embraced phenomenological reduction that included bracketing, horizontalization, organizing themes, and building of textural descriptions (Creswell, 2014).

Subsequently, emerging themes were clustered and compared with the a priori codes framework that included four overarching DLQ dimensions (Olls, 2014; Shaw et al., 2011):

- Managerial Ineffectiveness (MI, [Theme 1]), as shown in Appendix 1.
- Interpersonal Harshness (IH, [Theme 2]), as shown in Appendix 2.
- Laissez-Faire (LF, [Theme 3]), as shown in Appendix 3.
- Indecisiveness/Inaction (II, [Theme 4]), as shown in Appendix 4.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section of the report, the researchers present expatriates' understanding of the impact of toxic leadership on their readiness for innovation. Furthermore, ad verbatim excerpts from the semi-structured face-to-face interviews have been included to demonstrate expatriates' real-life experiences with the phenomena of interest within the workplace.

The Effects of Toxic Leadership

Findings relevant to the stated objectives suggest that toxic leadership adversely affected expatriates' readiness for innovation. Commonalities were clustered and include occurrences of the number of times participants' data descriptions matched the chosen themes. Thus, the study clustered occurrences as per the four themes of toxic leadership that included MI (Theme 1: 89 occurrences), IH (Theme 2: 82 occurrences), LF (Theme 3: 68 occurrences), and II ([Theme 4: 74 occurrences]).

Participant's Excerpts Relevant to MI (Theme 1)

MI explored managerial actions that may cause workplace toxicity and affect innovative work behaviors. Therefore, MI included the following features: (a) not seeking followers' opinions, (b) not supporting followers, (c) poor partnerships, (d) failure to provide resources, and (e) not motivating followers.

My manager never asks for my opinion... I find it demotivating to work in an environment where my opinion is not valued... I do not feel encouraged to participate, as my manager rarely respond when I ask for assistance... I feel my manager discriminates between workers... My manager is taking credit for work that I have done... My manager always looks for mistakes...

The findings suggest that MI (Theme 1) caused lack of interest towards innovative work behavior, lack of available resources, and lack of participants' motivation due to unfavorable workplace environments. In addition, ineffective leaders did not appreciate participants' efforts, which created negativity and disengagement within the workplace. Implications from the participants' responses indicated poor leader-follower dyads as management did not seek out or act upon participants' feedback or recommendations. Therefore, strained leader-follower dyads adversely affected participants' participation and readiness for innovation. Hence, the findings concur with academicians that social skills are imperative to develop inspiring workplace environments (Aasland et al., 2014; Goldman, 2008; Sergio & Rylova, 2018).

Participants' Excerpts Relevant to IH (Theme 2)

IH explored managerial actions that may cause workplace toxicity and affect innovative work behaviors. IH included the following features: (a) undue working pressure, (b) tyrannical behaviors, (c) disrespectful behaviors, (d) micro-management, and (e) leaders' words and actions not aligned.

My manager changes targets in the middle of a project... Even though I am experienced, my manager is checking all details of my work... My manager is not respecting my time... My manager sets unrealistic goals without my

involvement... My manager's words and actions are different... I have no empowerment to make any decisions... I feel my manager is deliberately putting me down... My manager is calling me humiliating names...

The findings suggest that IH (Theme 2) caused discomfort to participants that included for example nervousness, tiredness, anxiety, frustration, anger, tension, confusion, negative thoughts, and fear that affected their well-being and readiness for innovation. Implications from participants' responses indicated several toxic leadership behaviors; for example, egoism, disrespect, arrogance, oppressiveness, forcefulness, self-centeredness, hostility, rudeness, exploitation, all knowing, abusiveness, self-serving political intentions, and micro-management.

This finding concurs with scholarly research that workplace toxicity can include the presence of bullying, destructive narcissism, and excessive Machiavellianism (Grandy & Starratt, 2010; Krasikova et al., 2013; Tepper et al., 2011). In addition, participants' rich descriptions suggested that toxicity adversely affected ethics, job satisfaction, and job security (Haynes et al., 2015; Metha & Maheshwari, 2013). In addition, feelings of inadequacy and distress discouraged participants to engage in innovative work behaviors (Abdullatif et al., 2016; De Spiegelaere et al., 2014).

Participants' Excerpts Relevant to LF (Theme 3)

LF explored managerial actions or the absence of managerial actions that may cause workplace toxicity that affect innovative work behaviors. Therefore, LF included the following features: (a) unclear management expectations, (b) no feedback, (c) lack of learning and development, (d) not valuing followers, and (e) absence of leadership.

My manager's instructions are unclear... My manager is not involved... I am not getting feedback about my performance... My manager's lack of direction affects the environment negatively... I often guess what to do... I do not know if my manager is satisfied with my work... My manager never

says thank you... Conflict situations are not resolved... I am not getting any recognition...

The findings suggest that LF (Theme 3) represents an absence of leadership that adversely affected participants' readiness for innovation. In addition, the results suggest lack of effective communication that adversely affected teamwork, morale, and collaboration. Furthermore, lack of constructive feedback, direction, and effective role clarification caused ambiguous workplace climates that triggered disengagement. Findings suggest that leaders were repeatedly absent or disengaged to hide their incompetence and insecurities.

Therefore, the research concurs with scholarly research that disengaged leaders contributed towards low morale, poor results, ambiguous environments, and increased workplace hostility (Çekmecelioğlu & Özbağ, 2014; Einarsen et al., 2007; Millier & Bellamy, 2014). Implications emphasized that ambiguous environments harbored incompetent and insecure leaders that attracted interference, low productivity, ineffective communication, non-compliance, poor collaboration, delayed decision-making, and lack of innovation (Aasland et al., 2014; Goffin & Mitchell, 2010; Goldman, 2008; Tidd & Bessant, 2009; Too & Harvey, 2012).

Participants' Excerpts Relevant to II (Theme 4)

II explored managerial actions that may cause workplace toxicity and affect innovative work behaviors. Therefore, II included the following features: (a) difficulty in making decisions, (b) poor problem solving, (c) unwillingness to act, (d) difficulty in dealing with change, and (e) slow to maximize technology.

It is taking a long time to get a decision from my manager... My manager displays no urgency... I feel my manager is deliberately withholding decisions to victimize... My manager is avoiding solving problems... We are in a fast-changing environment; however, my manager is slow to recognize or approve the necessary changes... I have difficulty to manage my team when my manager is slow to respond... My manager is outdated with the latest technology...

The findings suggest that II (Theme 4) negatively affected participants' readiness for innovation. The implications from participants' responses indicated that perceptions of toxicity can originate from leaders' behaviors to undermine, victimize, and harm. In addition, findings suggested that incompetence and intentions to obstruct workflow can contribute towards, ineffective problem solving, indecisiveness, and workplace distress that triggered disengagement.

The findings suggest that II denoted several elements of toxicity that included for example (a) repeated disruptive behaviors (Grandy & Starratt, 2010), (b) ineffective resources that affected participants' efficacy (Einarsen et al., 2007), (c) diffusion of negative emotional contagion that caused destructiveness within the workplace (Goldman, 2008), and (d) intentions to victimize, bully, and intimidate (Krasikova et al., 2013; Tepper et al., 2011)

Furthermore, participants' responses suggest that vagueness, inaction, and tainted intentions negatively influenced morale, teamwork, engagement, and innovative work behaviors. Therefore, findings concur that leaders have the responsibility to uphold an ethical code of conduct, sustain unadulterated intentionality, and practice ongoing reflection to improve (Bowerman, 2018; Hoffman, 2018; Millier & Bellamy, 2014; Mowchan et al. 2015; Sergio et al., 2015).

The implications of themes 1–4 suggest that toxic leaders: (a) can act in self-centered and isolating ways, (b) can ignore important issues, (c) unable to build effective inspiring teams, (d) are inconsistent and unreliable (e) can create ambiguity, (f) are dominating, autocratic, over-controlling, and (g) can violate trust (Olls, 2014; Shaw et al., 2011; Thoroughgood et al., 2012). Empirical data concur with scholarly research that toxic leadership can include systematic and repeated behaviors to violate, undermine and or sabotage followers' goals, well-being, job satisfaction, and motivation towards innovative work behaviors (Bhatnagar, 2012; De Spiegelaere et al., 2014; Goffin, & Mitchell, 2010).

CONCLUSION

The research findings suggest that in contemporary organizational environments, toxic leadership, an understudied phenomenon, can be a persistent destructive reality causing maltreatment, harm, increased turnover intentions, financial losses, and disengagement towards innovative work behaviors. Therefore, the present explorative, cross sectional, and descriptive phenomenological study enhances understanding of the lived experiences of expatriates as it pertains to the effect of toxic leadership on their readiness for innovation.

Considering the first objective, the study concludes that toxic leadership adversely affected expatriates' readiness for innovation. Volatile, uncertain, and competitive business conditions necessitate confident, competent, and result oriented expatriates to engage in innovative work behaviors. Concerning the second objective, results from the interviews revealed the emergence of four distinct themes that included managerial ineffectiveness, interpersonal harshness, laissez-fair, and indecisiveness/inaction. Thematic implications emphasize that ever-increasing complexities within organizations require ethical and inspiring leadership practices to navigate workplace demands.

Consequently, this study's results underpin the importance of positive leader-follower dyads to embrace expatriates' readiness for innovation. The study asserts that toxic leadership can represent a slow acting devious poison that confuses detection by creating ambiguity to hide incompetence, disguises intentions to harm, distorts accountability, and obscures application of a remedy. Thus, the implications emphasize that organizations need to identify, deter, stop, and develop toxic leaders with urgency to encourage ethical and responsible leadership practices.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Theme 1: Managerial Ineffectiveness (MI)

Verbal Protocol Analysis		
Participants' verbatim excerpts	Emerging Themes	A Priori Code relevant to Theme 1
My manager never asks for my opinion...	Absence of teamwork	Poor partnership
I find it demotivating to work in an environment where my opinion is not valued...	Not motivated	Not motivating followers
I do not feel encouraged to participate, as my manager rarely respond when I ask for assistance...	Not getting support	Not supporting followers
I feel my manager discriminates between workers...	Not getting support	Not supporting followers
My manager is taking credit for work that I have done...	Absence of teamwork	Poor of partnership
My manager always looks for mistakes...	Not motivating	Not motivating followers
I hardly have the required tools to perform my work efficiently...	Not having resources	Fails to provide resources
If my manager will make time to speak with me, we can solve many problems...	Absence of teamwork	Poor partnership
I feel my skills are not properly used and appreciated...	Not motivated	Not motivating followers

Appendix 2: Theme 2: Interpersonal Harshness (IH)

Verbal Protocol Analysis		
Participants' verbatim excerpts	Emerging Themes	A Priori Code relevant to Theme 2
My manager changes targets in the middle of a project...	Excessive work pressure	Undue work pressure
My manager is checking all details of my work...	Micro-managing	Micro-management
My manager is calling me humiliating names...	Disrespecting	Disrespectful behaviors
My manager is not respecting my time...	Excessive work pressure	Undue work pressure
My manager sets unrealistic goals without my involvement...	Excessive work pressure	Undue work pressure
My manager's words and actions are different...	Words and actions nor corresponding	Leaders' words and actions not aligned.
I have no empowerment to make any decisions...	Micro-managing	Micro-management
I feel my manager is deliberately putting me down...	Oppressive	Tyrannical behavior
My manager has threatened me ...	Oppressive	Tyrannical behavior

Appendix 3: Theme 3: Laissez-Faire (LF)

Verbal Protocol Analysis		
Participants' verbatim excerpts	Emerging Themes	A Priori Code relevant to Theme 3
My manager's instructions are unclear...	Uncertain expectations	Unclear management expectations
My manager is not involved...	No leadership	Absence of leadership
I am not getting feedback about my performance...	No feedback	No feedback
My manager's lack of direction affects the environment negatively...	No leadership	Absence of leadership
I often guess what to do...	Uncertain expectations	Unclear management expectations
I do not know if my manager is satisfied with my work...	No feedback	No feedback
My manager never says thank you...	No appreciation	Not valuing followers
Conflict situations are not resolved...	No leadership	Absence of leadership
I am not getting any recognition...	No appreciation	Not valuing followers
I am not getting any job-related training...	No learning and development	Lack of learning and development

Appendix 4: Theme 4: Indecisiveness/Inaction (II)

Verbal Protocol Analysis		
Participants' verbatim excerpts	Emerging Themes	A Priori Code relevant to Theme 4
It is taking a long time to get a decision from my manager...	Unproductive decision making	Difficulty in making decisions
My manager displays no urgency...	Reluctance to act	Unwillingness to act
I feel my manager is deliberately withholding decisions to victimize...	Unproductive decision making	Difficulty in making decisions
My manager is avoiding solving problems...	Ineffective problem solving	Poor problem solving
We are in a fast-changing environment; however, my manager is slow to recognize or approve the necessary changes...	Unproductive decision making	Difficulty in dealing with change
I have difficulty to manage my team when my manager is slow to respond...	Reluctance to act	Unwillingness to act
The work environment is negative and full of conflict...	Ineffective problem solving	Poor problem solving
My manager is outdated with the latest technology...	Not Exploiting technology	Slow to maximize technology
Our processes are not consumer friendly...	Not Exploiting technology	Slow to maximize technology