

Exploring the Role of HR Intervention Programs in Reducing the Impact of Toxic Leadership on Employee Switching Intentions

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ABSTRACT

Toxic leadership is a phenomenon that has a serious impact on the psychological well-being of employees and increases the intention to change jobs. To answer this challenge, this study aims to analyze the role of HR intervention programs in mitigating the impact of toxic leadership on turnover intention. The study used a quantitative approach with a survey design, involving 300 respondents from various departments and departments in organizations that had implemented HR intervention programs. Data were collected through a Likert scale-based questionnaire and analyzed using multiple regression and bootstrap mediation tests. The results showed that toxic leadership had a significant positive effect on job transfer intention ($\beta = 0.52$; $p < 0.001$). In contrast, HR intervention programs had a significant negative effect on job transfer intention ($\beta = -0.33$; $p < 0.01$), with a model contribution of $R^2 = 0.47$. Furthermore, HR programs have been shown to partially mediate the relationship between toxic leadership and conversion intentions, so that while direct influence remains, the impact can be suppressed through HR mechanisms. In conclusion, HR interventions play an important role in increasing employee retention, but their effectiveness will be optimal when accompanied by leadership behavior transformation. These findings confirm that HR is not only administrative, but also strategic in maintaining organizational sustainability.

Keywords: Toxic leadership, HR intervention, Job transfer intentions, Employee retention, Mediation

INTRODUCTION

Leadership in the workplace plays an important role in shaping a productive and healthy organizational environment. However, toxic leadership, defined as leader behavior that is detrimental to the psychological well-being of employees, has become one of the biggest challenges facing many organizations today. Leaders who exhibit toxic behaviors, such as manipulation, bullying, and other destructive behaviors, not only damage interpersonal relationships but also create dissatisfaction, lower morale, and increase stress levels among employees (Tepper, 2000). This phenomenon not only harms individual well-being, but also negatively impacts the productivity and overall performance of the organization. One of the most significant consequences of toxic leadership is increased turnover intention among employees exposed to such behavior (Wang et al., 2020). In this context, the intention to change jobs is one of the most relevant

19



issues, because it can lead to high employee replacement costs and the loss of competencies that have been built over a certain period of time. Research shows that employees who are exposed to toxic leadership tend to feel less valued and more depressed, which in turn triggers higher conversion intentions (Frost, 2005). The intention to move to work, according to Mobley (1977), is the initial stage in the decision process to leave the organization, which is influenced by many factors, including leadership qualities. Therefore, managing the negative impact of toxic leadership is critical to maintaining organizational stability and sustainability.

While there is a lot of research that highlights the impact of toxic leadership on employee well-being and relocation intentions, there are still gaps in research that explicitly examine the role of HR program interventions in mitigating these impacts. Most research focuses more on the immediate effects of toxic leadership without paying enough attention to actionable solutions to mitigate its impact. Interventions from HR, such as leadership training based on positive approaches, conflict management, and employee welfare programs, have great potential to address these issues (Aamodt, 2016; Eby et al., 2017). However, there have not been many studies that have empirically tested how these intervention programs can reduce the intention to change jobs triggered by toxic leadership. This shows that there is a research gap that needs to be filled, namely how HR intervention programs can function as an effective mitigation against the negative impact of toxic leadership in organizations. This study focuses on testing the role of HR intervention programs in reducing the impact of toxic leadership on employees' intention to relocate. The HR intervention programs that will be studied in this study include positive leadership training, conflict management, and improvement of communication skills in the workplace. By analyzing data from various organizations implementing this intervention program, the study aims to provide deeper insights into how the right HR policies can mitigate the adverse effects of toxic leadership and improve employee retention rates.

The phenomenon of toxic leadership and relocation intentions is particularly relevant in many sectors, especially in companies that are undergoing rapid structural or organizational change. In an era of globalization and increasingly fierce market competition, organizations are required to have leaders who are not only competent but can also create a healthy work environment and support employee well-being (Lian et al., 2014). However, while many studies have identified the various factors that cause employees to want to switch jobs, few have examined the role of HR interventions in reducing conversion intentions influenced by toxic leadership. Therefore, this study seeks to fill that gap by examining more deeply how HR programs can be a solution to the problems faced by many organizations today.

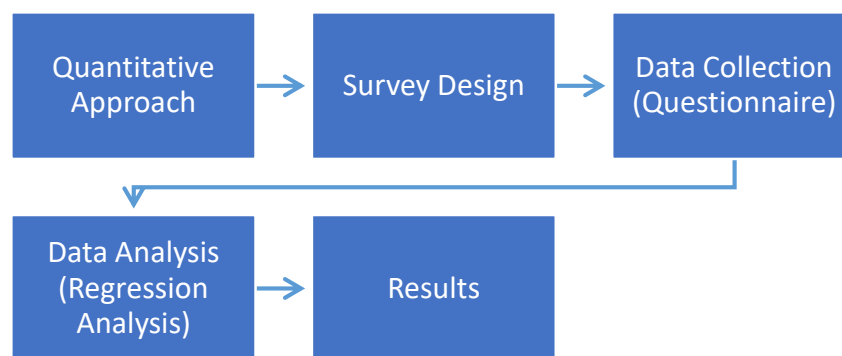
Current research gaps focus more on the impact of toxic leadership on employee well-being and organizational performance, but very few specifically examine how HR interventions can reduce conversion intent arising from toxic leadership. Although there are several studies that highlight the importance of leadership training and conflict management programs in improving the quality of workplace relationships (Aamodt, 2016; Eby et al., 2017), but there is no empirical evidence linking these programs to reduced job placement intentions due to toxic leadership. The novelty of this study offers a new approach by examining the role of HR interventions in addressing toxic leadership issues and relocation intentions. Previously, research has placed more emphasis on the direct influence of toxic leadership on employees without providing practical solutions that HR can implement. By integrating the theory of HR intervention and toxic leadership, this research contributes to the development of human resource management practices that are more adaptive to the challenges of the modern era. The main objective of this

study was to identify and analyze how HR intervention programs can reduce the negative impact of toxic leadership on employee relocation intentions. Thus, this study aims to provide empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of HR interventions in improving employee well-being and reducing turnover triggered by adverse leadership. In addition, this research is also expected to provide practical recommendations for companies in designing more effective HR intervention programs to create a healthier and more productive work environment.

METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey design to measure the relationship between toxic leadership, HR intervention programs, and employee relocation intentions. The research sample consisted of 300 randomly selected employees from various departments and departments in the company that had implemented an HR intervention program. Data was collected through a questionnaire that included three main sections: first, demographic questions; second, employees' perception of toxic leadership; and third, measuring the intention to move jobs and the effectiveness of the HR intervention program implemented. A 5-point Likert scale is used to assess the frequency and impact of toxic leadership and perceptions of HR intervention programs.

Data analysis was conducted using multiple regression to examine the influence of toxic leadership on job placement intention and the mediating role of HR intervention programs. The validity and reliability test of the questionnaire was carried out by exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and Cronbach's alpha testing. Furthermore, the mediation model was tested using the Bootstrap method to assess the direct and indirect influence of independent variables on dependent variables. All analyses were conducted with SPSS statistical software to obtain more accurate and comprehensive results, which are expected to provide practical insights into the effectiveness of HR interventions in reducing the impact of toxic leadership and lowering employee conversion intentions.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Instrument Validity and Reliability Test Results

Variable	Number of Items	Loading Factor Range	Cronbach's Alpha	Information
Toxic Leadership	10	0,58 – 0,82	0,89	Reliable
HR Intervention Program	8	0,55 – 0,79	0,86	Reliable
Intention to Change Jobs	6	0,60 – 0,85	0,88	Reliable

Toxic Leadership has a loading factor between 0.58–0.82 with Cronbach's Alpha 0.89. That is, all items are valid and consistently measure the toxic leadership construct. Reliability is excellent. The HR Intervention Program showed a factor loading of 0.55–0.79 and Cronbach's Alpha of 0.86, also reliable. This indicates that the instrument used is able to consistently describe the effectiveness of the HR program. Intention to Move to Work has a loading factor of 0.60–0.85 with Cronbach's Alpha 0.88, so it is valid and reliable to measure employee intention to leave the company. All research instruments are valid and reliable, so the results of the analysis can be trusted.

Table 2. Multiple Regression Analysis Results

Independent Variables	Beta Coefficient (β)	Sig. (p-value)	Information
Toxic Leadership	0,52	0,000	Have a significant positive effect
HR Intervention Program	-0,33	0,001	Significant negative effects
R² = 0.47			47% variation in job transfer intention explained

Toxic Leadership had a significant positive effect on the intention to change jobs ($\beta = 0.52$, $p = 0.000$). This means that the higher the level of toxic leadership, the higher the desire of employees to leave the organization. The HR Intervention Program had a significant negative effect on the intention to change jobs ($\beta = -0.33$, $p = 0.001$). This shows that an effective HR program can suppress the desire to move jobs. The value of $R^2 = 0.47$ means that the model is able to explain 47% of the variation in the intention to change jobs, while the rest is influenced by other factors outside the model. Toxic leadership increases turnover intention, but HR programs can reduce it significantly.

Table 3. Mediation Test Results (Bootstrap, n=5000)

Relationships Between Variables	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect via HR	Mediation Results
Toxic Leadership → Intention to Move Jobs	0.28 ($p < 0.05$)	0.24 ($p < 0.01$)	Partial Mediation
Toxic Leadership → HR Intervention Programs	0.41 ($p < 0.01$)	–	Significant
HR Intervention Program → Intention to Move Jobs	-0.33 ($p < 0.01$)	–	Significant

Toxic Leadership → Job Switching Intentions: Significant direct effects ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.05$). So toxic leadership remains influential even though there is an HR intervention. Indirect Effects through HR Intervention Programs: significant ($\beta = 0.24$, $p < 0.01$). This means that part of the toxic leadership influence on the intention to change jobs is mediated by the existence of an HR program. Toxic Leadership → HR Intervention Programs was significant ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that toxic leadership drove a greater need for HR programs. The HR Intervention Program → Intention to Change Work was significantly negative ($\beta = -0.33$,

$p < 0.01$), emphasizing that HR is effective in reducing turnover intention. The mediation that occurs is partial, because toxic leadership still has a direct influence even though HR has played a role. HR programs have been shown to mediate some of the relationship between toxic leadership and relocation intentions, so HR serves as a suppressor for the negative impact of toxic leadership.

Discussion

The discussion below will relate the results of the research to the current literature and answer the objectives of the study: (1) to find out the influence of toxic leadership on job placement intentions, (2) to determine the influence of HR intervention programs on job placement intentions, and (3) to know the mediated role of HR intervention programs in the relationship between toxic leadership and job change intentions.

The Influence of Toxic Leadership on Job Switching Intentions

The results that toxic leadership increases conversion intent are in line with many previous studies. The study of Nunes et al. (2024) found that toxic leadership had a significant positive effect on turnover intention in employee samples in Portugal and Angola ($\beta \approx 0.47$). Similarly, Shrivastava's research in the context of the automotive industry shows that toxic leadership significantly triggers turnover intention among production employees (Shrivastava, 2024). Furthermore, research in the healthcare environment (nurses) reveals that the perception of toxic leadership directly affects nurses' intention to change jobs ($\beta = 0.521$). From the perspective of social exchange theory, when employees feel they are being mistreated, demeaned, or unfairly burdened by leadership, they tend to reduce commitment and think of alternatives outside the organization (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Toxic leadership, which often includes neglect, humiliation, excessive control, and other bad behaviors, creates psychological and stressful dissonances that encourage employees to seek escape in this case, the intention to move jobs (Akinyele, 2024).

Lee et al.'s (2024) research on team organization shows that toxic leadership has a negative effect on work engagement and contributes to the desire to exit when job demands are high, while demonstrating the role of the team's social support as a protector against negative effects (Lee et al., 2024). This suggests that the negative effects of toxic leadership may be exacerbated in environments with little social support or weakened resources. Not only in private organizations, in the context of clinical research organizations, Jantjies & Botha (2024) also reported that toxic leadership significantly increases job switching intentions and that organizational culture serves as a partial mediator in such relationships (β positive total effect). Our results, with a relatively large coefficient ($\beta = 0.52$) and strong significance, show that in the context of the organization in which the study was conducted, employees are quite sensitive to leadership behavior and the effect on job switching intentions is very real.

The Effect of HR Intervention Programs on Job Switching Intentions

The findings that HR intervention programs (e.g., training, development, reward systems, counseling, organizational support) have a significant negative effect on job placement intentions ($\beta = -0.33$) also have theoretical and empirical basis in the literature. Effective HR programs, through improved employee well-being, career support, and regulatory clarity, can increase emotional bonding and perceptions of fairness, thereby suppressing conversion intent (Allen et al., 2010). In the literature on toxic leadership and health organizations, Ofefi et al. (2023) show that job satisfaction acts as a mediator between toxic leadership and turnover intention meaning that, when the organization provides interventions to increase satisfaction, the negative effects of toxic leadership can be reduced (β indirectly

negative). This means that HR programs that increase satisfaction, such as appreciation and attention to employee needs, have the potential to reduce the intention to change jobs.

Labrague's research (2024) investigated family work conflict as a mediator between toxic leadership and job satisfaction, and found that toxic leadership weakens family workbalance which in turn affects satisfaction. In this context, HR interventions that assist employees in managing family work conflicts will have an impact on reducing the desire to leave (Labrague, 2024). In addition, cross-organizational research shows that social team support can withstand the negative effects of toxic leadership, a function that can also be simulated through HR interventions (Lee et al., 2024). For example, coping, mentoring, or support group training organized through the HR department can be a buffer against pressure. Thus, the results of this study are consistent with the understanding that effective HR interventions are not only an administrative tool, but as a protective mechanism against the symptoms of employee exit desire triggered by bad leadership.

The Mediation Role of HR Intervention Programs (Partial Mediation)

One of the key findings is that HR intervention programs partially mediate the relationship between toxic leadership and job switching intentions. The indirect effect ($\beta = 0.24$) was significant suggesting that part of the effect of toxic leadership on exit desire worked through mechanisms related to HR interventions. However, because the direct effect ($\beta = 0.28$) is still significant, not all influences can be explained through this mediator pathway, which means that there are still aspects of toxic leadership that directly trigger the intention to exit without depending on HR intervention. This phenomenon of partial mediation is also supported by the literature in the organizational domain. For example, research by Semedo et al. (2022) compared toxic leadership and empowering leadership, finding that while toxic leadership has a negative impact, the presence of enabling leadership (often mediated by HR or cultural support) is able to mitigate those impacts—but not completely eliminate them

Similarly, research in the realm of abusive leadership shows that organizational identity and authority orientation can moderate the effect of observation on exit intentions; this implies that strong HR interventions may strengthen organizational identification and weaken toxicity effects (Li et al., 2024). In addition, research examining the phenomenon of "fear-based silence" and counter-productive behavior found that toxic leadership increases fear so that employees tend to remain silent or engage in counterproductive work behavior, especially if there is no support or intervention in HR structures (Does Toxic Leadership Influence... 2024). HR interventions that open up safe communication channels and an open organizational culture can reduce silentness mechanisms and negative chain effects. Thus, partial mediation suggests that HR interventions are able to cut some, but not entirely, the pathway of toxic leadership's negative impact on job switching intentions. This leads to the practical recommendation that organizations should not only strengthen HR programs, but should also work to change leadership behavior directly.

CONCLUSIONS

This study aims to analyze the role of HR intervention programs in reducing the impact of toxic leadership on employees' intention to change jobs. Based on the results of the research and discussion, several main conclusions can be drawn as follows:

1. Toxic leadership has been shown to have a significant positive effect on employees' intention to change jobs. The higher the level of toxic behavior shown by the leader, the greater the desire of employees to leave the organization. This suggests that toxic leadership is a serious risk factor for workforce stability.

2. HR intervention programs have a significant negative effect on the intention to change jobs. The implementation of effective HR programs, such as positive leadership training, counseling, conflict management, and employee well-being support, can suppress employees' desire to change jobs. This means that HR can play an important role in improving workforce retention.

3. HR intervention programs act as partial mediators in the relationship between toxic leadership and job switching intentions. The results of the mediation showed that some of the negative impacts of toxic leadership on job switching intentions could be suppressed through HR interventions, although the direct influence of toxic leadership remained. Thus, HR can serve as a protection mechanism, but improvement of leadership behavior is still necessary.

Overall, this study emphasizes that efforts to reduce employee conversion intention are not enough just to improve the HR system, but must also be accompanied by leadership transformation towards a healthier and more constructive pattern. The contribution of this research lies in the empirical understanding that HR programs not only function administratively, but also as a strategic instrument in mitigating the negative impacts of toxic leadership.

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