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The impact of toxic leadership on employee silence: The mediating role of workplace bullying: A study analyzing the perspectives of some leaders at the University of Kufa

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Abstract

This study investigated the mediating effect of workplace bullying on the relationship between toxic leadership and employee silence within the context of an educational institution, specifically the University of Kufa. A sample of 52 individuals from various leadership positions participated in the study. Data was collected through a survey method. The results revealed that toxic leadership has a significant direct effect on workplace bullying within the University of Kufa. Furthermore, workplace bullying was found to have a significant direct effect on employee silence.

The findings suggest a mediating role of workplace bullying in the relationship between toxic leadership and employee silence. Specifically, workplace bullying weakens the relationship between toxic leadership and employee silence. This indicates that the link between toxic leadership and employee silence within the University of Kufa is associated with high levels of workplace bullying behavior. As the level of workplace bullying increases, the indirect effect of toxic leadership on employee silence also increases, thus strengthening the mediating effect, and vice versa.

Based on these findings, the study recommends raising awareness about the detrimental effects of workplace bullying and implementing measures to prevent such behavior within educational institutions, including the University of Kufa. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of establishing a robust mechanism for selecting leaders that incorporates a set of fundamental principles and criteria to ensure the exclusion of individuals with a propensity for hostile and toxic behavior towards their colleagues.

Keywords: Toxic leadership, employee silence, workplace bullying, and university of Kufa

Introduction

The relationship between a leader and their subordinates is one of the most significant variables impacting team performance, as it determines the attitudes and behaviors of subordinates towards their leader, thus affecting the performance of the team and the organization as a whole. An ideal situation can be achieved when the relationship between leaders and their subordinates is good, the task structure is high, and the leader's authority is strong. Therefore, most leadership research focuses on how to improve leaders for their organizations and increase the effectiveness and development of their subordinates. Development contributes to achieving organizational effectiveness but with awareness of organizing activities and behaviors of some leaders through which they antagonize their colleagues and subordinates, and perhaps clients, they began focusing on negative leadership styles. Toxic leadership is a negative leadership style representing a unique set of destructive traits and behaviors that deliberately and intentionally affect subordinates, contributing to the emergence and spread of other negative behaviors among organization employees, such as workplace harassment and employee silence. These behaviors cause various negative effects, such as decreased job satisfaction, organizational loyalty, morale, self-confidence, and others, resulting in increased absenteeism and turnover rates, and decreased organizational performance as a whole.

Similarly, the issue of bullying has received global attention, both at the individual and organizational levels, due to its serious threat. It affects the mental health of individuals in society as it is a negative phenomenon resulting from a series of repeated aggressive behaviors issued from one person or group of people to another person or group (victim)

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unable to defend themselves due to the imbalance of power between the parties (the bully/victim), workplace harassment may manifest in the form of psychological and moral harm or verbal or physical abuse, which have other negative consequences by creating an inappropriate and unstable work environment. Based on the foregoing, it can be concluded that toxic leadership may contribute to the spread of many negative phenomena, such as workplace bullying. These toxic behaviors can also keep employees silent, thus inhibiting them from expressing their thoughts and suggestions on solving organizational problems and contributing to its development, thereby avoiding concerns about the toxic behavior of supervisors at work, and thus about the causal relationship between toxic leadership and employee silence may be direct or indirect, meaning that it occurs through other negative variables such as workplace bullying. Therefore, the researcher will attempt to study the direct and indirect interaction impact between the four research variables and provide a set of recommendations that contribute to reducing the negative effects resulting from these variables within the educational institution of the University of Kufa.

The First Chapter
Research Methodology
First: Problem Statement
Organizational participation of employees in decision-making, providing them with opportunities to express their opinions, suggestions, and perspectives, and allowing them to offer constructive criticism and report unethical or illegal behavior of others, is one of the most important factors in the success of organizations. However, the toxic behaviors practiced by some leaders towards their employees – characterized by arbitrary supervision, narcissism, authoritarian leadership, self-centeredness, and the inability of subordinates to predict their behavior – cause a climate of silence in the organization, becoming a common culture among employees. This may lead them to deliberately withhold information, opinions, and perspectives that could contribute to the success of the organization and the achievement of its goals. Additionally, toxic leadership contributes to the emergence and intensification of other negative phenomena, such as workplace harassment, which in turn may lead employees to prefer remaining silent to avoid getting into trouble, resulting in decreased job satisfaction, organizational dissatisfaction, and reluctance to engage in this and that. Consequently, their efficiency and the efficiency of the organization as a whole decline, negatively impacting its work outcomes.

Based on the above, toxic leadership behaviors may be a cause or exacerbating factor for the emergence or intensification of employee silence, as well as an introduction or cause of other negative phenomena, such as workplace grievances, that reinforce employee silence. This means that the impact of toxic leadership and employee silence may be indirect, and therefore, the research problem can be summarized by attempting to answer the following question:

To what extent can workplace bullying mediate the relationship between toxic leadership and employee silence?
Second: Research Objectives
1. Estimate the extent of employee awareness in the educational institution of the University of Kufa of the toxic leadership behaviors of their supervisors at work.
2. Evaluate the extent of workplace bullying and the extent of its practice by employees in educational institutions at the University of Kufa and its silent behavior at work.
3. Determine the direct impact of toxic leadership behaviors of workplace bullying in the educational institution of the University of Kufa.
4. Determine the direct impact of workplace bullying on employee silence in the educational institution of the University of Kufa.
5. Determine the indirect impact of toxic leadership on employee silence through the mediating role of workplace bullying in the building of the educational institution of the University of Kufa.

Third: The Research Importance
The study derives scientific importance as it seeks to contribute to the theoretical foundations of toxic leadership, workplace bullying, and employee silence, in addition to discussing the negative effects resulting from these variables and analyzing the relationships between them by measuring the direct impact of toxic leadership on workplace bullying and employee silence and measuring the direct impact of workplace bullying on employee silence. It is also – to the best of the researchers' knowledge – the first study to discuss the indirect impact of toxic leadership on employee silence through the mediating and interactive role of workplace bullying.

In light of the study results, a set of recommendations will be presented that will be useful in making this possible, decision-makers must limit the practice of these behaviors in the organization and avoid the negative consequences resulting from them so that organizations can achieve their goals.

Fourth: The Research Hypotheses
1. **First main hypothesis:** There is a significant meaningful relationship between toxic leadership and its dimensions and employee silence.
2. **Second main hypothesis:** There is a significant meaningful relationship between workplace bullying and employee silence.
3. **Third main hypothesis:** There is a significant meaningful relationship between toxic leadership and its dimensions and workplace bullying.
4. **Fourth main hypothesis:** There is a significant meaningful impact between toxic leadership and its dimensions and employee silence.
5. **Fifth main hypothesis:** There is a significant meaningful impact between workplace bullying and employee silence.
6. **Sixth main hypothesis:** There is a significant meaningful impact of the toxic leadership variable on employee silence through the mediating role of workplace bullying.

Fifth: Research Variables and Measurement Methods
The study includes four main variables, each containing several sub-dimensions. To measure these variables, the researchers utilized a set of established scales known for their validity and reliability, widely used in existing research. Each scale comprises a set of statements

constituting it. Below is an explanation of each research variable and its scale:

- **Toxic Leadership (Independent Variable):** Toxic leadership, the independent variable, was measured using a scale developed by the researchers, consisting of... The scale comprises three sub-dimensions: (inability to predict, narcissism, and authoritarian leadership). These sub-dimensions are measured through (15) statements reflecting the sample individuals' awareness of the practices exercised by their supervisors at work, regarding toxic leadership behaviors.
- **Workplace Bullying (Independent Variable/Mediator):** To measure workplace bullying as an independent and mediator variable, a scale consisting of three sub-dimensions was used: (workplace bullying, person-related bullying, violence, and physical intimidation). These are measured by (15) statements reflecting the extent to which the respondents are exposed to bullying, violence, and physical intimidation, both from their supervisors and colleagues at work.
- **Employee Silence (Dependent Variable):** It encompasses a level of employee silence in three sub-dimensions: compliance silence, defensive silence, and ending social silence. These dimensions are measured using a scale comprising (15) statements expressing the extent to which employees at the University of Kufa practice silent behaviors within an educational institution.

Sixth: Research Methodology, Type, and Data Sources:
The study relies on two types of data

- Secondary Data: This is obtained by reviewing Arabic and foreign books, research papers, and articles related to the topic. The study and its four variables were conducted to identify the research gap, formulate hypotheses, and examine the leadership of the educational institution at the University of Kufa, including its statistics, reports, and data from the Department of Public Affairs, as well as official websites of employees and the institution.
- Primary Data: This is obtained by collecting questionnaires from the leadership of educational institutions at the University of Kufa, extracting responses from them, and using them to test hypotheses to obtain results and formulate appropriate recommendations.

The Second Chapter
Theoretical Framework of the Research
The First Topic
The Concept of Toxic Leadership and Its Dimensions
Firstly: The Concept of Toxic Leadership
Most research in the field of leadership deals with it from an excessively positive perspective. However, the continuous transgressions committed by leaders in many business, educational, political, and military organizations have called for greater focus on the dark side of leadership, thus bringing toxic leadership into the spotlight. Many studies have shown negative effects on these organizations. Toxic leadership occurs when a leader exhibits numerous destructive behaviors and displays some non-professional personal characteristics, causing significant harm to subordinates and the organization as a whole.

Therefore, toxic leadership can be defined as a set of destructive behaviors that drive leaders to achieve personal goals and benefits by harming the interests of individuals, work teams, and the organization as a whole (Yavaş, A., 2016) [10]. Heppell, T., (2011) [4] defined it as the system and repeated behavior by a leader, manager, or supervisor that violates the legitimate interests of the organization by sabotaging or undermining its goals, purposes, resources, and effectiveness, as well as destroying the motivation, well-being, happiness, and job satisfaction of subordinates.

Başkan, B., (2020) [18] affirmed that senior leaders engage in many destructive behaviors that reveal some of their distorted traits and personality characteristics. For these behaviors and personal traits to be considered toxic, they must cause serious and lasting harm to their subordinates and their organizations in general because the desire to harm others and fulfill oneself at their expense is what distinguishes toxic leaders from negligent leaders who do not intend harm, although both have a negative impact on their subordinates and the organization.

Therefore, a toxic leader is characterized by some distorted personality traits that hinder individuals from building work teams, fostering healthy professional relationships, and working in a fast-changing environment. These traits include selfishness, impulsivity, indecision, aggressiveness, negativity, mood swings, vindictiveness, control issues, distrust of others, and risk aversion (Aubrey, D. W., 2012) [5]. Kılıç, M., & Günsel, A. (2019) [16] also see these characteristics, which, for example, lead to some destructive behaviors towards subordinates and the organization. These behaviors are not limited to deceiving subordinates with misleading information, destroying the organization's ethical structure, suppressing any attempts at constructive criticism, promoting authoritarian leadership styles among subordinates, leading to conflicts among individuals, and inciting them against each other. For some, refusing to take responsibility for failures, blaming subordinates, and sacrificing them to justify it is a sacrificial lamb approach. Deliberate ignorance and perhaps even promoting incompetence, corruption, and favoritism are also among these behaviors.

The author adds that toxic leadership syndrome is accompanied by three main characteristics, namely: (Uysal, H. T., 2019) [17].

1. Lack of clear concern for the satisfaction and well-being of subordinates.
2. Complete trust among subordinates that the leader primarily guides based on personal interests.
3. Toxic personal practices negatively impact the organizational climate of the institution.

Secondly: The Dimensions of Toxic Leadership
Most researchers have approached toxic leadership through three dimensions that explain the practices and behaviors of toxic leaders. (Schmidt, 2008) [2] defined them as follows:

1. **Unpredictability:** This refers to the inability of subordinates to predict or anticipate their leader's behavior due to fluctuations and oscillations between various behavioral patterns. It represents a wide range of behaviors reflecting radical changes in the leader's mood, directly affecting the work climate. (Özer, Ö., *et al.*, 2017) [11] noted that the inability to predict the leader's behavior is one of the strongest indicators of

subordinates' dissatisfaction with that leader and their desire to stay in the organization, leading to the conclusion that this may later result in the leader's toxicity. When a leader is described as unpredictable, things worsen. His negative behaviors stem from his subordinates' inability to predict these behaviors.

2. **Narcissism:** Narcissism is a real disorder, especially among many presidents and executive directors. (Bhandarker, A., *et al*., 2019) [15] Narcissism means self-love, self-absorption, self-admiration, seeking dominance, and ignoring others' opinions because these leaders focus on themselves, their goals, their success, and how others perceive them. Narcissism itself is not destructive behavior, but when a leader with these characteristics begins to take charge, the actions that enhance his position require absolute obedience from his subordinates and the rejection of criticism under any pretext, and in such cases, the organization suffers and is at risk due to such behaviors.

3. **Authoritarian Leadership:** Authoritarian leadership includes behavior that limits the independence of subordinates, restricts their freedom of choice, discourages any individual initiative or new ideas they may offer, and forces them to fully comply with the leaders' programs and operational procedures. (Dobbs, J., *et al*., 2019) [14] Therefore, it can be defined as behaviors through which leaders seek absolute power and complete control over their subordinates, emphasizing their obedience and execution of all orders and instructions issued by them, without any discussion, argument, or opposition from them.

The Second Topic
The Concept of Workplace Bullying and its Dimensions
Firstly: The Concept of Workplace Bullying
This term has several different names depending on the culture of each society. It can be called bullying, harassment, aggression, or insolence, but the most common term in most societies is bullying. (Matthiesen, S. B., *et al*., 2010) [3] Workplace bullying is considered one of the most common types of personal attacks in institutions (Chirilă, T., *et al*., 2013) [6]. It is a means involving a set of negative practices used by the aggressor to control the behavior of the targeted individual or individuals through repeated verbal abuse, whether intentional or unconscious, which causes fear, humiliation, and self-anxiety. The victim has a negative impact on their performance at work, and the work environment becomes inappropriate (Einarsen, S. V., *et al*., 2020) [19].

Workplace bullying is systematic and long-term exposure to forms of cruelty, aggression, attacks, humiliation, psychological harm, and social exclusion by other members of the organization (Cornell, D., *et al*., 2015) [9]. It also refers to unethical behavior that rejects basic principles of social acceptance.

(Cornell, D., *et al*., 2015) [9] added that the person who falls victim to bullying realizes that the bully is stronger than them and finds it difficult to defend against repeated attacks. The author has clarified that there are many forms of workplace bullying, as there is no unified list of these attacks. The attack could be verbal, such as insults, threats, spreading false rumors, giving derogatory and mocking names to the victim, making them a laughing stock among colleagues, or physical assault, such as slapping, hitting,

forcing someone to do something, or fatal assault, for example, giving the victim an unreasonable amount of time to complete certain tasks, not allowing the victim to take leave, forcing the victim to stay late at work, and exposing them to dangerous situations at work. This bullying could also be psychological, such as intimidation, stalking, conspiracy, hatred, and insult to the victim, which puts tremendous pressure on them and makes them feel helpless.

Secondly: The Dimensions of Workplace Bullying
(Hogh, A., *et al*., 2001) [1] confirmed that workplace bullying has three dimensions: (work-related bullying, bullying associated with violence and physical intimidation, and person-related bullying). These dimensions can be clarified as follows:

- **Work-related Bullying:** This type of bullying refers to the negative behaviors practiced by the bully towards the victim to affect their job performance and create an unsafe and unstable work environment. This includes withholding important information that negatively impacts their performance, assigning tasks that are not within their expertise or skills, assigning tasks with tight deadlines, pressuring them not to claim their rights to vacations, benefits, and promotions, and assigning them tasks outside their specialization.

- **Person-related Bullying:** This type of misconduct refers to the negative behavior perpetrated by the offender towards the victim to humiliate them and diminish their worth. It involves undermining them by ridiculing, mocking, ignoring, excluding, spreading rumors about them, shifting responsibilities away from them and replacing them with trivial tasks, making derogatory and offensive remarks about their ideas and personal life, continuously criticizing their performance without justification, and declaring or implying their incompetence for the job altogether.

- **Bullying Associated with Violence and Physical Intimidation:** This type of bullying refers to negative behavior practiced by the bully towards the victim with the aim of intimidating, frightening, and harming them. It can go beyond verbal threats to include shouting, spontaneous anger, making accusations, violating privacy, verbal threats of violence, physical harm, material damage, actual harm, and physical assault on property.

The Third Topic
The Concept of Employee Silence and its Dimensions
Firstly: The Concept of Employee Silence
This means that subordinates intentionally conceal information, ideas, inquiries, and opinions in matters related to their professional status or the problems and issues facing the organization (Prouska, R., *et al*., 2018) [13]. Additionally, (Krause, V., 2021) [22] defined it as a negative phenomenon where employees tend to remain silent and refrain from expressing their ideas and opinions on technical and behavioral issues related to their work, which may hinder the improvement and development process in the organization. Organizational silence reduces employees' commitment, and increases their readiness to leave their jobs, thus increasing the turnover rate. It also impedes organizational change and development, damages the educational environment in the organization, and the organizational climate, leading to organizational stagnation.

Secondly: The Dimensions of Employee Silence

Through reviewing numerous previous studies, most researchers agree on three dimensions of employee silence, defined by (Brinsfield, C. T., 2013) [7] as follows:

- **Acceptance Silence:** This refers to employees' inclination to deliberately withhold information, ideas, and opinions due to despair and frustration. Employees adapt to the current situation and are not ready to speak out or positively engage in attempting to change this situation. This type of silence is called "passive acceptance of the current situation".

- **Defensive Silence:** This refers to the employee's behavior related to deliberately hiding information, ideas, and opinions as a form of self-defense and a preemptive response resulting from fear and anxiety about external threats. Among these is hiding facts about problems that require correction, and concealing information about personal errors at work. Defensive silence is driven by fear of talking about problems, unlike surrendering silence, which is considered surrendering, errors, or fear of the consequences of proposing changes, meaning considering and considering alternative options. Then comes the conscious decision that withholding and hiding information ideas and opinions is the best alternative to protect against problems.

- **Terminated Social Silence:** This refers to the professional employee's behavior that involves deliberately concealing information, ideas, and opinions about altruism and motives of cooperation to benefit and assist others and support the organization as a whole. This type of silence covers: concealing organizational knowledge to protect the organization's intellectual property, as well as hiding unauthorized confidential information that may result in discussing or sharing this information publicly to harm the organization.

The Fourth Topic
The Impact of Toxic Leadership on Employee Silence and Workplace Bullying

Toxic leadership, as a behavioral approach, harms subordinates and ultimately extends this harm to the organization. This is done through stifling enthusiasm, independence, creativity, and innovative expression among subordinates, as these leaders spread their toxins exercising complete and excessive control over subordinates, labeling leadership as "control." Consequently, employees may resort to silence in the workplace, whether due to despair, frustration, and resignation or as a defensive mechanism out of fear of discussing problems and avoiding the consequences of sharing opinions and making suggestions ((Saqib, A., et al., 2017) [12].

In this regard, (YİĞİT, B., 2022) [26] affirmed that toxic leadership behaviors promote employee silence in organizations. Similarly, (Kurtulmuş, B. E., 2020) [20] clarified that employee silence occurs as a direct result of toxic leadership, which leads to emotional exhaustion for employees and a decline in their performance at work, thereby reducing the overall efficiency of the organization. Many studies, including research, agree that narcissistic leadership, which represents one dimension of toxic leadership, is associated with high levels of organizational silence as one of the mechanisms through which employees

express their negative feelings and rejection of leaders' behavior. External threats received by individuals due to narcissistic leader behavior trigger a defensive reaction, such as voluntary silence to avoid involvement in problems and to protect themselves and their interests in the face of any of these threats, within the same context.

Toxic leadership, through aggressive supervision, makes employees deliberately commit to silence and prefer to cling to their ideas rather than share their opinions and suggestions or direct constructive criticism towards the organization, negatively impacting their commitment, satisfaction, loyalty, and desire to continue working in the organization (Coakley, N., 2021) [23].

Most toxic leaders suffer from some form of inadequacy and a constant sense of deficiency, driving them to promote themselves and engage in narcissistic and authoritarian behavior toward their subordinates. These leaders only feel competent and secure when they degrade and ridicule others. Individually (Zaman, U., et al., 2023) [27]. One of the most common reasons for linking toxic leadership to workplace bullying is the aggressive and malicious traits of toxic leaders and their continuous harm to their subordinates and the organization. Therefore, (Farghaly Abdelaliem, S., et al., 2023) [25] pointed out that workplace bullying is one of the symptoms and effects of toxic leadership, which harms and negatively affects the organization's success because the practices of toxic leaders directly and negatively affect the organizational climate in the workplace.

Moreover, these behaviors create an unstable organizational environment that employees cannot cope with, as is the case with toxic leaders mistreating other employees due to their destructive behavior and personality imbalance. One of the main problems caused by toxic leaders is not only mistreating others, especially those employees who reject these toxic practices and try to prevent and oppose them but also encouraging other employees to engage in bullying and empowering them to use it against victims to create a work environment that allows them to pursue their interests and goals (Kurtulmuş, B. E., 2021) [24]. In the same context, (Adeoye, S. O., et al., 2020) [21] indicated a positive relationship between toxic leadership and workplace bullying, in which toxic leadership moderates and enhances the relationship between bullying and organizational deviance as a result of the emotional exhaustion experienced by employees due to these negative practices.

The Third Chapter
Practical Framework of the Research
The First Topic
The Research Sample Characteristics and Preliminary Tests
Firstly: The Research Sample Characteristics
1. Distribution of Sample Individuals by Gender

The results revealed that the proportion of males was higher, accounting for (58%) of the sample individuals, while the proportion of females was (42%) of the sample individuals. This is illustrated in Table (1) and Figure (1).

Table 1: The Research Sample Characteristics

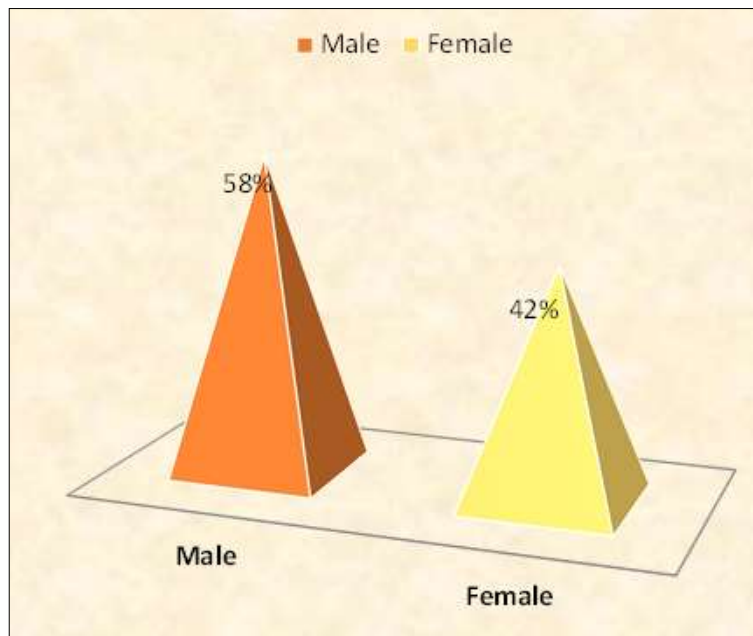| Gender	Repetition	Percentage
Male	26	58%
Female	19	42%
Sum	45	100%

Fig 1: Distribution of sample personnel by gender

2. Distribution of sample individuals by educational qualification:

The results in Table (2) and Figure (2) indicate that the majority of the sample individuals hold a bachelor's degree, accounting for (38%) of them. The proportion of individuals with master's and doctoral degrees was equal, at (31%) each, indicating a good level of practical qualification among the sample individuals.

Table 2: The Research Sample Characteristics by Educational Qualification

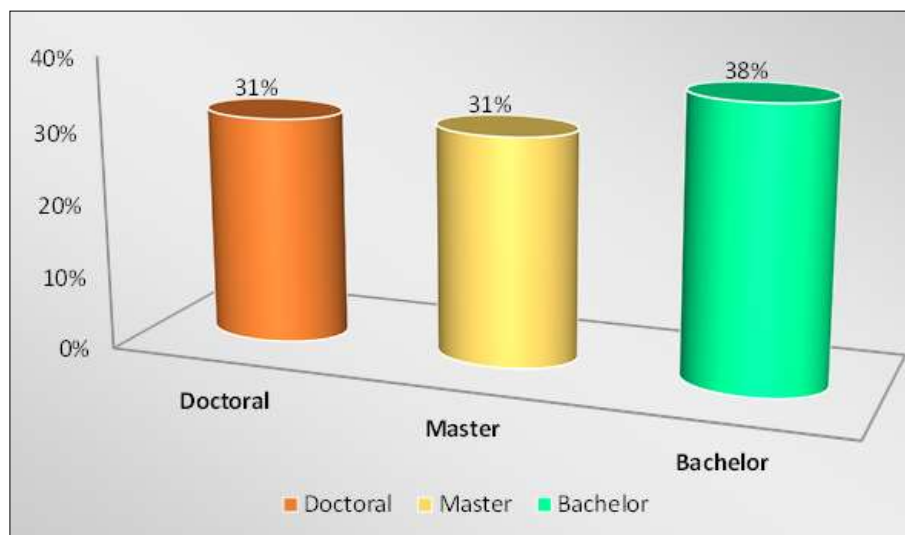| Degree	Repetition	Percentage
Doctoral	14	31%
Master	14	31%
Bachelor	17	38%
Sum	45	100%

Fig 2: Distribution of sample individuals by educational qualification

Secondly: The Preliminary Tests
Scale Reliability

To ensure the reliability of the scale and its instruments, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was computed. The results, presented in Table (3), indicated acceptability with a minimum value of (0.70) for acceptance. This suggests the presence of internal consistency for all items, with the items related to the toxic leadership variable showing an acceptable reliability value of (0.781), the workplace bullying variable at (0.857), the employee silence variable at (0.851), and the overall questionnaire reliability at (0.866). All values demonstrate high reliability.

Table 3: Study Scale Test

Variables and dimensions	Cronbach's alpha coefficient
Toxic Leadership	0.781
Workplace Bullying	0.857
Employee Silence	0.851
Overall Questionnaire	0.866

Factor Analysis and Model Building:

To assess the construct validity, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted, and models were built, with the requirement that items achieve loadings greater than (0.50). Results within Figure (3) indicate that the data for the toxic

leadership variable achieved acceptance for the required loadings exceeding (0.50), indicating construct validity.
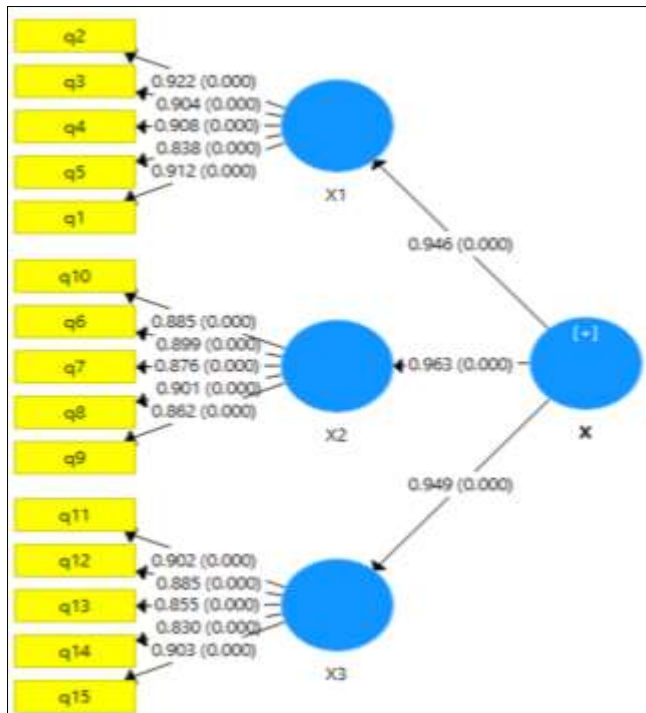

Fig 3: Variable Model Toxic Leadership

Furthermore, Figure (4) indicates that the data for the workplace bullying variable achieved acceptance for the required loadings exceeding (0.50), indicating construct validity. Similarly, Figure (5) indicates that the data for the employee silence variable also achieved acceptance for the required loadings exceeding (0.50), suggesting construct validity.
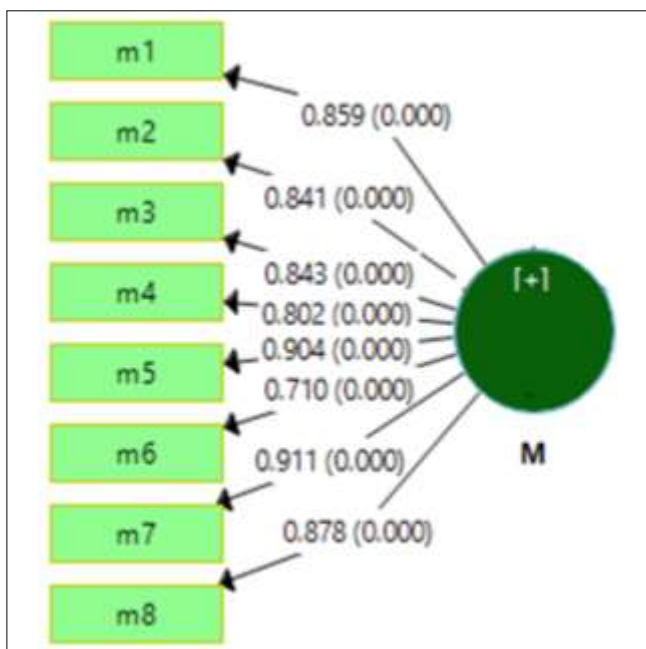

Fig 4: Variable Model Workplace Bullying

Also, Figure (5) indicates that the employee silence variable data achieved acceptance for saturation values, which require being greater than (0.50), indicating that the data achieved construct validity.
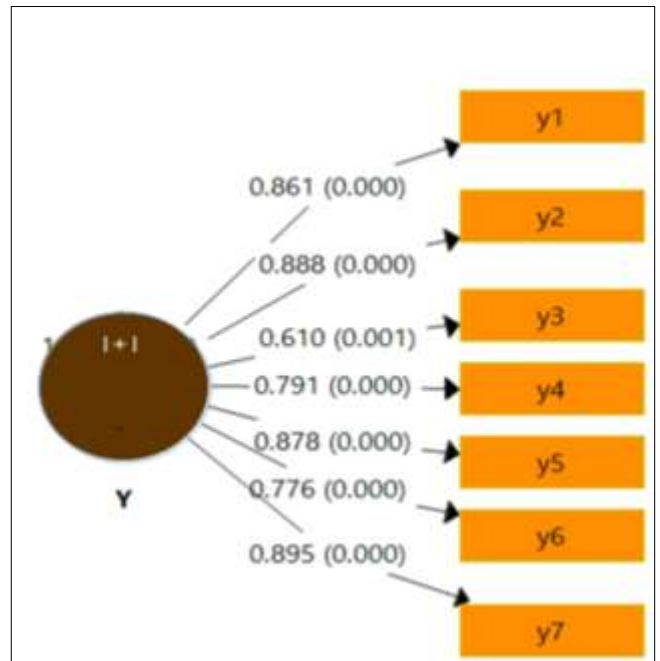

Fig 5: Variable Model Employee Silence

The Second Topic
Testing Hypotheses
Firstly: The Testing Correlation Hypotheses
To assess the correlation relationships between the study variables, correlation coefficients were utilized to determine the extent of the relationship between the dimensions and the overall axis using a correlation matrix. This aimed to identify the strength and nature of the relationship between the study variables and then test their hypotheses using correlation coefficients and assess significance levels (Sig.), which should be less than (0.05).

1. **First Primary Hypothesis:** There is a significant correlation between toxic leadership and its dimensions and employee silence.
   Reviewing the analysis values in Table (4), it is evident that there is a significant correlation between the variables at the overall level with a correlation coefficient value of (0.898**). The relationship at the sub-level was also high and positive, reaching (0.800, 0.867, 0.902). These relationships were significant based on the value of (Sig.), indicating that the significance level was acceptable and less than (0.05), confirming the acceptance of the hypothesis.

2. **Second Primary Hypothesis:** There is a significant correlation between workplace bullying and employee silence.
   Reviewing the analysis values in Table (4), it is evident that there is a significant correlation between the variables at the overall level with a correlation coefficient value of (0.950**). These relationships were significant based on the value of (Sig.), indicating that the significance level was acceptable and less than (0.05), confirming the acceptance of the hypothesis.

3. **Third Primary Hypothesis:** There is a significant correlation between toxic leadership and its dimensions and workplace bullying.
   Reviewing the analysis values in Table (4), it is evident that there is a significant correlation between the variables at the overall level with a correlation coefficient value of (0.941**). The relationship at the

sub-level was also high and positive, reaching (0.937, 0.902, 0.852). These relationships were significant based on the value of (Sig.), indicating that the

significance level was acceptable and less than (0.05), confirming the acceptance of the hypothesis.

Table 4: The Correlation Relationships Between the Variables

Employee Silence	Workplace Bullying	Relationships	Variables
.800**	.852**	r	Unpredictability
.000	.000	Sig.	
.867**	.902**	r	Narcissism
.000	.000	Sig.	
.902**	.937**	r	Authoritarian Leadership
.000	.000	Sig.	
.898**	.941**	r	Toxic Leadership
.000	.000	Sig.	
.950**	1	r	Workplace Bullying
.000		Sig.	

Secondly: The Testing Causal Relationship Hypotheses
This section aims to present and discuss the research results in order to ascertain the validity of the causal hypotheses, including a description and analysis of the causal relationships between the research variables and describing the degree of contribution of the independent variables to explaining the dependent variables through the following division:

1. **Fourth Primary Hypothesis:** There is a significant causal relationship between toxic leadership and its dimensions and employee silence.
   Reviewing the analysis values for the causal relationships outlined in Table (5), it is evident that there is a significant causal effect between the variables, as the standardized beta coefficient value was ($\beta = 0.888$), indicating a high level of influence. The model's explanatory power, reflected by the coefficient of determination, reached ($R2 = 0.806$), and the relationship was significant based on the value of (F), which recorded a value of (178.54), exceeding the tabulated value within the significance level. Additionally, the significance level (Sig.) recorded acceptable values, meeting the acceptance criterion of

being less than (0.05). The sub-dimensions also had high beta values of (0.708, 0.851, 0.870), and all values were significant based on the value of (F), which exceeded the tabulated value, and the significance level was below (0.05). Hence, this hypothesis is accepted.

2. **Fifth Primary Hypothesis:** There is a significant causal relationship between workplace bullying and employee silence.
   Reviewing the analysis values for the causal relationships outlined in Table (5), it is evident that there is a significant causal effect between the variables, as the standardized beta coefficient value was ($\beta = 0.923$), indicating a high level of influence. The model's explanatory power, reflected by the coefficient of determination, reached ($R2 = 0.903$), and the relationship was significant based on the value of (F), which recorded a value of (399.33), exceeding the tabulated value within the significance level. Additionally, the significance level (Sig.) recorded acceptable values, meeting the acceptance criterion of being less than (0.05). Hence, this hypothesis is accepted.

Table 5: The Regression Analysis of the Variables

Significance Level (Sig.)	Test (F)	R2	β	α	Variables
0.000	76.31	0.641	0.708	0.998	Unpredictability
0.000	130.45	0.752	0.851	0.474	Narcissism
0.000	187.51	0.813	0.870	0.490	Authoritarian Leadership
0.000	178.54	0.806	0.888	0.383	Toxic Leadership
0.000	399.33	0.903	0.923	0.111	Workplace Bullying
The tabulated (F) value at the significance level (0.05) = 4.054					
The tabulated (F) value at the significance level (0.05) = 7.413					

Thirdly: The Testing Mediation Hypotheses
This section aims to present and discuss the research results in order to ascertain the validity of the indirect mediation hypotheses, as included in the sixth primary Hypothesis.

1. **Sixth Primary Hypothesis:** There is a significant indirect effect of toxic leadership on employee silence through the mediating role of workplace bullying.
   Reviewing the analysis values for the mediation relationships outlined in Table (6) and Figure (6), it is evident that there is a direct effect between toxic leadership and employee silence, with a coefficient (0.146), which is statistically significant as its significance level was below (0.05). Similarly, there is

a direct effect between toxic leadership and workplace bullying, with a coefficient (0.946), which is statistically significant as its significance level was below (0.05). Furthermore, there is a direct effect between workplace bullying and employee silence, with a coefficient of (0.908), which is statistically significant as its significance level was below (0.05).
Regarding the mediating relationship, it is apparent that there is a significant indirect mediating effect of toxic leadership on employee silence through the mediating role of workplace bullying, with a coefficient of (0.859), which is statistically significant as its significance level was below (0.05). From this, we can

conclude that the indirect relationship through the mediating variable is stronger and more significant than the direct relationship, thus confirming this hypothesis.

Table 6: Results of the Mediation Test of Workplace Bullying between Toxic Leadership and Employee Silence

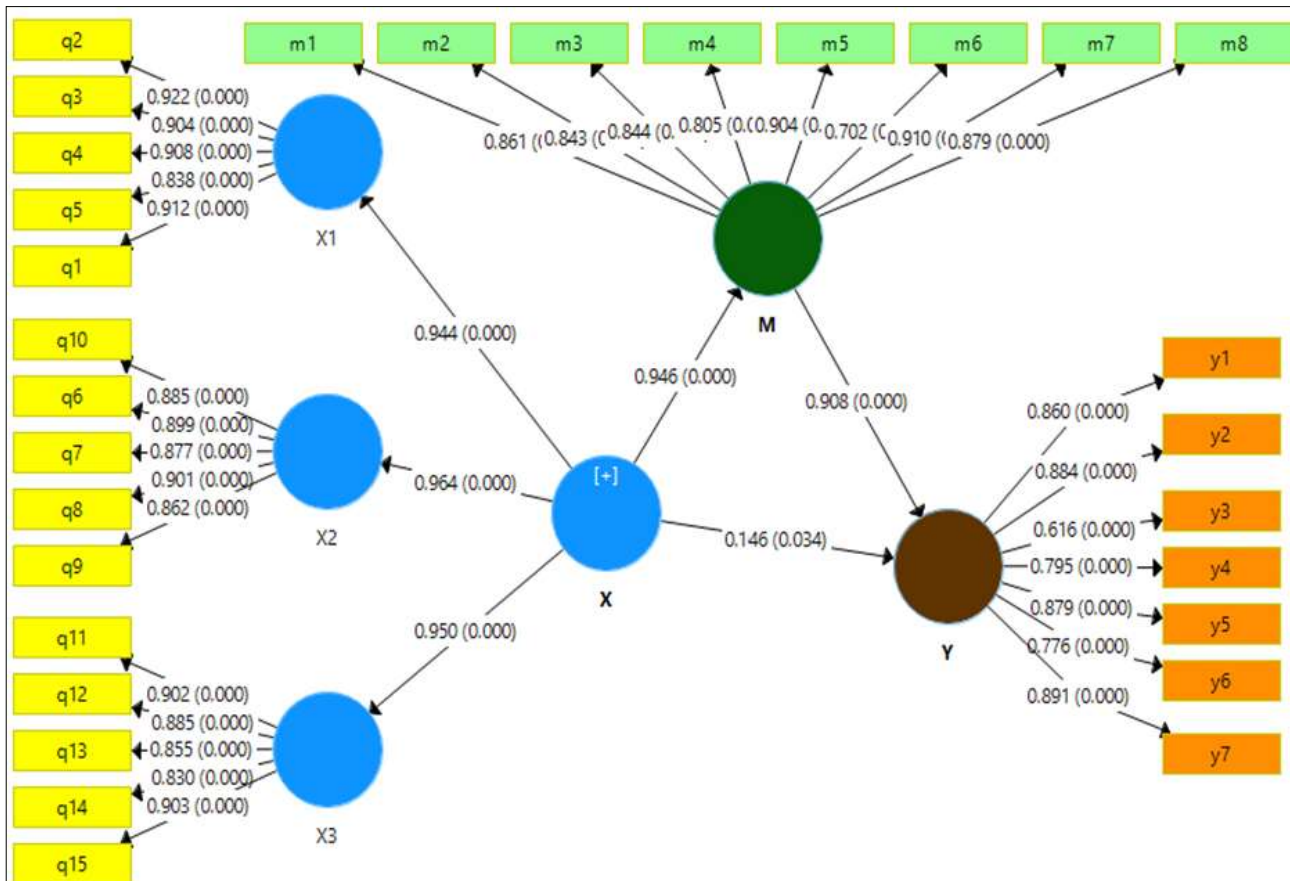| Path	The Effect	Computational Medium of the Effect	Standard Deviation of the Effect	/T /Value	Significance Level (Sig.)
M -> Y	0.908	0.877	0.206	4.408	0.000
X -> M	0.946	0.945	0.024	40.169	0.000
X -> Y	0.146	0.177	0.217	1.211	0.034
X -> M -> Y	0.859	0.827	0.191	4.504	0.000

Fig 6: Mediation Model of Workplace Bullying between Toxic Leadership and Employee Silence

The Fourth Chapter
Conclusions and Recommendations
Conclusions
1. The purpose of the research is to begin measuring the indirect impact of toxic leadership on employee silence through workplace bullying.
2. The research sought to measure the indirect impact of toxic leadership on employee silence through the mediation of workplace bullying.
3. To achieve these objectives, a set of direct effects between the research variables was tested, revealing a direct and significant impact of toxic leadership on workplace bullying.
4. The behaviors of senior leaders provide an environment conducive to practicing bullying and misconduct in the workplace, whether by the leaders themselves or among subordinates and peers. On the other hand, there is a direct and significant impact of workplace bullying on employee silence.
5. Toxic leadership behavior directly contributes to the occurrence of bullying, which turns into victimization leading to the spread of organizational mockery in the

workplace, targeting employees specifically. They resort to silence as a result of intimidation through verbal abuse, mockery, ignorance, humiliation, exclusion, and intimidation, which can even lead to physical violence. The level of mockery increases in the organization, and subordinates develop a general sense of fear, uncertainty, despair, frustration, disappointment, and lack of trust in the organization's leadership, all of which will negatively impact the organization, its work, and its outcomes.

Recommendations
In light of the research results regarding the negative impacts of toxic leadership styles and their accompanying practices characterized by narcissism, authoritarianism, and favoritism over organizational interests, which may have detrimental consequences and lead to a culture of negative intimidation among the staff of Al-Kufa University, the researcher proposes the following recommendations:
1. Officials in the educational institution of Al-Kufa University must establish a precise mechanism for selecting leaders, including a set of fundamentals and

criteria that ensure the exclusion of individuals with hostile and toxic behavioral tendencies towards their colleagues. In selecting administrative leaders capable of ensuring an ethical work environment characterized by a positive and encouraging atmosphere, mutual trust between subordinates should be promoted, and human aspects in dealing with them should be considered.

2. Conduct a series of training courses and workshops for current and future leaders, attempting to combine career advancement activities by attending and passing these courses to develop their awareness of the necessity of practicing good behavior. This supports the ethical and human aspects and encourages them to do good deeds towards their subordinates, refraining from mocking or ridiculing them, ignoring their opinions, as well as caring about their interests, listening to their problems, and working to solve them.

3. The previous results indicate that employee silence is an expected and inevitable result of both toxic leadership and workplace bullying and organizational mockery. These results confirmed the presence of these phenomena in all three dimensions within the educational institution of Al-Kufa University. Some employees deliberately withhold information, ideas, and opinions due to despair, frustration, resignation, and a desire for isolation and non-integration (submissive silence) or due to fear and anxiety from external threats (defensive silence). However, other employees are not interested in hiding information and opinions; their silence is motivated by cooperative motives aimed at helping others and benefiting the organization as a whole (prosocial silence). Government officials must work to mitigate the spread of this phenomenon.

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