Investigating the Dark Side of Projectification: The Roles of Toxic Leadership, Work-Family Conflict, Job Stress, and Mindfulness in Public Sector Project Performance

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The primary goal of this study is to investigate the issues connected with projectification within public sector organizations, while also studying the negative consequences of toxic leadership on project performance. Additionally, the study seeks to suggest mindfulness as a moderator, providing potential means of reducing the negative effects of toxic leadership on problems including work-family conflict and project team member job stress.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The research will utilize a quantitative approach and draw upon Social Cognitive Theory to explain how toxic leadership influences project performance. Data will be collected through surveys from project manager-subordinate dyads in major Pakistani cities. Demographic information, toxic leadership, and mindfulness data will be gathered at the first time point (T1), and after four weeks (T2), data on work-family conflict and job stress will be collected. Project managers will also rate project performance. The two-time point data collection aims to reduce common method bias.

Findings/Results: The study expects to advance understanding by revealing how toxic leadership negatively impacts project performance through the mediators of work-family conflict and job stress. The research proposes mindfulness as a moderator to alleviate the negative effects of toxic leadership on employees' work-family disputes and job stress. The findings are anticipated to contribute valuable insights into the mechanisms and boundary conditions of projectification in the public sector organizational context.

Practical Implications: The practical implications of this research include providing insights for organizations, especially in the public sector, on the potential detrimental effects of toxic leadership in a project-based environment. Moreover, the study aims to offer practical recommendations for mitigating these negative impacts through the incorporation of mindfulness as a moderating factor. This information can guide organizational practices and leadership development programs to enhance project performance and employee well-being.

Originality/Value: The research is innovative in addressing the dark side of projectification, particularly in the public sector in Pakistan, where no similar studies have been conducted. By exploring the negative impacts of toxic leadership beyond the project setting and into employees' home lives, the study adds a unique perspective. Additionally, the introduction of mindfulness as a moderator adds novelty and practical value by proposing a potential solution to buffer the adverse effects of toxic leadership.

Keywords: *Projectification, Toxic leadership, work family conflicts, job stress, project performance*