

Narcissistic Leadership and Silent Compliance: A Social Learning Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Applying the social learning theory, this study investigates the influence of supervisor narcissism on acquiescent silence, exploring the sequential mediation of an instrumental ethical climate and workplace bullying.

Design/Methodology/Approach: Utilizing time-lagged data from employees in Pakistani service sector organizations, we find that followers' ethical behavior is actively shaped through observation, emulation, and identification with narcissistic leader behaviors. These leaders, exhibiting traits like autonomy, entitlement, exhibitionism, exploitation, self-sufficiency, superiority, and vanity, contribute to an instrumental ethical climate prioritizing self-interest over ethical considerations.

Findings/Results: Our results highlight the role of narcissistic supervision, instrumental ethical climate, and workplace bullying in facilitating acquiescent silence among employees. The study suggests direct interventions, discouraging supervisor narcissism, and indirect measures, such as curbing the instrumental ethical climate or addressing bullying in the organization.

Practical Implementation: Implementing these measures may provide direct and indirect corrective avenues to cultivate a more vibrant and positive organizational climate.

Originality/Value: This climate may foster a competitive environment conducive to workplace bullying, leading victims to adopt acquiescent silence despite facing repeated hostility.

Keywords: *Narcissism, Acquiescent silence, Ethical climate and Workplace bullying.*