

# Exploring Employee Turnover Intention: The Impact of Toxic Leadership and the Mediating Roles of Cognitive Distraction and Workplace Bullying in the Organizational Landscape

Ankita Shrivastava\*, Avnish Sharma

Institute of Business Management, GLA University, Mathura, India. \*Corresponding Author's Email: ankita141210@gmail.com

## Abstract

This study investigates the impact of toxic leadership on employee turnover intention within automobile industry. The primary objectives are to assess the direct influence of toxic leadership (TLB) on employee turnover intentions (ETI) and uncover the mediating roles of cognitive distraction (CD) and workplace bullying (WPB). The implications of toxic leadership (TLB) on employee turnover intentions (ETI) in the automobile industry remain underexplored. This study addresses this gap, recognizing the adverse effects of toxic leadership (TLB) on organizational dynamics and employee intent to leave. The study uses a quantitative approach and distributes surveys among employees in automobile industry. The SPSS PROCESS macro simplifies data analysis by allowing for the investigation of both direct and indirect (mediating) effects. The research model synthesized guides hypothesis testing according to the relevant literature. Statistically significant direct impacts of toxic leadership (TLB) on turnover intention are identified. Positive associations with workplace bullying (WPB) and cognitive distraction (CD) substantiate the mediating roles, providing an understanding of toxic leadership (TLB) dynamics. This study enhances our comprehension of toxic leadership (TLB) in automobile industry. The results highlight the importance of addressing mediating factors to reduce turnover intentions among employees in the automobile industry.

**Keywords:** Cognitive Distraction, SPSS Process, Toxic Leadership, Turnover Intention, Workplace Bullying.

## Introduction

Leadership is a principled undertaking to foster organizational justice, tranquility, and affluence for all stakeholders (1). It plays a pivotal role in cultivating and sustaining a conducive workplace milieu wherein organizational members can engage in learning, contribute effectively, and persist in the pursuit of shared objectives (2). Toxic leadership (TLB) engenders negative emotional states and intentions, thereby adversely affecting workplace bullying (WPB) within the organization and the well-being of employees. Moreover, it directly correlates with employees' inclination to leave the company (3, 4). Toxic leadership, delineated by manifestations of abusive conduct, exploitative practices, and notable neglect of the welfare of subordinates, has become a focal point within the realm of organizational psychology (5). Leaders exhibiting toxicity are characterized by preoccupation with their personal interests, evincing a conspicuous lack of concern for their subordinates' well-being within the organizational framework (6). This

leadership style has been empirically associated with adverse consequences for employees, from diminished job satisfaction and elevated stress levels to a decline in organizational commitment. Human resources play a crucial role in service-focused firms in today's highly competitive economic environment (7). Bullying is a recognized factor impacting employee commitment and satisfaction, leading to destructive consequences, a hostile work environment, and diminished performance. Researchers in organizational behavior and human resource management emphasize the widespread effects of workplace bullying (WPB) on fostering a supportive environment, positive employee relations, and enhanced productivity (8). Workplace bullying (WPB) refers to the persistent occurrence of harmful behaviors such as abuse, derogatory remarks, taunting, mockery, or exclusion from social interactions, carried out by co-workers, managers and employees in a lower position (9). Employee turnover intention

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution CC BY license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted reuse, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

(Received 08<sup>th</sup> March 2024; Accepted 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2024; Published 30<sup>th</sup> July 2024)

(ETI) is a significant concern in the automobile industry due to its disruptive impact on operating operations and the significant expense of recruiting and training new staff. The research suggests that many key elements, including income, mental well-being, the efficacy of mentoring programs, ethical climate, equitable decision-making procedures, work autonomy, and leadership behavior, influence employee turnover intention (10). These factors significantly influence employee satisfaction and profoundly impact their likelihood of leaving the company. The organizational environment has a crucial role in influencing performance results. A toxic workplace negatively impacts individuals' emotional and physical well-being, affecting the entire organization. According to Maslow's hierarchy of requirements, the basic human need for security is essential in all situations, and uncertainty makes it challenging to achieve higher-level demands (11). Cognitive distraction (CD) significantly contributes to employees' desire to leave their jobs. Nevertheless, investigating cognitive distraction in the workplace has produced inconclusive findings due to the disadvantages and benefits associated with such diversions. Workplaces increasingly endorse multitasking practices, and prior research has investigated how multitasking impacts employee attention. Disruptions and annoyances among coworkers can add to mental distraction from current responsibilities (12). External interruptions initiate a cognitive distraction chain involving diversion, realization, resumption, and retrieval. Even after resuming an interrupted task, prolonged cognitive distraction induces psychological stress among employees. This research examines the influence of TLB on employees' desire to leave their jobs (13). Moreover, it investigates the role of a harmful work environment and CD as intermediaries in the relationship between TLB and employees' inclination to quit their professions (14).

The primary objective of this study is to scrutinize the repercussions of TLB on employees' intention to turnover, a detailed exploration of which is delineated in the subsequent section. Additionally, this research delves into examining the intermediary roles played by a toxic workplace and CD in this relationship. A variety of historical and cultural factors influence the relationship between TLB and ETI. The Industrial Revolution

historically promoted authoritarian leadership styles that prioritized control and discipline over employee well-being in order to maximize efficiency and productivity. During this period, management theories such as Taylorism, which frequently ignored the human aspect, initiated the establishment of TLB and persisted throughout the 20th century. The human relations movement attempted to address these concerns. However, the emergence of globalization and technological advancements in the late 20th and early 21st centuries intensified competitive pressures. Consequently, organizations often prioritize results over employee well-being, leading to the proliferation of TLB. High-profile corporate scandals have underscored the detrimental effects of TLB. However, certain sectors continue to face challenges in effectively addressing these issues. Cultural factors, such as high-power distance and organizational cultures that prioritize competition and short-term results over employee well-being, play a significant role in fostering toxic leadership. Leadership styles significantly influence workplace dynamics, as authoritarian and transactional leaders tend to create environments that contribute to increased stress levels and employee turnover. Transformational leaders who inspire and support employees can decrease turnover and foster a positive work environment. Workforce demographics, such as generational differences and underrepresented groups, impact employee responses to leadership. The younger generations, including Millennials and Gen Z, prioritize supportive leadership and are more inclined to leave toxic work environments. Inclusive leadership practices can help alleviate the negative effects of TLB, especially for underrepresented groups. The literature has thoroughly examined the detrimental effects of TL, WPB, and CD independently. However, there is an apparent lack of research on how these factors interact and influence employee turnover intentions. This study investigates how WPB and CD operate as mediators in the connection between TLB and employees' intentions to leave their jobs. Understanding the mediating role of workplace bullying is essential for several reasons

1. It provides a nuanced perspective on the processes through which toxic leadership affects employees, going beyond the direct

impact to unveil potential underlying dynamics.

- Identifying workplace bullying and cognitive distraction as a mediator can help organizations develop specific interventions to address the adverse effects of TLB and decrease employee turnover.

The data for this study emanated from a quantitative survey involving 377 employees within the Indian automobile industry. The statistical tools employed for testing the research hypotheses were SPSS PROCESS macro, ensuring a robust analysis of the research framework.

### Hypothesis Formulation

The hypothesis of our research is based on the independent variable such as toxic leadership (TLB), workplace bullying (WPB), and cognitive distraction (CD), and dependent variable such as employee turnover intention (ETI). When employees experience de-motivation or dissatisfaction, they are more inclined to contemplate quitting the organization. The presence of unpleasant emotions among workers may result in a decline in performance and an increase in employee turnover, both of which are undesirable consequences for organizational leadership (15). Studies have shown that autocratic leadership has a significant role in workers' decisions to quit their jobs (14). Researchers conducted research on Indian businesses, such as retail outlets, factories, and private banks, and found that autocratic leadership significantly influences workers' desire to leave their jobs (16, 17).

**Hypothesis (H1):** TLB is positively influences the ETI.

**Hypothesis (H2):** TLB is positively influences the WPB.

**Hypothesis (H3):** TLB is positively influences the CD.

Research has extensively examined the impact of hostile work environments characterized by bullying on employees' psychological well-being, showing that such environments lead to negative behavioral outcomes (18). These workplaces

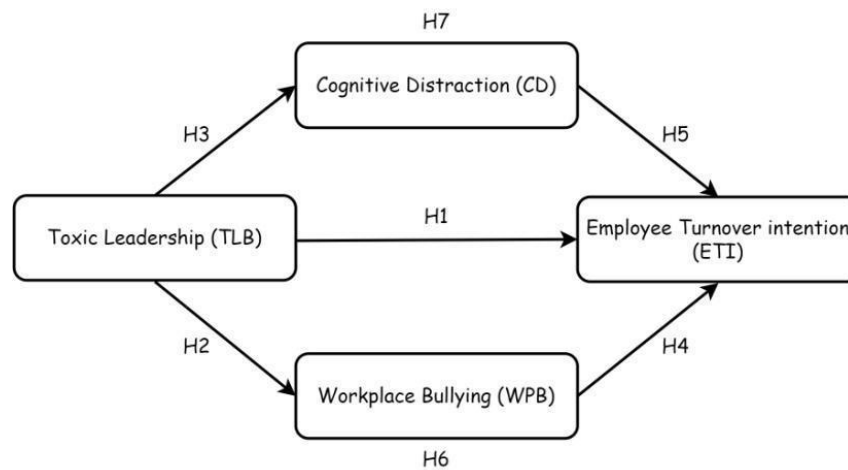
decrease employee engagement and foster negative emotions, such as frustration and anxiety, leading to incivility. Researchers identify incivility, a feature of workplace bullying, as a predictor of employees' intention to leave (6, 13). Additionally, studies have examined the relationship between ETI, job satisfaction, and WPB, finding that workplace bullying increases employees' desire to leave while reducing job satisfaction (19).

**Hypothesis (H4):** A WPB is positively influences the ETI. Gupta *et al.*, (20) suggested that distractions or unnecessary interruptions from supervisors negatively affect task quality, influencing ETI. Another study investigated the relationship between ETI and job satisfaction, taking into account factors such as standard working hours, work-life conflict, and utilization of information technology (21, 22). However, the role of CD in organizational settings, particularly in higher education, remains underexplored.

**Hypothesis (H5):** A CD is positively influences the ETI. Studies globally have investigated the relationships between WPB, TLB, and ETI (23). Research consistently shows a significant link between TLB and increased ETI (6, 24). The study in Ref (25) examined toxic leadership's impact on employee disengagement and turnover, and the conditions under which its negative impact is reduced. Van Prooijen and de Vries (26) found that toxic leadership fosters organizational conspiracy beliefs, leading to increased job insecurity and turnover intentions. However, the mediating role of WPB remains unexplored.

**Hypothesis (H6):** A WPB mediates the relationship between TLB and ETI. The study explored the relationships between workflow interruptions, cognitive distraction, leadership-related social stressors, and turnover intention (27, 14). Further research has found that toxic leadership mediates employees' turnover intentions (13). The relationship between ETI and TLB is intricate and influenced by various factors (15).

**Hypothesis (H7):** A CD mediates the relationship between TLB and ETI. Figure 1 displays the research model used in our investigation.



**Figure 1:** Research Model

## Methodology

### Sample and Participants

The sample population for this study comprised 377 employees from the Automobile sector, with a balanced representation of age groups (20-60 years), genders (69.76% male, 30.24% female), and experience (0-20 years). These demographic factors were considered to ensure a diverse and representative sample.

Table 1 presents an overview of the demographics of the study participants, highlighting key variables essential for understanding the sample. Regarding gender distribution, most participants are male, comprising 69.76% of the total respondents. Females, on the other hand, make up the remaining 30.24%. Regarding marital status, most participants are married 59.16%, followed closely by singles 31.56%. A smaller percentage of participants consists of widowed individuals 6.37% and divorced individuals 2.91%. The

participants possess diverse educational backgrounds with varying qualifications. The largest group holds a Diploma/ITI qualification 24.14%, followed by those with an Intermediate or Equivalent education 18.83%. Individuals with a Bachelor's degree account for 14.85% of the total, while those with a Master's degree or higher make up 6.10%. There is evident diversity in age among the participants, distributed across different age groups. Individuals under 25 constitute 22.82% of the sample, those between 25 and 35 represent 28.38%, and individuals aged 35 to 45 make up 24.93%. The study also includes individuals aged 45 to 55 (17.77%) and those 55 and older 6.10%. The participants also possess a range of professional experience, with the majority falling between 4 to 8 years (34.48%). Individuals with 0 to 3 years of experience make up 30.50%, those with 8 to 12 years represent 25.20%, and individuals with over 12 years of experience account for 9.82%.

**Table 1:** Demographic Details of Participants (N=377)

Name	Options	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	263	69.76
	Female	114	30.24
Marital status	Single	119	31.56
	Married	223	59.16
	Widowed	24	6.37
	Divorced	11	2.91
	Education	Secondary School or lower	74
	High School or equivalent	62	16.45
	Intermediate or equivalent	71	18.83
	Diploma/ITI	91	24.14
	Bachelor's Degree	56	14.85
	Master's Degree or higher	23	6.10

Age (in years)	Below 25	86	22.82
	25 - 35	107	28.38
	35 - 45	94	24.93
	45 - 55	67	17.77
	55 - above	23	6.10
Experience (in years)	0 - 3	115	30.50
	4 - 8	130	34.48
	8 - 12	95	25.20
	More than 12	37	9.82

### Measuring Instruments

The ten items associated with toxic leadership (TLB) were adapted from the works of Paltu and Brouwers (10) and Soqair and Gharib (14). These items were: "To what extent do you perceive consistent monitoring and control of tasks by your leadership, limiting autonomy?", "To what degree does your leadership team display favoritism or mistreat certain individuals?", "How frequently do your leaders take advantage of employees for personal gain without regard for their well-being?". Participants rated the frequency of certain leadership team behaviors on a Likert scale from 1 to 5. We have incorporated eight components of workplace bullying (WPB) adapted from the studies by Mehmood *et al.*, 2024 (27). Such questions were: "How often do individuals undermine the efforts of their colleagues in the workplace?" "How frequently have you observed or experienced unfair criticism from colleagues or superiors?" and "How frequently have you experienced or observed verbal bullying in your workplace?" Respondents rated the prevalence of workplace bullying on a Likert scale from 1 to 5. We derived seven cognitive distraction (CD) items from the works of Asghar *et al.*, 2021 (28). These items were: "To what extent are you content with the balance between your work and personal life?" "How satisfied are you with your overall job?" "How satisfied are you with the level of job security in your current position?" "o what extent are you satisfied with your relationships with colleagues in the workplace?" Respondents rated their overall work satisfaction on a Likert scale of 1 to 5. We adapted five items measuring employee turnover intention (ETI) from the works of Ofei, *et al.*, 2023 (29). These answers were: "How would you evaluate your competence in completing assigned tasks?" "How well do you collaborate with team members to achieve collective goals?" "How frequently do you demonstrate initiative and

contribute innovative ideas to your team?" Participants rated their perceived performance on a 1–5 Likert scale to assess employee performance.

## Results

### Sample Adequacy and Data Sphericity Tests

We evaluated the sample's adequacy by conducting the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test, which assesses the data's suitability for factor analysis. A KMO value that is nearly 1 suggests that the dataset is appropriate for factor analysis. Values below 0.5 suggest limited benefits from factor analysis (30).

The KMO indicator in Table 2 is 0.879, close to the ideal value of 1. Furthermore, Bartlett's test of sphericity was utilized to verify the unique and separate attributes of the research variables. It is crucial to assess whether the correlation matrix is similar to an identity matrix.

### Measurement Models and Discriminant Validity

We assessed the reliability and validity of the measurement model using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) in IBM SPSS. The threshold for accepting factor loadings as valid was set above 0.7 (31). After conducting the validity test, it was found that there were 22 valid questions out of 30 questions. These questions are divided into workplace bullying (7 questions), toxic leadership (6 questions), cognitive distraction (5 questions), and turnover intentions (4 questions). We utilized Cronbach's alpha, average variance extracted (AVE), factor loading, and composite reliability for evaluation. The factor loading values surpassed the 0.70 threshold, suggesting robust relationships between the items and their corresponding constructs. The Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values surpassed the recommended 0.70 threshold, demonstrating strong internal consistency and reliability of the scales. The

convergent validity, evaluated using AVE, showed values exceeding the 0.5 threshold for all constructs, affirming the convergence of the items within each construct (32). Overall, thoroughly

examining factor loading, internal consistency, and convergent validity indicates strong support for the model's fit and predictive ability. Table 3 is for the results of the reliability and validity tests.

**Table 2:** KMO and Bartlett's Test

Test	Results
KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.879
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx Chi-Square
	df
	Sig.
	4382.998
	528
	<.001

**Table 3:** Convergent Validity and Composite Reliability Test Results

Variable	Item	Convergent Validity		Internal Consistency	
		Loading ( $\lambda$ )	AVE	CA ( $\alpha$ )	CR
Workplace Bullying (WPB)	WPB_1	0.824**	0.652	0.924	0.99
	WPB_2	0.720**			
	WPB_2	0.813**			
	WPB_3	0.836**			
	WPB_5	0.820**			
	WPB_6	0.818**			
	WPB_7	0.815**			
Toxic Leadership (TLB)	TL_1	0.818**	0.583	0.884	0.984
	TL_2	0.814**			
	TL_3	0.721**			
	TL_4	0.755**			
	TL_5	0.701**			
	TL_6	0.764**			
Cognitive Distraction (CD)	CD_1	0.759**	0.608	0.903	0.973
	CD_2	0.855**			
	CD_3	0.719**			
	CD_4	0.847**			
	CD_5	0.706**			
Employee Turnover Intention (ETI)	ETI_1	0.798**	0.589	0.883	0.963
	ETI_2	0.783**			
	ETI_3	0.762**			
	ETI_4	0.726**			

Discriminant validity can be assessed using the Fornell and Larcker (33) technique and the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) correlation ratio. The Fornell-Larcker approach confirms discriminant validity when the square root of the average variance excluded (AVE) for each latent variable exceeds the construct inter-constructed correlation. This criterion has been criticized, making the HTMT technique more popular than the Fornell-Larcker method (32). HTMT values above the square roots of AVEs indicate significant discriminant validity across model components if

they are below 0.90 (34). Fornell and Larcker are said to provide fewer effective results than HTMT. Henseler *et al.*, (32) advised an HTMT threshold of 0.90 since values over 0.90 may reveal discriminant validity issues. Table 4 shows that each construct's HTMT values are below 0.90, proving discriminant validity. The scale fits the necessity to distinguish model structures clearly.

**Table 4:** Discriminant Validity Test

Constructs	TLB	WPB	CD	ETI
TLB	0.763**			
WPB	0.648**	0.791**		
CD	0.715**	0.727**	0.804**	
ETI	0.681**	0.718**	0.781**	0.811**

Notes: \*\*= $p < 0.01$  (2-tailed test), Toxic Leadership (TLB), Workplace Bullying (WPB), Cognitive Distraction (CD)

**Table 5:** Model Fit

Model fit indices	Observed Value	Threshold Value
$\frac{\chi^2}{df}$	1.72	1 to 3
CFI	0.928	$\geq 0.90$
TLI	0.914	$\geq 0.90$
GFI	0.836	$\geq 0.80$
RMSA	0.441	$\leq 0.80$

**Table 6:** Results of Path Analysis (Direct Impacts)

Hypothesis	Std. Beta ( $\beta$ )	t-value	p-value	Decision
TLB $\rightarrow$ ETI	0.428	7.215***	0.000	Supported
TLB $\rightarrow$ WPB	0.355	6.157***	0.000	Supported
TLB $\rightarrow$ CD	0.271	4.227***	0.001	Supported
WPB $\rightarrow$ ETI	0.386	6.871***	0.000	Supported
CD $\rightarrow$ ETI	0.167	3.024***	0.023	Supported

**Table 7:** Results of Path Analysis (Indirect Impacts or Mediating)

Hypothesis	Std. Beta ( $\beta$ )	t-value	p-value	Decision
TLB $\rightarrow$ WPB $\rightarrow$ ETI	0.137	3.008***	0.000	Supported
TLB $\rightarrow$ CD $\rightarrow$ ETI	0.047	2.841***	0.000	Supported

**Structural Equation Models (SEM)**

Table 5 illustrates the CFA findings demonstrating that the data and hypothetical model are suitable before performing SEM. The findings are within the usual ranges, indicating that the data is valid, appropriate, and precise for further examination. The study examined hypothesis paths using the widely adopted SPSS PROCESS macro, a popular method for evaluating direct and indirect effects on variables. All hypothesis paths in Table 5 and Table 6 showed statistical significance. The investigation identified a substantial correlation between Employee Turnover Intention (ETI) and Toxic Leadership (TLB) ( $\beta = 0.428, t = 7.215, p < 0.05$ ), supporting H1. Toxic Leadership was found to have a significant relationship with Workplace Bullying (WPB), supporting H2 ( $\beta = 0.355, t = 6.157, p < 0.05$ ). Furthermore, a significant association between TLB and Cognitive Distraction (CD) ( $\beta = 0.271, t = 4.227, p < 0.05$ ) supports H3. Moreover, the study revealed a strong correlation

between WPB and ETI ( $\beta = 0.386, t = 6.871, p < 0.05$ ), supporting H4. Finally, the analysis showed a strong and meaningful association between Cognitive Distraction and Employee Turnover Intention ( $\beta = 0.167, t = 3.024, p < 0.05$ ), supporting H5. These empirical results demonstrate how Toxic Leadership significantly affects organizational dynamics, supporting the hypothesized correlations. As a result, this influence significantly impacts employees' turnover intentions through workplace bullying and cognitive distraction, shows in Table 6. The results offer valuable insights into how leadership behaviors and workplace factors interact and affect employee turnover intentions in a specific organizational setting. The findings show a significant positive indirect effect of TLB on ETI through WPB, with a standardized beta of 0.137 and a t-value of 3.008. The analysis shows a significant indirect effect of TLB on ETI through CD, with a standardized beta of 0.047 and a t-value of 2.841. The results confirm the hypothesized

indirect effects, showing that TLB affects workplace factors and ETI through CD and WPB, illustrated in Table 7.

## Discussion

This research investigated the influence of TLB on workers' inclination to quit their positions in the Indian automotive industry. Our analysis went beyond the direct impact and included the effects of workplace bullying and cognitive distraction. This thorough investigation led to the creation and enhancement of a synthesized research model customized for the specifics of the current study.

### Direct Impacts and Indirect Impacts (Mediating)

The direct impact observed in this study, wherein TLB significantly contributes to employee turnover intention (ETI), resonates with earlier research highlighting the detrimental consequences associated with autocratic leadership styles (15, 35). This underscores the pivotal role of leadership behavior in shaping employees' intentions to depart from the organization. The positive correlation between toxic leadership and workplace bullying (WPB) aligns coherently with studies that accentuate the association between authoritative leadership and negative workplace behaviors (27). This underscores the adverse impact of TLB on workplace dynamics, potentially fostering mistreatment and conflict among employees. Findings pertaining to the positive association between toxic leadership and cognitive distraction (CD) resonate with existing literature that underscores the influence of leadership on employee cognitive processes. This suggests that toxic leadership styles contribute to cognitive disruptions, potentially affecting the focus and attention of employees. The indirect impact of TLB on ETI through the mediating factor of workplace bullying (TLB → WPB → ETI) aligns seamlessly with the scholarly contributions of. This underscores the role of toxic leadership in cultivating a hostile work environment characterized by bullying, thereby highlighting the intricate pathways through which toxic leadership shapes turnover intentions. Similarly, the recognized indirect effect of TLB on ETI through cognitive distraction (TLB → CD → ETI) aligns with studies that emphasize the role of leadership in influencing employee cognitive processes and

overall well-being (13, 15). This nuanced understanding adds depth to our comprehension of the intricate relationships between leadership styles and employees' intentions to leave the organization.

### Theoretical and Practical Implication

These findings contribute to and extend existing literature emphasizing the significance of leadership behaviors in influencing workplace dynamics and, consequently, employee turnover intentions. The identification of bullying in the workplace and cognitive distraction as elements that function as mediators is in line with the request for a more thorough knowledge of the processes via which toxic leadership exerts its impact (6). When developing treatments and training programs to build healthier work environments and reduce the negative impacts of TLB, organizations should take these findings into account and include them in their planning activities.

This study presents a unique approach by examining the interconnected effects of WPB, TLB, and CD on ETI. The originality of this research lies in its comprehensive analysis of these factors and their mediating roles. The findings have significant practical implications for organizational leaders and HR specialists, as they underscore the necessity of addressing toxic leadership to mitigate workplace bullying and cognitive distractions, thereby reducing turnover rates (17).

### Future Works

Future research should explore the enduring consequences of TLB on employees and organizations. Longitudinal studies can provide insights into how prolonged exposure to TLB affects employee mental health, job satisfaction, and career progression. Additionally, investigating the efficacy of diverse therapeutic approaches, such as coaching, counseling, and organizational development interventions, in mitigating the negative effects of TLB across different organizational settings would be valuable. Understanding which strategies are most effective in various cultural and industry contexts can guide organizations in implementing tailored interventions.

### Conclusion

This study examined the complex dynamics of TLB in the Indian automobile industry and its effects on



ETI. The results offer valuable insights into the complex relationship between TLB, WPB, and employees' intentions to leave. The evident effect of toxic leadership on employee turnover intention is consistent with previous research, highlighting the critical influence of leadership behavior on employees' intentions to leave. Toxic leadership has been linked to workplace bullying and cognitive distraction, highlighting the negative impact on workplace dynamics and employee cognitive processes. In addition, the research revealed secondary effects of authoritarian leadership on employees wanting to leave their jobs through workplace mistreatment and mental distraction. The results mirror the research of previous scholars, highlighting the establishment of a hostile work atmosphere marked by bullying and the cognitive disturbances caused by authoritarian leadership. Based on established theories and recent empirical evidence, the research model enhances understanding of the implications of toxic leadership in the automobile industry. The results highlight the significance of examining the direct influence of leadership styles on workplace atmosphere and employee welfare. Organizations aiming for sustainable and healthy work environments must address the implications of toxic leadership highlighted in this study through strategic interventions. Addressing toxic leadership behaviors and promoting a positive workplace culture is essential in reducing employee turnover intentions. Future studies may investigate specific contextual factors impacting these dynamics and develop interventions customized for the academic environment. This study provides a foundation for future research, giving meaningful insights for professionals, scholars, and leaders looking to improve work environments and address the adverse effects of authoritarian leadership in educational settings.

### Abbreviations

TLB:	Toxic Leadership
CD:	Cognitive Distraction
WPB:	Workplace Bullying
ETI:	Employee Turnover Intentions
JS:	Job Satisfaction
KMO:	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin

### Acknowledgement

Nil.

### Author Contributions

Ankita Srivastava: Conceptualization, data analysis, methodology, data collection, original draft preparation. Avnish Sharma: Supervision, formal analysis, validation.

### Conflict of Interest

Nil.

### Ethics Approval

Not applicable.

### Funding

Nil.

### References

1. Brubaker TA, Bocarnea MC, Patterson K, Winston BE. Servant leadership and organizational citizenship in Rwanda: A moderated mediation model. *Servant Leadersh Theory Pract.* 2015;2(2):27–56.
2. Paais M, Pattiruhuzo F. Effect of Motivation, Leadership, and Organizational Culture on Satisfaction and Employee Performance. *J Asian Financ Econ Bus.* 7(8):577–88.
3. Seyed Hasan H, Ebrahim Hajipour AK, Darikandeh A. The mediating effect of organizational culture in the relationship of leadership style with organizational learning. *J Hum Behav Soc Environ.* 2020;30(3):279–88.
4. Zhou X, Rasool SF, Yang J, Asghar MZ. Exploring the Relationship between Despotic Leadership and Job Satisfaction: The Role of Self Efficacy and Leader-Member Exchange. *Int J Environ Res Public Health.* 2021;18(10). Available from: <https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/18/10/5307>.
5. Asghar MZ, Gul F, Hakkarainen PS, Zeki Taşdemir M. Validating entrepreneurial intentions questionnaire to assess the impact of entrepreneurship education. *Egit ve Bilim.* 2019;44(197):383–99.
6. De Clercq D, Azeem MU, Haq IU, Bouckenoghe D. The stress-reducing effect of coworker support on turnover intentions: Moderation by political ineptness and despotic leadership. *J Bus Res.* 2020;111:12–24.
7. Tag-Eldeen A, Barakat M, Dar H. Investigating the impact of workplace bullying on employees' morale, performance and turnover intentions in five-star Egyptian hotel operations. *Tour Travel.* 2017;1(1):4–14.
8. Noopur, Burman R. Role of perceived HRM toward workplace bullying and turnover intention: mediating role of resilience and psychological health. *Asia-Pacific J Bus Adm.* 2021 Jan 1;13(4):433–51.
9. Gupta R, Bakhshi A, Einarsen S. Investigating Workplace Bullying in India: Psychometric Properties, Validity, and Cutoff Scores of Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised. *Sage Open.* 2017;7(2):2158244017715674. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244017715674>.
10. Paltu A, Brouwers M. Toxic leadership: Effects on job satisfaction, commitment, turnover intention and organisational culture within the South African manufacturing industry. *SA J Hum Resour Manag.*

- 2020;18:1–11.
11. Salman S, Chawla RN, Naz M, Khan RMN. Impact of Workplace Bullying on Employee Intentions to Leave and Mediating Role of Employee Engagement: Banking Sector of Pakistan. *Pakistan J Humanit Soc Sci.* 2023;11(4):4213-4227.
  12. Mark G, Czerwinski M, Iqbal ST. Effects of Individual Differences in Blocking Workplace Distractions. In: *Proceedings of the 2018 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*. New York, NY, USA: Association for Computing Machinery; 2018. p. 1–12. (CHI '18). Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1145/3173574.3173666>.
  13. Rasool SF, Wang M, Tang M, Saeed A, Iqbal J. How Toxic Workplace Environment Effects the Employee Engagement: The Mediating Role of Organizational Support and Employee Wellbeing. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health.* 2021;18(5): 2294-2311. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18052294>
  14. Soqair N Al, Gharib F Al. Toxic Workplace Environment and Employee Engagement. *J Serv Sci Manag.* 2023;16(06):661–9.
  15. Iqbal J, Asghar A, Asghar MZ. Effect of Despotism Leadership on Employee Turnover Intention: Mediating Toxic Workplace Environment and Cognitive Distraction in Academic Institutions. *Behavioral Sciences.* 2022; 12(5):125-148. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs12050125>
  16. Mir Aimal K, Zainiab B, Jahanvash K. The Mediating Role of Employee Voice Behaviour in the Relation between Despotism Leadership and Employee Outcomes. *SJESR.* 2020;3(4):362–73.
  17. Lee MCC, Sim BYH, Tuckey MR. Comparing effects of toxic leadership and team social support on job insecurity, role ambiguity, work engagement, and job performance: A multilevel mediational perspective. *Asia Pacific Manag Rev.* 2024;29(1):115–26.
  18. Rasool SF, Maqbool R, Samma M, Zhao Y, Anjum A. Positioning Depression as a Critical Factor in Creating a Toxic Workplace Environment for Diminishing Worker Productivity. *Sustainability.* 2019;11(9):2589. <https://www.mdpi.com/20711050/11/9/2589>.
  19. Chen HT, Wang CH. Incivility, satisfaction and turnover intention of tourist hotel chefs. *Int J Contemp Hosp Manag.* 2019 Jan 1;31(5):2034–53. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-02-2018-0164>.
  20. Gupta A, Li H, Sharda R. Should I send this message? Understanding the impact of interruptions, social hierarchy and perceived task complexity on user performance and perceived workload. *Decis Support Syst.* 2013;55(1):135–45.
  21. Asghar MZ, Arif S, Barbera E, Seitamaa-Hakkarainen P, Kocayoruk E. Support through Social Media and Online Class Participation to Enhance Psychological Resilience. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health.* 2021; 18(22):11962-11981. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph182211962>
  22. Belkin LY, Becker WJ, Conroy SA. The Invisible Leash: The Impact of Organizational Expectations for Email Monitoring After-Hours on Employee Resources, Well-Being, and Turnover Intentions. *Gr & Organ Manag.* 2020;45(5):709–40.
  23. Albashiti B, Hamid Z, Aboramadan M. Fire in the belly: the impact of despotic leadership on employees work-related outcomes in the hospitality setting. *Int J Contemp Hosp Manag.* 2021 Jan 1;33(10):3564–84.
  24. Azeem MU, Bajwa SU, Shahzad K, Aslam H. Psychological contract violation and turnover intention: the role of job dissatisfaction and work disengagement. *Empl Relations Int J.* 2020 Jan 1;42(6):1291–308.
  25. Farghaly Abdelaliam SM, Abou Zeid MAG. The relationship between toxic leadership and organizational performance: the mediating effect of nurses' silence. *BMC Nurs.* 2023;22(1):1–12.
  26. van Prooijen JW, de Vries RE. Organizational Conspiracy Beliefs: Implications for Leadership Styles and Employee Outcomes. *J Bus Psychol.* 2016;31(4):479–91.
  27. Mehmood S, Rasool M, Ahmed M, Haddad H, Al-Ramahi NM. Role of workplace bullying and workplace incivility for employee performance: Mediated-moderated mechanism. *PLoS One.* 2024;19 (1 January):1–21. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0291877>.
  28. Asghar MZ, Iqbal A, Seitamaa-Hakkarainen P, Barbera E. Breaching Learners' Social Distancing through Social Media during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health.* 2021; 18(21):11012-11033. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph182111012> <https://www.mdpi.com/16604601/18/21/11012>.
  29. Ofei AMA, Poku CA, Paarima Y, Barnes T, Kwashie AA. Toxic leadership behaviour of nurse managers and turnover intentions: the mediating role of job satisfaction. *BMC Nurs.* 2023;22(1):1–10.
  30. Chen W, Fu J. The operating performance evaluation of retail industry listed companies based on factor analysis. In: *2011 2nd International Conference on Artificial Intelligence, Management Science and Electronic Commerce (AIMSEC)*. 2011. p. 6252–5.
  31. Hair Jr J, Sarstedt M, Hopkins L, G. Kuppelwieser V. Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). *Eur Bus Rev.* 2014 Jan 1;26(2):106–21.
  32. Henseler J, Ringle CM, Sarstedt M. A new criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling. *J Acad Mark Sci.* 2015;43(1):115–35.
  33. Fornell C, Larcker DF. Structural Equation Models with Unobservable Variables and Measurement Error: Algebra and Statistics. *J Mark Res.* 1981;18(3):382–8.
  34. Odunjo-Saka KA, Olaleye BR, Sarpong E, Adedokun JO, Ibrahim A. The influence of workplace bullying on the performance of hotel employees: the mediating role of emotional intelligence and psychological resilience. *Tour Manag Stud.* 2023;19(3):59–71.
  35. Wolor CW, Ardiansyah A, Rofaida R, Nurkhin A, Rababah MA. Impact of Toxic Leadership on Employee Performance. *Heal Psychol Res.* 2022;10(4):1–10.