

# **Toxic Leadership in Administrative Leadership and its Relationship with Counterproductive Work Behaviors Among Administrators at Fayoum University**

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## **Abstract**

Universities are considered one of the most important drivers of change in their contemporary societies, playing a significant role in both economic and social development. They strive to achieve their goals by selecting administrative leaders capable of performing their work efficiently.

Modern management emphasizes human development with the fundamental belief that people possess abilities and potential far beyond what is typically utilized or taken advantage of in the workplace. Consequently, negative leadership practices in some institutions, including universities, have renewed researchers' interest in the darker side of leadership. This interest has been centered around describing these practices through various terms such as destructive leadership, authoritarian leadership, narcissistic leadership, abusive leadership, deviant leadership, ineffective leadership, and toxic leadership. These terms are used to describe the negative behaviors of those in positions of power that can harm individuals, groups, and organizational success. Toxic leadership is viewed by many as a leadership approach that harms both subordinates and the institutions themselves, especially when opportunistic and sycophantic individuals are rewarded and promoted to leadership positions while those with creative and independent thinking are excluded from decision-making roles. As a result, toxic leadership often leads to high turnover rates and decreased productivity. The objective of this study was to examine the correlation between the dimensions of toxic leadership, which include self-promotion, abusive supervision, unpredictability, narcissism, and authoritarian leadership, and counterproductive work behaviors, such as sabotage, withdrawal, production deviation, aggression towards others, and withholding help from others, in relation to work behaviors at Fayoum University from the perspective of administrative leaders.

The researcher developed a theoretical framework on toxic leadership, addressing its concept, leadership styles, dimensions, and the characteristics of toxic leaders. The framework also covered counterproductive work behaviors in terms of their concept, dimensions, and the relationship between toxic leadership and counterproductive work behaviors in contemporary educational management literature.

The study's third section documents the reality of administrators at Fayoum University, where human resources are considered the most important asset. Administrators serve as a key tool for meeting the needs of students and faculty members. Providing a safe academic environment, supported by strong leadership, is crucial. If positive relationships are not established in the work environment, despite the availability of services, toxic leadership behaviors may arise, leading to decreased job satisfaction and counterproductive work behaviors, which negatively impact the university's performance.

The reality of Fayoum University, as outlined in its strategic plan (2022-2027), identified weaknesses in the administrative body, one of which is the "low level of job performance in the administrative system." This is despite the presence of incentive and reward systems and capacity-building programs.

The descriptive approach was used to achieve the study's objectives. After reviewing previous research on the relationship between toxic leadership and counterproductive work behaviors and analyzing the findings, the researcher formulated the main hypothesis as follows: There is a statistically significant correlation between the dimensions of toxic leadership (self-promotion, abusive supervision, unpredictability, narcissism, and authoritarian leadership) and counterproductive work behaviors (sabotage, withdrawal, production deviation, aggression towards others, and withholding help from others) related to the work of administrators at Fayoum University. The main hypothesis led to the formulation of five sub-hypotheses.

Field research was conducted to explore the reality of toxic leadership practices from the perspective of administrators and counterproductive work behaviors from the perspective of leaders, along with the correlation

between the two variables. The researcher designed two questionnaires to measure the study's variables. The research population included administrative leaders and administrators working at Fayoum University, and the study sample consisted of 377 individuals, including 60 administrative leaders and 317 administrators, selected using stratified random sampling. The results showed a correlation between the dimensions of toxic leadership and counterproductive work behaviors, as follows:

- The results revealed a significant overall correlation between the dimensions of toxic leadership and counterproductive work behaviors. All dimensions of toxic leadership (self-promotion, abusive supervision, unpredictability, narcissism) showed positive, statistically significant correlations with counterproductive work behaviors (sabotage, withdrawal, production deviation, aggression towards others, withholding help from others).
- The results revealed a significant positive correlation between the dimensions of toxic leadership (self-promotion, abusive supervision, unpredictability, narcissism) and sabotage as one of the dimensions of counterproductive work behaviors. The correlation between abusive supervision and sabotage was particularly high, while the correlation between narcissism and sabotage was lower.
- There was a statistically significant positive correlation between the dimensions of toxic leadership (self-promotion, abusive supervision, unpredictability, narcissism) and withdrawal as one of the dimensions of counterproductive work behaviors. The correlation between authoritarian leadership and withdrawal was notably higher, while the correlation between narcissism and withdrawal was lower.
- The results also showed a significant positive correlation between the dimensions of toxic leadership (self-promotion, abusive supervision, unpredictability, narcissism, authoritarian leadership) and production deviation. The correlation between self-promotion and production deviation was particularly high.
- The results indicated a significant positive correlation between the dimensions of toxic leadership (self-promotion, abusive supervision, narcissism, authoritarian leadership) and aggression

towards others. The correlation between self-promotion and aggression towards others was particularly high.

- The results also revealed a significant positive correlation between the dimensions of toxic leadership (self-promotion, abusive supervision, unpredictability, narcissism, authoritarian leadership) and withholding help from others. The correlation between self-promotion and withholding help from others was particularly high.

Based on the results, a set of proposed mechanisms were presented to overcome the negative practices of self-promotion, abusive supervision, unpredictability, narcissism, and authoritarian leadership. Additional suggestions were made to address counterproductive work behaviors, such as sabotage, withdrawal, production deviation, aggression towards others, and withholding help.