



Negative Effects of Toxic Emotions in Supervisory Relationships

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Short Communication

The relationship between work-related stress and employee health is gaining research attention of late. Negative effects of certain leadership behaviors are conceptualized as 'toxic emotions' in the workplace where all leaders create pains in their subordinates [1,2]. Seven behaviours are suggested as causes of this toxicity: Intention, Incompetence, Infidelity, Insensitivity, Intrusion, Institutional Forces and Inevitability).

We have developed a 46-item Toxic Emotions Scales (TES) to assess these behaviors. It consists of 10 subscales: Intention, Incompetence, Infidelity, Fairness, Hostility, Insensitivity, Arrogance & Corruption, Intrusion, Institutional Forces and Inevitability, with an alpha range of 0.81-0.97 and a CFA construct validity of 0.92.

Toxic Emotions and Subordinate Emotional Health at Work

We first tested the Toxic Emotions Scale (TES) to measure these dimensions and administered it along with GHQ-28 to 240 working adults, half male and half female and aged 25-40 in Taiwan. The Cronbach's alpha exceeded .70 for all the TEQ dimensions except Inevitability ($\alpha = .64$). Results found all 7 of the original Fox's toxic behaviors to correlate significantly with Somatization, Anxiety-Insomnia, Social Dysfunction, Severe Depression and Total Score except only Incompetence, which correlated insignificantly with Somatization ($r = .070$, $p = .276$). In addition, the correlation of Somatization reached significance with Infidelity ($r = .146$, $p = .024$), Insensitivity ($r = .134$, $p = .037$) and Inevitability ($r = .163$, $p = .011$) respectively. All other intercorrelations between the TEQ and the GHQ dimensions reached high significance ($p < .001$). Regression Analyses revealed the predictive effects of Institutional Forces on

Somatization ($F = 10.613$, $p = .001$); Infidelity ($F = 431.152$, $p = .000$) and Intrusion ($F = 269.588$, $p = .000$) on Insomnia; Intention on Severe Depression ($F = 34.147$, $p = .000$); as well as Intension ($F = 29.974$, $p = .000$) and Institutional Forces ($F = 18.256$, $p = .000$) on Total Score. These findings have provided the first evidence to the efficacy of 'toxic emotions' as a workable construct for analyzing the subordinate's emotional health at work.

Toxic Emotions: Teacher's Negative Behaviors on Pupil's Psychological Health

Negative effects of certain leadership behaviors are defined as 'toxic emotions' in the organization, and they are a new source of work-related stress. Our previous studies have confirmed the negative effects of the TES dimensions along with authoritarian leadership and traditional Chinese personality as major sources on the subordinates' poor psychological health at work. The present study investigated the relationship between head teacher's TES behaviors and school children's psychological health as measured by the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ). A sample of 505 secondary school students in Taiwan, 269 males and 236 females in Grades 7 ($n = 229$) & 9 ($n = 276$) participated.

Except for the correlation pairs for Incompetence vs. Social Dysfunction and Infidelity vs. Severe Depression, all other inter-correlations among all the TES scales and the GHQ scales were highly significant mostly at the 0.01 level and only several at the 0.05 level. The findings reflected a serious state of the children's health problem.

As regression analyses revealed, the Institutional Forces predicted Somatization ($\beta = .179$; $p < .01$), Anxiety-Insomnia (

$\beta=.184$; $p<.01$), and Social Dysfunction ($\beta=.135$; $p<.01$); whereas Infidelity predicted Severe Depression ($\beta=.177$; $p<.01$) negatively. The results indicated that [1] the head-teachers in this study indeed exhibited serious TES behaviors in their day-to-day interactions with their pupils, and that [2] these TES behaviors affected the pupils' psychological health to an alarming degree in the schools. The two predictive TES dimensions, the schools' Institutional Forces and the teacher's Infidelity, were found most salient and discomfoting. Implications of the findings and conclusions are evident and noted [3,4].

These two studies reported above along with several follow-up investigations examining a number of such dyadic supervisor-subordinate relationships have provided encouraging confirmation

of the validity and value of application of such a construct for real0life applications. We are pleased to have taken the first steps and experience the viability and usefulness of the measurement of toxic emotions in the work, social or public organizations.

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