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The Relationship between a Toxic Workplace
Environment, Workplace Stress, and Employee
Development

By

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of Master of Science in Human Resources Management

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The Relationship between a Toxic Workplace Environment, Workplace Stress, and
Employee Development

Maryana Al Khoury

ABSTRACT

Employees are the backbone of every organization. Due to the fast changes in today's corporate world, it is highly important to take into consideration the employees' well-being and to keep their stress levels minimized. It is for the organization's benefit to provide a safe working atmosphere for their employees. Hence, this paper aims to explore the relationship between a toxic workplace environment (TWE), workplace stress (WS), and employee development taking into consideration Career Development and Self-development (EDCD and EDCD). One hundred and twenty-three employees working in the private sector in Lebanon participated in our survey and the results were analyzed using SPSS software. Results indicated that a Toxic Workplace Environment leads to Workplace Stress and Toxic Workplace Environments and Workplace Stress negatively influence Employee Development. Future recommendations and managerial implications of the study are discussed along with limitations.

Keywords: Toxic Workplace Environment (TWE), Workplace Stress (WS), Employee Development (ED), Social Exchange Theory (SET)

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction and Background

In today's corporate world, the employee is considered a valuable organizational resource capable of achieving and sustaining a competitive advantage (Kimani et al., 2020). Employees are determinants of an organization's know-how, creativity, experience, technical skills, productivity, quality of service, and relationship with stakeholders (Pasban & Nojede, 2016). As the importance of the human resource is starting to capture more attention, organizations, now more than ever, have the responsibility of developing this human resource to ensure its efficacy (Kimani et al., 2020). According to Goal et al. (2014), the aim of employee development is to build knowledge, competencies, behavior, and motivation to enhance the individual and organizational performance. Moreover, Noe (2006), mentioned that employee development (ED) can be viewed from four different perspectives, which are: formal education, assessment, job experiences, and interpersonal relationships. According to Anjum & Ming (2017), when negative interpersonal relationships exist between employees, a toxic workplace environment (TWE) is present. Nevertheless, previous studies have proven that 80 per cent of employee productivity concerns and issues are directly related to the type of work environment they operate in (Anjum & Ming, 2017). Adding to that, a toxic workplace environment is a source of workplace stress (WS) which is universally considered as a major mental health problem. Workplace stress affects employees' productivity, performance, and decision-making abilities (Wang et al., 2020). Additionally, previous studies have demonstrated how being present in a

toxic work environment, specifically being ostracized, can have detrimental effects on the employee physical and psychological well-being (Xu et al., 2019). Also, a toxic workplace environment affects productivity, job satisfaction, and commitment (Mao et al., 2017). These outcomes are important since they denote being happy and satisfied with one's life and work (Xu et al., 2019).

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the relationship between a toxic workplace environment, workplace stress, and employee development.

1.2 Need for the study

A study by Wang et al. (2020), examined the relationships between a toxic workplace environment, workplace stress, and project success with the moderating effect of organizational support within Pakistan. This study aims to replicate the study conducted by Wang et al. (2020), but with employee development as an outcome.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this research is to add to the literature by exploring the relationship between toxic workplace environments, workplace stress, and employee development. The study will allow both employers and employees to recognize the consequences of a toxic workplace environment and how stressful it can be to individuals and the organization. It will also add to the literature on employee development as an important element linked to organizational outcomes.

1.4 Statement of the research problem

This study was guided by the following research hypotheses:

H1: TWE has a direct positive influence on WS

H2: WS has a direct negative influence on ED

H2a: WS has a direct negative influence on EDSD

H2b: WS has a direct negative influence on EDCD

H3: TWE has a direct negative influence on ED

H3a: TWE has a direct negative influence on EDSD

H3b: TWE has a direct negative influence on EDCD

H4: TWE has an indirect negative influence on ED

H4a: TWE has an indirect negative influence on EDSD

H4b: TWE has an indirect negative influence on EDCD

1.5 Operational definition of terms

Toxic Workplace Environment: When negative interpersonal relationships exist between employees, the workplace environment is known as toxic (Anjum & Ming, 2017).

Workplace Stress: is referred to “a condition suffered by a person within a workplace environment in which they are confronted with a thousand tasks to be fulfilled, completion of which seems impossible.” (Wang et al., 2020).

Employee Development: It can entail the advancement of an employee’s talents, skills, abilities, capabilities, and responsibilities (Kimani et al., 2020).

CHAPTER TWO

2.1 Literature Review

This chapter addresses the literature review on Toxic Workplace Environment, Workplace Stress, Employee Development, and Organizational Support. This chapter also covers the Hypothesis.

2.1.1 Toxic Workplace Environment

In a world tangled with fierce global competition among companies and countries, there is a need for a worthy human resources performance (Anjum & Ming, 2017) since employees' performance is widely influenced by the work environment, motivation, and the leadership in the organization (Mazzola et al., 2011). According to Wang et al. (2020), when the work environment is negative and pessimistic, it is said to be toxic. A toxic workplace setting is a catastrophe for the organization's stakeholders since it pervades and affects the whole organization's environment with toxicity, such as lack of employee engagement, toxic culture, and ultimately toxic managers and leaders (Rasool et al., 2019). Moreover, preceding studies revealed how a toxic work environment affects the employees' productivity, motivation, and decision-making abilities (Anjum & Ming, 2017). Additionally, being present in a toxic workplace environment is a primary reason for anxiety, depression, health degradation, absenteeism, and counterproductive work behaviors (Pouliakas & Theodossiou, 2013). Also, previous research has demonstrated clear relationships between toxic workplace environments and stress (Anjum & Ming, 2017). According to Wang et al. (2020), prior studies exposed two kinds of workplace environments: collaborative work environment (CWE) and toxic

workplace environment (TWE). A CWE is known for its amiableness, employee bonding, and feelings of belonging and involvement. This allows employees to experience a sense of affiliation to the organization as well as to one another. They develop feelings of empathy which generates organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) (Wang et al., 2020). On the other hand, the toxic work environment serves as an umbrella with multiple facets, which includes ostracism, harassment, bullying, threatening, incivility, humiliation, narcissism, aggressiveness, passivity, and many (Rasool et al., 2019). Some of the components of toxic workplace environment that received attention in the literature are ostracism, incivility, bullying, and harassment. For instance, ostracism is when employees feel isolated from their peers or colleagues (Mao et al., 2017). Harassment can be in the form of sexual intimidation, sexual images, and mockery about one's religion, ethnicity, race, or color (Rasool et al., 2019). Bullying can include employee mockery, humiliation, criticism, or even isolation (Khan et al., 2016). Incivility is a low-intensity negative behavior among employees (He et al., 2020). Wang et al. (2020), explained that such environments generate physical and mental blockages which cause stress. This stress can make an employee feel worn out with counterproductive behaviors as well as negative psychological effects and a worsened mental health (Wang et al., 2020). A toxic workplace environment is one of the many reasons behind elevating organizational costs (Acquadro Maran et al., 2018).

2.1.1.1 Ostracism

Ostracism in the workplace can take the form of isolation, segregation, leaving the room when an employee enters, avoiding eye contact, avoiding greetings, or transferring an employee to a remote setting (Sarwar et al., 2020). It is impactful because it negatively triggers the four basic human needs which are belonging, control, self-esteem, and meaningful existence (Mao et al., 2017). Moreover, ostracism can be a traumatic experience which leads to negative and stressful outcomes (Anjum & Ming, 2017). Hence, ostracism is a stressor that inhibits individuals from performing their routine tasks and diminishes motivation, which in the long run, is reflected on the employees' and the organizations' productivity (Avey et al., 2010).

2.1.1.2 Incivility

In line with He et al. (2020), incivility can include expressing disrespectful, disgraceful, and harsh comments to other individuals who can be colleagues, peers, or subordinates. It refers to subtle and deviant behavior with ambiguous intentions to harm other individuals in the organization (He et al., 2020). Incivility can be in the form of verbal abuse or non-verbal actions against other individuals (Rasool et al., 2019). Previous studies conveyed that over 70% of sampled employees report experiencing some forms of incivility which included receiving belittling remarks, having their credentials questioned, and being frequently interrupted (He et al., 2020). Moreover, undergoing incivility can hamper employees' self-esteem, satisfaction, respect, and productivity (Laschinger et al., 2014). Consequently, this toxic behavior will lead to several negative outcomes that will elevate physical and mental stress (Wang et al., 2020).

2.1.1.3 Bullying

Bullying is the exposure of an individual to frequent and consistent negative behavior from a single individual or a group of bullies for an extended period (Naseer et al., 2018). It can come in several forms like experiencing deconstructive criticism, being blamed without reasoning, being treated differently than the rest of the team, being isolated and excluded purposefully, being humiliated, being a victim of jokes, or being excessively monitored (Khan et al., 2016). Therefore, bullying can have a job-related character or a person-related character (Naseer et al., 2018). Furthermore, bullying can create a toxic workplace environment which can accelerate workplace depression, anxiety, stress, low engagement levels, absenteeism, poor performance, and work destruction (Chung, 2018).

2.1.1.4 Harassment

Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety Act (the Act) defines workplace harassment as "engaging in a course of vexatious comments or conduct against a worker in a workplace that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcomed." (Anjum & Ming, 2017). Harassment can be sexual or can include nude mockery about one's beliefs, race, gender, genes, origin, color, or ethnicity (Adikaram, 2016). Its psychological impact can include depression, anxiety post-traumatic stress disorder, sleep disruptions, and work-related suicide. Not to mention that stress resulting from such environments can weaken the immune system and increase the risk of having common colds and cancer (Liang, 2021). Consequently, harassment lowers employee

morale and work motivation which will be reflected on the organizational productivity (Liang, 2021).

2.1.2 Employee Development

Employee development refers to the organization's arranged activity to enhance employee performance and personal growth (Jehanzeb, 2020). London (1989) describes employee development as a long-term personal and professional growth for individuals. It is concerned with the overall employee growth and can entail the advancement of an employee's talents, skills, abilities, capabilities, and responsibilities (Kimani et al., 2020). Although there is no concrete definition for employee development, there are numerous views and perspectives of employee development conducted by several researchers to form a clearer picture and definition (Jangbahadur & Sharma, 2017). Some academics view it as a means that aids individuals in achieving their personal goals through self-development, while others view it from the organizational strategic perspective concerned with achieving group goals (Jangbahadur & Sharma, 2017). Goal et al. (2014), mentioned that development is not only about skills or job demands, but it is also about developing attitude and motivation. In addition to that, Noe (2006), stated that "there are four approaches to employee development which are formal education, assessment, job experiences, and interpersonal relationships." Furthermore, the Baldrige category utilized three dimensions to define and measure employee development, namely: (1) work systems, (2) staff education, training, and development, and (3) staff well-being and satisfaction (Goldstein, 2003). Taking into consideration staff well-being, it is explained as providing a suitable work environment (employee

safety and health) and climate (employee benefits) to support employee well-being and motivation (Goldstein, 2003). Another study conducted by Jangbahadur & Sharma (2017), explained employee development from a different viewpoint which included four employee development factors which are HRM practices, leadership development practices, self-development practices, and career development practices (Jangbahadur & Sharma, 2017).

On a different note, investments in employee development pave the way for employees to perceive that their organization values their contribution and employability. This motivates employees to turn back this positive treatment by working hard and enhancing their performance to achieve organizational goals (Bibi et al., 2018). This idea stems from the social exchange theory which was originally founded in 1959 by Thibaut and Kelley (Bibi et al., 2018). Blau (1964) explains that the Social Exchange Theory (SET) postulates that whenever employees are treated fairly and feel valued, respected, and supported by their organization, they will feel obligated to reciprocate this feeling by giving back positive behavior, attitudes, motivation, and better performance. Not to mention that providing a healthy workplace environment compels employees to give in return to their organization by being loyal and remaining in the organization (Bibi et al., 2018). On another hand, having an unsupportive workplace environment can affect the employees' ability to benefit from development programs, which diminishes their commitment to their jobs (Jehanzeb, 2020). One of the many ways in which employees can feel supported beyond contract is to be offered development opportunities (Kraimer et al., 2010).

On a different note, a study conducted by Kimani et al. (2020) explained about a study conducted by Hameed and Waheed in 2011, in which they mentioned that developed employees have higher job satisfaction, increased commitment to their organization, and an elevated performance which is reflected on the overall success of the organization (Kimani et al., 2020). Nevertheless, prior research proved how employee development can positively affect employee retention, improve skills and knowledge, enhance self-confidence, and self-esteem, thus, achieving a strategic advantage (Jehanzeb, 2020). This study will follow the steps of the research conducted by Jangbahadur & Sharma (2017), which studied the concept of employee development from four factors namely HRM practices, leadership development practices, self-development practices, and career development practices. However, career development and self-development sub scales will be used in the analysis for obtaining more accurate results.

2.1.2.1 HRM Practices

HRM practices are important sources through which a firm develops and supervises its employees (Jangbahadur & Sharma 2017). For instance, training and development programs lead to employee skill development as it relates to and reinforces the employees' expertise (Valeau et al., 2019). Moreover, employee empowerment is one of the most valuable HRM practices affecting the workplace environment (Jangbahadur & Sharma 2017). Not to mention the importance of providing employees with autonomy to develop their performance activities through which they can claim their expertise (Valeau et al., 2019).

2.1.2.2 Leadership Development

Leadership development practices focus on developing employee job-related technical skills, which can be tactical, functional, or personal (Hamilton & Bean, 2005). After that, leaders train employees and guide them in improving their performance by influencing positive behavioral changes (Jangbahadur & Sharma 2017). Hence, such development programs expand employee skills through transferring organization values and cultures among individuals to achieve organizational objectives (Hamilton & Bean, 2005).

2.1.2.3 Self-development

Self-development practices boost the employee decision-making abilities and paves the way for better relationship building skills (Jangbahadur & Sharma, 2017). Self-development programs development centers, and learning facilities pave the way for employees to boost their self-productivity which contributes to individual and organizational development (Sincar et al., 2018)

Moreover, an effective training work environment aids in employee task performance. Such climate includes training and development services, job rotation, mentoring, networking, and autonomy. Not to mention that these procedures are based on the concept of organizational support (Tracey & Tews, 2005). For instance, mentoring is known as the developmental support where senior employees provide to junior ones which impacts their psychological growth and career development (Kraimer et al., 2010). On the other hand, reverse mentoring creates a good social relationship between new employees and existing ones and creates interconnectivity (Hasaranga et al., 2021).

Therefore, self-development can serve as an important tool in endorsing employee development (Conlon, 2004).

2.1.2.4 Career Development

Career development is concerned with enhancing employee skills, knowledge, and abilities related to their career which is of value to the employees and their organization (Jangbahadur & Sharma, 2017). In line with Jangbahadur & Sharma (2017), career planning, which is the first step in the career development process, is the procedure in which employees are held accountable for their own development and identify their skills and interests and look for ways to set their goals and carry out their career plans. In addition to that, previous studies have shown that an individual's behavior is the result of his/her environment, which is why individuals should look for environments that suit their skills, abilities, values, and attitudes (Karkoulian et al., 2009).

The subsequent step in achieving career development is career management, whereby employees receive feedback about their progress in achieving their goals and formulate strategies to meet them (Greenhaus et al., 2009). Therefore, career development enforces employee job commitment, thus achieving long-term organizational excellence through employee efforts (Pathiranage & Wickramaratne, 2020).

2.1.3 Workplace Stress

Workplace stress is known as “the change in one's physical or mental state in response to the workplace that pose a clear challenge or threat to that employee's wellbeing.” (Colligan &

Higgins, 2006, p. 90). It is when an employee detaches him/herself from his/her tasks which creates dissatisfaction in his/her personal and professional life, accomplishments, and work-life battles (Anjum & Ming, 2017). Job stress can be a result of situational or individual factors which lead to depersonalization, poor self-assessment, and underestimating oneself, which eventually lead to poor job outcomes (Anjum & Ming, 2017). Several studies confirmed direct relationships between stress and a toxic workplace (Liang, 2021). For instance, negative workload, ostracism, lack of autonomy, bullying, career development barriers, difficult relationships, any many other factors, which are considered components of a toxic work environment, lead to workplace stress (Pouliakas & Theodossiou, 2013). The tension resulting from a toxic environment can lead to anxiety, depression, health problems, absenteeism, and counterproductive work behaviors which ultimately diminish productivity (Wang et al., 2020). Moreover, several studies proved how ostracism depletes employees' cognitive resources, which results in cognitive exhaustion, less engagement, and less OCB (Mao et al., 2017). In addition to that, former research indicated how bullying can lead to stress, burnout, depression, and other psychological and physiological issues, where POS can be a coping mechanism to battle such toxic behaviors (Naseer et al., 2018). Furthermore, research indicates that organizational support acts as a vital resource in reducing stressors, like incivility, through meeting socio-emotional needs, growing their confidence, increasing their feelings of worth and competence, and boosting performance-reward expectancies (He et al., 2020). Moreover, the management of conflicts in a proper manner will positively affect employees' performance and engagement and will lead to less turnover intentions (Singh, Burgess, Heap, Messarra, Karkoulilian, & El-Kassar, 2016). According to theory of conservation of resources by Hobfoll (1989), to conserve lost resources, employees

often tend to share their thoughts and feelings with their colleagues to gain emotional association (Heaphy & Dutton, 2008).

2.1.4 Employee Well-being

Employee well-being is how organizations sustain an environment (safety and health) and climate (useful benefits) which support employee well-being and motivation (Goldstein, 2003). Well-being can be physical or psychological (David et al., 2014).

Psychological or affective well-being is a widespread concept in the literature which is defined as a state of happiness in one's life and work. It is concerned with representing an individual's psychological state that includes more positive emotions than negative ones (Xu et al., 2019). Affective well-being is a crucial term in organizations because if taken into consideration, can yield several organizational outcomes including creativity and better job performance (Xu et al., 2019). Moreover, illness, apprehension, depression, and fatigue are some of the signs of poor mental health and a lack of well-being. Likewise, headaches and muscular aches are some of the indicators of a poor physical well-being (Rasool et al., 2021). Psychological well-being can lead to higher productivity and lower turnover rates (Xu et al., 2019).

Aside from that, being present in a toxic workplace environment can diminish an employee's sense of security, and consequently have a negative impact on well-being (Rasool et al., 2021). For instance, numerous studies have shown a positive relationship between workplace bullying and employee well-being (Rajalingam, 2020). It has been observed that toxic environments lead to high stress levels and diminish satisfaction, threatening employees' psychological well-being and leaves them with high levels of

mental stress (Dos Santos, 2020). Similarly, ostracism is inversely linked with employee well-being which leads to job tension and emotional exhaustion (Chung, 2020). At the positive spectrum, being present in a collaborative work climate inspires an emotional tone of relationships which generates physical and psychological employee well-being (Anjum & Ming, 2017). Furthermore, employee well-being is embedded in a system of social exchange between employees, supervisors, and coworkers (Haider et al., 2018). This means that when healthy social relationships exist between individuals, this will generate feelings of empathy, trust, and respect which will lead to better psychological well-being (Haider et al., 2018). Former research stated that healthy and satisfying relationships at work do predict employees' quality of life and well-being (Biggio & Cortese, 2013). In addition, the relationship between well-being and perceived organizational support is more noticeable and appreciated when employees are under more stress (Sarwar et al., 2020). Nevertheless, looking at the theory of conservation of resources, it has been shown that psychological well-being is a resource that helps employees deal with their job tasks while protecting them from getting their resources depleted (Xu et al., 2019).

2.1.5 Theoretical Study Background: Social Exchange Theory

According to Blau (1964), social exchanges are “voluntary actions” taken by organizations to treat employees positively and expecting this treatment to be reciprocated by employees. The process of the social exchange theory stems from the idea that the organization values its employees and their contributions and is concerned about their well-being (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1990). When employees perceive that they are being valued, they will feel the urge to reciprocate these “good deeds” through their

positive behavior and work attitudes (Gould-Williams & Davies, 2005). For instance, many studies indicated that organizations who invested in training and development programs found that their employees reciprocated through desirable work outcomes (Gould-Williams & Davies, 2005). Still, an important factor in social exchange relationships is trust which requires the originator to trust that the recipient will reciprocate (Blau, 1964; Gould-Williams & Davies, 2005). Considering the Social Exchange Theory, Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), which is a voluntary behavior is an important component for organizational success and competitive advantage in organizations (El-Kassar, Yunis, & El-Khalil, 2017).

On a different note, when organizations provide employees with suitable working environments, employees will want to repay this act by being loyal and remaining with the organization (Bibi et al., 2018). In contrast, bullied employees perceive a lack of organizational support which drives them to reciprocate such toxic treatment with retaliatory and negative behavior towards their organization (Naseer et al., 2018). Nevertheless, the social exchange theory mentions that employees will have an elevated performance when they are endorsed and appreciated by their company (Bibi et al., 2018).

CHAPTER THREE

3.1 Hypotheses and Conceptual Model

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between toxic workplace environments, workplace stress and employee development. In this research, toxic workplace environment is the independent variable, workplace stress is the dependent variable, and employee development is the outcome. This chapter includes the hypotheses and the development of the conceptual model.

3.1.1 Hypotheses Development

This section will present four hypotheses to be addressed in the study. These hypotheses are theorized based on the literature review and the theoretical framework: The Social Exchange Theory.

Toxic Workplace Environment and Workplace Stress

According to Wang et al. (2020), prior research indicated that a violent workplace increases occupational stress among employees. A toxic workplace fails to meet employee psychological needs, which depletes employee resources, thus reducing the social unity among them (Wang et al., 2020). In reference to the Social Exchange Theory, employees experiencing toxic behavior and feeling trapped in a toxic atmosphere may develop the desire to reciprocate with more negative and counterproductive behavior, which will elevate stress levels among peers (Naseer et al., 2018). Not to mention that extensive research showed how a toxic work environment

contributes to hypertension, anxiety, and workplace stress (Wang et al., 2020). In addition, Rasool et al. (2021) stated that a toxic workplace environment negatively impacts employee well-being. Moreover, employees who are bullied at work experience a lack of psychological well-being, as well as report greater levels of general and mental stress (Rasool et al., 2021). Not to mention that workplace ostracism is also negatively related to employee psychological well-being since it increases workplace stress and results in emotional exhaustion (Chung, 2020). Nevertheless, workplace stress can be due to factors inside or outside the organization; but creating a peaceful work atmosphere can result in fewer conflicts and costs (Sonnenschein et al., 2007; Hakanen et al., 2011). Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H1: TWE has a direct positive influence on WS

Workplace Stress and Employee Development

Prior studies indicated that workplace stress resulting from a toxic workplace environment increases absenteeism and diminishes productivity and involvement (Wang et al., 2020). Not to mention that high levels of stress may drive individuals to engage in behaviors that harm their well-being such as smoking, eating less, or avoiding physical activity (Wang et al., 2020). Moreover, Goldstein (2003) mentioned that the stress resulting from a negative workplace environment lowers employee well-being. For that purpose, organizations take measures to ensure employee well-being such as providing a collaborative work environment, using methods to guarantee employee satisfaction, and providing career development services (Goldstein, 2003). For instance, it has been shown that reverse mentoring influences career development due to the presence of psychological support and role modelling for working efficiently (Hasaranga et al.,

2021). Hence, this will provide employees with a synergistic spirit to work efficiently, decrease conflicts, and increase workplace diversity (Hasaranga et al., 2021).

Nevertheless, investing in employees by providing development practices, yields higher self-efficacy, increase in motivation for career progression, and decrease in stress resulting from conflicts through building competencies (n.d, 2021). Therefore, it is hypothesized:

H2: Workplace Stress has a direct negative influence on employee career development and self-development.

Toxic Workplace Environment and Employee Development

According to the Social Exchange Theory, when organizations invest in developing their employees, the employees would want to reciprocate positively (Chen et al., 2018). For instance, HRM practices, leadership development, self-development, or career development provided by the organization increase motivation for development and may contribute to the overall employee development (Jangbahadur & Sharma, 2017).

Previous studies have proved that employee development has a significant effect on work behavior (Regen et al., 2020). In addition to that, employees who feel that they have social and organizational support are more likely to feel that the people who are important to them would want them to participate in development activities and feel that they have wide development opportunities to choose from (Hurtz & Williams, 2009).

Moreover, a toxic environment at work negatively impacts employee involvement, commitment, retention, and motivation for development (Rasool et al., 2021). In addition, a toxic workplace environment can affect the employees' ability to benefit

from development programs, which diminishes their commitment to their jobs (Jehanzeb, 2020). Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H3: A toxic workplace environment has a direct negative influence on employee career development and self-development.

H4: TWE has an indirect negative influence on employee career development and self-development.

3.1.2 Conceptual Model

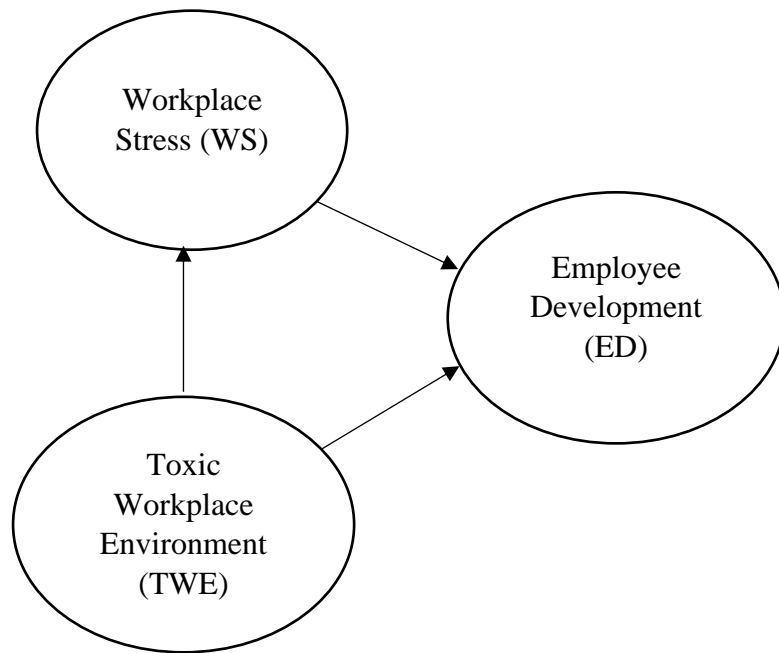


Figure 1 - Schematic Model of the Relationship between a Toxic Workplace Environment, Workplace Stress, and Employee Development.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 Research Methodology and Statistical Analysis

4.1.1 Participants

The sample population consisted of 123 adults who participated in the survey with usable results. The participation in the survey was voluntary and the questions were optional. The survey was generated using Google Forms for the collection of data. The questionnaire included four structured scales that indicated validity and reliability in previous studies: Toxic Workplace environment (TWE), Workplace Stress (WS), and Employee Development (ED). Additionally, the survey included eight demographic questions. The survey thus constituted of a total of 50 close-ended questions and included seven sections, namely: Consent form, Demographics, Perceived Organizational Support, Employee Development, Workplace Stress, Toxic Workplace Environment, and a Follow Up section.

The first section was the consent to participate in the survey and participants were given the option to “agree” and start answering the questions or “disagree” and exit the survey. The second section was the demographics questions section. The third section was the perceived organizational support scale, the fourth section was the employee development scale, the fifth section was the workplace stress scale, and the sixth section was the toxic workplace environment scale. The seventh section was a follow up and participants were optionally asked to provide their initials and the last 3 digits of their

mobile number, to match their answers in case they decided to participate again in the survey for a possible longitudinal study.

The average time to complete the survey was 5 to 7 minutes.

Consent

The survey started with the consent form, inviting participants to take part in the survey. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study as well as given a guarantee that all their responses will remain confidential and anonymous. Later, participants were given the choice to proceed with the survey or to dismiss it.

Demographics

This section included 8 questions that asked about: age, gender, level of education, years of experience, number of people employed at the company, role in the organization, type of the industry, and the country they are living in.

4.1.2 Measures

The Toxic Work Environment Scale was adopted from Anjum A, Ming X, Siddiqi A, & Rasool S in 2018. The Toxic Work Environment variable included 4 dimensions namely: harassment, bullying, incivility, and mobbing. This scale included 7 items and was measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1= Strongly Disagree and 5= Strongly Agree). Sample items included “Has any of your supervisors, co-workers, or subordinates ever appreciated your physical appearance?” and “Has any of your supervisors, coworkers, or subordinates ever spoke rudely to you in public?”. This scale was validated by Wang et al. in 2020 with a Cronbach’s alpha score of 0.96, indicating strong reliability.

The Workplace Stress Scale was implemented from Anjum & Ming in 2018. This scale included 7 items measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree and 5=Strongly Agree). Sample items included “I do not feel any interest or enjoyment in doing things” and “I often think about hurting myself, and I deserve to be dead.” This scale was validated by Anjum & Ming in 2018 with a Cronbach’s alpha score of 0.949, showing strong reliability.

The Perceived Organizational Support scale was adopted from Eisenberger R, Stinglhamber F, Vandenberghe C, & Sucharski IL, Rhoades L in 2002. The POS scale was measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1= Strongly Disagree and 5= Strongly Agree). This scale included 7 items; some of the sample questions included “The organization attaches great importance to my work goals and values” and “The organization always helps me whenever I am facing bad time.” This scale has been validated by Wang et al. in 2020 and the Cronbach’s alpha value recorded 0.94, displaying strong reliability.

The Employee Development Scale was adopted from Jangbahadur & Sharma in 2017. This scale included 11 items and was divided into 2 sub scales: self-development (5 items) and career development (6 items). It was measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1= Strongly Disagree and 5= Strongly Agree). Samples of the questions included “In my organization, job assignments are assigned to promote personal development” (self-development), and “Training programs are offered in my organization” (career development). The Employee Development scale was validated by Jangbahadur &

Sharma in 2017 and the Cronbach's alpha value recorded 0.954 for self-development and 0.952 for career development, showing strong reliability.

4.1.3 Data Collection

The initial approval from The Institutional Review Board (IRB) was granted on 5 May 2021. However, minor amendments were made to the survey and the IRB Protocol Amendment Application was sent to the IRB. The final approval was granted on 2 June 2021. The data collection started on 2 June 2021 and ended on 2 August 2021.

Participants received information about the study which explained its purpose and how to participate. The interested candidates were asked to access the survey through a Google Form link which directed them to the survey. The first thing present on the survey was the informed consent form to provide a guarantee to confidentiality and anonymity. The Demographics questionnaire came first, then the perceived organizational support scale, employee development scale, workplace stress scale, and toxic workplace environment scale respectively. After that came the optional follow up section. The age inclusion criteria were from 18 till 64 years. Finally, a total of 123 participants fully completed the survey.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 Analysis

5.1.2 Survey Administration

The sample of this study includes participants that are currently employed or have been employed in an organization in Lebanon. The survey administration took place from June 2, 2021, till August 2, 2021. The survey was circulated online using google forms where 123 participants responded and participated in the survey. Thus 123 responses were used for analysis using SPSS software and PROCESS.

5.1.3 Demographics

In our sample of 123 respondents, there were 72 females representing 58.5% of the sample and 51 males representing 41.5 % of the sample. The frequency distribution is shown below.

Table 1 - Gender

		Gender			Cumulative
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Percent
Valid	0	51	41.5	41.5	41.5
	1	72	58.5	58.5	100.0
	Total	123	100.0	100.0	

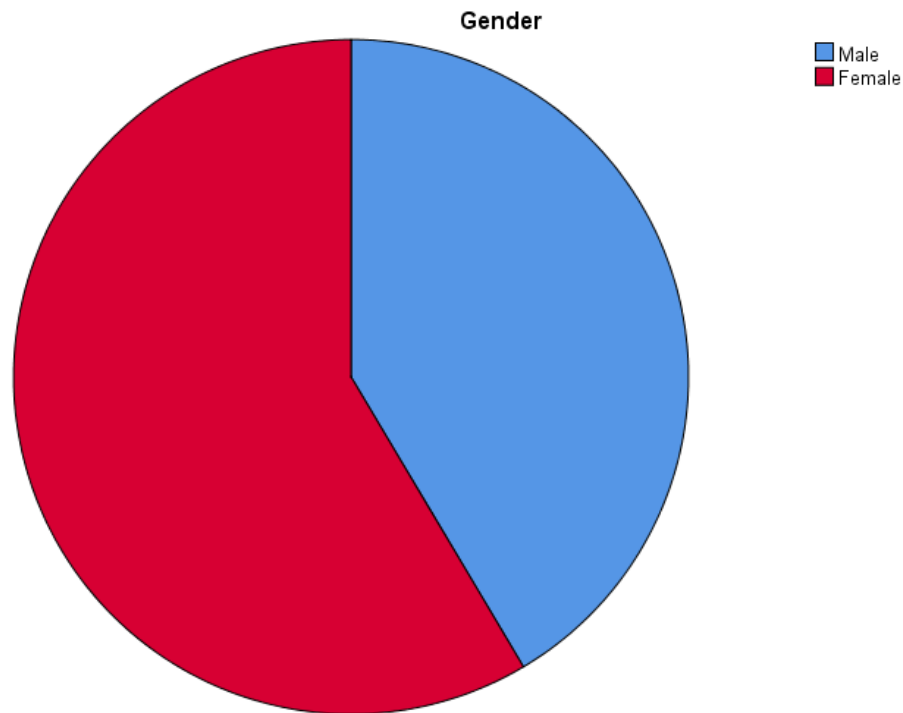


Figure 2 - Gender

As for the age distribution, 12% (15 responses) were between 18 and 24 years old, 62% (76 responses) were between 25 and 34 years old, 16% (20 responses) were between 35 and 44 years old, and 10% (12 responses) were between 45 and 64 years old. The frequency distribution is shown below.

Table 2 - Age

		Age			Cumulative
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Percent
Valid	0	15	12.2	12.2	12.2
	1	76	61.8	61.8	74.0
	2	20	16.3	16.3	90.2
	3	12	9.8	9.8	100.0
	Total	123	100.0	100.0	

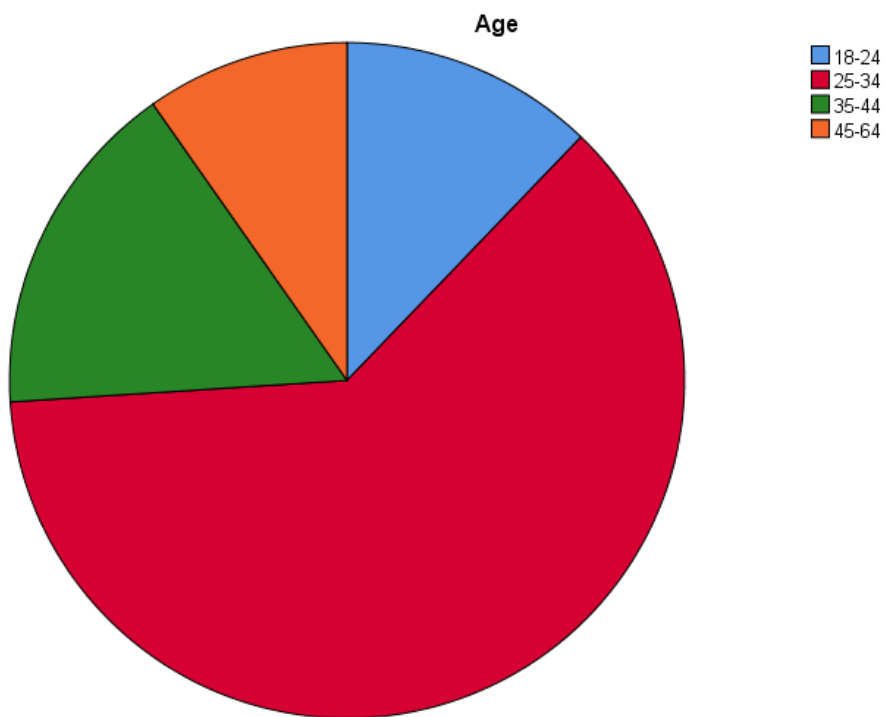


Figure 3 - Age

As for the level of education, 6% (7 responses) have a high school diploma, 42% (52 responses) have a bachelor's degree, 16% (20 responses) are pursuing a master's degree, and 36% (44 responses) have completed a master's degree or a Ph.D. degree. The frequency distribution is shown below.

Table 3 - Education

		Education			Cumulative
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Percent
Valid	0	7	5.7	5.7	5.7
	1	52	42.3	42.3	48.0
	2	20	16.3	16.3	64.2
	3	44	35.8	35.8	100.0
	Total	123	100.0	100.0	

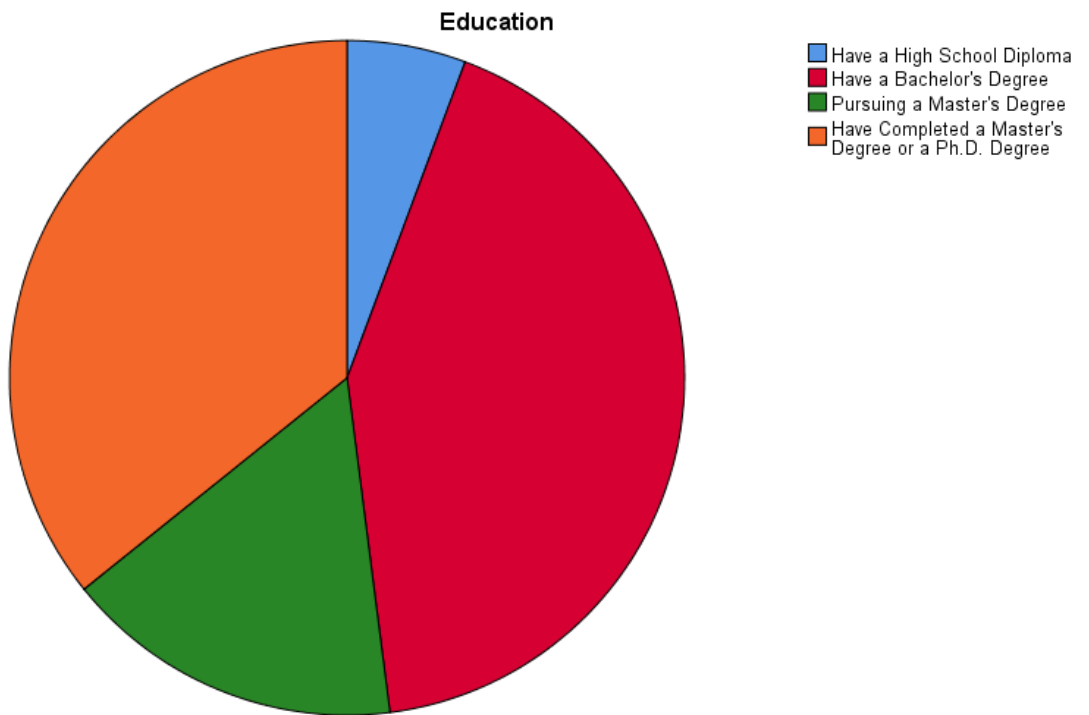


Figure 4 - Education

Moreover, 18% (22 responses) have less than 3 years of experience, 32% (39 responses) have from 3 to 5 years of experience, 20% (25 responses) have 5 to 9 years of experience, 15% (18 responses) have from 10 to 15 years of experience, while 15% (19 responses) have more than 15 years of working experience. The frequency distribution is shown below.

Table 4 - Experience

		Experience			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	22	17.9	17.9	17.9
	1	39	31.7	31.7	49.6
	2	25	20.3	20.3	69.9
	3	18	14.6	14.6	84.6
	4	19	15.4	15.4	100.0
	Total	123	100.0	100.0	

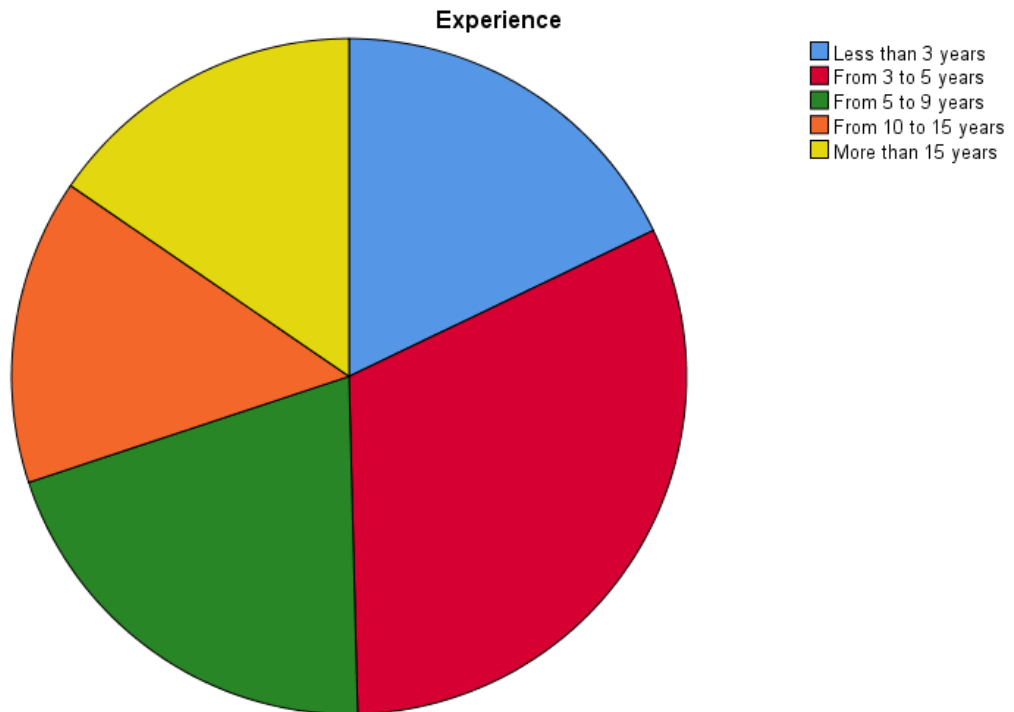


Figure 5 - Experience

As for the number of employees in the organization, 24% (29 responses) have less than 50 employees employed in the company they work in, 23% (29 responses) have 50 to 199 employees, 13% (16 responses) have 200 to 499 employees, while 40% (49 responses) have more than 500 employees employed in the company they work in. The frequency distribution is presented below.

Table 5 - Number of Employees

		Number of Employees			Cumulative
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Percent
Valid	0	29	23.6	23.6	23.6
	1	29	23.6	23.6	47.2
	2	16	13.0	13.0	60.2
	3	49	39.8	39.8	100.0
	Total	123	100.0	100.0	

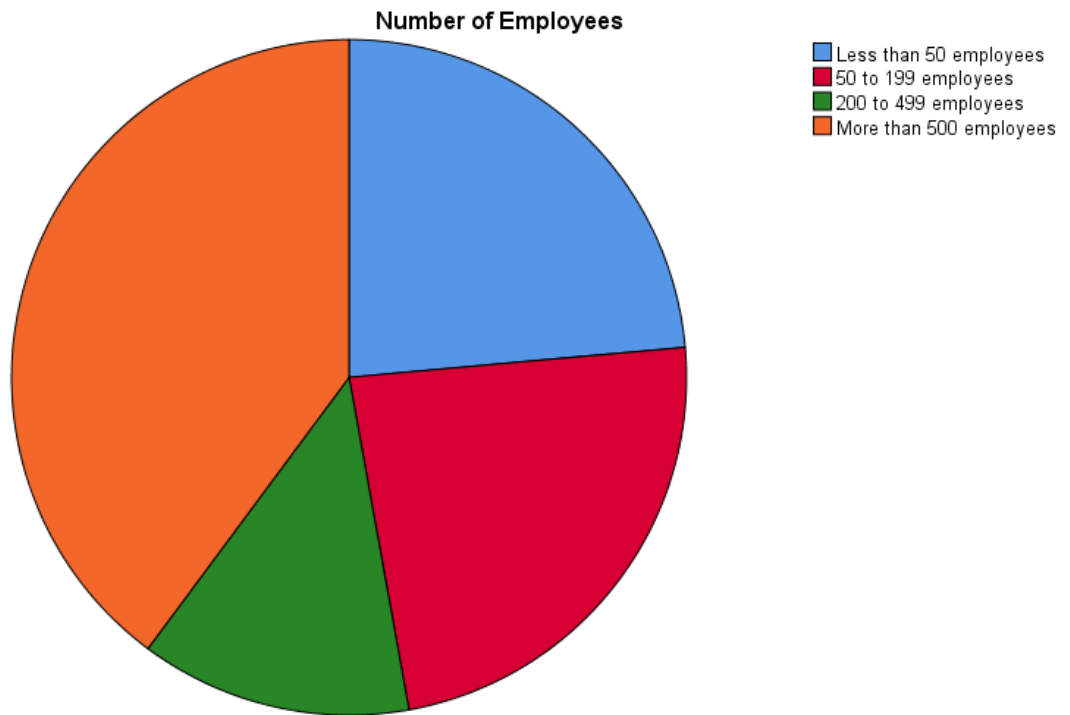


Figure 6 - Number of Employees

As for the role in the organization, 11% (13 responses) are in the upper management, 16% (20 responses) are in the middle management, 10% (12 responses) are in the junior management, 5% (6 responses) are administrative staff, 5% (responses) are support staff, 3% (4 responses), 20% (25 responses) are consultants, 9% (11 responses) are trained professionals, 7% (8 responses) are skilled laborers, 2% (3 responses) are part-time

employees, 2% (3 responses) are self-employed, and 10% (12 responses) are in different organizational roles. The frequency distribution is presented below.

Table 6 - Role in the Organization

		Role in the organization			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	13	10.6	10.6	10.6
	1	20	16.3	16.3	26.8
	2	12	9.8	9.8	36.6
	3	6	4.9	4.9	41.5
	4	6	4.9	4.9	46.3
	5	4	3.3	3.3	49.6
	6	25	20.3	20.3	69.9
	7	11	8.9	8.9	78.9
	8	8	6.5	6.5	85.4
	9	3	2.4	2.4	87.8
	10	3	2.4	2.4	90.2
	11	12	9.8	9.8	100.0
Total		123	100.0	100.0	

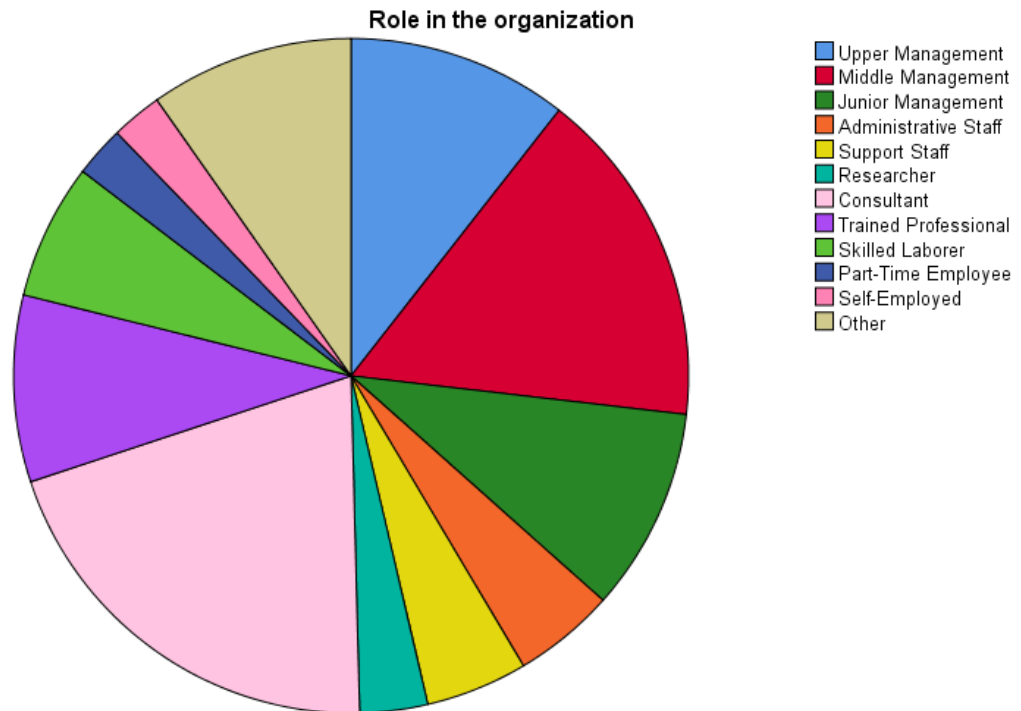


Figure 7 - Role in the Organization

For the type of industry, 8% (10 responses) work in the Banking sector, 9% (11 responses) work in the Hospitality and Tourism sector, 21% (26 responses) work in the Information and Communication Technology sector, 2% (3 responses) work in the Management of Companies and Enterprises sector, 2% (2 responses) work in the Information and Cultural Industries sector, 4% (4 responses) work in the Manufacturing sector, 8% (10 responses) work in the Education sector, 4% (5 responses) work in the Retail sector, and 42% (52 responses) work in other industries. The frequency distribution is presented below.

Table 7 - Type of Industry

		Type of industry			Cumulative Percent
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	
Valid	0	10	8.1	8.1	8.1
	1	11	8.9	8.9	17.1
	2	26	21.1	21.1	38.2
	3	3	2.4	2.4	40.7
	4	2	1.6	1.6	42.3
	5	4	3.3	3.3	45.5
	6	10	8.1	8.1	53.7
	7	5	4.1	4.1	57.7
	11	52	42.3	42.3	100.0
	Total	123	100.0	100.0	

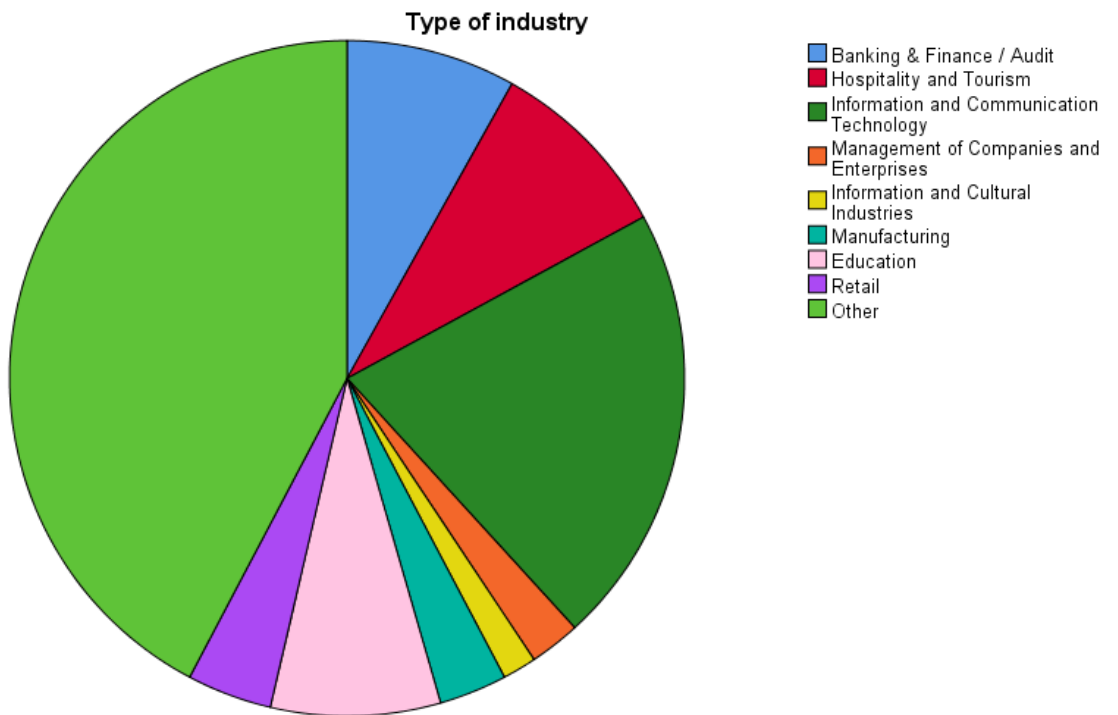


Figure 8 - Type of Industry

5.1.4 Cronbach Alpha

The reliability results displayed in table 7 below revealed that the measures are reliable, and the Cronbach Alpha values are above the minimum of 0.7. SPSS software was used to compute the Cronbach Alpha values and analyze the findings.

Table 8 - Cronbach Alpha

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha
EDCD	0.792
EDSD	0.810
TWE	0.803
WS1	0.900

Some questions were removed from the EDCD scale, which included EDCD2 EDCD3 EDCD4 respectively: “Training programs are offered in my organization”, “I can easily consult my manager about the development of my career.”, “In my organization, management is organized in self-managed teams in performing a major part of their work roles.” Also, EDSD1 and EDSD2 were removed “My job allows me to decide on my own how to go about doing my work.” And “My job allows me to make a lot of decisions on my own.” Moreover, TWE1 was also removed “Has any of your supervisors, co-workers, or subordinates ever tried sharing dirty jokes with you?”

5.1.5 Scores

Concerning EDCD, all the items used to measure this dimension of ED obtained a significant loading (higher than 0.7) and were averaged to obtain the overall score of 0.792. Also, the items of EDSD scale revealed a significant loading and were averaged to obtain a score of 0.810. Moreover, the items representing TWE revealed a significant loading and obtained an average of 0.803. Finally, the items representing WS revealed a significant loading and were averaged to obtain a score of 0.900.

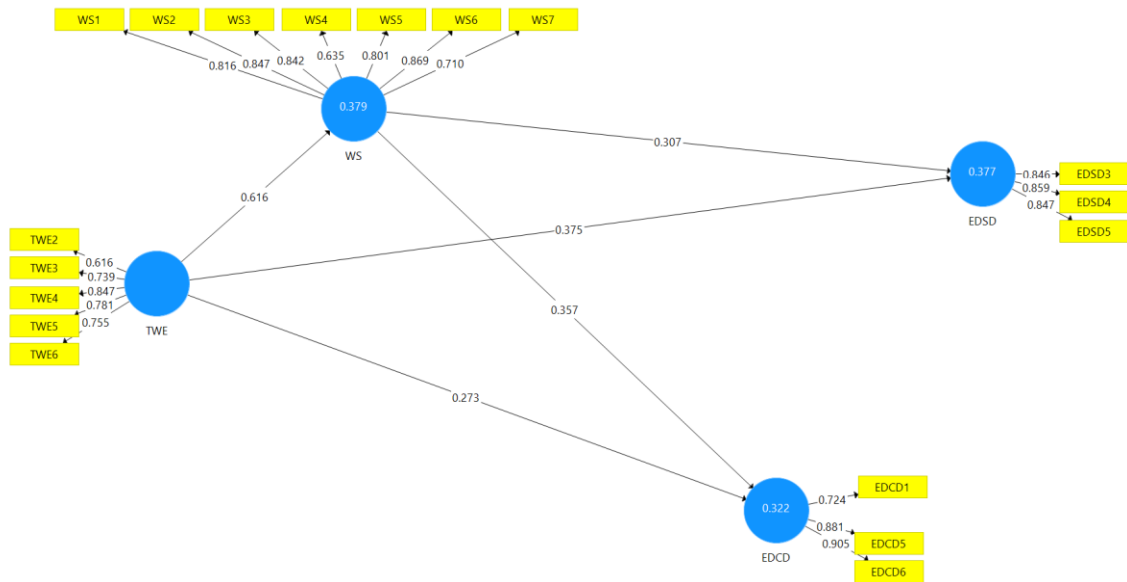


Figure 9 - Reliability and Validity

Table 9 - Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	<u>rho_A</u>	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
EDCD	0.792	0.841	0.877	0.707
EDSD	0.810	0.815	0.887	0.724
TWE	0.803	0.811	0.865	0.565
WS	0.900	0.916	0.921	0.628

5.1.6 Testing the model

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE: TWE

DEPENDENT VARIABLE: WS

The significance of the direct positive relationship between the independent variable TWE and the dependent variable WS is confirmed. Moreover, analysis of the variance resulted in a test statistic of $F = 11.577$ with a path coefficient = 0.616 and p-value = 0.000 confirming the significance of the model.

Moreover, the direct negative relationship between WS and EDCD was also supported. The analysis of variance resulted in a test statistic of $F = 3.991$ with a path coefficient = 0.357 and p-value = 0.000. Also, the direct negative relationship between WS and EDSD was supported. The analysis of variance resulted in a test statistic of $F = 3.573$ with a path coefficient = 0.307 and p-value = 0.000.

The direct negative relationship between TWE and EDCD was confirmed. The analysis of variance resulted in a test statistic of $F = 2.781$ with a path coefficient = 0.273 and p-value = 0.006. Moreover, the direct negative relationship between TWE and EDSD was also supported were $F = 4.263$, path coefficient = 0.375, and p-value = 0.000.

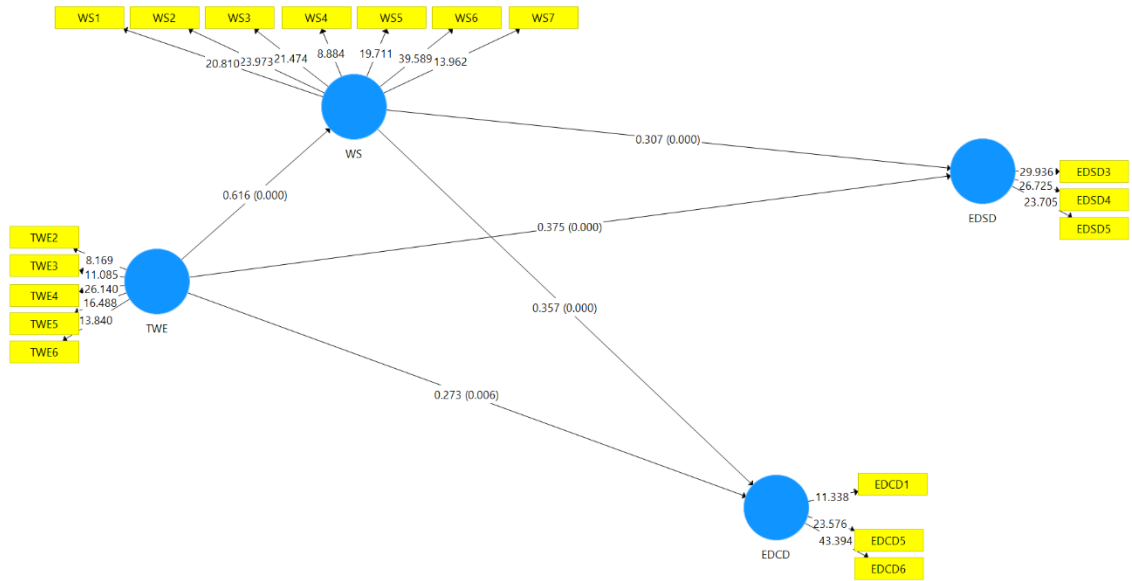


Figure 10 - Path Coefficients

Table 10 - Direct Relationships

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
TWE -> EDCD	0.273	0.279	0.098	2.781	0.006
TWE -> EDSD	0.375	0.378	0.088	4.263	0.000
TWE -> WS	0.616	0.622	0.053	11.577	0.000
WS -> EDCD	0.357	0.356	0.089	3.991	0.000
WS -> EDSD	0.307	0.308	0.086	3.573	0.000

In addition, the indirect negative effect between TWE and EDCD was supported, were path coefficient = 0.220, F = 3.703, and p-value = 0.000. Also, an indirect negative relationship between TWE and EDCS were path coefficient = 0.189, F = 3.394, and p-value = 0.000. TWE showed an indirect effect on EDCD and EDSD through WS. This

means that WS mediates the relationship between TWE and EDCD and EDSD and the mediation is partial since the direct relationship between TWE, EDCD, and EDSD is also significant.

Table 11 - Indirect Relationships

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
TWE -> EDCD	0.220	0.221	0.059	3.703	0.000
TWE -> EDSD	0.189	0.191	0.056	3.394	0.001

CHAPTER SIX

6.1 Discussion

The aim of this thesis was to determine the relationship between a Toxic Workplace Environment, Workplace Stress, and Employee Development. In other words, this thesis aimed at testing how being present in a toxic environment stresses employees and how this negatively affects their development on personal and professional levels.

All direct relationships were supported as indicated by the p-values and path coefficients, therefore H1, H2, and H3 were supported. This indicates that the more TWE exist, the less is the presence of EDCD and EDSD. Also, the higher the level of WS, the less EDCD and EDSD.

We also tested the indirect effect of TWE. Results showed a significant indirect effect on EDSD and EDCD through WS. Moreover, WS partially mediated the relationship between TWE and EDCD, TWE and EDSD since the direct relationship between TWE, EDCD, and EDSD is also significant.

6.1.1 Positive relationship between Toxic Workplace Environment and Workplace Stress

H1: Toxic Workplace Environment has a direct positive influence on Workplace Stress

The result of this study supported H1, concluding that there is a direct positive relationship between Toxic Workplace Environment and Workplace Stress. This result coincides with Wang et al. (2020) whose study showed a positive relationship between

TWE and WS. Toxicity can affect individuals on many levels and stress has severe consequences on mental and physical well-being.

6.1.2 Direct negative relationship between Workplace Stress and Employee Development

H2: Workplace Stress has a direct negative influence on Employee Development

The result of the study supported H2, concluding that there is a direct negative relationship between Workplace Stress and Employee Development, which includes self-development and career development. Nevertheless, investing in employees by providing development practices, yields higher self-efficacy, increase in motivation for career progression, and decrease in stress resulting from conflicts through building competencies (n.d, 2021).

6.1.3 Direct negative relationship between Toxic Workplace Environment and Employee Development

H3: Toxic Workplace Environment has a direct negative influence on Employee Development

The result of the study supported H3, concluding that there is a direct negative relationship between a Toxic Workplace environment and Employee Development, including career development and self-development. According to Jehanzeb (2020), a toxic workplace environment can affect the employees' ability to benefit from development programs, which diminishes their commitment to their jobs.

6.1.4 Indirect negative relationship between Toxic Workplace Environment and Employee Development

H4: Toxic Workplace Environment has an indirect negative influence on Employee Development

The result of the study supported H4, concluding that there is an indirect negative relationship between a Toxic Workplace Environment and Employee Development which includes self-development and career development. TWE showed a significant indirect effect on EDSD and EDCD through WS. This means that WS mediates the relationship between TWE and EDCD and EDSD and the mediation is partial since the direct relationship between TWE, EDCD, and EDSD is also significant. A toxic environment at work negatively impacts employee involvement, commitment, retention, and motivation for development (Rasool et al., 2021).

6.2 Managerial Implications

On a practical note, findings of this study showed that being in a toxic work environment leaves employees feeling stressed and burnt out. This study encourages HR managers and leaders to alleviate toxic workplace environments and to keep stress levels to the minimum as much as possible as well as to encourage employee development. Moreover, it is important for managers to notice that employees are the main reasons of their achievements. Therefore, managing employee behavior is the core of success of their organizations (Dagher et al., 2015). Anjum et al. (2018) stated that people grow on a personal level when they face tough situations. When an employee is in a toxic environment, he/she should try to pay attention to what he/she can learn from a

tough situation, since each adversary can teach people a lesson to become better (Anjum et al., 2018).

6.3 Limitations of the Study

The study's primary limitation was that it was conducted at one point in time which limited the scope of the findings. Also, the study was conducted in Lebanon at a time the country was going through a major economic crisis. Not to mention the COVID-19 pandemic which worsened the situation and caused several organizations to shut down, leaving the country with high unemployment rates. Employees were already stressed out from the country's general situation, and many have started to develop themselves for better opportunities within Lebanon or abroad.

6.4 Future Research

Limited research has been conducted on toxic work environments and their impact on mental health. Future research could explore this topic using different variables such as Person-Organization Fit or Job Satisfaction. Further research could investigate the impact of the demographic variables such as gender, years of experience, and generational cohorts. It is also recommended to collect responses during different time intervals when the situation becomes stable in Lebanon and people are less worried and stressed about their personal lives and careers.

6.5 Conclusion

This study contributes to the literature by showing the impact of the working environment on mental health. Moreover, El-Kassar et al. (2011) suggested that to enhance an employee's positive emotional attachment organizations can promote and

encourage incentives, affection, support, and provide a positive working climate to enhance employee involvement. Moreover, diminishing toxic behaviors can motivate employees to engage their physical and mental efforts to achieve goals that benefit the organization (El-Kassar, Messarra, & El-Khalil, 2017). A toxic workplace environment can be stressful and leaves employees demotivated and resentful towards their organization. For that purpose, the toxicity and stress employees are experiencing will motivate them to develop themselves personally and professionally for a better opportunity within their organization in another department or in a different organization.

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APPENDIX: Survey and IRB Approval

Consent to participate in a Survey

Factors Affecting Employee Development

Dear participants, if you are currently employed or have in the past been employed in an organization, I would like to invite you to participate in research by completing the following questionnaire/survey. I am a student at LAU and this research is part of the requirement for my Master's in Human Resources. The purpose of this questionnaire is to study The Relationship Between a Toxic Workplace Environment, Workplace Stress, and Employee Development with the Moderating Effect of Organizational Support. Your participation in this study is voluntary and I would highly appreciate your input regarding your supervisors/coworkers/subordinates. I would also like to assure you that all the information you provide about your subordinates will be dealt with strict confidentiality. There will be no access to any information that might reveal your identity. If you choose to participate, please complete the survey as truthfully as you can. Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

There are no known risks, harms, or discomforts associated with this study beyond those encountered in normal daily life. The information you provide will be used to enhance and improve the effect of the constructs under study, namely: Toxic Workplace Environment, Workplace Stress, Employee Development, and Organizational Support. You will not directly benefit from participation in this study. I appreciate completing this survey that will take 5-7 minutes of your time.

By continuing with the questionnaire / survey, you agree with the following statements:

1. I have been given sufficient information about this research.
2. I understand that my answers will not be released to anyone and my identity will remain anonymous. My name will not be written on the questionnaire nor be kept in any other records.
3. When the results of the study are reported, I will not be identified by name or any other information that could be used to infer my identity. Only researchers will have access to view any data collected during this research however data cannot be linked to me.
4. I understand that I may withdraw from this research any time I wish and that I have the right to skip any question I do not want to answer.
5. I understand that my refusal to participate will not result in any penalty or loss of

benefits to which I otherwise am entitled to.

6. I have been informed that the research abides by all commonly acknowledged ethical codes and that the research project has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board at the Lebanese American University

7. I understand that if I have any additional questions, I can ask the research team listed below.

8. I have read and understood all statements on this form.

9. I voluntarily agree to take part in this research project by completing the following survey/Questionnaire.

We recommend that if you feel any kind of distress while completing the questionnaire, you should seek advice from health/counseling services or contact the researcher. If you have any questions about this study, you may contact:

<i>Name (PI)</i>	<i>Phone number</i>	<i>Email address</i>
<i>Maryana Al Khoury</i>	<i>0096171619269</i>	<i>Maryana.alkhoury@lau.edu</i>

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, or you want to talk to someone outside the research, please contact the:

Institutional Review Board Office,

Lebanese American University

3rd Floor, Dorm A, Byblos Campus

Tel: 00 961 1 786456 ext. (2546) irb@lau.edu.lb

Factors Affecting Employee Development

Demographic Variables

Gender	
Male	
Female	
Prefer not to say	

Age	
Short Answer	

Level of Education	
High School or Less	
University/BA/BS Degree	

Pursuing a master's degree	
Completed a master's degree or a Ph.D. Degree	

Years of Experience	
Less than 3 years	
From 3 to 5 years	
From 5 to 9 years	
From 10 to 15 years	
More than 15 years	

Work Industry	
Business	
Engineering	
Education	
Healthcare Services	
Other:	

Work Position	
Non-managerial position	
Operational Level Manager	
Middle Level Manager	
Top Level Manager	

Company Size	
Less than 50 Employees	
50-199 Employees	
200-499 Employees	
500 or more Employees	

Employee Well-Being Scale

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	My organization supports the well-being and development of all employees.					
2.	My organization uses a variety of methods to measure employee satisfaction.					
3.	My organization works to improve employee health and safety (such as ergonomic training for jobs requiring lifting).					
4.	In my organization, employees receive career development services.					
5.	In my organization, employee turnover is evaluated in each department.					

Organizational Support Scale

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	My organization attaches great importance to my work goals and values.					
2.	My organization always helps me whenever I am facing a bad time.					
3	My organization respects and give importance to my opinions and suggestions.					
4.	My organization is flexible in my working hours if needed, whenever I guarantee to complete my tasks on time.					
5.	My organization provides me enough time to deal with my family matters.					
6.	My organization cares about my thoughts and feelings.					
7.	My organization tries to provide its employees with all the basic facilities to make life better.					

Employee Development Scale:

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	<i>Self-development:</i>					
1.	My job allows me to decide on my own how to go about doing my work.					
2.	My job allows me to make a lot of decisions on my own.					
3.	Gaining new information about ways to perform work more effectively is important in my organization.					
4.	In my organization, job assignments are assigned to promote personal development.					
5.	In my organization, there are rewards and incentives for acquiring and using new knowledge and skills in one's job.					
	<i>Career development:</i>					
1.	I develop my career plan based on manager's performance appraisal.					
2.	Training programs are offered in my organization					
3.	I can easily consult my manager about the development of my career.					
4.	In my organization, management is organized in self-managed teams in performing a major part of their work roles.					
5.	I assess my career plan frequently.					
6.	I develop my skills to achieve my career goals.					

Person-Organization Fit Scale

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	My values are consistent with my company's organizational values.					
2.	Company adaptation is hard for me because my values differ greatly from my organization's values.					
3.	I do not feel any burden with keeping my values while I am at work.					
4.	My personal goals match with my company's organizational goals.					
5.	Overall, I am a highly compatible person with my organization.					

Workplace Stress Scale

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	I do not feel any interest or enjoyment in doing things.					
2.	I feel down, stressful and without hope while I am at work.					
3.	I feel very dizzy and sleepy most of the time.					
4.	My eating habits have changed, these days sometimes I eat much less and sometimes eat too much.					
5.	I feel that I am exhausted and do not have energy in my body to do things.					
6.	I feel that I am a loser and cannot get any success in doing my work.					
7.	I often think about hurting myself, and I deserve to be dead.					

Toxic Workplace Environment Scale

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	Has any of your supervisors, co-workers, or subordinates ever tried sharing dirty jokes with you?					
2.	Has any of your supervisors, co-workers, or subordinates ever appreciated your physical appearance?					
3.	Have you ever been assigned with work that is not of your competence level?					
4.	Has any of your supervisors, co-workers, or subordinates ever talked about your personal and sexual life?					
5.	Has any of your supervisors, co-workers, or subordinates ever ignored your greetings?					
6.	Has any of your supervisors, co-workers, or subordinates ever maintained a distance from you while at work?					
7.	Has any of your supervisors, co-workers, or subordinates ever					

	spoke rudely to you in public					
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NOTICE OF IRB APPROVAL – EXEMPT STATUS

To: Ms. Maryana Al Khoury
Dr. Leila Messarra
School of Business

APPROVAL ISSUED: 5 May 2021
EXPIRATION DATE: 5 May 2023
REVIEW TYPE: EXEMPT CATEGORY B

Date: May 5, 2021

RE: **IRB #:** LAU.SOB.LM2.5/May/2021

Protocol Title: *The Relationship Between a Toxic Workplace Environment, Workplace Stress, and Employee Development with the Moderating Effect of Organizational Support*

Your application for the above referenced research project has been reviewed by the Lebanese American University, Institutional Review Board (LAU IRB). This research project qualifies as exempt under the category noted in the Review Type.

This notice is limited to the activities described in the Protocol Exempt Application and all submitted documents listed on page 2 of this letter. **Final reviewed consent documents or recruitment materials and data collection tools released with this notice are part of this determination and must be used in this research project.**

CONDITIONS FOR ALL LAU NOTICE OF IRB EXEMPTION DETERMINATION

LAU RESEARCH POLICIES: All individuals engaged in the research project must adhere to the approved protocol and all applicable LAU IRB Research Policies. **PARTICIPANTS** must NOT be involved in any research related activity prior to IRB notice date or after the expiration date.

EXEMPT CATEGORIES: Activities that are exempt from IRB review are not exempt from IRB ethical review and the necessity for ethical conduct.

PROTOCOL EXPIRATION: **PROTOCOL EXPIRATION:** The LAU IRB notice expiry date for studies that fall under Exemption is 2 years after this notice, as noted above. If the study will continue beyond this date, a request for an extension must be submitted at least 2 weeks prior to the Expiry date.

MODIFICATIONS AND AMENDMENTS: Certain changes may change the review criteria and disqualify the research from exemption status; therefore, any proposed changes to the previously IRB reviewed exempt study must be reviewed and cleared by the IRB before implementation.

RETENTION: Study files must be retained for a period of 3 years from the date of project completion.

IN THE EVENT OF NON-COMPLIANCE WITH ABOVE CONDITIONS, THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR SHOULD MEET WITH THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE IRB OFFICE IN ORDER TO RESOLVE SUCH CONDITIONS. IRB CLEARANCE CANNOT BE GRANTED UNTIL NON-COMPLIANT ISSUES HAVE BEEN RESOLVED.

If you have any questions concerning this information, please contact the IRB office by email at irb@lau.edu.lb

BEIRUT CAMPUS	BYBLOS CAMPUS	NEW YORK OFFICE
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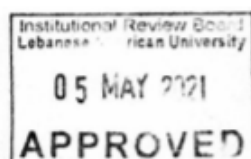


The IRB operates in compliance with the national regulations pertaining to research under the Lebanese Minister of Public Health's Decision No.141 dated 27/1/2016 under LAU IRB Authorization reference 2016/3708, the international guidelines for Good Clinical Practice, the US Office of Human Research Protection (45CFR46) and the Food and Drug Administration (21CFR56). LAU IRB U.S. Identifier as an international institution: FWA00014723 and IRB Registration # IRB00006954 LAUIRB#1

Dr. Joseph Stephan
Chair, Institutional Review Board

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED:

IRB Exempt Protocol Application	Received 18 April 2021
Proposal	Received 18 April 2021, amended 29 April 2021
Informed Consent	Received 18 April 2021, amended 29 April 2021
Survey	Received 18 April 2021, amended 29 April 2021
Recruitment Script	Received 29 April 2021
Link to the survey	Received 18 April 2021, amended 29 April 2021
IRB Comments sent: 19 April 2021 28 April 2021	PI response to IRB's comments dated: 19 & 20 April 2021 29 April 2021
NIH Training – Leila Messarra	Cert.# 2061311 (Dated 22 April 2015)
CITI Training – Maryana Al Khoury	Cert.# 39169942 (Dated 14 November 2020)



NOTICE OF IRB APPROVAL – EXEMPT STATUS

To: Ms. Maryana Al Khoury
Dr. Leila Messarra
School of Business

APPROVAL ISSUED: 5 May 2021
EXPIRATION DATE: 5 May 2023
REVIEW TYPE: EXEMPT/AMENDMENT

Date: June 2, 2021

RE: IRB #: LAU.SOB.LM2.5/May/2021

Protocol Title: The Relationship Between a Toxic Workplace Environment, Workplace Stress, and Employee Development with the Moderating Effect of Organizational Support

Your amendment to the above referenced research project has been approved by the Lebanese American University, Institutional Review Board (LAU IRB).

This approval is limited to the activities described in the Protocol Exempt Application and all submitted documents listed on page 2 of this letter. Final reviewed consent documents or recruitment materials and data collection tools released with this notice are part of this determination and must be used in this research project.

APPROVAL CONDITIONS FOR ALL LAU APPROVED HUMAN RESEARCH PROTOCOLS - EXEMPT

LAU RESEARCH POLICIES & PROCEDURES: All individuals engaged in the research project must adhere to the approved protocol and all applicable LAU IRB Research Policies & Procedures. PARTICIPANTS must NOT be involved in any research related activity prior to IRB approval date or after the expiration date.

EXEMPT CATEGORIES: Activities that are exempt from IRB review are not exempt from IRB ethical review and the necessity for ethical conduct.

PROTOCOL EXPIRATION: The LAU IRB approval expiry date for studies that fall under Exemption is 2 years after this approval as noted above. If the study will continue beyond this date, a request for an extension must be submitted at least 2 weeks prior to Expiry date.

MODIFICATIONS AND AMENDMENTS: Certain changes may change the review criteria and disqualify the research from exemption status; therefore, any proposed changes to the previously approved exempt study must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation.

NOTIFICATION OF PROJECT COMPLETION: A notification of research project closure and a summary of findings must be sent to the IRB office upon completion. Study files must be retained for a period of 3 years from the date of notification of project completion.

IN THE EVENT OF NON-COMPLIANCE WITH ABOVE CONDITIONS, THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR SHOULD MEET WITH THE IRB ADMINISTRATORS IN ORDER TO RESOLVE SUCH CONDITIONS. IRB APPROVAL CANNOT BE GRANTED UNTIL NON-COMPLIANT ISSUES HAVE BEEN RESOLVED

If you have any questions concerning this information, please contact the IRB office by email at irb@lau.edu.lb

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The IRB operates in compliance with the national regulations pertaining to research under the Lebanese Minister of Public Health's Decision No.141 dated 27/1/2016 under LAU IRB Authorization reference 2016/3708, the international guidelines for Good Clinical Practice, the US Office of Human Research Protection (45CFR46) and the Food and Drug Administration (21CFR56). LAU IRB U.S. Identifier as an international institution: FWA00014723 and IRB Registration # IRB00006954 LAUIRB#1

Dr. Joseph Stephan
Chair, Institutional Review Board

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED:

LAU IRB Protocol Amendment Application	Received 15 May 2021
Informed Consent & Questionnaire edited	Received 15 May 2021
Link to the survey	Received 15 May 2021, amended 1 June 2021
IRB Comments sent: 1 June 2021	PI response to IRB's comments dated: 1 June 2021

