
TOXIC LEADERSHIP AND TURNOVER INTENTION AMONG POLICE OFFICERS IN THE NIGERIAN POLICE FORCE

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Abstract

The study draws on the leader-member exchange model and explores the relationship between toxic leadership and turnover intentions of police officers in the Nigerian Police Force. The study employed survey design and a sample of 280 police officers were selected through a stratified random sampling procedure. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire. The measurement scale was examined to determine the reliability and validity using various statistics. The method of data analysis was Partial Least Square Regression with structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM). The data were analyzed and the results demonstrated that there was a positive but insignificant relationship between abusive supervision and turnover intention of police officers, there was a significant positive relationship between narcissistic leadership and turnover intention of police officers; there was a positive non-significant relationship self-promoting leadership and turnover intention of police officers ;there was a significant positive relationship between unpredictable leadership and turnover intention of police officers. The study concluded that police officers in the Nigerian Police had the intention to leave for other jobs due to toxic leadership style of superior officers. In tandem with findings, it was recommended that superior officers need to empathize while enforcing rules, procedures and programmes of the Nigerian Police.

Keywords: Toxic Leadership, Abusive Supervision, Narcissism, Unpredictable leaders, Turnover intent, Nigerian Police.

Introduction

Turnover intention and actual turnover of employees have been a major concern to both public and private sectors organisations largely on account of associated financial, recruitment, administrative costs and especially losing of employees with wealth of experience garnered on the job (Cho & Lewis, 2012). Accordingly, turnover cognition has become an area of scholarly attention over the decades. Turnover intention is the series of voluntary plans and deliberate attempts of employees to leave an organisation (Jano, Satardien, & Mahembe, 2019). The existing body of knowledge indicated that a plethora of factors are responsible for employee turnover intention in organisations. Court et al, (2018), Oluwafemi (2013) and Skelton, Nattress and Dwyer (2020) consider big five personality factors, organizational justice dimensions, employee job satisfaction and job embeddedness as predictors to employee turnover intent or intent to stay in different sectors of economies and countries.

In addition, how the role of dark side of leadership affects employee attitude and behaviour has also been explored in prior studies. In accordance with the view of Macklem, (2005) and Dyck (2001), toxic leadership contributed to withdrawal behaviour of absenteeism, poor performance and health of employees in organisations. Bad leadership is a recurring decimal in most public sector organisations in Nigeria, and the Nigerian Police is one of such agencies of government. Toxic leadership is conceptualized as a style of leadership with an “organized, systematic and persistent destructive behaviours” applied by the leader to bring negative consequences on the employees and the organisation (Labrague et al, 2020). It is a style of leadership exhibited by leaders for demonstrating nonchalant behaviour towards the well-being of subordinates and as well as manifesting harmful behaviour directed at employees (Schmidt, 2008). From the account of Milosevic, Maric and Lončar (2020), toxic leadership style brings about subordinates leaving a team, department as a measure to deal with toxicity of leaders and superiors and sometime voluntary of an organization despite the lack of job opportunities

The essence of the current study is to investigate the nexus between toxic leadership and turnover intentions in the Nigerian Police. Accordingly, the specific objectives of the study are to examine the relationship between abusive supervision and turnover intention in the police force, ascertain the link between Self-promoting leadership and turnover intention of the police force, determine the relationship between narcissistic leadership and turnover intention of the police force, assess the relationship between unpredictable leadership and turnover intention of the police force. Remaining part of the study is structured as follows: The first is to review literature for hypothesis development, second part is the methodology, third part is the data analysis, fourth is to the discussion of the results and managerial implications and fifth part is the limitations and suggestions for further study.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Leader-member Exchange model

Social transactions and relationships are initiated and formed between leaders and followers, superior officers and subordinates particularly in the police force. These social exchange relationships are in dyadic and multilateral structural forms, and the nature of such relationships can be mutually cordial or toxic, leading to employee embeddedness or turnover cognitions (Lussier & Achua, 2016). Accordingly, the study is anchored in the leader-member exchange theoretical foundations. As indicated by Northouse (2016) that Dansereau, Graen and Haga (1975) advanced the Leaders-Member exchange model, stating that leaders form dyadic relationships based on in-group with extra-roles and out-group with contractual

roles. Leaders tend to be kind towards members of the ingroup with respect to distributions of resources and as well as in the social interactions. The leadership style of superior officers would not be abusive, self-promoting, narcissistic and unpredictable to subordinates with high quality exchange relationships while the outgroup members are likely to face negative tendencies from superior officers in the form of abusive supervision, self-promotion, narcissism and unpredictability. This is likely to occur in the case of low quality of leader-member exchanges that transpires between superior officers and subordinate officers in the Nigerian Police force.

Abusive supervision and turnover intention

Police officers oversee subordinates and manifest ill-dispositional behaviour towards the rank and file in the Nigerian Police. Police officers as leaders verbally and non-verbally abuse subordinates and exhibit tyrannical and bullying disposition towards junior staff. Accordingly, some junior staff begin to have the intent to leave the police force. For Lyu, Ji, Zheng et al, (2019), abusive leadership means the perspective of subordinates over their leaders for displaying inimical verbal and non-verbal behaviour of incivility, angry outburst, derogatory remarks about junior staff without physical abuse. Abusive leadership consists of behaviours in the form of taking credit, passing of the buck, impoliteness, abuse of privacy and yelling at junior officers (Hussain, Abbas, Culzar, Jibril & Hussain, 2020). These actions without doubt positively influence the employees' intentions to leave an employer organization. In the empirical investigation of Hussain (2020) and Saleem et al (2018), the results indicated that abusive supervision positively influenced turnover intention. In line with the literature reviewed, it is hypothesized that:

Abusive supervision of leadership has positive influence on turnover intention of Nigerian police officers

Self-promoting Leadership and Turnover Intention

Leaders in some cases pursue personal interest and rise personal interest to the detriment of subordinate and the overriding goals of entities. Such leaders who project personal needs are into self-promoting leadership. Toxic leadership engages in self-promoting activities and as well condition their subordinates to exalt their leaders. In accordance with the assertion of Schmidt (2008), prior scholars consider self-promotion as an inherent element of toxic leadership, which has not been treated independently but for his seminal work for developing measurement instrument. Self-promoting leadership focuses on developing positive image and prestige of the upper levels the leadership hierarchy without due regard for the rank and file in organizations

There is a significant relationship between Self-promoting Leadership and Turnover Intention of Police officers

Narcissistic Leadership and Turnover Intention

Nervicka et al, (2018) state that narcissism is a grandiose and flagrant display of self-worth, which is a personality trait of leaders. Narcissistic leaders centre all activities on themselves and pursue personal interest to the detriment of their followers and subordinates (Asrar-ul-Haq & Ajuni, 2020). Narcissistic leaders believe in their entitlements and superiority complex over and above their subordinates, seeking ego-centric interests. The subordinates who perceive these tendencies in their leaders and senior officers of the police force may look for ways to dissociate from such leaders. The narcissistic proclivities of superior officers directed towards junior officers of the police force may come with exit plans in the Nigerian

Police (Nevicka, Hoogh, Hartog & Belschak, 2018). Leaders of entities relate with subordinates and make optimum utilization of resources to realize predetermined goals. However, narcissistic leaders often explore aggressive and provocative tendencies over subordinates to attain undue advantage instead of the aims of the organization. The police force usually engages in team approach to deal with criminality and maintain law and order. The leaders and the squads work as a team to fight crime. However, it has been noted that narcissistic leaders tend to reduce the effectiveness of team performance and outcomes (Nevicka et al.,2018).

Narcissistic leadership has a significant influence on the turnover intentions of police officers in the Nigerian Police Force

Unpredictable leadership and Turnover Intention

In line with arguments of Schmidt (2008), unpredictable leadership is part of the toxic leadership because unpredictable negative behaviour engenders negative consequences. The unpredictable dimension of toxic leadership is in a state of rarity. There is a lack of empirical evidence as to how unpredictable leaders bring about turnover intent. It is believed that unpredictable leaders portend stress and risk to followers. Thus, the need to seek for opportunities to quit a job.

There is a significant relationship between unpredictable leadership and turnover intention of police officers in the Nigerian Police.

Methodology

Design and Sample

The study applied an analytic descriptive survey design and a sample of 280 was selected for the study with the application of a proportionate stratified sampling procedure of taking into accounts of different divisional police stations and several categories of police officers. A total of 280 questionnaires were distributed to the police officers and retrieved only 245 while only 240 questionnaires were utilized for data analysis, which were properly filled and others were not returned. The data collection instrument was adapted from Schmidt (2008) and the measurement was designed on a 5-point Likert scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree. A total of 21-items were designed with the subdimensions of abusive leadership had 4-items, self-promoting leadership consist of 4-items narcissistic leadership with 4-items and unpredictable leadership with 4-items while turn over intention was made up of 4-items.

Variables, Method of Data Analysis and Measurement

Independent Variable Toxic Leadership. Toxic leadership is a form of bad leadership that considers abusive supervision, self-promotion, narcissism and unpredictability of leaders in relation to their subordinates. In this study, these dimensions are examined as to how the affect the cognition of policers to leave their job.

Dependent Variable Turnover Intentions. Turnover intention is the cognitive processes and the deliberate efforts to leave the police force or searching for other forms of job basically due to the dark leadership style prevalent in the Nigerian Police force.

The study applied partial least square structural equation modelling (PLS SEM) with use of smart PLS version 3 for the testing of the hypotheses postulated in the study. The measurement model was examined to ascertain the reliability and validity of the measurement instruments. The results are presented as follows in table1 below. From the measurement

model, all the factor loadings were greater than > 0.70 indicating the validity of the measurement items of the instrument while some scholars suggested 0.5 as the lower limit threshold (Chin, 2010). Although, items 3 and item 4 for narcissistic leadership, items 1 and 3 for self-promoting leadership and items 3 and 4 for turnover intention were deleted as the factor loadings were below the threshold of 0.7 and after which the model was retested with bootstrapping and the results are provided below. Furthermore, the Cronbach alpha coefficients were within the range of 0.832 to 0.580 while that of composite reliability (CR) coefficients were 0.887 to 0.810. As reported that Cronbach alpha coefficient may be misleading based on the number items of the measurement instruments. Looking at the coefficients of CA greater than 0.7 as the lower threshold, the measurement instruments were reliable and attained internal consistency (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; Hair et al, 2014). In terms of the construct validity, the coefficients for the average variance extracted were beyond the lower limit threshold of 0.50, this affirmed that there was a convergent validity of the measurement instrument. In view of the discriminant validity, this was also attained as the square root of the AVE of each construct was greater than the inter-correlation coefficients of constructs in the measurement model (Fornel & Larcker, 1981).

Table 1. Reliability and Discriminant Validity of the Measurement Model

Constructs /Latent Variables	Factor Loadings	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	
<i>Toxic Leadership</i>					
<i>Abusive supervision</i>		0.796	0.865	0.617	
AS1	0.737				
AS2	0.748				
AS3	0.865				
AS4	0.780				
<i>Narcistic Leadership</i>		0.606	0.827	0.708	
NL1	0.757				
NL2	0.918				
<i>Self-promoting Leadership</i>		0.704	0.856	0.751	
SP2	0.767				
SP4	0.955				
<i>Unpredictable Leadership</i>		0.832	0.887	0.663	
UP3	0.861				
UP2	0.819				
UP1	0.807				
UP4	0.766				
<i>Turnover Intention</i>					
TN2	0.938	0.580	0.810	0.685	
TN1	0.700				
Discriminant Validity	1	2	3	4	5
1. Abusive Leadership	0.786				
2. Narcistic Leadership	0.578	0.841			
3. Self-promoting Leadership	0.437	0.629	0.866		
4. Turnover intention	0.456	0.598	0.506	0.828	
5. Unpredictable leadership	0.437	0.535	0.505	0.557	0.819

Analysis and Results

This aspect focuses on the analysis of the structural model to determine the relationship between toxic leadership style and turnover intention of police officers in Nigeria. From table 2, the results show that there is no significant positive relationship between abusive supervision and turnover intention of police officers ($\beta = 0.101$, $t = 0.892$, $p > 0.05$), there is a significant positive relationship between narcissistic leadership and turnover intention of police officers ($\beta = 0.310$, $t = 2.217$, $p < 0.05$); there is no significant positive relationship

self-promoting leadership and turnover intention of police officers ($\beta = 0.122$, $t = 1.062$, $p > 0.05$); there is a significant positive relationship between unpredictable leadership and turnover intention of police officers ($\beta = 0.286$, $t = 2.054$, $p < 0.05$). The path model is also presented below.

Table 2. The Relationship between Toxic Leadership and Turnover intention of Police Officers.

Relationships	Path Coeff.	t-test (Bootstrap)	P-Values	Decision
<i>Abusive Supervision</i> → <i>Turnover intention</i> (H_1)	0.101	0.892	0.300	<i>Rejected</i>
<i>Narcissistic leadership</i> → <i>Turnover intention</i> (H_2)	0.310	2.217	0.027	<i>Accepted</i>
<i>Self-promoting leadership</i> → <i>Turnover intention</i> (H_3)	0.122	1.062	0.289	<i>Rejected</i>
<i>Unpredictable leadership</i> → <i>Turnover intention</i> (H_4)	0.286	2.054	0.040	<i>Accepted</i>

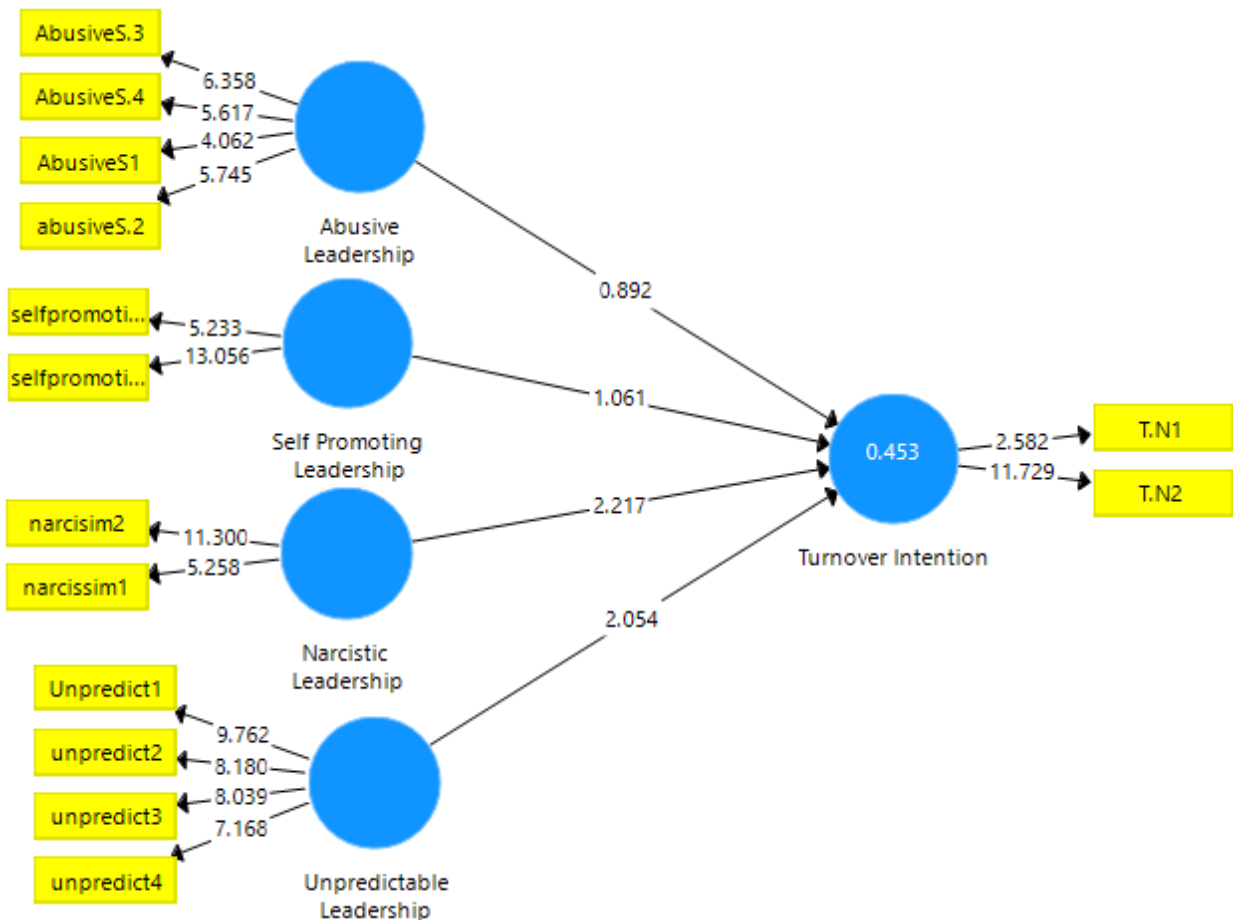


Fig 1: Structural Path Model of Toxic Leadership and Turnover Intention of Police Officers.

Discussion of Results

The study examined the relationship between toxic leadership and turnover intentions of police officers in the Nigerian police force. The study demonstrated that abusive leadership had no significant effect on turnover intention of police officers, narcissistic leadership had a

positive significant effect on turnover intention on police officers. There was no significant positive relationship self-promoting leadership and turnover intention of police officers and there was a significant positive relationship between unpredictable leadership and turnover intention of police officers.

In view of the finding from the nexus between abusive supervision and turnover intention, the prior findings of Hair, De fluitier and Brougham (2016) and Lyu et al (2019) underpinned the empirical evidence that abusive supervision was related with turnover intentions among police officers in Nigeria. This implies that the top management of the Nigerian Police should build mechanisms to bring about a friendly climate and reduce abusive tendencies among police officers.

Considering self-promoting leadership style, the current empirical evidence demonstrated that self-promotion through toxic leadership had a positive influence on turnover intention among police officers. However, the relationship between self-promotion and turnover intention was not statistically significant. In terms of prior studies, self-promoting dimension of toxic leadership is devoid empirical literature.

In regard to narcissism of toxic leaders, the finding from the current study that narcissistic leadership influenced turnover intention among police officers is to some extent consistent with the empirical evidence of previous study by Disque (2020) that narcissism had a positive impact on turnover intention of employees. In view of the findings, senior officers with leadership role should pursue mutual and common interest beneficial to individual police officers, squad and the entire Police Force in Nigeria. The senior police officers who occupy leadership positions should endeavour to relate with subordinates without being uncivil and ruthless but empathetic towards fellow workers and the rank and file.

In line with the findings of unpredictable leadership, police officers have turnover intent as they would not be able to ascertain the next line of action with regards to the behaviour of the leader towards them. Subordinates must of the times want leaders that be relied.

Limitations and Direction for further Studies

The study no doubt is of a significant relevance based on the findings but with few limitations. The study was executed in Bayelsa State. Thus, caution is required in making generalizations from the findings of the study. The form of data collection was structured questionnaire and the option of interview was not employed. In view of the limitations of the study, future studies can replicate the study by covering others states of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Future studies can examine toxic leadership and organisational justice among police officers in Nigeria.

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Declaration of conflict of interest

There is no potential conflict of interest to the [publication of this paper.

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