

Can Emotion Regulation Mitigate the Harmful Effects of Toxic Leadership on Psychological Well-being and Turnover Intention?

Emine ŞENER¹  Mehmet Orkun ÜNSEVER²  Fatih Ferhat ÇETİNKAYA³ 

Abstract

This study aims to determine if cognitive emotion regulation mediates the relationship between private sector workers' perceptions of toxic leadership and their intention to leave and psychological health. The study employed a quantitative research approach, and 386 private sector employees in the province of Kırşehir provided data via a questionnaire technique. SPSS 21 and AMOS 21 were used to analyze the data. The validity and reliability of the scales employed in the study were assessed using basic validity tests and confirmatory factor analysis. The hypotheses developed within the parameters of the study were also tested using various statistical methods, including correlation analysis, mediation analysis, and structural equation modeling. In terms of the impact of managers' behavior on their employees, the study concluded that their psychological health and propensity to leave the company are greatly affected by toxic leadership behaviors in the private sector. Furthermore, it was found that the association between psychological well-being and toxic leadership is fully mediated by cognitive emotion control.

Keywords: Toxic Leadership, Turnover Intention, Psychological Well-being, Emotion Regulation

Duygu Düzenlemesi, Toksik Liderliğin Psikolojik İyi Oluş ve İşten Ayrılma Niyeti Üzerindeki Zararlı Etkilerini Azaltabilir mi?

Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı, özel sektör çalışanlarının toksik liderliğe ilişkin algıları ile işten ayrılma niyetleri ve psikolojik sağlıkları arasındaki ilişkide bilişsel duygu düzenlemesinin aracılık rolünün olup olmadığını belirlemektir. Çalışmada nicel araştırma yaklaşımı kullanılmış ve Kırşehir ilinde 386 özel sektör çalışanına anket tekniği ile veri sağlanmıştır. Verilerin analizinde SPSS 21 ve AMOS 21 programları kullanılmıştır. Çalışmada kullanılan ölçeklerin geçerliliği ve güvenilirliği temel geçerlik testleri ve doğrulayıcı faktör analizi kullanılarak değerlendirilmiştir. Çalışmanın parametreleri dahilinde geliştirilen hipotezler ayrıca korelasyon analizi, aracılık analizi ve yapısal eşitlik modellemesi gibi çeşitli istatistiksel yöntemler kullanılarak test edilmiştir. Çalışmada, yöneticilerin davranışlarının çalışanları üzerindeki etkisi bağlamında, psikolojik sağlıklarının ve şirketten ayrılma eğilimlerinin özel sektördeki toksik liderlik davranışlarından büyük ölçüde etkilendiği sonucuna varılmıştır. Ayrıca, psikolojik iyi oluş ile toksik liderlik arasındaki ilişkinin bilişsel duygu kontrolü tarafından tam olarak aracılık edildiği bulunmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Toksik Liderlik, İşten Ayrılma Niyeti, Psikolojik İyi Oluş, Bilişsel Duygu Düzenleme

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¹ Department of Business Management, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Kırşehir Ahi Evran University, Turkey, esener@ahievran.edu.tr

² Department of Business Management, Institute of Social Sciences, Kırşehir Ahi Evran University, Turkey, orkununsever@yahoo.com

³ Department of Business Management, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Kırşehir Ahi Evran University, Turkey, ffcetinkaya@ahievran.edu.tr

1. Introduction

In the 21st century, the requirements for organizations and managers to be successful are being reviewed again and from different perspectives. Changing individuals' attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, values, and needs has significantly changed their expectations. Perspectives in psychology and management science have accompanied this change from different perspectives. Whatever the leader's attitudes and behaviors are, it is a fact that this will undoubtedly be seen in the situation of the organization and the workers. While management science has generally viewed the concept of leadership from a positive perspective in previous years and concluded that all leadership qualities are good, in recent years, the dark sides of leadership qualities have also become apparent (Bozbayır et al., 2023).

One of these dark sides is toxic leadership, which has received particular attention in recent years. Toxic leadership was defined as “a type of leadership characterized by malicious behavior used to bully or manipulate people” (Lipman-Blumen, 2006; Pelletier, 2009). Destructive leadership, gloomy leadership, or, more broadly, weak leadership are other terms used to describe this type of leadership style. This attitude of the leader naturally affects the work attitude of the employee. Sometimes, this effect may even lead to the employee intending to quit or quit his/her job. Since intentions can predict a person's perceptions and the judgment that results from those perceptions, they are the determining factor in actual conduct. According to McCarthy, Tyrrell, and Lehane (2007), the final step in the decision-making process is turnover intentions. Organizations and organizational psychology research benefit from understanding the predecessors of turnover intentions (Treglown et al, 2018).

In this picture, the share of the person's feeling of well-being, i.e., psychological well-being, should not be ignored. Although no single concept defines psychological well-being, it is universally important. According to a widely accepted definition, psychological well-being is the combination of feeling good and performing well. Another common commentary on psychological well-being is defined by the six-dimensional model suggested by Ryff (1989). Positive relationships, self-acceptance, environmental mastery, personal growth, and life purpose are all included in this concept of well-being.

In this study, the variable that is argued to affect employees' turnover intention and psychological well-being is emotion regulation. Emotional regulation encompasses a set of competencies. In the literature, nine distinct conceptual approaches to cognitive emotion regulation have been proposed. These include self-blame, blaming others, rumination, catastrophizing, putting into perspective, positive refocusing, positive reappraisal, acceptance, and planning (Garnefski &

Kraaij, 2007). It enables one to manage, assess, and control the processes that lead to the development of emotion and how it manifests.

Accordingly, the primary inquiry of this research is whether cognitive emotion control techniques have a moderating influence on the consequences of toxic leadership perceptions on turnover intention and psychological health in the private sector. The following sub-questions are also sought in the study to answer this main question.

- Do toxic leadership perceptions of private sector employees affect their turnover intentions, and if so, what is the direction and strength of this relationship?
- Do toxic leadership perceptions of private sector employees affect their psychological well-being, and if so, what is the direction and strength of this relationship?
- Do private sector workers' cognitive emotion regulation techniques become impacted by toxic leadership perceptions, and if so, how strongly and in what direction?
- Does the impact of toxic leadership views on turnover intentions become mediated by the emotion regulation attitudes of private sector workers?
- Do private sector workers' attitudes toward emotion control act as a moderator in the relationship between psychological well-being and toxic leadership perceptions?

2. Literature and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Toxic Leadership

Leaders are one of the most important impactful people of an organization's success or failure. For this reason, organizational researchers have become increasingly aware of the importance of leadership style in recent years. As Stogdill (1974) argues in his study, “There are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are people trying to define the subject.” However, there are a few definitions that have consistently permeated academic and popular sources over the years. One of them is the definition made by Gandolfi and Stone (2022). According to this definition, leadership is “an intentional tool used by a leader to guide a group of people in an organization to a widely understood future state that is different from the current state.” The word intentional is a critical element of this definition. They discussed the commitment required to practice leadership and to develop leadership skills. Although this study is not related to leadership styles, the researchers concluded that every leadership style requires commitment (Gandolfi & Stone, 2022).

Leadership behaviors and styles arising from the personality traits of individuals are ultimately reflected in the behaviors and attitudes of organizational employees in the workplace and,

after a while, affect their performance. As a result, it is believed that certain traits of the leader—such as competence, vision, honesty, and respect for others—can positively impact workers (Manaa, 2022). From a different perspective, a leader who has negative traits like narcissism, self-promotion, and manipulative and dominating actions has a detrimental impact on employee morale and performance (Manaa, 2022). Some other definitions of toxic leadership, defined by scholars as “a type of leadership characterized by malicious behavior used to bully or manipulate people”, are as follows: This type of leadership is also defined as “destructive leadership, dark leadership, or weak leadership”. (Wolor et al, 2022). The toxic leader aims to protect his/her interests and tries to intimidate and intimidate his/her employees in order to gain acceptance, it is a dysfunctional type of leadership that discourages organizational members by constantly humiliating them with narcissistic tendencies and authoritarian attitudes, causing their physical and mental destruction (Çoban, 2021).

Examining the elements of Lipman-Blumen's (2006) toxic leadership scale reveals that toxic leadership can have detrimental consequences on a variety of organizational aspects, including motivation, organizational commitment, organizational culture, and organizational climate (Kılıç & Günsel, 2019). Problems like tardiness or absenteeism, decreased productivity at work, the rise of relocation demands, and resignations impact the organization's administrative and organizational processes from a micro perspective and sectors and fields from a macro perspective. These issues arise when employees are evaluated based on their individual mental and physical health as well as the loss of functionality of group behaviors (Ullah et al, 2021). The idea behind toxic leadership is “leaders who display a wide range of extreme emotions in an unpredictable pattern, lack emotional intelligence, act in ways that are culturally and/or interpersonally insensitive, are primarily motivated by self-interest, and influence others using negative methods” (Reed, 2004; Whicker, 1996).

Schmidt (2008) distinguished five sub-dimensions of toxic leadership:

- Coercion, public criticism, rudeness, tantrums, and other careless behaviors are examples of abusive supervision.
- Authoritarian leadership: This leadership style is frequently linked to a lack of consideration for the needs and opinions of others.
- A subdimension of toxic leadership, narcissism is characterized by a high sense of personal inadequacy, self-aggrandizement, selfishness, and self-interested goals.
- Self-promotion entails just engaging in activities and groups pertaining to personal growth and avoiding accountability for employees' individual or collective errors.

•Unpredictability; this concept in toxic leadership describes the leader's mood swings, characterized by sudden outbursts of emotion and tantrums, for no apparent and logical reason. The concept of unpredictability is also related to psychopathology (Batchelor et al, 2023).

Lipman-Blumen (2006) divided toxic leadership into two categories: intentional and unintentional. It can be said that the intentionally toxic leader intentionally harms others for status promotion. Unintentional toxic leaders do not intentionally and knowingly cause harm, but they are incompetent people who can cause serious problems to the organization with their irrational and irresponsible behaviors (Budak & Erdal, 2022). Nonetheless, recent instances of power abuse in various settings, including politics and business, have reignited curiosity about the shadowy side of leadership. Recent scholarship has used different constructs to describe this dark and destructive form of leadership: Exploiter (Tepper, 2000), cruel (Ashforth, 1994), unethical or bad (Kellerman, 2004), and toxic (Lipman-Blumen, 2006; Pelletier, 2009; Reed, 2004; Whicker, 1996). Although these structures are named differently by different authors, the same phenomenon is generally emphasized. Toxic leaders, often described by staff as arrogant, selfish, inflexible, and overbearing, are indifferent to their employees' motivation, morale, or well-being (Dobbs & Do, 2019). Although he presents a negative picture of his followers, the reasons why his followers continue to follow him differ. According to Gangel (2008), those who follow a toxic leader do so because they lack courage and education, they are insecure, they fear the leader, they have no other options, and they like the toxic leader's charisma.

There can be many explanations why toxic leaders behave this way in the workplace; however, some reasons are more prominent than others. Pelletier (2009) asserts that toxic leaders exhibit specific behavioral characteristics, such as incompetence, a lack of moral philosophy, a lack of honesty and integrity, and a lack of trust (Baloyi, 2020).

The toxic habits of the leader make the work more difficult and demanding. They are viewed as haughty, self-centered, rigid, and controlling, and they don't care about the happiness and welfare of their workers. To identify toxic tendencies in a leader before they have a significant detrimental influence, it is crucial for businesses to analyze leadership behavior (Naeem & Khurram, 2020). In this study, turnover intention and psychological well-being, which are argued to be affected by toxic leadership perception, are examined.

2.2. Turnover Intention

In the literature, turnover intention refers to the desire to leave an organization. Intentions are important in that they reflect a person's perception. Since these intentions have the power to predict

judgment that emerges as a continuation of perceptions, this fact is the key to determining behavior. McCarthy, Tyrrell, and Lehane (2007) argue that turnover intention is the last part of the decision-making process.

Research aimed at comprehending the reasons behind turnover intentions constitute a significant portion of the literature on organizational behavior. The most reliable measure of turnover intention, according to these studies, is turnover intention. These studies have shown how perceived supervisor and organizational support, job satisfaction, job stress, job engagement, organizational commitment, and workgroup cohesion relate to the intention to leave (Simone et al, 2021). Employers rely on employee surveys to gauge how their staff members feel about their jobs and working circumstances. It is debatable whether it is appropriate to look into the predictive ability of other well-being indicators for turnover intention, given the prevalence of work satisfaction measures and the evidence that they are a reliable indication of this intention. However, it may be argued that employee well-being is a multifaceted concept that extends well beyond job satisfaction. Employee surveys that solely use a job satisfaction metric to reflect overall employee health appropriately ignore this multidimensionality. Employers have lost out on this chance to get crucial information about the role that other aspects of the work experience play (Diane, 2022). However, the reasons for these purposes are often obscure, and the phenomenon is far from being fully understood, especially since some of the psychological processes of fundamental turnover are still unclear (Ismail, 2015).

The factors that trigger turnover intentions can be characterized as individual (age, gender, education, marital status, family or kinship responsibilities, and professional experience), organizational (job satisfaction and organizational commitment), and external factors (macroeconomic factors, labor market). As an example of individual factors, according to role theory, individuals have various identities; the most prominent roles for individuals are their roles in business life and their roles in family life. The greater the incompatibility between these two roles, the more this causes a negative mood in the individual, and the source of the threat is questioned using negative evaluations. People either think that they are the main cause of the issue or they think that outside forces are to blame, which leads them to conclude that it is an accident. People who think they have control over their lives, or who think they are in charge of their lives, tend to stay employed at the same firm with little influence from pressures. The literature has examined the influence of environmental stimuli and antecedents (external organizational factors), which are events and stimuli that take place in the environment outside the organization. The most well-researched external variables are positive macroeconomic factors, including a warming labor market, the availability of job alternatives, the level of economic development, employment policy, social security policy, and labor supply and demand circumstances (Steil et al, 2019).

Furthermore, self-efficacy reduces turnover intention, according to a study by Moore (2002). An employee may quit due to internal organizational concerns, including role uncertainty and conflict. These two intra-organizational factors may lead to a faster psychological exhaustion of the personal resources of the employees for the organization. In the following process, these personal resources may continue with the search for a company with job clarity (Halawi, 2014).

With these arguments, the following assumption was made.

Hypothesis 1a: There is a significant relationship between employees' perceptions of toxic leadership and turnover intentions.

2.3. Psychological Well-Being

Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) put out one of the earliest and most significant models of psychological well-being, characterizing it as the outcome of two factors: having pleasant feelings and participating in worthwhile activities. This concept suggests that people who actively participate in meaningful activities and regularly feel good are likely to have higher levels of psychological well-being (Dhanabhakym & Sarath, 2023).

The conceptualization of psychological well-being has varied since the first study. While some researchers associate psychological well-being with the realization of life potential and happiness, others associate well-being with individuals' personal experiences or the outcome of achieving goals, as well as the feeling of well-being (Roslan et al, 2017).

Psychological well-being is commonly defined as the outcome of feeling good and functioning well. Another commonly recognized concept is psychological well-being, which is defined by Ryff's (1989) six-dimensional model. The paradigm states that self-acceptance, healthy relationships, autonomy, environmental mastery, personal development, and life purpose are all components of well-being. Some research distinguishes between psychological and subjective well-being (Shevleva et al, 2022).

Subjective well-being, one of the two primary well-being conceptions that emphasize life satisfaction and personal pleasure, distinguishes between positive and negative impacts and defines the psychological impact of well-being as the attainment of an individual's potential. The psychological approach definition of well-being, which incorporates several sub-dimensions, formulates human development and life's existential concerns. Although both approaches were developed at different times, their complementary effects and relationships can be seen. These two different structures include different aspects of the positive functioning of the individual's psychology. Actually, the following two theories of happiness are embodied in these two disparate notions of

happiness/well-being/well-being: (1) a eudaemonist philosophy, which maintains that happiness arises when people pursue meaningful goals through personally expressive behaviors, and (2) a hedonic philosophy, which maintains that happiness is comparable to subjective experiences of pleasure and satisfaction (Leite et al, 2019).

Positive emotional ideas like happiness and contentment, as well as feelings like compassion, caring, dedication, and trust, are recognized to be associated with the idea of well-being. Several criteria form the basis of the psychological idea of efficient functioning, some of which are as follows: Realizing one's potential, feeling somewhat in control of one's life, finding meaning in pursuing meaningful objectives, and experiencing healthy relationships (Huppert, 2009). Age and other sociodemographic characteristics have also been discovered to have a variety of relationships with psychological well-being.

Positive emotional states like happiness (hedonic perspective) and functioning with sufficient efficacy in one's personal and social life (eudaimonic perspective) are frequently considered to reflect psychological well-being. Huppert (2009) associates the concept of psychological well-being with the well-being of individuals' lives. Thus, it can be said that psychological well-being is the coexistence of feeling good and effective functioning and working (Winefield et al, 2012). According to these descriptions, people who have high psychological well-being are content, capable, at peace with life, and supported. Tests that measure well-being aim to capture objective measures of standard of living and psychological, spiritual, and social aspects. From this perspective, the concept is complex and multifactorial, as individuals' subjective judgments about their lives are divided into subjective measures based on cognitive and emotional aspects. When these constructions focus on psychological elements like happiness, they are frequently referred to as measures of psychological well-being. While measures such as life satisfaction are only concerned with one aspect of psychological well-being, the multidimensional structure of psychological well-being is broad. Within this broad structure, there are other aspects of both psychological and physiological health, such as stress, functionality/disability, and physical symptoms. (Fitzgerald et al, 2019).

With these arguments, the following assumption was made:

Hypothesis 1b: There is a significant relationship between employees' perceptions of toxic leadership and their psychological well-being.

2.4.Cognitive Emotion Regulation

Emotion regulation abilities are studied in the context of using cognitive processes as a required precondition since people frequently utilize them to solve issues, reduce fear, and manage challenges. Individuals who regulate their emotions through cognitive processes develop strategies

before reacting to a situation, and then an emotional response to that situation occurs. According to research on cognitive emotion regulation techniques, people can better control their emotions, particularly following stressful situations (Bacıoğlu & Kocabıyık, 2020).

Emotions can be regulated through thoughts and cognitions. This helps individuals to manage their emotions after stressful events. Individual variances in the particular thoughts and cognitions that enable emotion regulation result from people's varied life experiences, even while the ability to regulate emotions cognitively is widely acknowledged. Furthermore, cognitive emotion regulation is thought to be crucial for people's mental well-being. In the literature, nine distinct cognitive emotion control techniques have been proposed conceptually. These are self-blame, blaming others, rumination, catastrophizing, putting into perspective, positive refocusing, positive reappraisal, acceptance, and planning (Garnefski & Kraaij, 2006).

Since Freud started researching the connections between emotional drives and mental health, there has been interest in emotion regulation. Neurophysiological reactions, attentional cognitive processes, information processing, internal cue encoding, and behavioral mechanisms like response selection or control over the demands of familiar surroundings are all part of emotion regulation (Khatibi & Yousefi, 2015). By definition, conscious techniques involving a person's attention and assessment processes are referred to as cognitive regulation of emotion. Using executive functions is one approach to conceptualizing the cognitive processes of emotion control. While non-executive strategies like rumination suggest a lack of attention or inhibitory deficits, executive cognitive emotion regulation (e.g., reappraisal, mental state change, appraisal, planning, working memory, and information updating, monitoring) implies using higher cognitive structures. For instance, rumination has been linked to reduced cognitive flexibility and deficiencies in internal change in working memory, while reappraisal has been linked to greater emotional flexibility, interference resolution, and working memory capacity (Miklosi et al, 2014). It has been demonstrated that self-report of allegedly maladaptive emotion management techniques, such as avoidance, rumination, and suppression, is consistently linked to psychopathological symptoms. Research on the preventive function of ostensibly adaptive techniques, such as positive reappraisal or acceptance, indicates that there is a comparatively weaker correlation between these techniques and psychopathology (Kököneyi et al, 2019).

A collection of competency levels that enable an individual to manage, assess, modify, and control the recurrence of emotion production processes is referred to as emotional regulation. Therefore, individuals develop and apply a set of strategies that enable them to adjust or modify emotional events throughout life. Furthermore, a person's physiological and emotional well-being

depends heavily on their capacity to control their emotions, which also helps to reduce their chances of developing anxiety and depression (Aristu et al, 2019).

Examining the current research generally highlights the fact that, just as certain regulating techniques are more associated with emotional issues than others, these techniques can also be useful in various ways to guarantee the well-being of the individual. Strategies that can directly affect positive emotional experiences, such as “positive reappraisal” in the face of negative situations, can be effective in increasing life well-being (Balzarotti et al, 2014).

With these arguments, the following assumptions were made:

Hypothesis 1d: Cognitive emotion regulation mediates the relationship between employees' perceptions of toxic leadership and turnover intentions.

Hypothesis 1e: Cognitive emotion regulation mediates the relationship between employees' perceptions of toxic leadership and psychological well-being.

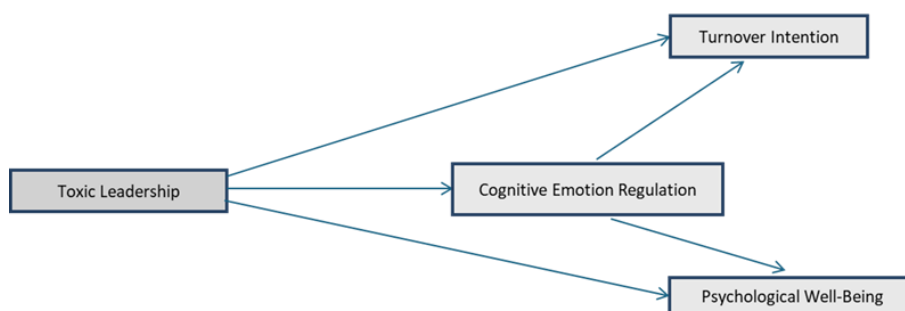
3. Method

3.1. Research Model

The study is descriptive, and by incorporating cognitive emotion regulation into the model, a mediation model between toxic leadership and turnover intention and psychological well-being was developed. The conceptual model is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Conceptual Model of The Study



*Source: Created by the authors by utilizing the literature.

3.2. Participants

The population of the research consists of private-sector employees. Especially considering the intensive working conditions and forms, it is a group where there is a high probability of experiencing undesirable phenomena at the organizational level. People who freely participated in the survey and work in the private sector in Kırşehir province make up the study's sample in the private sector universe. According to the Social Security Institution data for the period of July 2023,

the number of workplaces employing compulsory 4/A insured in Kırşehir province is 4,201. These workplaces employ a total of 29,168 4/A insured employees. According to the calculation, the sample size representing the number of private sector employees (29,168) corresponds to 380 people.

In this study, 386 people, which is the sample size that can represent the relevant population, were reached. Every participant provided their answers freely and without being forced to do so. The majority of the 386 participants were male (63.2%), married (71%), with 1-15 years of service (43.3%), in the 33-37 age range (25.4%), bachelor's degree holders (38.3%) and education sector employees (57.5%).

3.3.Data Collection Tools

Four fundamental scales are part of the data-gathering instrument utilized in this investigation. Çelebi, Güner, and Yıldız (2015) created the first one, the "Toxic Leadership Scale," to find out how participants felt about toxic leadership. The 30-item scale looks at four sub-dimensions of toxic leadership (unappreciation, manipulation, selfishness, and negative mood).

The second scale, the Cognitive Emotion Regulation Scale, was created by Garnefski, Kraaij, and Spinhoven (2001) to assess how people manage their emotions both in everyday life and in the wake of stressful life events. The scale comprises nine sub-dimensions and 36 components. These include catastrophizing, blaming other subscales, putting into perspective, ruminating, positive refocusing, planning, self-blame, acceptance, and positive reappraisal. There are four elements on each subscale. On a five-point Likert-type scale, 1 represents never and 5 represents always. Higher subscale scores indicate increased employment of the technique identified by a subscale. Onat and Otrar translated the associated scale into Turkish (2010) (Kula & Mor, 2016).

Diener, Scollon, and Lucas (2009) created the third scale, the Psychological Well-Being Scale, which has eight items and is used to gauge individuals' psychological well-being. The scale's internal consistency coefficient is 87. Telef (2013) carried out the Psychological Well-Being Scale adaptation study in Turkish. The internal consistency coefficient in the Turkish adaptation research was determined to be 87. The score ranges from 1 to 7. A person with a high score on the scale is considered psychologically strong. The scale has a single dimension, and the study's Cronbach's alpha score was 0.864.

The fourth scale used in the study to determine the turnover intention of the participants is the Turnover Intention Scale developed by Rosin and Korabik (1991). The scale, which was adapted into Turkish by Tanrıöver (2005), consists of 4 statements in total. These statements are respectively "I would leave my job if I had the opportunity", "I have recently started to think about leaving my job

more often”, “I am actively looking for a new job”, and “I do not think about leaving my job”. Since the 4th statement is negative, it was reverse-coded and included in the analysis. The Cronbach's alpha value calculated for the scale consisting of a single dimension was 0.908.

3.4.Data Collection Process

The data of the study were collected online between January-April 2024 using Google Forms. At the beginning of the questionnaire form, the necessary preliminary information about the research was given, and the contact number was specified for possible problems. In addition, the research was evaluated with the decision numbered 2023/11 at the meeting of the Kırşehir Ahi Evran University Ethics Commission held on 21.12.2023 and deemed ethically appropriate. In addition, the “Informed Voluntary Consent Form” given while obtaining ethics committee approval was delivered to the participants online, and their consent was obtained. The study did not involve human health or negativity, and no conflict of interest was pursued.

4. Results

This portion of the study provides the results and conclusions derived from the analyses. The scale-related statistics are presented first, followed by the correlational relationships between the several sub-dimensions and the overall scale scores as well as the outcomes of structural equation modeling within the parameters of the model that was developed.

4.1.Statistics on Scales

To ascertain if the data were regularly distributed, the skewness and kurtosis values were examined based on the sum of the scores. Total toxic leadership (skewness: 0,262; kurtosis: -0,616), total emotion regulation (skewness: -0,206; kurtosis: -0,095), total turnover intention (skewness: 0,448; kurtosis: -0,636) and finally total psycwellbeing (skewness: -1,092; kurtosis: 1,236) were obtained.

When the relevant data are analyzed, it is seen that the skewness and kurtosis values are between +1.5 and -1.5. As stated in Tabachnick and Fidell's (2013) study, the fact that the skewness and kurtosis values are in this range shows that the data exhibit a normal distribution.

In the study, the adequacy of the data was examined before proceeding to factor analysis. Within the scope of the adequacy tests, while the KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin/Measure of Sampling Adequacy) value of the toxic leadership scale was found to be 0.948, the approximately chi-square value for the related scale was obtained as 8347.790, df 190, and $p=0.000$. The total variance explained for the related scale was 79,557%. The values for the cognitive emotion regulation scale were found as KMO value 0,777, approximately chi-square value 5065,776, df value 325 and $p=$

0,000. The total variance explained for the related scale was obtained as 75,230%. As a result of the analysis conducted for the turnover intention scale, the KMO value was obtained as 0.800, and the values within the scope of Barlett's test were obtained as approximately chi-square value 1069,292, df value 6, p=0.000, respectively. Finally, in the psychological well-being scale, while the KMO value was found to be 0.882, the approximately chi-square value was obtained as 1348.884, df=28, and p=0.000.

Table 1

Factor Loading Values for The Scales

Toxic Leadership		Psyc wellbeing		Turnover intention		Emotion regulation	
Toxic_Leader_1	,800	Psyc1	,749	İntoq1	,912	emotionreg_8	,670
Toxic_Leader_3	,816	Psyc2	,534	İntoq2	,887	emotionreg_17	,831
Toxic_Leader_4	,764	Psyc3	,562	İntoq3	,730	emotionreg_26	,679
Toxic_Leader_5	,827	Psyc4	,438	İntoq4	,774	emotionreg_35	,875
Toxic_Leader_6	,801	Psyc5	,770			emotionreg_1	,646
Toxic_Leader_8	,875	Psyc6	,828			emotionreg_10	,764
Toxic_Leader_9	,816	Psyc7	,700			emotionreg_28	,902
Toxic_leader_19	,842	Psyc8	,775			emotionreg_4	,539
Toxic_leader_20	,873					emotionreg_13	,443
Toxic_leader_22	,893					emotionreg_22	,706
Toxic_leader_24	,799					emotionreg_31	,964
Toxic_leader_25	,873					emotionreg_5	,617
Toxic_leader_12	,851					emotionreg_14	,608
Toxic_leader_15	,909					emotionreg_23	,794
Toxic_leader_26	,888					emotionreg_32	,788
Toxic_leader_27	,803					emotionreg_9	,767
Toxic_leader_28	,931					emotionreg_18	,782
Toxic_leader_30	,843					emotionreg_36	,715
Toxic_leader_23	,894					emotionreg_25	,739
Toxic_leader_16	,917					emotionreg_34	,693
						emotionreg_2	,560
						emotionreg_11	,721
						emotionreg_12	,615
						emotionreg_30	,872
						emotionreg_6	,734
						emotionreg_15	,727

*Source: Created by the authors using the AMOS program.

As can be seen In table 1 above, as a result of the CFA (Confirmatory Factor Analysis) conducted for the toxic leadership scale, it is seen that the factor loads for the relevant scale are in the range of (0.764-0.931), while the factor loads for the psychological well-being scale are in the range of (0.438-0.828), the factor loads for the turnover intention scale are in the range of (0.730-0.912) and finally the factor loads for the cognitive emotion regulation scale are in the range of (0.539-0.964). The first level multifactor structure of the toxic leadership scale, which consists of a total of

4 sub-dimensions and 30 statements, was tested using the Amos 21 program. In the analysis using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), the Maximum Likelihood calculation method was used, considering the normal distribution of the data. To ensure goodness of fit values in the toxic leadership scale, in some cases, covariances were drawn under the condition of being formed under the same dimension. The items with factor loadings below 0.40 were removed from the analysis, and the final version of the scale consisted of 20 statements. The items removed from the scale can be stated as follows in order and on a dimension basis; questions 2, 7, 10, 11 from the dimension of unappreciation, 17, 18, 21 from the dimension of manipulation, 13, 14 from the dimension of selfishness and 29 from the dimension of negative mood. In order to increase the goodness of fit value in the psychological well-being scale (which consists of 8 items and a single dimension). The Maximum Likelihood calculation method was selected because the data exhibited normal distribution for this scale, and as a result of the values obtained, it was concluded that the one-factor structure was theoretically appropriate. In the 36-expression cognitive emotion regulation scale, consisting of a total of 9 sub-dimensions and 4 statements for each dimension, 10 statements were not included in the analysis because their factor loadings were below 0.40. These items can be specified based on dimensions respectively as follows; Question 19 from the self-blame dimension, Question 27 from the blame others dimension, Questions 20 and 29 from the acceptance dimension, Questions 12,30 from the rumination dimension, Questions 24,33 from the positive reappraisal dimension and finally Questions 7 and 16 from the putting into perspective dimension. Finally, it can be said that the theoretical structure of the turnover intention scale, which consists of a single dimension and 4 statements, was confirmed as a result of the analysis. The values obtained were significantly below the specified threshold for all variables; this shows that each scale structure is different and separate (Uygungil-Erdogan et al., 2025).

Table 2*Toxic Leadership Scale Basic Validity Test Values*

	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV	selfishness	unappreciation	manipulation	Negative mood
Selfishness	0,922	0,797	0,752	0,665	0,893			
Unappreciation	0,932	0,664	0,776	0,701	0,796	0,815		
Manipulation	0,946	0,745	0,785	0,771	0,867	0,881	0,863	
Negative mood	0,924	0,753	0,785	0,696	0,781	0,833	0,886	0,868

*(CR: Composite reliability; AVE: Average Variance Extracted; MSV: Maximum Squared Variance; ASV: Average Shared Square Variance)

**Source: Created by the authors using SPSS and AMOS programs.

The basic validity test results of the toxic leadership scale are as shown in Table 2. The internal reliability criterion that the CR value should be greater than 0.7 is met for all dimensions, the condition that the AVE value should be greater than 0.5 is also met, in terms of convergent validity,

CR>AVE is met and in terms of discriminant validity, MSV<AVE condition is met only based on selfishness dimension. In general, according to the results of CFA, the scale fits according to the final fit criteria, and it also conforms to acceptable values based on discriminant and convergent validity, which is parallel with the sources in the literature.

Table 3

Cognitive Emotion Regulation Scale Basic Validity Test

	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV	Catastrophizing	Self-blame	Planning	Blaming others	Putting into perspective	Acceptance	Rumination	Positive reappraisal	Positive refocusing
Catastrophizing	0,757	0,613	0,573	0,190	0,783								
Self-blame	0,818	0,605	0,479	0,137	0,661	0,778							
Planning	0,798	0,500	0,531	0,143	-0,247	0,050	0,707						
Blaming others	0,799	0,570	0,242	0,060	0,492	0,099	0,040	0,755					
putting into perspective	0,678	0,513	0,433	0,168	-0,331	0,127	0,597	-0,112	0,716				
Acceptance	0,584	0,417	0,125	0,041	0,122	0,353	-0,274	-0,157	0,166	0,646			
Rumination	0,720	0,569	0,573	0,169	0,757	0,692	-0,024	0,353	-0,062	0,217	0,755		
Positive reappraisal	0,696	0,534	0,531	0,164	-0,229	0,117	0,729	-0,253	0,622	0,098	-0,231	0,731	
Positive refocusing	0,771	0,479	0,433	0,108	-0,172	-0,099	0,339	-0,034	0,658	-0,065	-0,271	0,447	0,692

*(CR: Composite reliability; AVE: Average Variance Extracted; MSV: Maximum Squared Variance; ASV: Average Shared Square Variance)

**Source: Created by the authors using SPSS and AMOS programs.

The results of the basic validity test of the cognitive emotion regulation scale are presented in Table 3. When the relevant data are examined, the CR value, the internal security criterion, has values above 0.7 except for 3 dimensions (putting into perspective, acceptance and positive reappraisal dimensions are below 0.7 but close to the limit values). The condition that the AVE value should be greater than 0.5 is met except for two dimensions (acceptance and positive refocusing dimensions). In terms of convergent validity, CR>AVE is met. In the MSV<AVE comparison, which is discriminant validity, this validity is met except for two dimensions (planning and rumination dimensions).

Table 4

Goodness of Fit Values of The Scales

	Toxic leadership	Emotion Regulation	Turnover Intention	Psyc Well being
CMIN/DF	4,820	4,638	3,824	3,995
GFI	0,852	0,824	0,995	0,954
CFI	0,931	0,806	0,997	0,957
RMSEA	0,099	0,097	0,086	0,088

*(CMIN/DF: Normed chi-square; GFI: Goodness of fit index; CFI: Comparative fit index; RMSEA: Root mean square error of approximation)

**Source: Created by the authors using the AMOS program.

The data on whether the model tested with the structural equation model is supported by the data collected are given in Table 4, and a conclusion can be reached by interpreting these values, which are called goodness of fit values. When the values in the table are compared with the commonly used threshold values (CMIN/DF (X squared/sd) ≤ 5.00 ; GFI ≥ 0.85 ; CFI ≥ 0.950 ; RMSEA ≤ 0.10), it is seen that the CMIN/DF value, RMSEA and GFI (Goodness of fit index) values in the toxic leadership scale are compatible with the threshold values. Still, the other criterion for the scale in question, CFI (Comparative fit index) value is close to these limits. Similarly, in the cognitive emotion regulation scale, CMIN/DF and RMSEA (root mean square error of approximation) values are compatible with the threshold values, while the other two values, GFI and CFI, are close to the threshold values. While the data obtained from the turnover intention scale are compatible with the frequently used threshold values according to four different criteria, similarly, the psychological well-being scale also complies with the threshold values. With these results, it can be said that the predicted theoretical structures of the scales are confirmed (See also: Karagöz, 2019).

4.2. Correlational Relationships Between Total Scale Scores

According to the data In table 5, regarding the correlation values of the variables in the research model is examined, it is seen that there is a coefficient of 0.166 ($p=0.01$) between toxic leadership and cognitive emotion regulation, toxic leadership and turnover intention based on scale total scores, 0.481 coefficient ($p=0.01$), 0.126 ($p=0.05$) between toxic leadership and psychological well-being, 0.206 coefficient ($p=0.01$) between cognitive emotion regulation and psychological well-being and finally -0.206 coefficient ($p=0.01$) between turnover intention and psychological well-being.

Table 5

Data On Correlation Values

Variables	Toxic_Leadership	Emotion regulation	Turnover Intention	Psyc wellbeing
Toxic leadership	1			
Emotion regulation	,166**	1		
Turnover Intention	,481**	,030	1	
Psyc wellbeing	,126*	,206**	-,206**	1

* $p<0.05$ ** $p<0.01$ ***Source: Created by the authors using SPSS program.

4.3. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and Path Analysis

When the coefficients In table 6 (stage 1) are examined, there are positive and significant relationships between toxic leadership, turnover intention and psychological well-being. The standardized regression coefficient (toxic leadership - turnover intention) was 0.48 ($p<0.01$) and the standardized regression coefficient between toxic leadership and psychological well-being was 0.13 ($p=0.013$; $p\leq 0.05$).

Table 6

Regression Coefficients Obtained From (Stage 1)

Relationships			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	p
Total turnover intention	<---	Total toxic leadership	0,11	0,01	10,767	***
Total psyc wellbeing	<---	Total toxic leadership	0,049	0,02	2,49	0,013

*Source: Created by the authors using the AMOS program.

Data In table 7 of the model (stage 2), the relationship between toxic leadership and cognitive emotion regulation was examined, where the standardized path coefficient was 0.17 ($p \leq 0.01$), indicating the existence of a positive and significant relationship between the two variables. In short, it can be concluded that as the level of toxic leadership in managers increases, employees will try to reduce the effects of this situation by using cognitive emotion regulation strategies.

Table 7

Regression Coefficients Obtained From (Stage 2)

Relationships			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	p
Total emotion reg	<---	Total toxic leadership	0,082	0,025	3,301	***

*Source: Created by the authors using the AMOS program.

When the values of the mediation analyses in Table 8 (stage 3) are examined, it is possible to make a comparison by considering the coefficients in the first stage with the cognitive emotion regulation added to the model. In the first stage, the standardized coefficients in the relationship between toxic leadership and psychological well-being decreased from 0.13 to 0.09 (with the addition of cognitive emotion regulation to the model). In addition, when the presence of a change in the significance level is checked, the significant relationship in the first stage ($p=0.013$) becomes insignificant ($p=0.061$) with the addition of cognitive emotion regulation to the model in Stage 3. This shows us the presence of a full mediation effect. In order to test this situation further, the values obtained with the Sobel test were analyzed. According to the Sobel test results, the Sobel t test value=3.89 and $p=0.000$, confirming the full mediation effect. In short, cognitive emotion regulation has a full mediating effect between toxic leadership and psychological well-being.

Table 8

Regression Coefficients For Mediating Effect Analysis (Stage 3)

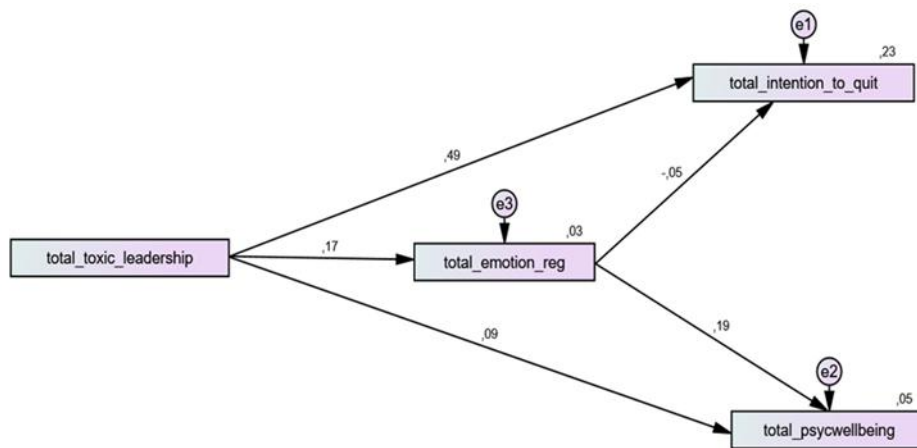
Relationships			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	p
Total emotion reg	<---	Total toxic leadership	0,082	0,025	3,301	***
Total turnover intention	<---	Total toxic leadership	0,112	0,01	10,825	***
Total psycwellbeing	<---	Total toxic leadership	0,037	0,02	1,872	0,061
Total turnover intention	<---	Total emotion reg	-0,024	0,021	-1,141	0,254
Total psyc wellbeing	<---	Total emotion reg	0,15	0,04	3,791	***

*Source: Created by the authors using the AMOS program.

When another relational analysis in Phase 3 is examined, there is no change in the significance in Model 1 with the addition of cognitive emotion regulation to the model for the relationship between toxic leadership and turnover intention (in both cases at $p \leq 0.01$ level), and there is an increase in the standardized regression coefficients (there is an increase from 0.48 to 0.49), so it is not possible to talk about any mediation effect. The mediating model and the values according to this model can be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Mediation Model For Path Analysis Phase 3



*Source: Created by the authors using the AMOS program.

As a result of the analyses, the findings obtained regarding the hypotheses of the study and the decisions made according to the data related to the hypotheses are given in Table 9.

Table 9

Hypothesis Test Results

Hypothesis	Test Result Decision
H1a: There is a significant relationship between employees' perceptions of toxic leadership and turnover intentions.	Accepted
H1b: There is a significant relationship between employees' perceptions of toxic leadership and their psychological well-being.	Accepted
H1c: There is a significant relationship between employees' perceptions of toxic leadership and their cognitive emotion regulation strategies.	Accepted
H1d: Cognitive emotion regulation mediates the relationship between employees' perceptions of toxic leadership and turnover intentions.	Rejected
H1e: Cognitive emotion regulation mediates the relationship between employees' perceptions of toxic leadership and psychological well-being.	Accepted

5. Discussion

This study looked at how private sector workers' psychological health and plans to leave were affected by toxic leadership perceptions. According to the results, which support the study's hypotheses, toxic leadership affects workers in various ways. These findings also highlight the crucial influence that leadership style has on the actions and emotions of employees in businesses. Below is

the interpretation of the findings obtained in line with the hypotheses of the study, their compatibility with the literature, and recommendations.

5.1.Toxic Leadership and Turnover Intention

H1a: There is a significant relationship between employees' perceptions of toxic leadership and turnover intentions. (Acceptance)

The study's conclusions show that employees are more likely to leave when they perceive toxic leadership. This outcome is consistent with earlier research in the literature. Some types of leadership have positive effects on employees, while toxic leadership leads to negative consequences. While empowering leadership motivates employees and encourages their development, toxic leadership demotivates employees and increases turnover intentions (Martinko et al, 2007; Semedo et al, 2022; Tepper, 2000). Negative behaviors of toxic leaders reduce employees' job satisfaction and weaken organizational commitment. Destructive and unsupportive behaviors of toxic leaders weaken employees' commitment to the organization and increase turnover intentions. Toxic leaders often exhibit behaviors such as belittling employees, behaving unfairly, and underestimating employees' contributions. This type of leadership reduces employees' willingness to stay with the organization and increases the likelihood that they will consider alternative job opportunities. As a result, employees may tend to leave their jobs to avoid such negative work environments.

5.2.Toxic Leadership and Psychological Well-Being

H1b: There is a significant relationship between employees' perceptions of toxic leadership and their psychological well-being. (Acceptance)

Although it has been noted that the stressful, discouraging, and unsupportive attitudes of toxic leaders considerably lower the psychological well-being of their workforce (Einarsen et al., 2007; Schyns and Schilling, 2013), the study's finding of a significant positive correlation, albeit weak, between psychological well-being and toxic leadership perception is noteworthy. This relationship may seem surprising and paradoxical at first glance because toxic leadership is generally associated with negative effects. In some studies, in the literature, the relationship between these two variables was found to be negative (Fedorova & Polents 2017; Kılıç, 2019). However, it would be meaningful to focus on a few possible situations when interpreting this situation. The first one is that employees may develop emotional resilience and immunity to stress as a result of prolonged exposure to toxic leadership. It can be argued that this may increase their ability to cope with challenges and their overall psychological resilience. Such an immune effect may help employees become more resilient to negative leadership behaviors and maintain their psychological well-being. However, this is a

hypothesis for future studies. Another possibility is that overexposure to toxic and coercive leadership may encourage employees to develop themselves and increase their problem-solving skills. Under toxic leadership, employees may develop strategies to cope with stress and grow personally in the process. As their capacity to handle difficulties increases, this may have a favorable impact on their general psychological health. In addition, it should be noted that toxic leadership can lead to the strengthening of solidarity and social support mechanisms among employees. Toxic leadership situations can lead employees to support each other and develop coping strategies together. Such social support networks can enhance employees' psychological well-being. In addition, it can be argued that employees may discover themselves in difficult situations, seek motivation outside of work life, and develop alternative emotion regulation strategies.

The intricacy and diverse dynamics of the positive association between psychological well-being and toxic leadership perceptions may be better understood with the aid of all these potential reasons. This finding provides important clues about how leadership styles and employees' psychological well-being can be better managed in organizations. A more detailed examination of such relationships will contribute to creating healthier and more productive work environments in organizations.

5.3. Toxic Leadership and Cognitive Emotion Regulation

H1c: There is a significant relationship between employees' perceptions of toxic leadership and their cognitive emotion regulation strategies. (Acceptance)

It can be concluded that as the level of toxic leadership behavior increases, employees will try to reduce the effects of this situation by using cognitive emotion regulation strategies. The strategies used by employees who encounter toxic leadership can generally be summarized as follows; as Tepper et al. (2007) stated in their study, it is possible to cope with toxic behaviors by engaging in compromise behaviors, and according to Ülbeği et al. (2013), it is possible to cope with toxic behaviors by exhibiting exemplary behaviors, self-promotion, and highlighting one's own achievements and qualifications. According to Yagil et al. (2011), it is possible to respond to the problem with two different solution strategies. Coping strategies that aim to solve the problem and prioritize controlling, reducing, and balancing emotional problems can be used. In order to apply these, direct open communication with the source of the problems is required (Çeliker, 2022).

5.4. Cognitive Emotion Regulation and Turnover Intention

H1d: Cognitive emotion regulation mediates the relationship between employees' perceptions of toxic leadership and turnover intentions. (Rejected)

The study found that the association between turnover intentions and toxic leadership views was not mediated by cognitive emotion control. This suggests that the factors that determine employees' turnover intentions are shaped not only by emotional regulation but also by other organizational factors such as leadership style, job satisfaction, organizational justice and support (Rafferty & Griffin, 2004). Turnover intention is associated not only with individual emotional regulation skills but also with a range of factors such as organizational support, career opportunities, and job satisfaction (Saeed et al., 2014). Beyond perceptions of toxic leadership, employees' turnover decisions are also shaped by the general conditions of the job and individual expectations. According to the literature, environmental antecedents—stimuli and events that occur in the environment outside the organization—have a significant impact on turnover intentions. Positive macroeconomic factors, such as a warming labor market, the availability of alternative job options, the degree of economic development, employment policy, social security policy, and labor supply and demand conditions, are the most extensively studied external determinants (Steil et al., 2019).

5.5.Cognitive Emotion Regulation and Psychological Well-Being

H1e: Cognitive emotion regulation mediates the relationship between employees' perceptions of toxic leadership and psychological well-being (Acceptance)

The study found that the association between psychological well-being and toxic leadership views was significantly mediated by cognitive emotion control. It was discovered that psychological constructs like life experiences, emotional intelligence, and personality traits are linked to psychological well-being, and that psychological well-being and education level have a strong positive correlation (De-Juanas et al., 2020). Cognitive emotion regulation strategies can help employees manage their reactions to stressful and negative working conditions, which contributes to their psychological well-being (Gross, 2002; Lazarus, 1991). This finding emphasizes the importance of organizations providing training and support to their employees to improve their stress management and emotional regulation skills. Cognitive emotion regulation strategies can help employees cope with stress and maintain their mental health. This increases the importance of organizations providing emotional regulation skills training and support programs for their employees.

6.Conclusions

This study revealed that toxic leadership has significant effects on employees' turnover intention and psychological well-being. Moreover, cognitive emotion regulation mediated the relationship between toxic leadership perceptions and psychological well-being. Organizations

should develop strategies to minimize toxic leadership behaviors and implement programs that support employees' emotional regulation skills. Such measures can increase employees' job satisfaction, reduce turnover intentions, and generally contribute to creating a healthier and more productive work environment.

This study clearly reveals that toxic leadership has significant effects on employees' turnover intention and psychological well-being with the results that toxic leaders' negative and destructive behaviors may cause employees to be dissatisfied with the work environment and seek better working conditions, that a challenging and toxic atmosphere may have an immune effect on employees' psychological well-being, that the factors affecting employees' turnover intention are not only limited to emotional regulation, but also other organizational factors such as leadership style, job satisfaction, organizational justice and support.

In line with the results of this study, the following recommendations have been developed that can help organizations reduce the toxic leadership effects on their employees and create a healthier and more productive working environment, as well as contribute to determining the necessary strategies to protect employees' psychological well-being and increase their job satisfaction:

- Organizations should conduct comprehensive leadership training and development programs to reduce leaders' toxic behaviors and enable them to adopt more positive leadership approaches.
- To support employees' psychological well-being, organizations should provide psychological support and counseling services in the workplace.
- Organizations should organize training for employees to improve their emotional regulation skills.
- Organizations should adopt a fair and transparent management approach to increase employees' perceptions of fairness and support. Organizations should create a strong support network within the organization to increase employees' organizational commitment and reduce turnover intentions.
- To increase employees' job satisfaction and commitment, organizations should provide career development opportunities and allow employees to develop their skills. Such opportunities can strengthen employees' organizational commitment and reduce turnover intentions.

Finally, for future studies, it can be suggested that new models be created and tested that will address the relationship between toxic leadership and psychological well-being and the relationship between emotional regulation and turnover from multiple perspectives.

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Informed Consent Form: Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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