

Toxic leadership and Employee Silence (ES): The Role of Courageous Followership (CF)

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Toxic leadership, Employee
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ABSTRACT

The article focused on the negative role played by employee silence, as it is one of the symptoms that employees don't want to give their hundred percent towards the productivity and performance of organizations. Furthermore, toxic leadership can even augment this silence behavior and thus it can be drastic for an organization. The study analyzed the role of courageous followership as a moderating player in this framework. We collected the data from 214 respondents and then various tests were run to test the association. Analysis show that toxic leadership definitely augments the intensity of employee silence, however the role of courageous followership is moderating the effect positively. After screening and cleansing the data, we employed SPSS software to analyze data. Various tests were applied to generate results. It is found that all the hypotheses were approved and the study has theoretical, academic and practical implications for the professionals. Conclusively, the study can be beneficial for the policy makers especially for HR Managers and directors from varied organizations.

INTRODUCTION

Modern firms compete in a market that is complicated, volatile, and aggressive. Even in today's hyper-competitive environment, every company wants to succeed. As a result, companies of all sizes and industries struggle to keep their top employees. Few companies consider human capital to be their most significant asset, capable of pushing them to success or leading them to fail if properly managed. Lack of clarity, trouble integrating diverse personalities into a cohesive and united team, inability to build critical competencies behavioral patterns, poor communication and feedback, a lack of awareness, and toxic leadership can all contribute to organizational failure and challenges.

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Toxic leadership is a significant factor that can undermine an organization's success and lead to failure for a variety of reasons. Researchers have only given toxic leadership, also known as destructive leadership, a limited amount of attention (examples include harsh supervision, bullying, narcissism, sympathy tyranny, and so on.) Toxic leadership practices in the workplace have been linked to greater turnover intentions, lower employee satisfaction, commitment, and increased psychological discomfort, including anxiety, burnout, depression, disengagement, low self-esteem, emotional weariness, and employee quiet.

According to some study, employees typically feel insecure when requested by management to share their opinions and ideas because they fear that their remarks and suggestions for change may upset the current balance and organization, or irritate administrators. Employees' feelings of insecurity lead them to make the decision to keep silent, whether subconsciously or consciously. Employee silence can be extremely harmful to a company's bottom line. Employee silence leads to a lack of concern on the part of the workforce.

To compete with employee silence organizations necessitates a mix of leadership and followership abilities, since effective leadership growth is dependent on solid followership skills. Organizations collapse for a variety of reasons, including incompetent leadership and irresponsible followers. A culture of bold followership conduct, in addition to the leadership position, is essential for enterprises to advance in the global environment. Courageous followers who take on personal responsibility and assist the leaders in the organization's growth.

Such responsible behavior increases followers' capacity to be self-accountable in their job. Good capacities of both the leader and the follower are at the heart of effective leadership.

In this article it is explain how those who are confronted with their leader's poor conduct tend to adopt avoidant habits by avoiding direct contact with their toxic boss. And a courage follower may be able to assist an employee in overcoming their discomfort as a result of the circumstance they are in.

Background of the study

Nowadays, businesses are seeking to use the intellectual talents of their human capital to boost efficiency and production in order to achieve the ultimate objective efficiently. Organizations are paying more attention to approaches and applications including cooperation, democracy, and the ability to express oneself in the workplace, as well as reinforcing the company culture. Organizations have become more knowledge-based than ever before. As a consequence, employees who share their opinions and share their

understandings contribute to the organization's success. Such an atmosphere is expected to be created by businesses. Regardless, the majority of employees choose not to communicate their opinions or concerns about situations at work. Fear, embarrassment, a lack of ethical responsibility knowledge, implicated friends, a lack of opportunity to speak up, and a lack of organizational political talents are all factors that lead to silence. Employee silence has a variety of consequences for the employees. (Malikeh Beheshtifar, 2012). In many parts of the world, there is a growing interest in this evolving issue of employee silence. There is evidence that many employees meet instances on a monthly, weekly, or even daily basis where they believe something should be addressed, but they seldom speak out, hampering individual and collective effectiveness, growth, and well-being. (Michael Knoll, February, 2021). In a growing nation like Pakistan, unemployment is rising, individuals are finding fewer job options, and they do not desire to leave their jobs due to social and economic pressures. Downsizing is seen to be a major source of toxic supervision, particularly among subordinates who look particularly fragile and subservient. Employees try to avoid interactions with the source of abuse by keeping a distance from their supervisor and remaining silent about organizational issues, rather than displaying apparent reprisal and aggression by ending relationships with supervisors, which could result in their future job loss in a risky economic situation (Naz, 2018). Silence is a problem that many individuals have to deal with: Employees at all levels are aware of problems, inefficient procedures, inappropriate conduct or activities, and good opportunities for advancement, but they don't always share their concerns and ideas with someone who can act on them. Simply put, employees do not use their voices. Employee silence is major issue which every industry is facing but specially in hotel industry is among mainstream issue. Because a hotel is a service firm, its employees are part of the product being sold; their work performance impacts the quality of service and the overall performance of the organization. Because a hotel can only function properly if its workers work in a pleasant setting, which enhances customer satisfaction, managers should pay close attention to their employees' attitudes and how customers treat them. Because of the necessity to engage with unanticipated client requests, verbal aggression, long working hours, and repeated job activity, stress levels in the hotel sector can be particularly high. As a result, staff are frequently emotionally fatigued. As a result, despite the fact that their work features expose hotel employees to many types of social undercutting, there is little study on how employee silence impacts hotel employees (Hyo Sun Jung, 2019).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Toxic Leadership

The goal of this research is to illustrate the widespread toxic behavior in the workplace, as well as the harm that such behavior does to businesses. Because of their prevalence, such patterns of behavior should be expected and planned for if we are to avoid toxic leadership taking over the workplace. High-profile leadership failures continue to be widely documented in the media, while fraud and white-collar crime continue to wreak havoc on business organizations and executives throughout the world. These ongoing failures raise concerns about what can be done to lessen the incidence of such blunders, limit the harm they do, and stem the erosion of faith in people in positions of authority and responsibility (Walton, August 2021).

Toxic leadership is defined as a set of damaging behaviors that motivate leaders to pursue personal ambitions and get personal gains at the expense of the interests of individuals, teams, and organizations. Furthermore, the harmful and dysfunctional activities of toxic leaders have the potential to spread to lower levels of the workplace, resulting in a poisonous organizational atmosphere (Adeel Saqib, 2017). Destructive leadership practices force leaders to pursue personal ambitions and rewards at the expense of the interests of individuals, teams, and organizations (Coakley, August, 2021).

There was a dearth of study on toxic leadership at all levels of organizations in the 1980s and early 1990s. The focus of this literature tended to remain on the positive aspects of leadership as the number of studies on leadership behavior rose. Most toxic leader research up to the first decade of the twenty-first century focused on the efficacy of leaders and the loss of leadership effectiveness due to toxic leadership. Furthermore, as the prevalence of toxic leadership in the workplace has risen, more academic study has been conducted in this area. Toxic leadership may take many forms, including public criticism, rudeness, inconsiderate conduct, and other behaviors that make employees feel bad. According to Pelletier (2009), 46% of employees have encountered or observed toxic leadership, showing a need to address the issue. Individual performance will suffer as a result of the lack of a solution, and stress and attrition will rise. A toxic leader, according to Kusy and Holloway, is not the same as a tough coworker; rather, a toxic leader is someone who has an impact on others' job performance and quality of life. Because of the significant impact of toxic leadership on businesses, more research is needed to better understand the problem and provide effective remedies (Spain, 2014).

Employee Silence

Employee silence is described as the deliberate withholding of information, thoughts, and views from others. It is largely concerned with information on work and the organization, such as knowledge about ineffective procedures, unlawful activity, work disputes, and problems with organizational choices. Although there are various distinct types of quiet, it is thought that acquiescent and quiescent silence will arise as a response to injustice (David B. Whiteside, August 2013). Is silence priceless? Many virtues are related with silence, including modesty, respect for others, prudence, and decorum. People keep their mouths shut to avoid shame, conflict, and other perceived threats. Silence, on the other hand, may express support and sharing, as well as disapproval and resistance, making it a pressure tool for both people and institutions (Bagheri, 2012) The spiral of silence hypothesis, first proposed in 1974, investigates ideas to discover why certain groups remain silent while others become increasingly loud in public forums. The hypothesis claims that certain organizations' quiet is due to the unpopularity of their viewpoints in the public discourse. While the majority factions are backed by and, as a result, Minority groups, on the other hand, are unwilling to speak up on their concerns for fear of being isolated. Until the year 2000, when Morrison and Milliken's well published piece in the New York Times changed everything. Scholars began to focus on the relationship between the two in the Academy of Management Review. Quiet and other antecedents to a "climate" include managerial practices, organizational policies, and silence. The authors propose that there is a willingness to speak out dynamic (Malikeh Beheshtifar H. B., 2012)

Courageous Followership (CF)

The nature and influence of followers and following in the leadership process are investigated in the study of followership (Mary Uhl-Bien, 2013). Courageous follower is defined as someone who possesses five attributes while serving in a subordinate post. These attributes are mirrored in the daring follower's behavioral aspects. These aspects include (a) taking responsibility, (b) serving, (c) challenging, (d) participating in transformation, and (e) acting morally. After 30 years of study in commercial organizations, (Kouzes, 2017)) recognized excellent leadership strategies as "model the path," "inspire a common vision," "question the process," "allow others to act," and "encourage the heart." The heart of the leadership style stresses the need for followers to develop certain abilities and behavior's that lead to self-leadership (Wajeeha Ghias, June 2018).

Mary Parker Follett, a management researcher, advocated for a greater focus on followership in 1933. She believed that leaders were in charge of educating employees how to be

followers, engaging them in self-management, and assisting them in developing an emotional attachment to the company. The Saturday Evening Post made its own call for speakers and authors to address the audience in 1949. The Harvard Business Review named followership one of the top five breakthrough concepts of 2003. However, there was very little information about followership in the literature. Although many publications on leadership have been written, there have been few journal articles on followers (Vugt, February, 2006)

Toxic Leadership and Courageous Followership

Leadership is frequently portrayed in a positive light, with leaders motivating, influencing, and persuading followers to work together toward common goals that benefit companies. Followership is frequently viewed through a negative perspective, with the assumption that followers rely on leaders for motivation and inspiration. Many leader–follower models in modern businesses do not necessarily align with the reality of seeing leadership through a positive lens and followership through a negative lens. Many followers of organizations are organically compelled to participate actively in their job, using their own mental strength to address organizational difficulties. Some leaders in organizations engage in harmful activities, have faulty personalities, and introduce poison into their systems. The lack of research on followership and negative leadership highlights the necessity for empirical research on both notions and, more especially, the impact of toxic leaders on the efficacy of their followers (Bell, 2017).

Courageous Followership (CF) and Employee Silence (ES)

Silence has been characterized as a pattern of conduct in which workers suppress information, views, or queries, which can inhibit organizations from recognizing and addressing problematic practices (Matt Howard, December 2019). A courageous follower is a committed, cooperative, and participative posture in which an individual is willing to support and promote the leader's opinions while also making deliberate efforts to attain the leader's/common organization's goals and objectives. Because daring followers support leaders and organizations, it's important to know when it's proper to speak with, consult with, or enquire of the leaders. So, this is analyses that a courageous follower can motive to break employee silence which have a positive impact on organization.

Toxic Leadership (TL) and Employee Silence (ES)

Toxic leadership actions are emotionally draining, resulting in emotional tiredness and employee silence in the workplace. Based on the notion of resource conservation, argued that when subordinates confront unfavorable conduct from their bosses. They plan to use, void ant or passive coping actions to avoid the cause of stress and tiredness, which is the toxic

leader. The study hypothesized that toxic leadership actions promote an increase in employee silence based on these beliefs.

Theoretical Framework

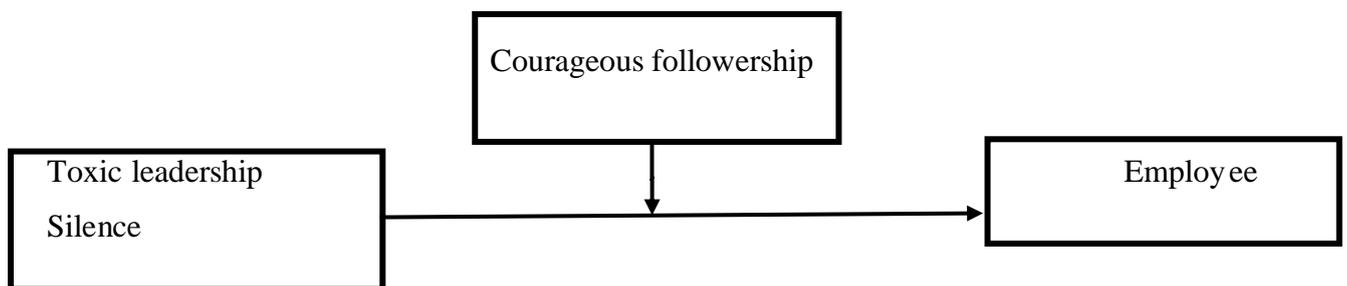
The study's theoretical framework is based on three variables, and the behavior is treated as:

DV = Employee Silence

MV= Courageous Followership

IV= Toxic Leadership

The conceptual framework is shown below, which depicts the topic under investigation as well as the pattern of interaction.



In this theoretical framework, it is explained that independent variable toxic leadership has a direct negative impact on dependent variable employee silence, as well as independent variable toxic leadership negatively impact on mediating variable courageous followership which have a positive impact on dependent variable employee silence. Toxic leadership may derail the organizational succeed into failure. In current study examined the impact of toxic leadership on employee silence with the moderating role of courageous followership.

H1: *Toxic leadership significantly augments employee silence in organizations.*

H2: *Courageous followership moderates the association between toxic leadership and employee silence.*

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The goal of this research is to explore, verify, and assess the correlations between employee silence, toxic leadership, and brave followership in order to compile and organize the many pieces of material available on the subject. The major purpose of the research is to build on prior research on employee silence and toxic leadership by looking at the apparent links in the hotel sector. The respondents' reactions to the studied criteria are evaluated in terms of their age, gender, education, and experience.

Target Population

The population is the complete group of persons or procedures that the researcher wants to investigate. The participants in this study were hotel middle manager from twin cities. The

data would be collected from Rawalpindi/Islamabad organizations where no previous study has been conducted to obtain the accurate numbers. One industrial design has been chosen for the current research, which is aimed towards hotel personnel. The majority of the research data was acquired from hotel sector administrative middle level workers.

Sampling

It includes some of the population's members, sample is a subset of the population. To gather data, the nonprobability convenience sampling approach was employed for this research project, and data was obtained from those individuals who were readily accessible to supply it. Because the data can be obtained easily and fast, this approach is employed. The study should be conducted on the entire population, but this is impractical because to the enormous size of the population. As a result, the quickest option to acquire data is to employ convenience.

Instruments for data collection

A basic questionnaire on a five-point Likert scale was used to collect the data. The data collecting questionnaire consists of five sections, as well as demographic information. The first four sections covered the ideas under consideration, while the final piece delved into the specifics of the demographic data. The first segment, which included eight items, assessed toxic leadership; the second section, which included twenty-four items, assessed courageous followership; the third section, which included twelve items, assessed employee silence; and section four, which assessed demographics. Validity and reliability were guaranteed in order to quantify the topics researched.

ANALYSIS

For it to be applicable, Roscoe (1975) suggested using a sample size of 30-500 people. A sample of more than 200 responders, according to Hoe (2008), is sufficient for analysis. In order to limit the possibility of a low response rate and get good results, 370 questionnaires were delivered using a convenience sample technique, and 100 questionnaires were provided online. The 370 traditional distributed surveys yielded a total of 151 responses, with 63 responses received via the virtually (online) sent form. There were 370 questionnaires distributed in all, with 214 responses. As a result, the sample size chosen for consistent and trustworthy results is provisionally justified.

After clearing the data, it was entered into SPSS 21. Data was subjected to a series of tests, including reliability and validity testing, demographic analysis testing, correlation testing, and hypothesis testing. In hypothesis testing, both hypotheses were accepted.

Descriptive analysis

Descriptive statistics are a series of brief descriptive coefficients that characterize a specific data set, which might be a representation of the entire population or a sample of the population. Descriptive statistics are classified into two types: measurements of central tendency and measures of variability (spread). The mean, median, and mode are examples of central tendency measurements, whereas standard deviation, variance, minimum and maximum variables, kurtosis, and skewness are examples of variability measurements.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
EXPERIENCE	214	1.00	2.00	1.5981	.49143
EDUCATION	214	2.00	3.00	2.7009	.45892
AGE	214	1.00	3.00	1.9907	.77515
GENDER	214	1.00	2.00	1.5047	.50115
Valid N (listwise)	214				

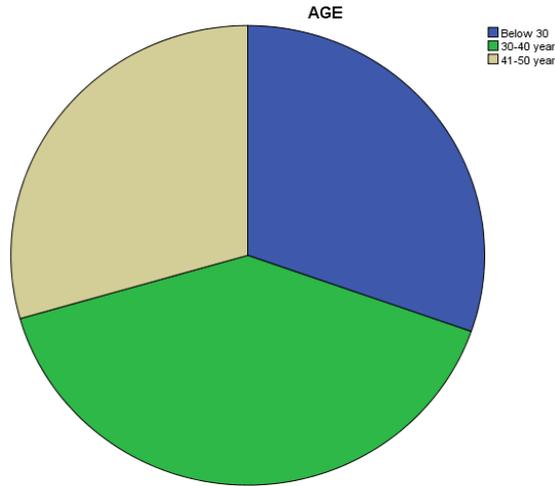
The mean and standard deviation of the variables are shown in descriptive statistics. Experience had a mean score of 1.5981, Education mean score of 2.7009, Age had mean score of 1.9907 and Gender had a mean score of 1.5047 demonstrating that the claim was fully understood and agreed upon by the respondents

Demographics is the description or distribution of characteristics of a certain target audience, consumer base, or population.

Table 2
Demographics Analysis

AGE					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below 30	65	30.4	30.4	30.4
	30-40 year	86	40.2	40.2	70.6
	41-50 year	63	29.4	29.4	100.0
	Total	214	100.0	100.0	

Figure 1: Age



The age distribution of the respondents is indicated in the table above, with those under 30 years old accounting for 30.4 percent of the total replies; those between 31- and 40-years old account for 40.2 percent and 29.4 percent of the total responses, respectively.

Table 3
Gender

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	106	49.5	49.5	49.5
Valid Female	108	50.5	50.5	100.0
Total	214	100.0	100.0	

Male respondents accounted for 106 or 49.5 percent of total replies, while female respondents accounted for 108, or 50.5percent of total responses, as seen in the table above.

Figure 2: Gender

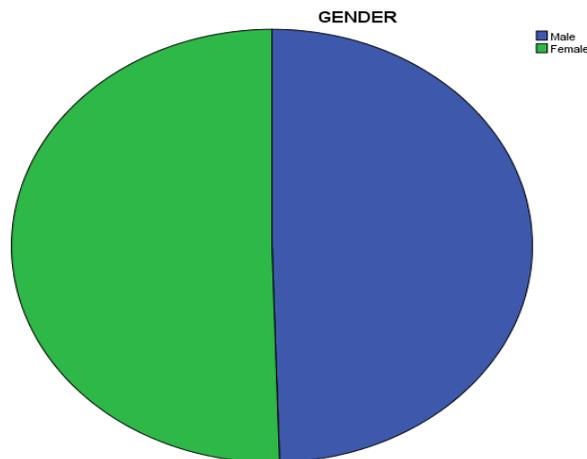


Table 4
Education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Bachelor degree	64	29.9	29.9	29.9
Valid	Master	150	70.1	70.1	100.0
	Total	214	100.0	100.0	

The above table depicts the respondents' educational distribution. The majority of respondents had a master's degree, accounting for 70.1 percent of total replies, while bachelor's degrees accounted for 29.9 percent of the data set.

. Figure 3: Education

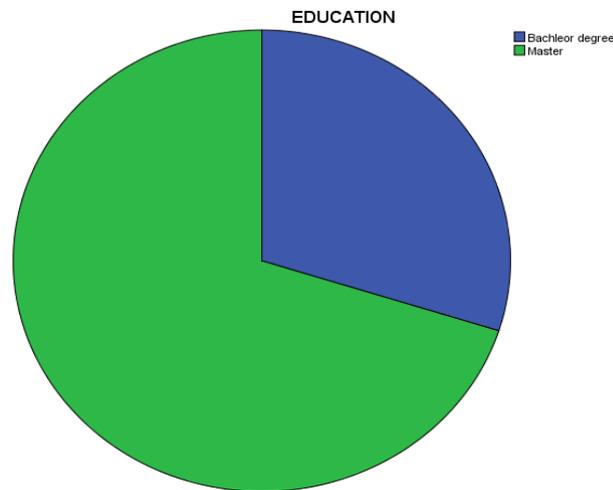
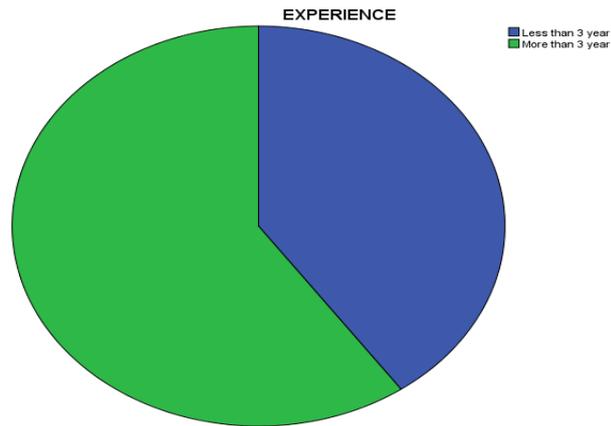


Table 5
Experience

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Less than 3 years	86	40.2	40.2	40.2
Valid	More than 3 years	128	59.8	59.8	100.0
	Total	214	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4: Experience



The table above shows the overall amount of job experience. Individuals with less than three year and more than three years of work experience constituted 40.2 percent and 59.8 percent of the data set.

Reliability Statistic

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), dependability is a metric used to determine the stability and consistency of products. Cronbach's Alpha is a test for dependability. If it is less than 0.7, the dependability is adequate (out of 1). A score of .9 or more is considered excellent, a score of .8 or higher is considered good, and a score of less than .7 is considered acceptable. The dependability of the instruments is mentioned below.

Table 6
Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.610	8
.885	24
.732	12

In the table above, the Cronbach's Alpha, composite reliability, a for each of the study variables have been reflected. It reveals how successfully the instrument has been fitted to measure what it is supposed to measure. Cronbach's alpha of Toxic leadership is .610 regarded to be acceptable. Employee silence Cronbach's alpha is larger than or equal to 0.70, the result is acceptable. And courageous followership Cronbach alpha is .885 which is regarded to be accepted which measure of how well something works.

Correlation Analysis

The correlation coefficient varies from -1 to 1. Correlational readings are incorrect if the value is more than one or less than one. Pearson Correlation was used to determine the relationships between variables. The table below shows the correlation of variables.

Table 7
Correlation

		Toxic leadership	Courageous followership	Employee silence
Toxic leadership	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
Courageous followership	N	214		
	Pearson Correlation	.330**	1	
Employee silence	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	214	214	
Employee silence	Pearson Correlation	.432**	.252**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	214	214	214

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The findings clearly reveal that factors have substantial connections. The relationship between toxic leadership and employee silence with moderating role of courageous followers. So, the correlation between toxic leadership and courageous followership is 0.330 which mean $p < 0.05$ and it accepted it error does not exist. Toxic leadership and employee silence correlation value is .432 which men $p < 0.05$ and courageous followership and employee silence is 0.252 which mean $p < 0.05$ and its accepted.

Regression Analysis

Regression is a statistical technique used in finance, investment, and other industries to determine the strength and type of a relationship between one dependent variable (usually denoted by Y) and a group of other variables (known as independent variables).

Table 8
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.334	.402	.396	.34357

a. Predictors: (Constant), Courageous followership, Toxic leadership

Table 9
Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized t		Sig.
	Coefficients		Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.313	.097		23.795	.000
1 Toxic leadership	.264	.024	.616	10.919	.000
Courageous followership	.026	.030	.049	.866	.388

a. Dependent Variable: Employee silence

Multiple regression analysis was performed to examine the role of courageous followership on toxic leadership and employee silence, as indicated in the table above. R square equal to .402, $p < 0.05$ the findings show that courageous followership contributes to excellent leadership, implying that if someone is a courageous follower, he would eventually become a support for employee silence

Table 10
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.426	.227	.520	.30612

a. Predictors: (Constant), Moderating variable, Courageous followership, Toxic leadership

Table 11
Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized t		Sig.
	Coefficients		Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.863	.225		17.181	.000
Toxic leadership	-.413	.093	-.961	-4.429	.000
Courageous followership	-.510	.077	-.952	-6.653	.000
Moderating variable	.225	.030	2.158	7.469	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee silence

Multiple regression analysis was performed to examine the role of courageous followership on toxic leadership and employee silence, as indicated in the table above. R square equal .227, $p < 0.05$ the findings shows that courageous followership moderates the association between toxic leadership and employee silence.

Hypotheses Testing

After finalizing the analysis and results, based on assessing the strength of evidence from a sample and providing a framework for making population-related decisions, the following were finalized:

Table 12

Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses	Approve/ Reject
H1: Toxic leadership significantly augments employee silence in organizations.	Approved
H2: Courageous followership moderates the association between toxic leadership and employee silence	Approved

This table shows that all hypothesis is accepted. To evaluate the hypothesized associations and establish the moderating influence of courageous followership between employee silence and toxic leadership. The courageous followership moderates' effect is shown in the table above. The results reveal that the correlations are supported.

Managerial and Theoretical Contributions

Based on the study it can be proposed that this study enlightened the role of courageous followership in organizations. In many organizations, toxify the environment and thus can poison the organizational setup and hence the system starts malfunctioning. This can lead to employee silence where workers can e present but don't give their best to the organizations. However, if there exists courageous followership, and if its promoted, this can handle the situation well. Theoretically this is good addition to understanding and comprehension of academicians and researchers, while practically, this can be very useful for HR Directors and those who are in the helm of originations' running process.

CONCLUSION

Organizations back then focused solely on building leadership skills, with little or no understanding of the value of followership. The organization's backbone is its followers. Without his or her followers, the leader is nothing. In a developing country like Pakistan, courageous followers are required in order for the organization to have overcome the

employee silence and less hostility. Courageous followers serve their leader with complete honesty and adapt to the organization's needs. They do not follow the boss blindly and speak out against any unethical behavior. In Pakistan, courageous followers are needed because their capacity to assume responsibility and accountability will help the organization succeed. The conclusion of this study supports the studies done earlier and also furthers the phenomenon for more research.

Recommendations and Future Direction

Because there aren't many researches on role of courageous followership, it may be studied in depth. There has always been debate about toxic leadership, but now the attention should shift to the growth of followership. The study can be done using a qualitative technique since it may yield various results. Further research on the components of the variables is needed. Individuals must cultivate their followership in order to boost their chances of becoming great leaders in the future. Because the current investigation was done during a pandemic, the sample size was restricted. Because the courageous followership method is a new topic in research, there are few studies on it in Pakistan. This research could be done on other sectors also like banking, tourism and telecom sector etc.

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