

*Supplementary Materials*

The Impact of Narcissistic Leadership on Employee Burnout: The Mediating Role of Emotional Intelligence in Workplace Resilience in the Banking Sector

Maya Daniel Alhallak, Dania Abdullatif Chaban and Ahmad Warrak *

Management Department, Faculty of Business Administration, Arab International University, Ghabajib 16180, Syria

* Correspondence: a-warak@aiu.edu.sy

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1. Narcissistic Leadership

Narcissistic leadership is a distinct leadership style characterized by an excessive focus on the self, grandiosity, entitlement, and a profound lack of empathy toward followers [1]. Narcissistic leaders typically exhibit a strong desire for admiration and validation, often placing their own needs and ambitions above those of their teams or organizations. This leadership style is marked by exploitative behaviors, manipulateness, and a tendency to create toxic work environments where employees may feel undervalued or threatened.

At its core, narcissistic leadership derives from the psychological construct of narcissism—a personality trait defined by an inflated sense of self-importance, need for admiration, and deficient interpersonal empathy [2]. When manifested in leadership roles, narcissistic traits can influence decision-making, interpersonal dynamics, and organizational culture, often with detrimental effects on employee well-being and performance. Several theoretical frameworks help explain the dynamics and consequences of narcissistic leadership:

- Trait Theory of Leadership suggests that certain personality traits—including narcissism—shape leadership styles and behaviors [3]. Narcissistic leaders possess traits such as dominance, assertiveness, and confidence, which may initially appear advantageous for leadership roles. However, when unchecked, these traits can lead to dysfunctional leadership practices.
- Social Exchange Theory posits that leadership is an ongoing exchange between leaders and followers, based on mutual trust, respect, and support [4]. Narcissistic leaders often disrupt this exchange by prioritizing self-interest, resulting in poor relational quality, low trust, and disengagement among employees.
- Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory [5] provides insight into how narcissistic leadership depletes employees' psychological resources, leading to stress and burnout. Narcissistic leaders demand excessive effort and emotional labor from employees without adequate support or recognition, causing resource loss and psychological strain.
- Impact on Employees and Organizations. Extensive research has demonstrated that narcissistic leadership negatively affects employee well-being and organizational outcomes:
- Emotional Exhaustion and Burnout: Employees under narcissistic leaders frequently report higher levels of stress, emotional exhaustion, and burnout symptoms [6,7]. The relentless demands and lack of emotional support erode employees' psychological health.
- Reduced Job Satisfaction and Engagement: Narcissistic leadership is linked to lower job satisfaction, decreased organizational commitment, and diminished work engagement [8].
- Increased Turnover and Counterproductive Behaviors: Toxic leadership climates fostered by narcissists often result in higher turnover intentions and the emergence of counterproductive work behaviors such as withdrawal or sabotage [9].
- Disruption of Team Cohesion: Narcissistic leaders' self-centered focus can fragment teams, reduce collaboration, and create hostile work environments.
- Moderating and Mediating Factors: While the impact of narcissistic leadership is generally negative, emerging research highlights factors that can moderate or mediate this relationship:



- Emotional Intelligence (EI): Emotional intelligence—the ability to perceive, understand, and regulate emotions—can buffer employees from the harmful effects of narcissistic leadership. Employees with high EI may better navigate toxic leadership by managing their emotional responses and maintaining psychological resilience [10].
 - Workplace Resilience: Resilience, defined as the capacity to recover from stress and adversity, can mediate the relationship between narcissistic leadership and burnout. Resilient employees tend to sustain performance and well-being despite toxic leadership behaviors [11,12].
 - Organizational Support and Climate: Supportive organizational structures and positive workplace cultures may mitigate the adverse effects of narcissistic leadership by providing resources and social support to employees.
- The Dual-Edged Nature of Narcissistic Leadership: Interestingly, some scholars argue that narcissistic leadership can have both detrimental and occasionally beneficial effects:
- Narcissistic leaders' confidence and vision may initially inspire followers or drive organizational change [12].
 - Under certain conditions, narcissistic traits might energize employees and stimulate goal-oriented behavior, particularly when psychological resources are abundant [11].

However, these potential benefits are typically short-lived and contingent on contextual factors such as follower characteristics and organizational environment.

2. Employee Burnout

Employee burnout is a psychological syndrome that arises from prolonged exposure to chronic workplace stressors, characterized by three core dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization (or cynicism), and a diminished sense of personal accomplishment [13,14]. Emotional exhaustion refers to feelings of being emotionally overextended and depleted of emotional resources. Depersonalization reflects a cynical attitude and detachment from one's work and colleagues. Reduced personal accomplishment describes the tendency to evaluate oneself negatively, particularly regarding work performance and efficacy.

Burnout is recognized as a multidimensional construct that impacts employees' mental health, job satisfaction, and overall workplace productivity [15]. It often results in reduced motivation, lowered commitment, and increased absenteeism or turnover, making it a critical concern for organizations worldwide.

Leadership style plays a pivotal role in either exacerbating or alleviating burnout. Narcissistic leadership, in particular, has been linked with higher burnout rates due to leaders' lack of empathy, inconsistent behaviors, and exploitative tendencies [6]. Conversely, supportive, transformational, and emotionally intelligent leaders tend to reduce burnout by fostering positive work environments and providing emotional support [16].

3. Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence (EI) refers to the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and regulate one's own emotions as well as those of others to guide thinking, behavior, and interpersonal relationships effectively [17]. It is a multidimensional construct that includes self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness (empathy), and relationship management. In organizational contexts, EI contributes to leadership effectiveness, team cohesion, stress management, and overall workplace well-being.

Daniel Goleman (1995) popularized EI in the business and leadership fields by emphasizing its importance in predicting success and handling workplace challenges. Unlike cognitive intelligence (IQ), which deals with analytical skills, EI centers on emotional adaptability and social functioning—key components in coping with high-pressure environments and managing interpersonal conflict [18].

Research increasingly identifies EI as a mediator in the relationship between leadership style and employee well-being. Employees with high EI can:

- Interpret narcissistic leaders' behavior without internalizing the negativity.
- Use emotional regulation to manage frustration or hostility.
- Maintain engagement and optimism despite toxic dynamics [10].

In this sense, EI serves as a psychological buffer, helping individuals maintain workplace resilience and emotional balance even when exposed to exploitative leadership. Employees with high EI can better recognize and regulate their emotional responses to workplace stressors, making them less susceptible to burnout [10]. EI enhances coping strategies, promotes optimism, and supports social interactions, all of which build resilience.

4. Workplace Resilience

Workplace resilience refers to the ability of individuals to adapt to, recover from, and remain productive in the face of adversity, stress, or organizational change [19]. It encompasses psychological strength, coping strategies, and adaptive behaviors that allow employees to sustain performance despite disruptions. Resilience is not only a personal trait but also a dynamic process influenced by environmental factors and organizational culture. In the workplace, resilience enables employees to manage pressure, bounce back from setbacks, and maintain well-being even in high-demand settings. It plays a central role in stress recovery, emotional regulation, and long-term career sustainability.

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