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Creating a Survey for Analyzing a Culture of Narcissistic, Toxic, and Power Behaviors in an Organization

by
David B. Ross

Survey Proposal

Overview

The purpose for creating this survey was to understand employees' experiences of coping with their organizational administrators/leaders who have characteristics regarding narcissism and elements of power, and who create a toxic culture. After much research and reflection, it prompted me to further my thoughts regarding a development of an instrument to measure these factors of a person who maintains an administrative/leadership position. Additionally, this survey seeks to understand the challenges, successes, and advice from employees who have been prone to a power hungry, narcissistic, and toxic leadership culture, as well as the mystery behind these behaviors. This survey will hopefully provide others (e.g., employees, administrators, researchers) useful information for those who have been subject to power controlled, narcissistic, and toxic environments. Hopefully, the purpose of this survey will give organizational personnel an optimistic point of view to become better informed how to identify and deal with certain behaviors and characteristics of controlling, narcissistic, and toxic leaders. Campbell, Hoffman, Campbell, and Marchisio (2011) stated there is limited empirical research on how narcissistic characteristics of a leader have an impact on organizational issues. Leadership is an actual utilization of power used by leaders in an organization to influence or control behaviors of the employees (Daft, 2014). Dobbs (2014) commented that "toxic leadership is a multidimensional construct that includes elements of abusive supervision along with narcissism, authoritarianism, self-promotion, and unpredictability" (p. 15).

Research Questions and Survey Objectives

The following research questions and survey objectives were developed to design the survey items and sections of the survey. The research questions were designed based on my interests as well as some colleagues regarding topics of narcissism, toxic culture, and power. Furthermore, the research questions are researchable and measurable, reviews the subject matter that the researcher will examine, and increases expectations of the information that will be gained from a study (e.g., collect data to answer the research question) (Cox, 2012; Suter, 2012). “Research questions yield answers that are valued in terms of their impact or social value. Some research questions do produce answers that are truly groundbreaking” (Suter, 2012, p. 101). From the communication that was generated between my formative and summative committees and myself, we feel this survey will bring answers to readers about narcissism, toxic cultures, and the use of power. Culture and change in an organization are controlled by individuals who developed the infrastructure and hierarchy. In most organizations, a power-hungry hierarchy can lead to a toxic culture and a backlash to decision making and policy development.

The research objectives helped me to gather descriptions connecting the categories of information; in this case, the characteristics of narcissistic and toxic leadership to include the many elements of power used to control or influence people. These survey objectives are important because they help in constructing the question items in the survey. For example, regarding Objective 1 of the first research question, I want to construct a question that will identify narcissistic characteristics. Survey Questions 1 and 4 are worded as follows: “Is your leader arrogant and conceited?” Also, “Do you perceive your leader as insolent?” The terms arrogant, conceited, and insolent reflect the characteristics of a narcissist. The open-ended

questions are designed to obtain experiences and perceptions of the quality levels within the organizational culture and structure.

Research Question 1. What is the relationship between narcissistic characteristics of leaders and the quality level of an organization?

Objective 1. Identify narcissistic characteristics.

Objective 2. Identify the quality level of an organization.

Objective 3. Determine the association between narcissistic characteristics and the quality level of an organization.

Research Question 2. What is the relationship between leaders who have toxic leadership characteristics and the consequence on the quality level of an organization?

Objective 1. Identify toxic leadership characteristics.

Objective 2. Identify the quality level of an organization.

Objective 3. Determine the association between toxic leadership characteristics and the quality level of an organization.

Research Question 3. What is the relationship between leaders who use the power of control over the power of influence and the consequence on the quality level of an organization?

Objective 1. Identify power of control.

Objective 2. Identify power of influence.

Objective 3. Identify the quality level of an organization.

Objective 4. Determine the relationship between the power of control and the power of influence and the quality level of the organization.

Published Instruments

I researched several other published instruments to measure my variables and gave a brief

soliloquy as to justify the creation of my survey instrument. Although there were many studies and surveys, I felt the following surveys covered narcissism, toxic leadership, and power quite well.

Instruments to measure narcissism. In a dissertation titled *The Structure of Narcissistic Personality: Adaptive and Maladaptive Dimensions as an Integrated Model of Narcissism* by Emily Ansell (2005), she used several instruments to include four measuring narcissism: Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) by Raskin and Hall (1981); Vulnerable Narcissism Scale (VNS) by Pimental et al. (2004); Murray's Narcism Scale (MNS) by Hendin and Cheek (1997) and Murray (1938); and Serkownek's Narcissism Hypersensitivity Scale (SNHS) by Serkownek (1975). The NPI consists of a 40-item survey (i.e., response format consists of a forced choice between two self-descriptive phrases) that measures trait narcissism based on the DSM-III Narcissistic Personality Disorder criteria. Of these many questions, there were two choices for each, the following words and phrases contained antonyms: *leader, success, authority, influence, modesty, I am apt to show off, like to be the center of attention, respect that is due to me, like to look at myself, easy to manipulate people, and I am a special person* (Raskin & Terry, 1988).

The other surveys were the Vulnerable Narcissism Scale that contained a 50-item self-report instrument designed to assess the behaviors and personality features related with vulnerable expressions of narcissism, which consisted of a collection of self-descriptive statements. These items had ratings of a 6-point Likert scale ranging from "Not at all like me" to "Very much like me." This scale measures vulnerable narcissistic personalities such as feelings of inadequacy and insecurity, fear, anxiety and powerlessness, moderate covert self-esteem, and affect following a self-esteem threat; the subscales are titled Narcissistic Self-Esteem

Vulnerability, Exploitativeness, Self-Sacrificing Self-Enhancement, Defensive Self-Sufficiency, Grandiose Fantasy, Narcissistic Social Avoidance and Shameful Disavowal of Needs (NSA), Narcissistic Entitlement Rage, and Narcissistic Entitlement Rage. Murray's Narcism Scale is designed as a self-statement consisted of 20 items with a 5-point Likert scale. Murray believed the narcissist has dual dynamics where an individual has experiences as covertly anxious self-preoccupation (e.g., feelings of neglect and belittlement) and overtly self-aggrandizing and exploitative (e.g., need for attention, grandeur) (Hendin & Cheek, 1997). Hendin and Cheek (1997) illustrated some phrases used in Murray's narcissism items: *feeling more absorbed in self than others, feelings easily hurt by ridicule, dislike sharing credit with others, wrapped up in my interests, and have enough to worry about than other's issues*. In 2013, Hendin and Cheek created a 10-item survey titled *The Hypersensitive Narcissism Scale* that aligned with Murray's Narcism Scale, which had a 5-point Likert scale ranging from uncharacteristic to characteristic. The Serkownek's Narcissism Hypersensitivity Scale is an 18-item survey as participants answers either true or false regarding their personal experiences. If a participant scored high, it suggests that the person was self-centeredness and extremely sensitive, lacked self-confidence, concerned with appearance, and would be preoccupied with sexual matters and resentment towards family (Wink, 1991). All of these surveys are suitable to study many areas of narcissism as there are distinctions between covert and overt narcissism.

Toxic Leadership Scale. Schmidt (2008) created a survey to research if toxic leadership has an impact on turnover intention and job satisfaction. Schmidt determined many factors of toxic leadership to include its correlation with transformational leadership, satisfaction with supervisors, job satisfaction, and turnover within an organization. The first portion of the survey was based on 13 areas of the respondents' demographics: age, gender, work title, management

position, years of employment, planning to change positions, and employment industry. The final portion of the demographics solicited responses if the respondents were in the military. This section was based on years in the military, branch, specialty, and pay grade.

Three other portions were designed for the respondent to answer questions to develop a scale of leadership. Schmidt (2008) noted that some questions in all portions might seem repetitive. The second session has 105 questions based on six scales of a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). All questions are to be answered by an overall statement “*the most destructive supervisor I have experienced . . .*” The third portion has the same overall statement, but for 7 questions with a Likert scales ranging from 1 to 7. The next portion consists of 45 questions from the same statement, but has a Likert scale of 5 responses. The last section is an open-ended format of 4 responses for the respondents’ job satisfaction: their job, coworkers, supervisor, and pay.

I do agree that it is a suitable survey, but I feel there could be limitations in the design as there were too many sections with too many Likert scales that answered the same statement of “the most destructive supervisor I have experienced . . .” I find that Schmidt’s (2008) statement in the instructions is off base because he said many questions are repetitive. I would also expand the open-ended questions to be more in-depth and not so elusive.

Power Base Profile-S instrument. Pounders (1996) utilized the Power Base Profile Superintendent (PBP-S) instrument as a second survey in her dissertation, which determined how teachers and principals perceived the leadership styles and power of influence of their superintendents. This survey was developed by Pounders to identify superintendent’s specific power bases; in addition, it was designed with six specific scenarios. These scenarios were based on the respondent’s perception regarding how their superintendent would react. The first

portion of the PBP-S instrument requires a short demographic response to the following two areas: (a) principal or teacher, and (b) male or female. The six scenarios (i.e., Situation 1 to Situation 6) each had a choice to select one out of five responses. This is another appropriate survey but could have limitations as well, as it only has specific situations for one titled profession and only illustrates power and leadership.

Development of the Survey

My plan to develop a survey started with reviewing the literature regarding narcissism, narcissistic and toxic leadership, and the elements of power as well as reviewing other instruments. I have worked on several presentations and papers to include a book chapter titled *Stress and Its Relationship to Leadership and a Healthy Workplace Culture*. I had attended a virtual conference in December 2014 by Regent University. The topic for “Call for Papers” regarding the conference was on *Narcissism and Toxic Leadership*. I submitted a paper that was accepted for the conference and hopefully for their publications; the title of this paper was *Servant Leadership to Toxic Leadership: The Power of Control Over the Power of Influence*. Based on the in-depth research of this topic, attending the conference, reading 12 other submitted papers on the topic, and having daily dialogue in the virtual discussion rooms, I developed a broader perspective on the topics to develop a survey on narcissism, toxic leadership, and elements of power. The survey design was based on a mixed methods approach consisting of 24 Likert scale response items, and 6 open-ended responses. Johnson and Christensen (2017) stated that a researcher who uses a mixed methods design is open-minded, flexible, and creative to collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. Based on my topic, this meets the criteria. In regards to the quantitative portion, I decided to use the following scoring scales in an attempt to try and place some personality into the survey: Likert scale of *No Way=1*, *Well Sort Of=2*,

Middle of the Road=3, *I Can See That*=4, or *Very Much So*=5. I also made the survey a little more aesthetically pleasing by separating each question with a lighter shade of purple; this shade was also placed in the response boxes for the open-ended questions. Bourque and Fielder (2003) made a point about spacing and grids to format the questions and responses; this helps the respondent follow the items.

I used the formative and summative committees to assist me in reviewing and verifying the questions, responses, and scales for the 24-item questions and the 6 open-ended questions. The *formative committee* was made up of an expert panel regarding their knowledge and experiences about the characteristics of leadership, narcissism, and power. The formative committee consisted of one executive vice-president of a large European-based company overseeing 300 employees with a \$275 million budget, a full professor at a public university who is published in toxic leadership and mobbing-bullying, and a retired federal agent who has taught leadership at the National FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia. I sent the first draft to the formative committee to wait for their input and modifications to the survey. They based their feedback on the literature, research questions, and research objectives, which I gave them along with the survey.

The selection of the *summative committee* was based on their experiences as administrators, mentors, and role models in areas of leadership and dealing with individuals, groups, and team dynamics. The summative committee consisted of three organizational leaders from different sectors and two professors with doctorate degrees who have experience in research. The summative committee reviewed the work of the formative committee to confirm that the survey questions effectively target the objectives of the study. Once the summative committee gave their feedback, it was then returned to the formative committee for their assent

and approval; the survey was then finalized and administered to a pilot group.

Survey Construction

Surveys are another method to gather data for any research, such as articles, master's theses, or a dissertation. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) mentioned that the use of surveys is another method to gather data for a quantitative or mixed methods approach. Loseke (2013) commented that surveys with written questions and fixed answers can be administered to a large group of respondents and able to generate increased amounts of data and that the "results can be analyzed using statistics" (p. 86). I created this survey from a mixed methods approach to offer a deeper understanding of a research phenomenon, which can be delivered through both a quantitative and qualitative research (Creswell, 2012).

Type of Survey and Strategies for Response Rate

The type of survey designed is a self-administered instrument containing three sections of toxic leadership, to include narcissistic characteristics and elements of power. The first section is a 24-item survey with a five-point response scale that will take the respondent approximately 7 to 9 minutes to complete. The second section of the survey is made up of 6 open-ended questions to address the overall effectiveness of the leader; this section should take the respondent approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. I also included a third section on the demographics of the participants, which should take less than 2 minutes to complete.

Fink (2003) stated that a self-administered survey could be either mailed through typical mail services (e.g., United States Postal Service, FedEx, United Parcel Service) or completed on site, but can also be uploaded on many Internet sites that have confidentiality and privacy policies. I agree with Fink that the survey can be completed at an on-site facility. I feel this is an advantage because any possible respondents would not have to face any survey fatigue if they

were unsure of the directions or other issues. A researcher could also have some incentives such as having coffee and snacks available while the respondents complete the surveys. If a researcher administered this survey at any leadership conference, I would think it could increase the response rate as well as be able to give in-depth instructions to clarify any questions or concerns a respondent may have regarding the survey. A possible disadvantage would be the time of the researcher as well as the participants who attend the conferences; my experience at some conferences is that people are multi-tasking their time between sessions and networking. Another disadvantage would be the risk and discomfort of confidentiality and anonymity.

In addition, I would consider a way to increase the response rate of possible participants for this survey by possibly meeting with potential participants face-to-face. Since the topic is a sensitive issue, it would not be as feasible to obtain approval from many organizations. By speaking at conferences on leadership or other face-to-face interactions, this will give the researcher a primary focus to recruiting a *non-probability* technique of *convenience sampling*. This technique could be used in any study as to select anyone who wishes to participate. I feel another strategy to obtain a larger sample would be to conduct an offshoot of recruiting participants utilizing a *snowball sampling* procedure. Since the contact information could be used through professional contacts and conferences, the recruitment strategy might reach participants beyond the existing social networks. I recognize that researchers who have direct contact will also help in the explanations and concerns for understanding and completing the survey.

Pilot Study

This survey was developed to obtain information from individuals who have an extensive background in leadership and how an organizational culture can be destroyed based on

narcissistic, toxic, and controlling behaviors of the organization's so-called leaders. This survey consists of three sections: (a) 24 items containing 3 subsets to measure narcissism behavior, toxic leadership characteristics, and elements of power; (b) 6 open-ended items measuring the perceived effectiveness leading a learning organization; and (c) the demographics of the respondents. The formative committee was chosen by me based on their expertise in leadership styles, characteristics, and behaviors. These individuals are considered experts in the field of leadership based on years of experience, positions of leadership, and research-based publications. These individuals assisted me in the design of the content. Once the formative committee and I finalized our collaborative thoughts, it was then submitted to a 5-member summative committee. The summative committee then evaluated the survey and gave feedback based on their expertise in the comprehension and application of leadership as an emergent quality. This is needed for individuals to properly lead organizations in areas of managing conflict and communication, influencing others, and building collaborative teams. At the end of these review processes, the survey was ready to be administered as a pilot study.

The Need for Revisions and Changes Made

Committee feedback. The formative and summative committees returned similar responses to the study, regarding all three areas of the survey. Originally, the quantitative portion containing the 24-Likert scale items of the survey had taken over 30 minutes to complete. The feedback was on point as I agreed that most respondents would develop survey fatigue, negatively impacting the participation, response rate, and completion rate. Other feedback was based on the items asking double-barreled responses. After reviewing them, I found some different terminologies and reduced the question to read quickly, but still maintain the integrity of the topics.

One area that I did change was the second phase of the study; I changed the effectiveness sliding scale from a 0% to 100% format to a 6 open-ended question design. I also reworded the 6-item questions to reduce the time to take the survey; shortening the survey response time from over 30 minutes to less than 15 minutes. Another comment was to keep the open-ended questions; however, make them force-choice responses of 3 to 4 items per question. Other comments were to use more common words, give consistency in the wording of the question: *Does your leader appear . . .?*, *Does your leader display . . .?*, and *Does your leader seem . . .?*

Description of Pilot Test

This survey was piloted with 15 individuals whom all had similar characteristics of a targeted population and had an understanding of leadership characteristics of a leader within any organizational culture. This pilot group was made up of both males and females who held college degrees (i.e., bachelors 4, masters 5, doctorate 6); all participants held a leadership position, but only 7 participants would want to hold another leadership position.

Each member of the pilot group was contacted via email and explained the purpose of the survey. I gave these individuals a brief synopsis of the research questions and objectives of the study. All 15 pilot-study members agreed to complete the survey and respond to all three sections of the survey. After the feedback regarding certain terminologies and double-barrel questions, I made sure that all items were designed to determine if the survey was easily understood, arranged in a logical order, contained questions relevant to the narcissistic, toxic, and power characteristics-behaviors, and provided choices that were mutually relevant and thorough. The survey items were designed for the following reasons: clearly written, indicating responses, understandability, mutually exclusive, exhaustive, made sense, suggestions, and etcetera (Fink, 2003).

Description of Suggested Changes

Speaking with the pilot-study group, they felt that the questions were relevant regarding narcissism, toxic leadership, and the elements of power. Because these individuals have an innate wisdom and real-world experiences dealing with so-called leaders who create a toxic environment, they agreed the items were valid. Most individuals that live in a utopian world might not understand a true world of *narcissism* and/or *power freaks*. There are endless research publications on narcissistic behaviors and toxic behaviors (i.e., mobbing, bullying, control) that breed a dysfunctional and abusive workplace (Davenport, Schwartz, & Elliott, 2005; Duffy & Sperry, 2014; Gray, 2014; Namie & Namie, 2003; Plante, 2012).

The pilot group did make mention that they have never taken a survey to measure the *so-called* negative sides of a leader, only the typical surveys on communication, leadership styles, team building, etcetera. This could provide information that other surveys only inform researchers that administrators/leaders fall into certain leadership categories such as structural, humanistic, symbolic; furthermore, measure managerial practices, competency inventories, work styles, professional development, and much more (Lashway, 2003). The average time for completing the survey ranged between 24 and 27 minutes. All participants stated they had no difficulty with the survey. Due to the great feedback from the formative and summative committees, the pilot group had positive feelings with the survey.

Data Analysis and Reporting Procedures

Overview

The final process for developing my survey on narcissistic characteristics, toxic leadership style, and power of control was to illustrate the data management plan, describe the analysis, run the appropriate data, and develop a couple of tables and graphs. In my pilot study

for the quantitative portion, I looked at a standalone construct of narcissism, toxic leadership, and elements of power. Edmonds and Kennedy (2013) described descriptive statistical analyses to summarize data. By using descriptive statistics analysis, I used an Excel spreadsheet to analyze the data of the pilot group.

Data Management Plan

Creating a codebook. I created a codebook that separated the 15 respondents of my pilot group. I gave all respondents a pseudonym, which ranged from PG1 to PG 15; PG represents the pilot group. Of the 15 respondents, I coded their gender, age, ethnicity, educational level, and years employed; this information had nominal categorical data as it was placed into groups and unable to be ranked in order. I then coded the respondents based on having a leadership role or not, and would they be interested in holding a future leadership role.

Additionally, I coded the 24-item responses which were divided into 3 subgroups: (a) narcissistic characteristics, (b) toxic leadership, and (c) elements of power. The following questions were coded for narcissistic characteristics: Q1, Q4, Q7, Q10, Q13, Q16, Q19, and Q22. The questions coded for toxic leadership were Q2, Q5, Q8, Q11, Q14, Q17, Q20, and Q23; and the questions coded for elements of power were Q3, Q6, Q9, Q12, Q15, Q18, Q21, and Q24. After running a descriptive analysis in Excel, the following tables illustrate the frequency of narcissism (see Table 1), toxic leadership (see Table 2), and elements of power (see Table 3).

Table 1

Narcissistic Characteristics

Narcissistic	
Mean	33.867
Standard Error	2.077
Median	36
Mode	39
Standard Deviation	8.043
Sample Variance	64.695
Kurtosis	6.742
Skewness	-2.513
Range	31
Minimum	9
Maximum	40
Sum	508
Count	15

Table 2

Toxic Leadership

Toxic	
Mean	30.067
Standard Error	1.459
Median	31
Mode	29
Standard Deviation	5.650
Sample Variance	31.924
Kurtosis	4.668
Skewness	-1.362
Range	26
Minimum	14
Maximum	40
Sum	451
Count	15

Table 3

Elements of Power

Power	
Mean	28.733
Standard Error	1.663
Median	29
Mode	30
Standard Deviation	6.442
Sample Variance	41.495
Kurtosis	1.681
Skewness	-0.309
Range	26
Minimum	14
Maximum	40
Sum	431
Count	15

Establishing reliable coding. I used a coding system that tested for accuracy by applying it to the data from the pilot survey. This was non-numerical data as the survey was designed to assign a numeral to the categories based on the Likert scale, the level of agreement. Upon confirming the accuracy and reliability of the coding system with the pilot test results, the actual survey results were closely monitored, periodically tabulated, and carefully inspected to ensure the coding maintains accuracy and reliability.

Reviewing the survey responses for missing data. This survey was distributed as a

convenience sample survey. There was no missing data since I met with all of the respondents of the pilot group; this pilot test minimized missing data as I was available to clarify any issues. In addition, I reviewed the directions with each respondent to make sure I would gather all the data. During the review of the many instruments, I was able to clarify some terminologies, which helped the respondents answer the items with ease. I did not have a contingency plan in place due to the procedure of meeting with all respondents.

Entering the data. I decided not to use SPSS because I felt comfortable with the format of Microsoft Excel. I created an electronic format of an Excel spreadsheet by listing the 24-item questions horizontally along the top of the spreadsheet while listing the 15 respondents vertically along the left margin. Every time I received a response, I entered the data and reverse scored 9 of the items and then ran the Excel statistical program for analysis (i.e., descriptive statistics).

Cleaning the data. I did address an area during data accuracy validation: I recoded the data in some of the items by reverse scoring. In the research, it does state to reverse negative-stated words; however, since this survey is to describe narcissistic characteristics, I chose to reverse positive-stated words. The following items were reverse scored: Q3, Q5, Q6, Q9, Q14, Q15, Q18, Q23, and Q24. Since I did enter the data manually, I conducted a side-by-side comparison of the survey to ensure the data was entered correctly. This was also validated by a research assistant. In addition, no items were left blank by the respondents.

Analysis Plan for Survey Objectives

The analysis plan for the survey objectives was planned to apply a descriptive statistical method that focuses on analyzing frequency. The justification for using this analysis plan was that the survey objectives sought to obtain descriptive information in the form of *ordinal data*. The data from the 24-item responses call for ratings of perceptions, not classified as dependent or

independent variables; this is a standalone construct. Fink (2003) commented that ordinal data is best analyzed in terms of central tendency, which includes the mean, median, and mode. As such, the analysis plan looked to capture the frequency that the respondents rated their leaders regarding characteristics of narcissism, leadership that is toxic to an organizational structure, and elements of power. Table 4 illustrates the mean score of all three areas of the survey. Participant 10 seemed to be the outlier compared to other respondents' scores.

Table 4

Mean Scores of Participants

	Narcissistic	Toxic	Power
Participant 1	39	34	32
Participant 2	33	30	26
Participant 3	36	29	29
Participant 4	37	40	40
Participant 5	33	29	28
Participant 6	37	32	30
Participant 7	33	29	28
Participant 8	36	31	26
Participant 9	40	36	20
Participant 10	9	14	14
Participant 11	23	26	30
Participant 12	36	32	40
Participant 13	39	27	30
Participant 14	39	31	30
Participant 15	38	31	28

Findings in the Analysis of a Survey Objective

The survey instrument has three objectives: (a) identify the perceptions of narcissistic characteristics, (b) identify the perceptions of toxic leadership characteristics, and (c) identify the perceptions of elements of power. An analysis of the pilot survey data pertaining to the survey objectives was conducted by applying a descriptive analysis method that concentrated on taking the frequency of ordinal data. Ordinal data allows the response to be ranked on a Likert scale of 1 to 5 (1=No Way, 2=Well Sort Of, 3=Middle of The Road, 4=I Can See That, 5=Very Much So).

The analysis revealed the following results for each of the eight items that pertained to this objective of narcissistic characteristics. Figure 1 shows the mean frequency of scoring the 8 items of narcissistic characteristics (i.e., Q1, Q4, Q7, Q10, Q13, Q16, Q19, and Q22). Other findings revealed that 14 of the 15 respondents felt that their so-called leader was narcissistic, toxic to the organizational culture, and used power to control people rather than used power to influence others. Figure 2 shows the mean frequency of scoring the 8 items of toxic characteristics (i.e., Q2, Q5, Q8, Q11, Q14, Q17, Q20, Q23). Figure 3 shows the mean frequency of scoring the 8 items of power characteristics (i.e., Q3, Q6, Q9, Q12, Q15, Q18, Q21, Q24). Cronbach's Alpha is the inter-item reliability, a measure of internal consistency with the descriptions of the measures of central tendency and dispersions: The relationship of the items as it pertains as a group (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2017); "coefficient alpha tells you the degree to which the items are interrelated" (Johnson & Christensen, 2017, p. 168). Based on the data from the 15 participants, using Cronbach's alphanumeric coefficient of reliability, this pilot study had a Cronbach's Alpha of .803. Reliability scores that are higher than .700 are considered to be

acceptable (Johnson & Christensen, 2017; Nunnally, 1978); in this pilot study, the range is to be considered good (see Table 5).

Table 5

General Guidelines for Interpreting Reliability Coefficients

Reliability coefficient value	Interpretation
.90 and up	Excellent
.80 - .89	Good
.70 - .79	Adequate
Below .70	May have limited applicability

Note. Adapted from “Testing and Assessment: An Employer’s Guide to Good Practices,” by U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration, 1999. Retrieved from <http://uniformguidelines.com/testassess.pdf>



Figure 1. Mean Frequency of Narcissistic Characteristics.

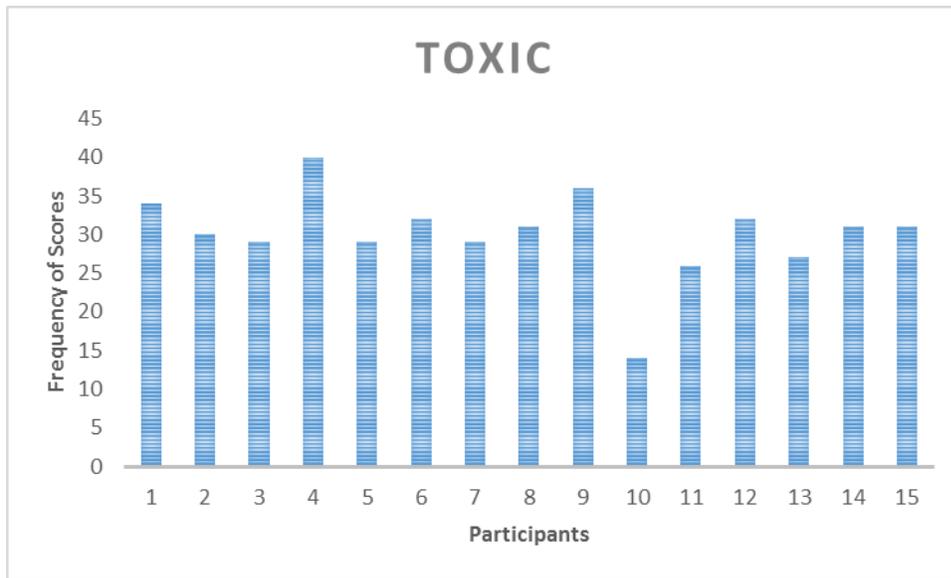


Figure 2. Mean Frequency of Toxic Characteristics.

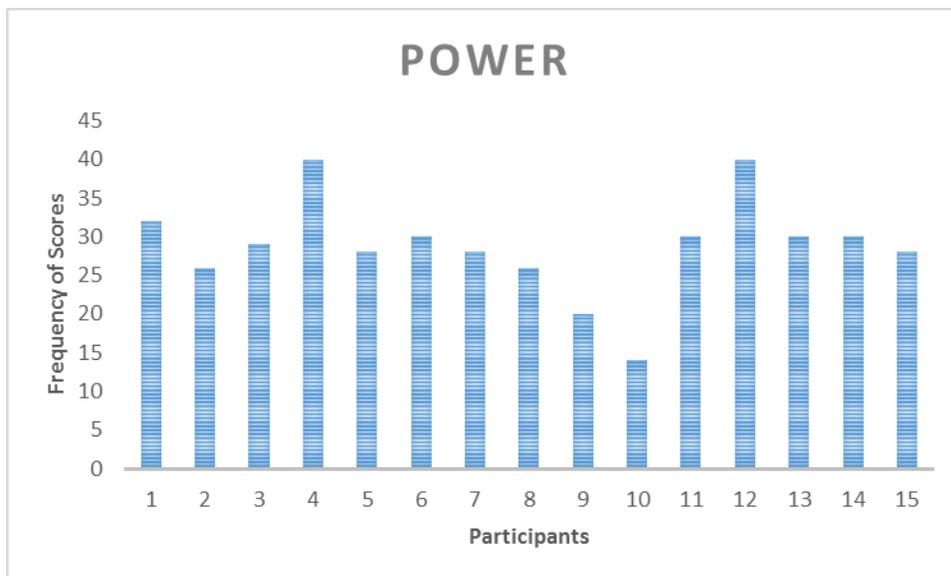


Figure3. Mean Frequency of Power Characteristics.

Figure 4 shows the commonalities between three of the objectives that had the same type of measurement. As previously stated, Participant 10 was determined to be an outlier to the survey, possibly that this respondent had a leader who is not narcissistic, nor toxic, nor used power to control people.

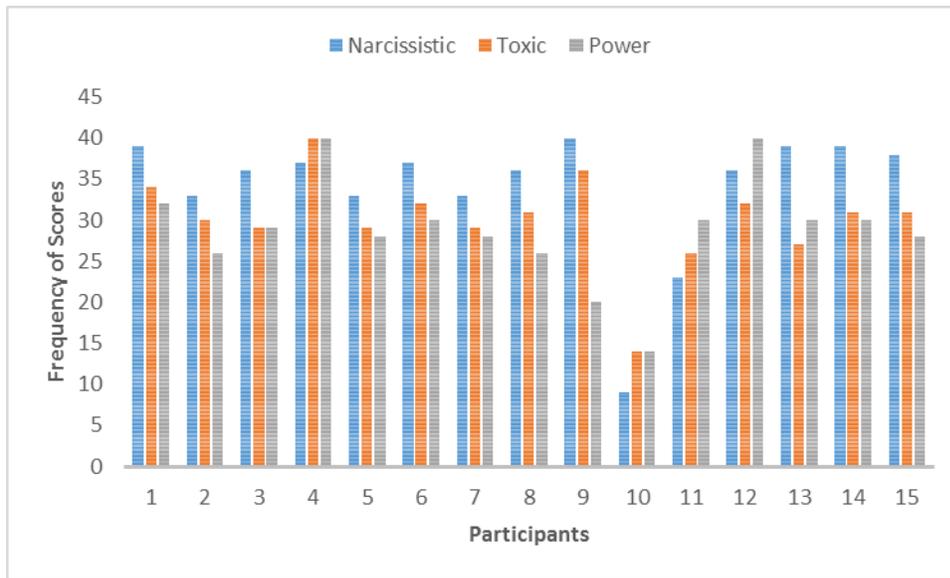


Figure 4. Overall Data of Frequency.

Qualitative Analysis

Although I covered information regarding the quantitative portion of the survey, I did gather some themes regarding the qualitative portion. The findings of the piloted open-ended responses indicated there is an alignment and support to the quantitative responses, especially the responses by Participant 10 (i.e., 1 out of 15) who did not work for a narcissistic, toxic, power person. In the findings of the themes, 14 out of 15 participants of the pilot group felt their leader to meet the characteristics and behaviors of a narcissistic and toxic person who has control issues. Although the respondents' comments contained some good qualities of their leader, the participants piloted felt their leader(s) were still narcissistic, toxic, and used power to control other individuals. In a mixed methods approach, as in this survey, both the quantitative and qualitative data can be interpreted either together or separate; this combination "can help the researcher identify convergence, inconsistency, and contradiction in the data" (Johnson & Christensen, 2017, p. 486). Listed below are the responses for each of the six open-ended questions.

1. How realistic are the demands and expectations of your leader to create a productive and positive work environment?

“He thinks he is perfect.” “Wants reports and productivity the way he does.” “He has not caught up with the job.” “He never honestly aimed to improve a productive work environment.” “She placed her own buddies into positions.” “Buddies praised her and never questioned her decisions.” “Divided the organization . . . those inside the circle of privileged and those of outside.” “Conversation and meetings were grounded more in her perceptions than others.” “The treatment of people is uneven, definitely an inner circle.” “No way we could please him or complete the tasks demanded.” “Unnecessary division and competition, not an optimal work environment.” “Usually demands are not realistic . . . very difficult to have a positive work environment with unrealistic demands.”

2. Explain how your leader motivates you to produce a positive image.

“Motivates through threat.” “He strives on power.” “Except the few who were inside the circle.” “Did not motivate me.” “Did nothing to cultivate me.” “Was intelligent and competent . . . motivated by opportunities.” “Leader failed to motivate people except those in the inner circle.” “Let us know of our importance as a role model.” “I was motivated to learn and grow as a person.” “He takes our ideas and uses them as though they are his.” “He supports us and listens we need to talk to him.” “Into themselves they could not see or hear us, as they had their own minds.” “Admire their intelligence, but did not make people feel better

personally or professionally.” “Not personally motivating, I stay positive because I care about the organization.”

3. Explain how your leader understands individual and team dynamics for the organizational culture.

“He does not understand team dynamics and culture, but wants everyone to agree with him.” “He always thinks he is right so there being no dissent.” “She disenfranchised people from the organization and made them feel threatened.” “Force people to strive on their own.” “Only born out of her own perspective and mindset.” “She gave lip service.” “Built relationships with individual people.” “The leader would listen and take heed of the problem.” “Understands very well, but seems to be more self-serving than serving the organization.” “Did not want united and like-minded thinking employees.” “The leader as the sole power broker in the organization.” “Addresses each person with cultural differences and background.” “No understanding, the decision making is about ‘him’ and only wants results focused about him.”

4. How does the leader help reduce stress or cause an increase in stress levels within the organization?

“Mistrust of the leader’s message; inconsistent in her position.” “When questioned about loyalty, she was inconsistent in her position.” “Does not reduce it, only causes it.” “Caused stress because we never knew whether we were meeting her goals or expectations.” “She maintained control over every decision, did not allow us the freedom to make decisions.” “Encouraged everyone and reminded them of their importance.” “Open door policy to discuss concerns.”

“Does not demand something that must be completed immediately.” “Increases stress . . . creates division, competition, backstabbing, and every person for themselves attitude.” “Stress is never lowered, does whatever it takes to make sure his agenda is met.”

5. Explain how your leader informs all personnel in the organization about change.

“Change happens when the leader wants it to happen.” “No concern for input, only their results.” “Does not care about making change happen systematically, but just makes the change.” “It never filters down.” “It changes at the top and never disseminates . . . only rumors and incorrect information gets disseminated.” “The leader mandates the changes without any efforts to secure employees’ buy-in.” “Changes were shared during monthly meetings.” “Meetings were designed to discuss changes.” “She would issue directives and explain upcoming changes.” “There is support and guidance.” “Communication was not provided.” “Did not involve personnel in the change process.”

6. How effective is the feedback you receive from your leader?

“I could care less about the feedback from a narcissistic leader who I do not respect.” “The effectiveness is not good at all.” “No feedback, too busy pushing his personal agenda.” “Not effective, no one wanted to hear it.” “Feedback was not given often, unless from outside sources.” “No constructive feedback.” “Given in a very authoritative and condescending manner.” “A lack because we did not meet her ‘unspoken’ expectations.” “Feedback was effective, but blunt.” “He looks for the good in us and makes a positive environment.” “Very positive.” “Constantly seeking the good in us.” “Is not demeaning and gives advice on how

to change mistakes/errors.” “The leader was extremely bright and intelligent, but ignored any personal criticism.” “Feedback was effective, but did not take much value in it.” “Feedback was based on the ‘what have you done for me lately’ environment.”

Hopefully the information from this paper, to include the mixed methods survey, will assist anyone who wishes to research on how organizations could be impacted by people who operate with narcissistic, toxic, and power-hungry characteristics/behaviors. Please contact me at daviross@nova.edu for further dialogue and permission to use this survey. Thank you.

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The Survey on Toxic Leadership (Other)

Created by

David B. Ross, Ed.D.

This survey will have three sections to elicit the participants' responses of their leaders. The first section is a 24-item survey with five-point response scales that will measure a person's characteristics of narcissism, toxic leadership, and elements of power. The second section of the survey is made up of 6 open-ended questions to address the overall effectiveness of the leader. The third section will be designed to obtain demographic data of the respondents.

Directions for the Survey

Part 1: In this first section, the survey asks you to describe your perceptions regarding the leader of the organization. You are asked to select a box to the right of each question. Please indicate by using a check mark (✓) how often these items are accurate about your leader. Please use the Likert scale of No Way=1, Well Sort Of=2, Middle of the Road=3, I Can See That=4, or Very Much So=5.

	No Way 1	Well Sort Of 2	Middle of the Road 3	I Can See That 4	Very Much So 5
1. Is your leader arrogant and conceited?					
2. Does your leader cause organizational failure?					
3. Is your leader influential towards everyone?					
4. Do you perceive your leader as insolent?					
5. Is there evidence to suggest your leader has the ability to build relationships?					
6. Does your leader share their knowledge and expertise to the team environment?					

	No Way 1	Well Sort Of 2	Middle of the Road 3	I Can See That 4	Very Much So 5
7. Does your leader crave admiration needing constant attention?					
8. Does your leader have poor leadership skills that lead to attrition?					
9. Does your leader acknowledge your achievements and talents?					
10. Is your leader self-centered?					
11. Does your leader cause a disruption (i.e., chaos) in the work setting?					
12. Does your leader seem to be preoccupied with personal success of power?					
13. Is your leader egotistical?					
14. Is your leader positive and effective to the organizational culture?					
15. Is your leader charismatic?					
16. Is your leader self-involved in their personal success?					
17. Does your leader convert people with their rhetoric?					
18. Is your leader consistent in the way he or she conducts business on a daily basis?					
19. Does your leader seem to be superior over others?					
20. Does your leader break ethical standards and systems that others rely on?					
21. Does your leader use their title to bully you?					
22. Does your leader lack empathy of others?					
23. Does your leader display the skills to attract followership?					
24. Does your leader ask you for input for the betterment of the organization?					

Part 2: In this second section, the survey asks you to respond with more in-depth responses how you perceive your leader to lead an effective learning organization (i.e., structure, culture, image).

1. How realistic are the demands and expectations of your leader to create a productive and positive work environment?

2. Explain how your leader motivates you to produce a positive image. If not, please clarify.

3. Explain how your leader understands individual and team dynamics for the organizational culture. If not, please clarify.

4. How does the leader help reduce stress or cause an increase in stress levels within the organization?

5. Explain how your leader informs all personnel in the organization about change. If not, please clarify.

6. How effective is the feedback you receive from your leader? If there is a lack of feedback, please explain.

Part 3: In this third section, please place a check mark (✓) next to the appropriate item that best describes your demographic area.

1. Are you: Male Female
2. Identify your age: 18-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60+
3. Identify your race: White Black Hispanic Other
4. What is your highest level of education: High School Associate
 Bachelor Master Doctorate
5. How many years of work experience: 1-9 10-19 20-29 30-39
 40+
6. Have you held a leadership position: Yes No
7. Do you want to hold a leadership position: Yes No
8. Please check the area of affiliation you are employed: government (political)
 education business medical social services other

Scoring the data:

The following questions refer to narcissistic characteristics: Q1, Q4, Q7, Q10, Q13, Q16, Q19, and Q22. The following questions refer to toxic leadership: Q2, Q5, Q8, Q11, Q14, Q17, Q20, and Q23; and the following questions refer to elements of power: Q3, Q6, Q9, Q12, Q15, Q18, Q21, and Q24.

The following items are to be reverse scored: Q3, Q5, Q6, Q9, Q14, Q15, Q18, Q23, and Q24.