

From Toxic Leadership to Organizational Excellence: The Leadership Continuum Model of Psychological Safety and Innovation

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Abstract: Organizations today operate in environments characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. While leadership remains one of the most influential determinants of organizational success, research continues to demonstrate the destructive effects of toxic leadership on employee wellbeing, organizational culture, innovation, and long-term performance. Existing literature largely focuses on identifying toxic leadership behaviors and their negative consequences. However, limited research explores how organizations recover from toxic leadership and transition toward innovative, psychologically safe, and high-performing cultures.

This conceptual article introduces the Leadership Continuum Model (LCM), a framework that positions toxic leadership and transformational leadership as opposite poles on a developmental continuum rather than isolated leadership constructs. Drawing upon Transformational Leadership Theory, Psychological Safety Theory, Path-Goal Theory, and Social Exchange Theory, the model proposes that psychological safety serves as the critical mediating mechanism through which organizations move from environments characterized by fear, silence, and disengagement to cultures characterized by trust, innovation, and organizational excellence.

The article synthesizes contemporary research on toxic leadership, employee silence, organizational culture, innovation, and leadership development. Managerial implications and future research directions are discussed. The Leadership Continuum Model provides scholars and practitioners with a practical framework for understanding leadership transformation and organizational renewal.

Keywords: Toxic Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Psychological Safety, Innovation, Employee Voice, Organizational Culture, Leadership Development

I. Introduction

Leadership remains one of the most studied and debated topics in organizational research. Despite decades of scholarship, organizations across industries continue to struggle with leadership failures that negatively impact employee engagement, innovation, and organizational performance. While leadership is often associated with inspiration, empowerment, and vision, an increasing body of literature reveals that leadership can also be destructive, self-serving, and toxic (Atkins et al., 2025; Semedo et al., 2022).

Toxic leadership has emerged as a significant concern in contemporary organizations. Researchers have linked toxic leadership to increased employee turnover intentions, diminished organizational commitment, workplace bullying, reduced innovation, employee silence, and psychological distress (Ahmed et al., 2025; Rasool et al., 2021; Wu & Li, 2023). These consequences create substantial financial and human capital costs for organizations seeking sustainable competitive advantage.

The challenge facing organizations extends beyond identifying toxic leadership. A more important question remains unanswered: How do organizations recover from toxic leadership and rebuild cultures capable of sustaining innovation and high performance?

This article proposes that organizations do not simply move from bad leadership to good leadership. Instead, they progress through a developmental continuum in which leadership behaviors, organizational culture, and employee perceptions evolve over time. Central to this transition is psychological safety, defined as an employee's belief that they can speak up, contribute ideas, challenge assumptions, and take interpersonal risks without fear of punishment or humiliation (Edmondson, 1999).

The purpose of this article is to develop a conceptual framework explaining how organizations move from toxic environments toward innovative cultures through transformational leadership and psychological safety.

II. Literature Review

2.1 Understanding Toxic Leadership

Toxic leadership refers to leadership behaviors that intentionally or unintentionally creates harm for employees and organizations. Toxic leaders frequently exhibit authoritarian tendencies, self-centered decision-making, manipulation, favoritism, intimidation, and abusive supervision (Sharma & Kulshreshtha, 2023).

Unlike ineffective leadership, toxic leadership actively damages organizational relationships. Semedo et al. (2022) argued that toxic leaders prioritize personal power over organizational wellbeing. Similarly, Lee et al. (2022) found that abusive supervision contributes to employee silence, relational conflict, and diminished creative performance.

Research demonstrates that toxic leadership often flourishes within cultures characterized by cronyism and nepotism. Ali et al. (2022) identified organizational cronyism as a significant predictor of reduced employee commitment and increased workplace deviance. Likewise, Hassanein et al. (2025) found that toxic leadership negatively affects trust and job satisfaction.

The consequences extend beyond individual employees. Toxic leadership contributes to organizational stagnation, reduced innovation, diminished morale, and higher turnover rates (Rasool et al., 2021).

2.2 Employee Silence as an Organizational Outcome

One of the most damaging consequences of toxic leadership is employee silence. Employee silence occurs when workers intentionally withhold ideas, concerns, feedback, or information that could benefit the organization.

Wu and Li (2023) found that leadership behaviors significantly influence employees' willingness to share innovative ideas. When employees perceive leadership as punitive or dismissive, silence becomes a protective mechanism.

Detert and Burris (2007) similarly concluded that leadership behaviors shape whether employees feel safe challenging existing assumptions or proposing innovative solutions.

The resulting environment often becomes characterized by information hoarding, reduced collaboration, and diminished innovation capacity.

2.3 Psychological Safety and Organizational Performance

Psychological safety has emerged as one of the most influential constructs in organizational behavior research. Edmondson (1999) defined psychological safety as a shared belief that the workplace is safe for interpersonal risk-taking.

Organizations characterized by psychological safety demonstrate higher levels of learning, collaboration, innovation, and performance (Edmondson & Lei, 2014). Employees in psychologically safe environments are more likely to report errors, share ideas, seek feedback, and challenge ineffective processes.

Frazier et al. (2017) found strong positive relationships between psychological safety and employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behaviors.

Conversely, psychologically unsafe environments often mirror characteristics associated with toxic leadership, including fear, silence, blame, and reduced creativity.

2.4 Transformational Leadership and Innovation

Transformational leadership represents a leadership approach focused on inspiring followers, creating shared vision, fostering innovation, and developing employees (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Transformational leaders encourage intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence. These behaviors help create conditions that support innovation and organizational learning.

Research consistently demonstrates positive relationships between transformational leadership and innovation performance. Ribeiro et al. (2018) found transformational leadership significantly predicts employee commitment and organizational performance.

Carmeli et al. (2010) further found that supportive leadership contributes to psychological safety, which subsequently promotes learning behaviors and innovation.

III. Theoretical Foundations

The Leadership Continuum Model (LCM) is grounded in multiple complementary theories that collectively explain how organizations transition from environments characterized by toxic leadership, employee disengagement, and limited innovation to cultures defined by psychological safety, employee voice, and organizational excellence. While no single theory fully explains this transformation, the integration of Transformational Leadership Theory, Psychological Safety Theory, Path-Goal Theory, Social Exchange Theory, and Organizational Learning Theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding leadership's role in shaping organizational outcomes.

The Leadership Continuum Model proposes that leadership behaviors exist along a developmental spectrum rather than as isolated categories. At one end of the continuum, toxic leadership fosters fear, silence, distrust, and

stagnation. At the opposite end, transformational leadership cultivates trust, engagement, innovation, and continuous improvement. Psychological safety serves as the critical mechanism that enables movement along this continuum.

3.1 Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational Leadership Theory serves as the primary leadership framework underpinning the Leadership Continuum Model. Originally introduced by Burns (1978) and later expanded by Bass (1985), transformational leadership focuses on the ability of leaders to inspire followers to exceed expectations and pursue collective organizational goals beyond their individual interests.

Unlike transactional leadership, which relies primarily on exchanges of rewards and punishments, transformational leadership seeks to elevate the values, motivations, and aspirations of followers. Bass and Avolio (1994) identified four primary dimensions of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Together, these dimensions enable leaders to create a shared vision, foster commitment, encourage creativity, and support employee development.

Research consistently demonstrates positive relationships between transformational leadership and organizational performance. Ribeiro et al. (2018) found that transformational leadership significantly influences employee commitment, motivation, and performance outcomes. Similarly, Carmeli, Brueller, and Dutton (2010) reported that supportive leadership behaviors enhance employee learning and psychological safety, which in turn contribute to organizational innovation.

Transformational leaders encourage employees to challenge conventional thinking, experiment with new ideas, and engage in collaborative problem-solving. These behaviors are particularly important in contemporary organizations facing rapid technological advancements, increased competition, workforce diversity, and changing customer expectations. In innovation-driven environments, transformational leadership provides the strategic vision and emotional support necessary to sustain creativity and organizational adaptability.

Within the Leadership Continuum Model, transformational leadership represents the desired leadership state toward which organizations should strive. It serves as the catalyst for establishing trust, fostering employee voice, and creating the conditions necessary for psychological safety and innovation.

3.2 Psychological Safety Theory

Psychological Safety Theory serves as the central explanatory mechanism within the Leadership Continuum Model. Edmondson (1999) defined psychological safety as a shared belief among team members that the workplace is safe for interpersonal risk-taking. Employees operating within psychologically safe environments feel comfortable expressing concerns, admitting mistakes, asking questions, and proposing new ideas without fear of embarrassment, punishment, or retaliation.

The importance of psychological safety has grown considerably in organizational research over the past two decades. Edmondson and Lei (2014) argued that psychological safety is essential for learning, adaptation, and organizational effectiveness. Employees who feel psychologically safe are more likely to engage in constructive dialogue, share knowledge, and participate in decision-making processes. Conversely, psychologically unsafe environments often produce fear, silence, and disengagement.

Frazier et al. (2017) conducted a meta-analysis demonstrating significant positive relationships between psychological safety and employee engagement, organizational commitment, creativity, and job performance. Similarly, Newman et al. (2017) found that psychological safety positively influences innovation, knowledge-sharing behaviors, and organizational learning.

Psychological safety is particularly important when examining the consequences of toxic leadership. Toxic leaders frequently create environments characterized by intimidation, favoritism, uncertainty, and fear. Under such conditions, employees often withhold information, avoid taking risks, and disengage from innovation activities. The resulting silence limits organizational learning and impairs performance.

The Leadership Continuum Model positions psychological safety as the bridge connecting leadership behavior and innovation outcomes. As leadership behaviors become more transformational, psychological safety increases. Increased psychological safety encourages employee voice, collaboration, experimentation, and learning, ultimately leading to enhanced innovation and organizational effectiveness.

3.3 Path-Goal Theory

Path-Goal Theory, originally developed by House (1971), provides additional insight into how leadership influences employee behavior and performance. The theory suggests that leaders are responsible for clarifying goals, removing obstacles, and providing the support necessary for employees to achieve desired outcomes. Effective leaders help employees identify pathways to success while minimizing barriers that may impede progress.

Sutianingsih and Handayani (2023) noted that Path-Goal Theory remains relevant because it emphasizes leadership's role in facilitating employee achievement and motivation. Leaders who effectively remove obstacles create conditions that enable employees to perform at higher levels and achieve organizational objectives.

From the perspective of the Leadership Continuum Model, toxic leadership represents a failure to fulfill the core assumptions of Path-Goal Theory. Rather than removing barriers, toxic leaders often create additional obstacles through fear, micromanagement, favoritism, unclear expectations, and punitive behaviors. These barriers reduce employee confidence, motivation, and willingness to contribute innovative ideas.

In contrast, transformational leaders align closely with the principles of Path-Goal Theory. By promoting communication, trust, empowerment, and collaboration, transformational leaders eliminate barriers that inhibit performance. Employees become more confident in pursuing goals because they perceive leadership support and organizational encouragement.

Path-Goal Theory therefore helps explain how leadership behaviors influence employee motivation and organizational outcomes. The theory reinforces the argument that leadership is not merely about directing employees but also about creating environments that support achievement, learning, and innovation.

3.4 Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory provides a valuable lens for understanding how employees respond to leadership behaviors. Blau (1964) proposed that workplace relationships are based on reciprocal exchanges between individuals and organizations. Employees evaluate how they are treated and respond accordingly through attitudes and behaviors that either support or undermine organizational objectives.

Positive workplace relationships generate trust, commitment, and cooperation. When employees perceive leadership as fair, supportive, and trustworthy, they are more likely to reciprocate through increased engagement, organizational citizenship behaviors, and discretionary effort. Conversely, when leadership behaviors are perceived as abusive, unfair, or self-serving, employees often respond with withdrawal, silence, reduced commitment, and turnover intentions.

Ali et al. (2022) demonstrated that organizational cronyism and favoritism negatively influence employee commitment and increase workplace deviance. Similarly, Rasool et al. (2021) found that toxic workplace environments significantly reduce employee engagement and organizational support.

The principles of Social Exchange Theory are highly relevant to the Leadership Continuum Model because they explain why employees react differently under toxic and transformational leadership conditions. Toxic leadership damages the reciprocal relationship between employees and organizations by eroding trust and perceptions of fairness. Transformational leadership strengthens these relationships by demonstrating concern for employee wellbeing and organizational success.

As trust increases, employees become more willing to share knowledge, contribute ideas, and participate in organizational improvement efforts. These reciprocal exchanges create the social foundation necessary for psychological safety and innovation.

3.5 Organizational Learning Theory

Organizational Learning Theory provides the final theoretical foundation supporting the Leadership Continuum Model. Scholars such as Argyris and Schön (1978) and Senge (1990) argued that organizations achieve sustainable success through continuous learning, adaptation, and knowledge creation.

Learning organizations encourage employees to question assumptions, share experiences, and develop new approaches to solving complex problems. Innovation emerges when organizations create systems that facilitate learning and knowledge exchange.

Psychological safety plays a critical role in organizational learning because employees are unlikely to share knowledge or challenge existing practices when they fear negative consequences. Likewise, transformational leadership promotes learning by encouraging experimentation, intellectual stimulation, and continuous improvement.

Organizations operating under toxic leadership often experience significant barriers to learning. Employee silence, fear of failure, and lack of trust restrict the flow of information and reduce opportunities for organizational adaptation. Over time, these limitations diminish innovation capacity and competitive advantage.

The Leadership Continuum Model proposes that transformational leadership and psychological safety work together to foster organizational learning. As employees become more willing to share ideas and challenge assumptions, organizations develop greater agility, adaptability, and innovative capability.

3.6 Integrating the Theories: The Leadership Continuum Model

The Leadership Continuum Model integrates these five theoretical perspectives into a unified framework explaining organizational transformation. Transformational Leadership Theory explains how leaders inspire and

motivate employees. Psychological Safety Theory explains how perceptions of interpersonal safety influence employee participation and innovation. Path-Goal Theory clarifies the leader's responsibility for removing obstacles and facilitating success. Social Exchange Theory explains employee responses to leadership treatment, while Organizational Learning Theory explains how innovation emerges through knowledge sharing and continuous improvement.

Together, these theories suggest that organizations progress along a continuum influenced by leadership behaviors. Toxic leadership creates environments characterized by fear, silence, disengagement, and limited innovation. Transformational leadership creates environments characterized by trust, psychological safety, employee voice, organizational learning, and innovation.

The central proposition of the Leadership Continuum Model is that psychological safety functions as the critical mechanism through which leadership behaviors influence innovation outcomes. As organizations cultivate transformational leadership practices and psychologically safe environments, they increase employee participation, organizational learning, and innovative performance. Consequently, leadership transformation becomes not only a matter of improving leadership effectiveness but also a strategic imperative for achieving long-term organizational excellence.

IV. The Leadership Continuum Model

The Leadership Continuum Model proposes that organizations exist along a spectrum between toxic leadership and transformational leadership.

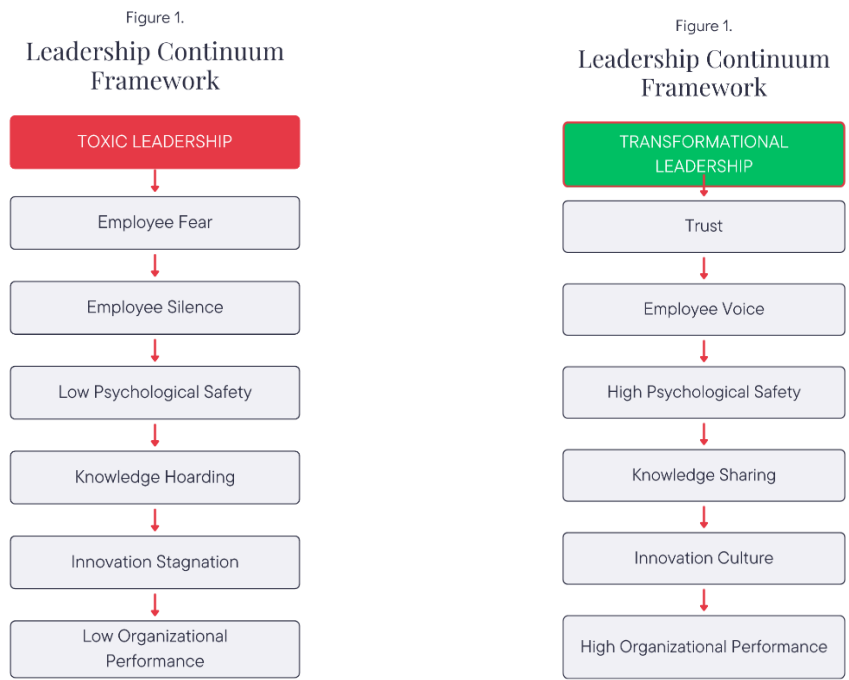


Figure 1. Leadership Continuum Framework

The model suggests psychological safety transition mechanism.

functions as the critical

V. Proposed Propositions

- Proposition 1: Toxic leadership negatively influences psychological safety.
- Proposition 2: Psychological safety positively influences employee voice behavior.

Proposition	3:
Employee voice positively influences organizational innovation.	
Proposition	4:
Transformational leadership positively influences psychological safety.	
Proposition	5:
Psychological safety mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and innovation outcomes.	
Proposition	6:
Organizations exhibiting higher psychological safety demonstrate greater organizational agility and innovation performance.	

VI. Discussion

The Leadership Continuum Model contributes to existing literature in three important ways. First, it reframes toxic leadership and transformational leadership as developmental positions on a continuum rather than isolated constructs. This perspective recognizes that organizational cultures evolve and can recover from destructive leadership patterns. Second, the model identifies psychological safety as the primary mechanism facilitating organizational transformation. Existing literature frequently discusses psychological safety independently; however, this framework positions psychological safety as the bridge between leadership behavior and innovation outcomes. Third, the model extends innovation research by demonstrating how leadership influences organizational creativity through employee voice and knowledge-sharing behaviors. Organizations seeking innovation often invest heavily in technology while neglecting leadership and cultural variables. The Leadership Continuum Model suggests innovation failures may originate from leadership dysfunction rather than technological limitations.

VII. Managerial Implications

The Leadership Continuum Model offers several practical implications for organizational leaders, human resource professionals, executive teams, and policymakers seeking to create innovative and high-performing workplaces. While organizations frequently invest substantial resources in technology, infrastructure, and process improvement initiatives, the findings presented in this article suggest that leadership behaviors and organizational culture remain critical determinants of long-term success. Specifically, psychological safety emerges as a strategic organizational asset that directly influences employee engagement, knowledge sharing, innovation, and organizational performance.

Developing Psychological Safety as a Strategic Priority

The first managerial implication involves the intentional development and measurement of psychological safety throughout the organization. Edmondson (1999) argued that employees are more likely to contribute ideas, identify risks, and participate in organizational learning when they perceive the workplace as psychologically safe. Organizations should therefore move beyond traditional employee satisfaction surveys and implement regular assessments that specifically measure psychological safety, trust, communication quality, and employee voice behaviors.

Leaders should view psychological safety not as a soft interpersonal issue but as a strategic capability that directly influences innovation and adaptability. Organizations operating in rapidly changing environments require employees who are willing to challenge assumptions, report concerns, and propose new solutions. Without psychological safety, employees often remain silent, limiting the organization's ability to learn and adapt (Edmondson & Lei, 2014).

Reimagining Leadership Development Programs

A second implication concerns leadership development. Many organizations continue to promote individuals based primarily on technical expertise, tenure, or operational performance rather than leadership competencies. Research suggests that leadership effectiveness depends not only on technical knowledge but also on emotional intelligence, communication skills, ethical decision-making, and the ability to build trust (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Carmeli et al., 2010).

Organizations should redesign leadership development programs to include competencies associated with transformational leadership, emotional intelligence, servant leadership, conflict resolution, and psychological safety. Particular attention should be given to helping leaders recognize behaviors that may unintentionally contribute to employee silence, fear, or disengagement. By equipping leaders with these skills, organizations can reduce the likelihood of toxic leadership behaviors and strengthen their innovation capacity.

Strengthening Promotion and Succession Planning Systems

The literature on toxic leadership consistently identifies favoritism, cronyism, and nepotism as contributors to employee dissatisfaction, reduced organizational commitment, and workplace dysfunction (Ali et al., 2022; Hassanein et al., 2025). Consequently, organizations should carefully evaluate promotion and succession planning processes to ensure leadership appointments are based on merit, competence, and demonstrated leadership ability. Human resource departments should establish transparent criteria for leadership selection and advancement. Leadership assessments, 360-degree feedback systems, and behavioral interviews can provide additional insight into a candidate's ability to foster trust, collaboration, and employee engagement. Such practices can help organizations avoid promoting technically competent individuals who lack the interpersonal skills necessary to lead effectively.

Creating Systems that Encourage Employee Voice

Another important implication involves the development of formal and informal mechanisms that encourage employee participation and upward communication. Research demonstrates that employees are more likely to contribute innovative ideas when they believe their input is valued and respected (Detert & Burris, 2007; Wu & Li, 2023). Organizations should therefore establish systems that support employee voice, including innovation councils, cross-functional project teams, suggestion platforms, listening sessions, and regular feedback opportunities.

Leaders should actively seek employee perspectives and demonstrate responsiveness to concerns and recommendations. When employees observe that their feedback leads to meaningful action, trust increases and participation becomes more frequent. Conversely, organizations that solicit feedback but fail to act upon it risk increasing cynicism and disengagement.

Aligning Leadership Practices with Innovation Goals

Many organizations pursue innovation primarily through investments in technology, digital transformation, and process redesign. While these investments are important, the Leadership Continuum Model suggests that innovation ultimately depends on human behavior. Employees must feel comfortable sharing knowledge, challenging assumptions, experimenting with new ideas, and learning from mistakes.

Transformational leadership behaviors are particularly important in fostering these conditions. Leaders who encourage intellectual stimulation, recognize employee contributions, and support experimentation create environments where innovation can flourish (Ribeiro et al., 2018). Consequently, organizations seeking competitive advantage should align leadership development efforts with innovation objectives rather than treating leadership and innovation as separate strategic initiatives.

Building Organizational Resilience Through Leadership

Finally, organizations should recognize that leadership serves as a critical component of organizational resilience. In periods of uncertainty, disruption, or crisis, employees often look to leaders for direction, support, and stability. Toxic leadership can amplify uncertainty and undermine trust, whereas transformational leadership can strengthen organizational adaptability and collective problem-solving capabilities.

The Leadership Continuum Model suggests that organizations that invest in leadership development, psychological safety, and employee voice are better positioned to navigate complex challenges and sustain long-term performance. By intentionally moving toward the transformational end of the leadership continuum, organizations can create cultures characterized by trust, learning, innovation, and organizational excellence.

In summary, the practical value of the Leadership Continuum Model lies in its ability to provide leaders with a roadmap for organizational transformation. Rather than focusing solely on eliminating toxic leadership behaviors, organizations should actively cultivate transformational leadership practices that foster psychological safety, employee engagement, organizational learning, and innovation.

VIII. Future Research

Future empirical studies should test the Leadership Continuum Model using quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

Researchers may examine:

- Psychological safety as a mediating variable
- Industry-specific leadership differences
- Higher education leadership environments
- Innovation outcomes associated with transformational leadership
- Leadership recovery strategies following toxic leadership transitions

Longitudinal studies would provide additional insight into how organizations progress along the continuum over time.

IX. Conclusion

Leadership continues to serve as one of the most influential determinants of organizational success, employee wellbeing, and innovation capacity. While extensive research has documented the harmful consequences of toxic leadership, considerably less attention has been devoted to understanding how organizations recover from toxic environments and transition toward cultures characterized by trust, engagement, and innovation. This gap in the literature provided the foundation for the development of the Leadership Continuum Model (LCM).

The purpose of this article was to advance leadership scholarship by proposing a conceptual framework that positions toxic leadership and transformational leadership as opposite poles along a developmental continuum rather than as isolated leadership constructs. Drawing upon Transformational Leadership Theory, Psychological Safety Theory, Path-Goal Theory, Social Exchange Theory, and Organizational Learning Theory, the Leadership Continuum Model offers a multidimensional explanation of how leadership behaviors influence organizational outcomes through the mediating role of psychological safety.

A central contribution of this article is the recognition that psychological safety serves as the critical mechanism linking leadership behavior to innovation performance. Employees who operate within psychologically safe environments are more likely to share ideas, challenge assumptions, collaborate across organizational boundaries, and engage in learning behaviors that contribute to innovation and organizational effectiveness. Conversely, toxic leadership behaviors often create cultures characterized by fear, silence, disengagement, and diminished creativity, limiting an organization's ability to adapt and compete in increasingly dynamic environments. The Leadership Continuum Model further contributes to the literature by integrating multiple theoretical perspectives into a unified framework that explains how organizations can move from leadership dysfunction toward organizational excellence. Rather than focusing exclusively on the negative consequences of toxic leadership, the model emphasizes the pathways through which leaders can intentionally cultivate trust, employee voice, knowledge sharing, and continuous learning. This shift from problem identification to organizational transformation represents an important advancement in contemporary leadership research.

From a practical perspective, the model offers leaders and organizations a roadmap for creating sustainable competitive advantage through leadership development and cultural transformation. Organizations seeking innovation must recognize that technological investments alone are insufficient to achieve long-term success. Innovation ultimately depends upon employees' willingness to contribute ideas, take calculated risks, and engage in collaborative problem-solving. Such behaviors flourish only when leadership practices foster psychological safety and mutual trust.

The findings also suggest that leadership development should be viewed as a strategic organizational investment rather than a human resource function alone. Organizations that intentionally develop transformational leaders, encourage employee voice, and establish psychologically safe environments are more likely to experience higher levels of engagement, innovation, organizational learning, and performance. In contrast, organizations that tolerate toxic leadership behaviors risk creating cultures that suppress creativity, increase turnover intentions, and diminish organizational resilience.

The implications of this research are particularly relevant as organizations navigate increasingly complex business environments characterized by rapid technological change, workforce diversity, globalization, and heightened competition. Under such conditions, leadership effectiveness becomes not merely a managerial competency but a critical organizational capability. Leaders who can create psychologically safe environments are better positioned to mobilize collective intelligence, leverage employee expertise, and foster innovation-driven growth.

Future research should empirically examine the relationships proposed within the Leadership Continuum Model through quantitative, qualitative, and longitudinal methodologies. Researchers may investigate psychological safety as a mediating variable, explore industry-specific applications of the model, and examine how organizations successfully transition from toxic leadership cultures to transformational leadership environments. Such research would provide valuable evidence supporting the model's theoretical assumptions and practical applications.

Ultimately, the Leadership Continuum Model argues that organizational transformation begins with leadership transformation. The movement from toxicity to innovation is neither accidental nor automatic; it is the result of intentional leadership behaviors that cultivate trust, psychological safety, learning, and employee engagement. As organizations continue to confront unprecedented challenges and opportunities, the leaders who create environments where people feel safe to contribute, innovate, and grow will be the leaders most capable of shaping the future of organizational excellence.

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