Original Research

The Impact of Internal Social Media Usage and Employee Engagement on Turnover Intention: The Moderation Role of Toxic Leadership

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Abstract

Objective: This study aims to investigate the potential moderating effects of toxic leadership on employee turnover intention. The study also investigates the impact of internal social media usage on employee engagement.

Design/Methods/Approach: The data for this study consisted of 305 employees, whose information was obtained through online questionnaires. The collected data was then analyzed employing the Structural Equation Model (SEM) using Lisrel 8.8 software.

Findings: The findings of this study provide evidence that toxic leadership acts as a moderator in the relationship between internal social media usage and turnover intention. Also, employee engagement acts as a mediator in the relationship between internal social media usage and toxic leadership to turnover intention.

Originality/Value: This study builds on previous research on social exchange theory by exploring the connections between internal social media usage and employee engagement, while uniquely examining the moderating role of toxic leadership, an aspect not fully addressed in prior studies.

Practical/Policy implication: Companies should leverage internal social media usage to boost employee engagement, which can significantly reduce turnover intention. By fostering better communication and collaboration, ISMU can lead to a more connected, satisfied, and committed workforce.

Keywords: Employee engagement, Internal social media usage, Toxic leadership, Turnover intention

JEL Classification: J24, J63, M51

1. Introduction

Employee engagement and turnover intention are crucial for any organization and have garnered attention from both practitioners and researchers. Practitioners are concerned with employee engagement and turnover intention because they have a direct and indirect influence on organizational performance (Wen et al., 2021). Their concern is increasing as the employee engagement level remains stagnant (Financial Management Magazine; Inspiring Workplaces). The survey revealed that fewer than 25% of employees worldwide are engaged, while 15% are actively disengaged (Gallup, 2025). On the other hand, the global intention of employees to leave within the next 12 months has increased from 19% in 2022 to 28% in 2023 and 31% in 2024 (PwC, 2024).

Considering the importance of the issue in organizations, scholars have investigated employee engagement and turnover intention. The literature is rich, and numerous studies have been conducted on employee engagement and turnover intention. We can distinguish those studies into two categories. The first category is the impact of employee engagement and turnover intention on the organization, specifically performance. The literature indicates that employee engagement has a positive influence on performance (Bhardwaj & Kalia, 2021; Sungmala & Verawat, 2021). Although the relationship between employee engagement and performance is complex (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2023), a meta-analysis has confirmed the positive relationship (Neuber et al., 2022). On the other hand, the literature indicates that turnover intention has a negative impact on performance (Liu et al., 2022; Haque, 2021). Research indicates that the negative relationship between turnover intention and performance is also linked to the psychological contract (Sandhya & Sulphey, 2020).

The second category is studies that focus on antecedents of employee engagement and turnover intention. One antecedent of employee engagement and turnover intention that has been largely investigated is leadership. The literature indicates that leadership has a significant influence on employee engagement and turnover intention (Arokiasamy et al., 2022; McKenna & Jeske, 2021). However, most of those studies apply positive leadership, such as transformational leadership (Diko & Saxena, 2023) or servant leadership (Omanwar & Agrawal, 2022). Leadership also has a negative side, known as the "dark side of leadership" in the literature (Ofei et al., 2023). There are numerous manifestations of this type of leadership, which is also known as destructive leadership, such as abusive or toxic leadership (Einarsen et al., 2007). Research findings indicate that destructive or dark leadership has a negative impact on individuals and organizations (Mehraein et al., 2023; Schyns & Schilling, 2013).

The dark side of leadership remains relatively under-researched, particularly in terms of its impact on employee engagement and turnover intentions. Unfortunately, with the pressure on the workplace, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic, we realize from social media that many employees complain about their supervisors (Dolce et al., 2020). Toxic culture or toxic leader are the popular words that employees often use to describe their workplace negatively. Toxic leadership inflicts stress and emotional exhaustion (Koc et al., 2022) and, even worse, triggers counterproductive behaviors (Ahmed et al., 2024). Considering the damage caused by toxic leadership and the extensive literature on leadership, toxic leadership remains under-researched (Gandolfi & Stone, 2022). Currently, the leadership field lacks a comprehensive consensus on the conceptualization of toxic leadership, a cohesive measurement construct, and theoretical frameworks that explain the emergence, effects, and transmission mechanisms of toxic leadership. Moreover, there is a dearth of quantitative research on toxic leadership with theoretical underpinnings" (Akinyele & Chen, 2024, p. 2).

In addition to the direct effect of toxic leadership on employees and the organization, organizations should not neglect the interaction effect of toxic leadership with other contextual factors. For example, an experiment shows that leadership style moderates the impact of communication media on feedback positivity, which, in turn, influences organizational outcomes such as job satisfaction and group cohesion or efficacy (Kahai et al., 2012). Indeed, toxic leadership is one of the most researched aspects of dark leadership (Akinyele & Chen, 2024). However, to the best of our knowledge, it has never been investigated as a moderator. We found a conceptual paper that argues toxic leadership as a moderator (Yiğit, 2022), but empirical support is explicitly needed in the context of non-Western culture (Akinyele & Chen, 2024; Azeez & Aboobaker, 2024).

Scholars have studied the interaction effect of leadership with other factors, including social media usage. However, most studies focus on positive leadership, such as transformational leadership (Khan, 2023) or inclusive leadership (Zhou & Mou, 2021). We follow Simard & Parent-Lamarche (2021), who investigated abusive leadership as a moderator in the relationship between work-organizational factors, psychological well-being, and intention to quit. In this study, we focus on toxic leadership instead of abusive leadership. "Identifying the 'boss approach' as a moderating variable could contribute to theories on leadership and management styles" (Mdhlalose, 2025, p. 122).

Another antecedent of employee engagement and turnover intention that is still rarely investigated is internal social media usage. The workplace today relies heavily on communication technology, where employees interact and communicate not only through face-to-face interactions but also through technology-mediated communication, including social media (Ewing et al., 2019). Organizations need to address these circumstances regarding organizational communication, especially as younger and technology-savvy generations have entered the workforce. It is estimated that more than 50% of large organizations have implemented internal social media (Gartner, 2013), with an investment of

$2.7 billion in internal social media networks (Weber & Shi, 2016). Many organizations have a closed social media account, such as Facebook or Instagram, to maintain engagement (Ewing et al., 2019; Haddud et al., 2016). The social media account is usually used to announce an event and post photos and news after the event. Research indicates that social media plays a crucial role in fostering togetherness within organizations, where members feel and think like a family or community (Hou, 2023). Therefore, we argue that internal social media usage can increase employee engagement and reduce the intention to turn over.

This study aims to investigate the impact of leadership and internal social media usage on employee engagement and turnover intention. We focus on the dark side of leadership, specifically toxic leadership, which is under-researched but has become a phenomenon, particularly among the young generation of employees. We apply social exchange theory (SET) as a theoretical lens to study the phenomenon. The theory aims to explain human behavior in social exchange, where tangible and intangible resources or benefits are exchanged (Zhang et al., 2018). Not only does toxic leadership erode trust as the core of SET (Saleem et al., 2022), it also violates the principle of reciprocity within SET. The toxic behaviors of leaders make subordinates less likely to contribute to their organizations because they do not receive support and fair treatment from their leaders (Lee et al., 2024; Saleem et al., 2022). Conversely, SET explains that reciprocity – through the exchange of resources and information – occurs in social media, where users aim to maximize benefits (Surma, 2016). Exchange and interaction in the internal social media enhance transparency and engagement, which in turn improve employees' perception of organizational support (Oksa et al., 2021; Roy, 2022). Furthermore, internal social media facilitates reciprocal interaction and exchange among users at a low cost (Surma, 2016).

This study contributes to the theoretical development in organizational behavior and communication by integrating internal social media usage (ISMU) and toxic leadership into the framework of Social Exchange Theory (SET) to explain employee engagement and turnover intention. We extend the literature by demonstrating how ISMU serves as a mechanism for both organizational-to-employee and employee-to-employee exchanges, thereby fostering engagement and reducing turnover intention. In contrast, toxic leadership disrupts these exchanges by eroding trust and reciprocity. Our findings enrich leadership studies by focusing on destructive leadership—a relatively underexplored area—showing its dual role as a direct driver of disengagement and turnover, as well as a moderator that weakens the positive influence of ISMU on engagement. From a managerial perspective, this study guides how organizations can effectively leverage ISMU, provided that leadership behaviors align with engagement goals, and highlights the importance of detecting and mitigating toxic leadership to optimize communication tools and retain talent.

We surveyed 305 respondents and analyzed the data using structural equation modeling (SEM), with LISREL 8.8 as the software. Our study found that internal social media usage and toxic leadership have a significant influence on employee engagement and turnover intention. Furthermore, we also found that toxic leadership moderates the relationship between internal social media usage and employee engagement. Our study contributes to the literature in SET and enriches the knowledge specifically in the domain of human resources management and organizational behavior.

Next, we present the theoretical background as well as the hypotheses developed from the literature. Next, we outline our research method, which describes the data and the data analysis procedure. We then present our research findings and discussion, followed by a conclusion and a discussion of the research implications.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development
2.1. Social Exchange Theory (SET)

"SET symbolizes an interdependent relationship between two actors and is grounded on reciprocity and rewarding actions from others" (Ferm & Thaichon, 2020, p. 2). The theory does not entail a single conceptual framework and has become a foundation for other theories, such as leader-member exchange or organizational support theory. Consequently, many scholars have applied SET to study workplace relationships (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

Central to leadership studies under SET is the idea that leadership behaviors – such as support, fairness, and ethical conduct – initiate reciprocal exchanges in which employees respond with trust, commitment, and positive work behaviors. The role of leader support enhances organizational commitment through high-quality exchanges (Walumba et al., 2011; Wayne et al., 1997). In contrast, destructive leadership, such as toxic leadership, negatively influences employees' commitment and expectations (Naeem & Khurram, 2020). In addition to leadership, SET is also often applied in research on internal social media usage. Wang et al. (2022) found that internal social media usage and the quality of the relationship with the leader impact employees' creativity. SET highlights the interaction on the internal social media usage that enables information and knowledge exchange (Men and Bowen, 2017) and builds a connection or sense of community (Uysal, 2016).

We apply SET in this study for two reasons. First, SET refers to relationships in a workplace that relate to both the individual and the organization (Chernyak-Hai & Rabenu, 2018). The variables in this study encompass the exchange between employees and their leaders, as well as between employees and their organization. Second, leadership studies using SET mainly focus on positive leadership, such as transformational leadership or ethical leadership. Toxic leadership

violates the mutual relationship between employees and the leader (Naeem & Khurram, 2020). However, leadership studies under SET rarely focus on destructive leadership, such as toxic leadership.

2.2 Hypotheses Development
2.2.1 The Relationship between Internal Social Media Usage towards Employee Engagement and Turnover Intention

Buettner (2015) defines internal social media (ISM) as a company-operated social networking platform with restricted access to its members. Previous research shows that ISM usage influences employee engagement. Employee engagement was originally known as personal engagement (Khan 1990), and since then, scholars often use employee engagement and work engagement interchangeably. Employee engagement refers to "*a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption*" (Schaufeli et al., 2002, P.74).

A growing body of research underscores the critical role of internal social media usage in cultivating a more connected and engaged workforce. Internal social media usage helps new hires to understand organizational culture, and is positively related to social acceptance as well as affective commitment (Gonzalez et al., 2013). Its increasing utilization has been shown to significantly enhance knowledge sharing and drive innovation within organizations (Men & Bowen, 2017). Moreover, internal social media usage creates open communication and allows employees to express their voices (Men et al., 2020; Ewing et al.,2019). A case study in a Danish bank shows how open communication makes employees engaged through interaction and discussion, and the co-creation of ideas on the internal social media usage (Madsen, 2023). Previous studies have also shown the positive impact of internal social media usage on employee engagement (Agarwal et al., 2021; Gode et al., 2020). Based on these insights, the following hypotheses are proposed:
H1: Internal Social Media Usage has a positive effect on Employee Engagement

Turnover intention is the likelihood of an employee to leave his/her organization within a specific period (Belete, 2018; Lazzari et al., 2022). It is usually measured to predict the actual employee turnover (Hom et al., 2017).

The rise of digital communication has led to extensive research on the benefits of internal social media usage for companies, including in combating employee turnover (Moqbel et al., 2020) Internal social media usage can help organizations in creating a healthy workplace environment characterized by a strong and positive social intraorganizational network that will make employees stay (Moynihan and Pandey, 2008). Furthermore, internal social media usage enhances knowledge sharing, collaboration, and innovation, which consequently improves both individual and organizational performance (Leftheriotis & Giannakos, 2014; Leonardi et al., 2013). Accomplishing performance targets creates a good feeling that may lead to a positive job attitude that prevents employees from leaving their organizations (Lu et al., 2019). Previous research shows that internal social media usage for social purposes negatively impacts turnover (Yingjie et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2019). A similar effect of internal social media usage for work-related purposes on turnover intention is also evident (Moqbel et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2019). Based on this substantial body of evidence, the following hypothesis is proposed:
H2: Internal Social Media Usage has a negative effect on Turnover Intention

2.2.2 The Relationship between Toxic Leadership towards Employee Engagement and Turnover Intention

Einarsen et al. (2007) define toxic leadership behavior as the systematic and repeated harmful actions by a manager or supervisor. Their destructive behavior or dysfunctional personal characteristics inflict significant and lasting harm on their constituents, specifically their subordinates (Lipman-Blumen, 2006). The literature has a rich body of knowledge about the impact of leadership on employee engagement. Conceptual and empirical research demonstrate the positive effect of leadership, e.g., transformational, authentic, ethical, or charismatic leadership (Carasco et al., 2015). Leaders increase employee engagement by: (1) designing meaningful and motivating work, (2) supporting and coaching employees, (3) enhancing employees' personal resources, and (4) facilitating rewarding and supportive coworker relations (Serrano and Reichard, 2011, P. 180).

However, empirical findings underscore the critical role of toxic leadership in predicting levels of engagement (Hadadian & Sayadpour, 2018; Naeem & Khurram, 2020). Unlike the leadership style aforementioned above, toxic leadership works oppositely. The behavior of toxic leaders becomes a stressor for subordinates, creating a negative feeling and decreasing employee engagement (Lyu et al., 2016; Weberg & Fuller, 2019). Empirical research in the Pakistan banking industry indicates a significant negative relationship between toxic leadership and employee engagement (Naeem & Khurram, 2020). The research findings confirm previous research that toxic leadership causes emotional distress and exhaustion in subordinates, which leads to subordinates' disengagement (Hadadian & Sayadpour, 2018; Bhandarker & Rai, 2019). Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:
H3: Toxic Leadership has a negative effect on Employee Engagement

There is a popular quote that says people quit their boss (not job), and many business media consider negative behavior of a leader as the main cause of employees' turnover decision (Business Insider, 2020; Forbes, 2019). Toxic

leadership intensifies organizational intimidation by manipulating workers' feelings of job insecurity, leading to increased turnover intentions (Lee et al., 2024). Under such leadership, employees may develop a stronger intention to leave the organization (Hattab et al., 2022) because toxic leadership decreases organizational commitment of employees (Gandolfi et al., 2025; Mehta and Maheshwari, 2013). Toxic leadership violates the fundamental principle of relationship and mutual benefit under social exchange theory (Nunes and Palma-Moreira, 2024). Previous research shows that nurses who work with toxic leaders have a higher tendency to leave their jobs (Türkmen & Özduyan, 2024; Ofei et al., 2023). A similar finding is also indicated in other industries such as manufacturing (Brouwers and Paltu, 2020) or the automobile industry (Shrivastia and Sharma, 2024). Based on these insights, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Toxic Leadership has a positive effect on Turnover Intention

2.2.3. The Relationship between Employee Engagement towards Internal Social Media Usage, Toxic Leadership, and Turnover Intention

Employee engagement is shaped by the working conditions provided by the organization (Dinh, 2020). According to Schaufeli & Bakker (2010), engagement comprises three key facets: vigor, dedication, and absorption. When an organization fails to create an environment that fosters these elements, employees may feel less committed and eventually consider leaving (Naeem & Khurram, 2020). Karadas & Karatepe (2019) further highlight the connection between work engagement and turnover intentions among hotel employees. A similar finding is also shown by research in other industries, such as manufacturing (Santhanam & Srinivas, 2020) or telecommunication (Sibiya et al., 2014), where disengaged employees are likely to leave shortly. Based on these findings, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H5: Employee Engagement has a negative effect on Turnover Intention

Zhang et al. (2019) explored the indirect effects of internal social media usage on turnover intention, revealing that using social media for work and social purposes influences turnover intention through employee engagement and organizational commitment. These findings emphasize the significant role that the nature of social media usage plays in employee retention. Supporting this, Haddud et al. (2016) provided initial evidence linking internal social media usage to higher levels of employee engagement. Additionally, Sievert & Scholz (2017) highlight an interdependence: while internal social media usage fosters stronger employee engagement, a minimum level of trust-based engagement is necessary for the successful implementation of these tools. Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6: Employee Engagement mediates the relationship between Internal Social Media Usage and Turnover Intention

Toxic leaders are known for micromanaging their employees and creating a climate of fear among their subordinates. They also exhibit narcissistic and self-centered behaviors, showing a lack of empathy and sensitivity towards their team members (O'Hara, 2015; Schmidt, 2008). This toxic environment not only diminishes trust and morale, but also significantly undermines employee engagement. Naeem & Khurram (2020) highlighted the mediating role of employee engagement between toxic leadership and turnover intention. Consequently, building on this understanding, the following hypothesis is posited:

H7: Employee Engagement mediates the relationship between Toxic Leadership and Turnover Intention

2.2.4. The Role of Toxic Leadership in Moderating the Relationship of Internal Social Media Usage on Employee Engagement

Schmidt (2008) underscores that toxic leaders are often perceived as narcissists and self-promoters who engage in unpredictable abuse and authoritarian control, behaviors that severely undermine trust and morale within a team. As a result, toxic leadership is typified by authoritarianism, narcissism, self-promotion, rudeness, and insecurity. Research by Ashfaq & Ahmad (2023) reveals that toxic leadership moderates the relationship between leadership and employee engagement, indicating that it can weaken the positive impacts of internal social media usage. Hattab et al. (2022) add that in environments where toxic leadership is present, employees may feel less safe to express themselves or fully engage with internal social media usage. Therefore, the internal social media is less effective. This moderating influence suggests that while internal social media usage has the potential to enhance employee engagement, the presence of toxic leadership can significantly undermine this effect. Consequently, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H8: Toxic Leadership moderates negatively the relationship between Internal Social Media Usage and Employee Engagement

3. Method
3.1. Data Collection and Sampling

This research primarily relied on data obtained through a questionnaire featuring closed questions, administered online for data collection. We applied purposive sampling method, and targeted permanent employees in Indonesia as our respondents. A study in Indonesian context is important considering the turnover intention in Asia Pacific is increasing, from 19% in 2022 to 31% in 2024 (PWC, 2024). Furthermore, more Indonesian have a better access on internet and active in social media. Meanwhile, more than 65% of large firms have adopted internal social media/platform (Deloitte Indonesia, 2023)

Two screening questions as our sampling criteria were imposed: 1) Permanent employees, 2) Minimum of 6 months of work experience in their current organization. The questionnaire was in Bahasa with Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (6) strongly agree. A total of 54 items were initially included that measured ISM Usage, Toxic Leadership, Employee Engagement and Turnover Intention. Table 1 displays examples of questions.

Table 1. Measurement of Operational Variables

Variables	Indicators	Code	Source
Internal Social Media Usage	My organization uses social media to...		Gonzalez et al. (2013)
	Post updates on work projects	ISMU1	
	Set up meetings with colleagues about work projects	ISMU2	
	Sharing information about organizational objectives with colleagues	ISMU3	
	Share information about organizational policies and procedures	ISMU4	
	Organize their working files	ISMU5	
	Upload credible information for future use	ISMU6	
	Share their expertise in a particular area	ISMU7	
	Gain access to others with expertise in a particular area	ISMU8	
	Set up social events with co-workers after working hours	ISMU9	
	Make friends within the organization	ISMU10	
	Take a break from work	ISMU11	
	Chat with others while at work	ISMU12	
	Find people with similar interests	ISMU13	
Toxic Leadership	My direct supervisor…		Larsson et al. (2012)
	Makes subordinates stupid	TL1	
	Behave arrogant	TL2	
	Treats people differently	TL3	
	Is unpleasant	TL4	
	Shows violent tendencies	TL5	
	Punishes subordinates who make mistakes or do not reach set goals	TL6	
	Uses threats to get his/her way	TL7	
	Puts unreasonable demands	TL8	
	Takes the honor of subordinates' work	TL9	
	Puts own needs ahead of the group's	TL10	
	Does not trust his/her subordinates	TL11	
	Does not keep promises	TL12	
	Does not dare to confront others	TL13	
	Does not show up among subordinates	TL14	
	Does not show an active interest	TL15	
	Does not take a grip on things	TL16	
	Shows insecurity in his/her role	TL17	
	Is bad at structuring and planning	TL18	
	Gives unclear instructions	TL19	
	Behaves confused	TL20	
	At my work, I feel bursting with energy	EE1	

Variables	Indicators	Code	Source
Employee Engagement	At my job, I feel strong and vigorous	EE2	Schaufeli et al. (2006)
	When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work	EE3	
	I can continue working for very long periods at a time	EE4	
	At my job, I am very resilient, mentally	EE5	
	At my work, I always persevere, even when things do not go well	EE6	
	I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose	EE7	
	I am enthusiastic about my job	EE8	
	My job inspires me	EE9	
	I am proud of the work that I do	EE10	
	To me, my job is challenging	EE11	
	Time flies when I am working	EE12	
	When I am working, I forget everything else around me	EE13	
	I feel happy when I am working intensely	EE14	
	I am immersed in my work	EE15	
	I get carried away when I am working	EE16	
	It is difficult to detach myself from my job	EE17	
Turnover Intention	I think a lot about leaving organisation	TI1	Mobley (1982)
	I am actively searching for an alternative to the organisation	TI2	
	As soon as it is possible, I will leave the organisation	TI3	
	If I had another job offer that paid the same as the one, I have, I'd leave here in a minute.	TI4	

Following meticulous data cleaning processes, the study processed a final sample comprising 305 respondents. In this study, Common Method Bias (CMB) was addressed through multiple strategies. Prior to data collection, a wording test was conducted to ensure item clarity and to minimize any potential indicator overlap across constructs. After data collection, Harman's single-factor test was measured, yielding a total variance explained of 23.2%, which is well below the commonly accepted threshold of 50%. This result indicates that CMB is not a significant threat to the validity of the findings (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Usmanova et al., 2021).

The sample exhibits a 45% female composition, with an average age falling within the 21-30 years range (52%). Approximately 66% of respondents possess a bachelor's degree. Among them, 63% hold staff-level positions, 27% are employed in the financial industry, and 55% work in the Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi regions. Moreover, 56% of respondents have accumulated 1-5 years of work experience (as seen in Table 2).

Table 2. Respondent Profile

Classification	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	168	55%
Female	137	45%
Age		
21-30 years old	158	52%
31-40 years old	97	32%
41-50 years old	39	13%
51-60 years old	11	4%
Education		
High school	25	8%
Diploma	15	5%
Bachelor	200	66%
> Bachelor	65	21%
Job Level		
Staff	192	63%
Lower Management	48	16%
Middle Management	52	17%
Top Management	13	4%

Classification	Frequency	Percentage
Job Industry		
Finance	81	27%
Public	33	11%
Education	32	10%
Retail	21	7%
Business	12	4%
Other	126	41%
Workplace		
Sumatera	31	10%
Jabodetabek	168	55%
Java – Non Jabodetabek	54	18%
Kalimantan & Sulawesi	23	8%
Other	29	10%
Length of work		
< 1 year	9	3%
1 – 5 years	172	56%
6 – 10 years	57	19%
11 – 15 years	44	14%
16 – 20 years	14	5%
> 20 years	9	3%

4. Results and Discussion

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was utilized for data analysis in this study, with Lisrel 8.8 software employed during the primary data processing stage. The analysis process comprised several key steps, including descriptive analysis, demographic factor analysis, and SEM analysis, which encompassed both measurement model and structural model analyses, as well as mediation and moderation analysis.

4.1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Table 3 presents a comprehensive overview of internal construct reliability (CR). It demonstrates a range of 0.87 to 0.94, significantly exceeding the accepted standard of 0.70, as recommended by Hair (2009). Furthermore, the variables exhibit a commendable level of variance extracted (VE) ranging from 0.46 to 0.64. It is worth noting that if the VE value falls below 0.5, it can still be considered reliable provided that the CR value exceeds 0.6 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Notably, all loadings register above 0.5, except for items ISM11, TL5, TL6, EE2, EE5, and EE11, which fall below the threshold and were therefore deleted for further analysis.

Table 3. Measurement Model - Results

Variables	Indicators	SLF	CR	VE
Internal Social Media Usage (ISMU)	ISMU1	0,56	0,92	0,48
	ISMU2	0,72		
	ISMU3	0,78		
	ISMU4	0,83		
	ISMU5	0,79		
	ISMU6	0,62		
	ISMU7	0,64		
	ISMU8	0,81		
	ISMU9	0,73		
	ISMU10	0,64		
	ISMU12	0,63		
	ISMU13	0,74		
Toxic Leadership (TL)	TL1	0,56	0,94	0,46
	TL2	0,66		
	TL3	0,64		

Variables	Indicators	SLF	CR	VE
	TL4	0,72		
	TL7	0,57		
	TL8	0,72		
	TL9	0,53		
	TL10	0,75		
	TL11	0,68		
	TL12	0,7		
	TL13	0,7		
	TL14	0,76		
	TL15	0,76		
	TL16	0,76		
	TL17	0,68		
	TL18	0,78		
	TL19	0,8		
	TL20	0,81		
	EE1	0,61		
	EE3	0,66		
	EE4	0,51		
	EE6	0,5		
	EE7	0,71		
	EE8	0,83		
Employee Engagement (EE)	EE9	0,8	0,92	0,47
	EE10	0,78		
	EE12	0,68		
	EE13	0,67		
	EE14	0,77		
	EE15	0,64		
	EE16	0,88		
	EE17	0,5		
	TI1	0,87		
Turnover Intention (TI)	TI2	0,69	0,87	0,64
	TI3	0,84		
	TI4	0,8		

4.2. Structural Model

Construction model testing was performed to verify the proposed research model. The results indicated a satisfactory fit of the goodness of fit index, which includes RMSEA = 0.079; GFI = 0.80; NFI = 0.95; NNFI = 0.92; RFI = 0.92, and CFI = 0.93. The structural model demonstrated a satisfactory overall fit, indicating that the research data align well with the model.
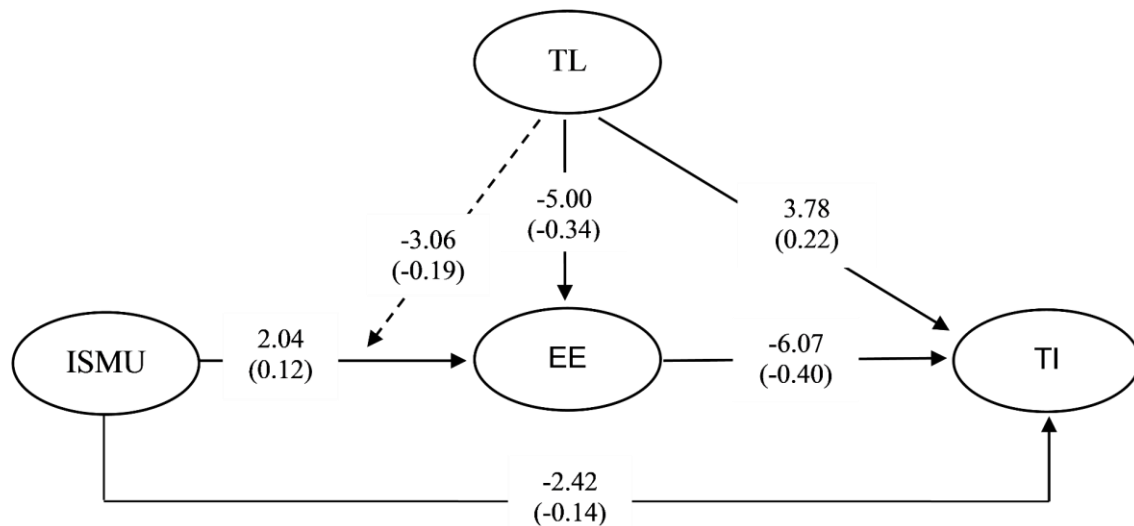
Figure 1. Model and Hypothesis Testing

The t-value and standardized loading factors for each relationship between variables are shown by two numbers, with the t-value above and the SLF in parentheses below it. Figure 1 shows eight paths between the variables tested, and we found all of our hypotheses supported. The t-value and SLF are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Summary of Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis	Relationship	Coefficient	Results	
H1	Internal Social Media Usage to Employee Engagement	0.12***	Significant	Supported
H2	Internal Social Media Usage to Turnover Intention	-0.14***	Significant	Supported
H3	Toxic Leadership to Employee Engagement	-0.34***	Significant	Supported
H4	Toxic Leadership to Turnover Intention	0.22***	Significant	Supported
H5	Employee Engagement to Turnover Intention	-0.40***	Significant	Supported
H6	Employee Engagement mediates Internal Social Media Usage to Turnover Intention	-0.188***	Significant	Supported
H7	Employee Engagement mediates Toxic Leadership to Turnover Intention	0.356***	Significant	Supported
H8	Toxic Leadership moderates Internal Social Media Usage to Employee Engagement	-0.19***	Significant	Supported

Note: ***$p < 0.01$

4.3. Discussion

This research aims to examine the complex relationships and moderating effects among toxic leadership, internal social media usage (ISMU), employee engagement, and turnover intention. The findings support the hypothesized relationships, with most results aligning with existing literature. These results underscore the critical role of leadership and communication platforms in shaping employee engagement and retention. Understanding these dynamics allows organizations to develop more effective strategies for fostering a committed and stable workforce.

The first hypothesis (H1) explores the direct relationship between internal social media usage and employee engagement. The findings confirm that internal social media usage has a positive impact on employee engagement, as evidenced by the t-value of 2.04, which exceeds the critical threshold of 1.645, thereby supporting H1. These results align with prior research by Men et al. (2020) and Ewing et al. (2019), reinforcing the notion that internal social media usage enhances communication, collaboration, and knowledge sharing—key drivers of employee engagement. This suggests that organizations should prioritize developing and maintaining robust internal social media usage to cultivate a more engaged workforce. In turn, this can lead to increased productivity, higher employee satisfaction, and reduced

absenteeism. Companies may also benefit from investing in training programs to ensure that employees can effectively utilize these platforms and by curating relevant and engaging content to maximize their impact.

Building on the theme of ISMU's influence, the second hypothesis (H2) examines the direct relationship between internal social media usage and turnover intention. The results confirm that internal social media usage negatively influences turnover intention, with a t-value of -|2.42|, significantly surpassing the critical threshold of 1.645, thus supporting H2. This finding is also consistent with previous research, which identified a direct effect of internal social media usage on employee turnover rates (Yingjie et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2019). Companies should leverage ISMU to build a stronger sense of community and belonging among employees, which can reduce turnover rates. Regular engagement through ISMU can also allow for better communication of organizational values and career development opportunities, further anchoring employees to the company. Moreover, ISMU use enables knowledge and information sharing that is beneficial to improve individual and organizational performance. In turn, it creates a positive feeling among employees that encourages them to stay in the organization (Lu et al., 2019).

The third hypothesis (H3) shifts the focus to the detrimental effects of toxic leadership on employee engagement. The findings confirm that toxic leadership has a detrimental impact on employee engagement, as indicated by a t-value of -|5.00|, which significantly exceeds the critical threshold of 1.645, thereby supporting H3. This result aligns with previous studies that underscore the significant influence of toxic leadership on employee outcomes, particularly in predicting engagement levels (Hadadian & Sayadpour, 2018; Naeem & Khurram, 2020). Instead of engagement, toxic leaders make employees stressed and exhausted, which leads to disengagement (Hadadian & Sayadpour, 2018; Bhandarker & Rai, 2019). To mitigate the adverse effects of toxic leadership, organizations should identify the symptoms (Gandolfi et al., 2025) and prioritize leadership development programs that cultivate positive and supportive leadership behaviors. By addressing toxic leadership early, companies can avoid its negative consequences, including preventing employee disengagement.

The fourth hypothesis (H4) examines the direct relationship between toxic leadership and turnover intention. The findings confirm that toxic leadership significantly increases turnover intention, as indicated by a t-value of 3.78, well above the critical threshold of 1.645, thus supporting H4. This result aligns with previous research by Lee et al. (2024), which demonstrated that toxic leadership intensifies organizational intimidation by exploiting employees' job insecurity, thereby heightening their intentions to leave the company. The positive relationship between toxic leadership and turnover intention has been indicated in different industries, such as health (Türkmen & Özduyan, 2024; Ofei et al., 2023), manufacturing (Brouwers and Paltu, 2020), or the automotive industry (Shrivastia and Sharma, 2024). For organizations, these findings highlight the dangers of allowing toxic leadership to persist, as it can lead to increased turnover, which is costly in terms of both financial resources and talent loss. To counteract this risk, companies should establish regular feedback systems, provide channels for anonymous reporting of leadership concerns, and hold leaders accountable for their actions (Gandolfi et al., 2025).

The fifth hypothesis (H5) investigates the direct relationship between employee engagement and turnover intention. The results confirm that higher levels of employee engagement significantly reduce turnover intention, as evidenced by a t-value of -|6.07|, which far exceeds the critical threshold of 1.645, thus supporting H5. This finding aligns with previous research that emphasizes the strong connection between work engagement and turnover intentions among employees (Karadas & Karatepe, 2019). Engaged employees are more committed to their job and to the organization that lead them to stay longer (Naeem & Khurram, 2020). Karadas & Karatepe (2019). The implication is clear: companies should prioritize strategies that enhance employee engagement, such as implementing recognition programs, offering professional development opportunities, and cultivating a positive workplace culture. By doing so, organizations can effectively lower turnover rates, leading to cost savings and a more stable, committed workforce.

Moving to the sixth hypothesis (H6), the study investigates the mediating role of employee engagement in the relationship between internal social media usage and turnover intention. The results support this hypothesis, aligning with the previous study by Sievert & Scholz (2017). Their study emphasizes the interdependent nature of this relationship: while internal social media usage can enhance employee engagement, a baseline level of trust and engagement is essential for these tools to be effective. This underscores the importance of not only implementing internal social media usage platforms, but also ensuring that they actively engage employees in meaningful ways. Internal social media use for social and work purposes (Zhang et al., 2019) increases employee engagement, which in turn decreases turnover intention (Haddud et al., 2016). Organizations should consider integrating internal social media usage with broader engagement initiatives, such as incorporating gamification or personalized content, to fully leverage its potential in reducing turnover. This approach can help create a more cohesive and committed workforce, ultimately contributing to lower turnover rates and greater organizational stability.

The seventh hypothesis (H7) similarly explores the mediating role of employee engagement, this time in the relationship between toxic leadership and turnover intention. The results confirm this hypothesis, echoing the findings of Naeem & Khurram (2020), who identified employee engagement as a key mediator between toxic leadership and turnover intention. In addition to diminishing trust and morale that undermine employee engagement, toxic leadership behavior is also positively related to employee intention to leave (Kassing et al., 2012; Mendes et al., 2011). This dual impact of toxic leadership – both directly decreasing engagement and indirectly increasing turnover – highlights the urgent need for organizations to address toxic behaviors of leaders. To mitigate these negative effects, companies should

implement robust leadership development programs, including targeted training, coaching, and the establishment of clear behavioral standards. Such initiatives are crucial to foster a more engaged workforce, which leads to reduce turnover rates and maintain a stable, productive work environment.

Finally, the eighth hypothesis investigates the moderating role of toxic leadership in the relationship between internal social media usage and employee engagement. The results confirm this hypothesis, aligning with the findings of Ashfaq & Ahmad (2023), who identified that toxic leadership could diminish the positive effects of leadership on employee engagement. Abusive and rude behaviors of toxic leaders make employees insecure and worry about optimizing internal social media usage for social or work purposes (Hattab et al., 2022). This suggests that, despite the presence of strong internal social media usage (ISMU), toxic leadership can significantly weaken their effectiveness in enhancing engagement. For companies, this underscores the importance of ensuring that leadership behaviors are consistent with the objectives of ISMU initiatives. When toxic leadership is present, swift and decisive intervention is essential to preserve the potential benefits of ISMU and to maintain a healthy organizational culture.

5. Conclusion

This study reveals the complex relationships between internal social media usage, toxic leadership, employee engagement, and turnover intention. The findings confirm that internal social media usage plays a crucial role in enhancing employee engagement, which is key to reducing turnover. However, the presence of toxic leadership significantly undermines these benefits, directly decreasing engagement and increasing turnover intention. Interestingly, the mediating role of engagement highlights its critical importance in retaining employees. Moreover, toxic leadership is shown to moderate the effectiveness of internal social media usage, emphasizing the need for leadership behaviors to align with organizational goals.

5.1. Theoretical Implications

This study advances organizational behavior theory by positioning internal social media usage (ISMU) within the Social Exchange Theory (SET) framework as a strategic tool for workplace relationships. ISMU facilitates both organizational-to-employee and employee-to-employee exchanges, strengthening engagement and reducing turnover intention. We highlight the role of technology-mediated communication not only as an operational tool but also as a mechanism for sustaining reciprocity and mutual commitment in the workplace.

We also contribute to leadership studies by examining toxic leadership, which is still less examined in this context, within SET. While prior research often focuses on positive leadership styles, our findings show how toxic leadership undermines exchange norms, lowering engagement and increasing turnover intention. Its moderating role further reveals that toxic leadership can erode the positive effects of ISMU, making leadership style a critical factor in workplace effectiveness.

Finally, the study integrates these insights to demonstrate that employee outcomes are shaped by both enabling mechanisms (such as ISMU) and constraining forces (like toxic leadership). This interplay highlights the importance of considering the broader organizational context when applying SET, both in theory and in practice. Future research can build on this by examining other leadership styles, cultural settings, or digital tools that may influence the quality of workplace exchanges.

5.2. Practical Implications

The findings of this study offer significant practical implications across various industries. The positive impact of internal social media usage on employee engagement suggests that organizations should prioritize integrating robust internal social media platforms to foster communication, collaboration, and a sense of belonging among employees. This is particularly crucial in diverse regions of Indonesia, where effective communication tools can bridge geographical and cultural gaps, enhancing overall employee engagement and retention. Organizations must invest resources in internal social media usage to tap into its benefits, including increased employee engagement and reduced turnover intention. Specifically, organizations should plan, design, and monitor the content on the platform to influence the attitude of employees. This implies a need for public relations practitioners to manage the internal social media usage (Men et al., 2020).

Furthermore, our study demonstrates the moderating effect of toxic leadership. Our findings underscore the need for organizations to address leadership quality actively. Implementing leadership development programs that promote positive leadership behaviors is essential to maximizing the benefits of internal social media usage and minimizing turnover intentions. Firstly, leaders at higher levels should be able to identify and mitigate toxic leadership behaviors at lower levels (Gandolfi et al., 2025). Second, a development program including training, coaching, and mentoring should be provided to leaders on how to use and optimize the internal social media usage. Finally,

organizations must ensure that their leaders are active on the platform by posting information or knowledge, or even as simple as commenting on the platform.

In businesses where the financial impact of high turnover is substantial, investing in leadership development and fostering a supportive workplace can result in considerable cost savings and a more stable workforce. Enhancing employee engagement, career development, and leadership quality is essential for sustaining a motivated and dedicated workforce. By prioritizing these areas, companies across various industries can create environments that not only draw in top talent but also ensure long-term retention, driving organizational success throughout Indonesia's diverse regions. Ultimately, strong employee engagement and retention will lead to superior organizational outcomes. This approach will also help in building a resilient workforce that can adapt to evolving business challenges.

5.3. Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research

This study, while providing valuable insights into the relationships between internal social media usage, toxic leadership, employee engagement, and turnover intention, has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the sample is limited to permanent employees who have been with their organizations for at least six months. While this criterion ensures that respondents have sufficient experience within their current roles to provide meaningful feedback, it may also introduce a selection bias, as newer employees with potentially different perspectives and experiences were not included. This limits the generalizability of the findings to only more tenured employees, excluding the views of those with shorter tenure who may have different engagement or turnover intentions. Given these limitations, future research should broaden the sample to include non-permanent employees with less than six months of tenure. This approach would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how different stages of employee tenure affect the dynamics at play.

Additionally, the study focuses exclusively on the moderating role of toxic leadership. Although toxic leadership is a significant factor affecting the relationships examined, it is not the only variable that could play a moderating role. Other leadership styles or organizational factors, such as transformational leadership, organizational culture, or job autonomy, might also influence these relationships. The exclusive focus on toxic leadership limits the understanding of how different contextual factors interact with internal social media usage to impact employee outcomes. Future studies could explore other potential moderating variables, such as different leadership styles or organizational characteristics. For example, scholars may use other destructive leadership styles such as abusive leadership (Tepper, 2000; Tepper et al., 2009) or unethical leadership (Treviño et al., 2003).

This would help to better understand the various factors that influence the effectiveness of internal social media usage in promoting employee engagement and reducing turnover intention. Expanding the scope in these ways could offer a more complete view of the organizational factor that drives higher achievement.

Author Contribution
Author 1: conceptualization, writing original draft, formal analysis, investigation, methodology, supervision.
Author 2: review and editing, writing review and editing, supervision, validation, and visualization.
Author 3: writing original draft, data curation, and visualization.

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Conflict of Interest
The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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