FACTORS OF TOXIC WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT AND PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT AFFECTING WORK SUCCESS AMONG TEACHERS IN THAILAND

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the predictive effects of toxic workplace environment and perceived organizational support on teachers' work success. The sample consisted of 400 teachers from four regions of Thailand, selected through multistage random sampling. The research instrument was a questionnaire that had undergone validity testing, with item–objective congruence (IOC) values ranging from .67 to 1.00, meeting all evaluation criteria. The reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) for the toxic workplace environment, perceived organizational support, and work success scales were .94, .79, and .96, respectively. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation coefficient, and multiple regression analysis.

The results revealed that most teachers perceived a moderate level of toxic workplace environment and organizational support, while their level of work success was low. The correlation analysis indicated that the toxic workplace environment had a statistically significant negative correlation with both perceived organizational support and work success, whereas perceived organizational support had a statistically significant positive correlation with

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work success. The results of the multiple regression analysis indicated that toxic workplace environment (X_1) and perceived organizational support (X_2) significantly predicted teachers' work success (Y) ($p < 0.05$). The standardized regression equation was $Z_Y = -.23Z_{X1} + .51Z_{X2}$. The model explained 26.0% of the variance in work success. The findings suggest that fostering an organizational culture that values and supports personnel can enhance performance and work success among teachers in Thai educational institutions.

Keywords: Toxic workplace environment, Perceived organizational support, Work success, Teachers, Schools

Introduction

A toxic workplace environment or the presence of toxic individuals in the workplace has become an increasingly recognized issue in modern organizational contexts. Although there is no universal definition in Thailand (Hongsa & Polyong, 2025), international literature describes such environments as encompassing behaviors like harassment, bullying, ostracism, and incivility (Anjum et al., 2018; Rasool et al., 2019). Other negative behaviors include humiliation, unfair policies, and gossip in the workplace (Taştan, 2017). These toxic dynamics contribute to reduced organizational collaboration (Tambunan & Sudiarno, 2024), a lack of trust among personnel (Ahmed et al., 2024), and a decline in overall work performance (Chamberlain & Hodson, 2010).

The concept of toxicology has evolved beyond physical toxicity to include psychological toxicity, acknowledging that humans themselves can become sources of "poison" within social and professional settings (Japanese Society of Toxicology, 2024). Toxic workplace environments have thus emerged as a global social problem (Rasool et al., 2019), particularly in professions requiring close interpersonal interaction-such as teachers and educational

personnel, who regularly engage with colleagues, students, and parents (Hongsa & Polyong, 2024). Following the COVID-19 pandemic, work patterns and social behaviors have changed significantly, leading to decreased interaction and diminished social soft skills, especially among younger generations raised in a digital environment (Gnecco et al., 2024). Consequently, workplace collaboration has become more prone to conflict. However, when teachers feel recognized and valued by their organizations, they demonstrate stronger motivation and more positive work behaviors, consistent with Social Exchange Theory (Gould-Williams & Davies, 2005).

Perceived Organizational Support (POS) refers to employees' perceptions of how much their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). POS influences employees' commitment and work performance. Rasool et al. (2021) found that employees who perceive strong organizational support exhibit higher levels of cooperation and project success. Similarly, Wang et al. (2020) identified POS as a mediating variable between toxic workplace stress and work success: when employees feel supported, their stress decreases and their productivity increases. Components of work success encompass time management, social interaction, supervisory support, and fair compensation (Eisenberger et al., 2020).

In the Thai context, the education system has invested substantial resources in improving learning quality. However, students' academic performance has continued to decline, as reflected in both national and international assessments. For instance, Thai students' average PISA scores in mathematics, reading, and science remain below the ASEAN average (Durongkaveroj, 2022). In addition, reports indicate that Thailand's educational outcomes remain in a critical condition. This is reflected in national assessment results, such as the Ordinary National Educational Test (O-NET), in which students at the basic education level consistently score below 50%, particularly in core subject areas.

Similarly, results from the Non-Formal Education National Test (N-NET) show that most learners fail to achieve passing scores, with a declining trend observed especially in foundational subjects. These patterns become more evident when Thai students' performance is compared in the global competitive context (Tengkuan & Suthasinobon, 2021). These issues reflect substantial challenges in teachers' work success. Many teachers experience stress from rapidly changing educational policies and management systems, leading to diminished motivation for self-development and difficulty in becoming reflective practitioners (Phaisri, 2023). Furthermore, social disparities and unsupportive school climates contribute to the failure of learning systems (Jarl et al., 2021).

Previous studies have explored related issues, such as the relationship between workplace bullying and performance among teachers in eastern Thailand (Hongsa et al., 2025). The present study extends this line of research by investigating teachers across all regions of Thailand, encompassing diverse cultural and organizational contexts. It broadens the conceptual scope of toxic workplace environments, recognizing bullying as one key component. Therefore, this study aims to examine how toxic workplace environments and perceived organizational support influence teachers' work success, ultimately proposing strategies to reduce organizational toxicity and enhance positive support mechanisms. These efforts aim to promote teacher well-being, aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 3 and SDG 4) ensuring teachers' mental health and improving educational quality in the long term.

Research Methodology

This study aimed to investigate the predictive effects of toxic workplace environment and perceived organizational support on teachers' work success, across all regions of Thailand. Additionally, the study analyzed the predictive factors influencing work success.

1. Population and Sample

The population consisted of civil servant teachers and educational personnel working in primary and secondary schools throughout Thailand. The sample size was determined using the G*Power formula (Faul et al., 2007), based on the estimated proportion of risk related to toxic workplace environments among teachers in Thailand's economic development zones (Hongsa et al., 2025). With an error margin (e) of 0.05 and a statistical power (1-β) of 0.95, the minimum required sample size was 388 participants. To compensate for potential incomplete responses, an additional 5% was added, yielding a final sample size of 400 participants.

A multistage sampling method was used to ensure national representation. The country was divided into four regions: the North, Northeast, Central and East, and South. Schools within each region were selected using simple random sampling, followed by random selection of teachers or educational personnel from each participating school's list. Each region contributed 100 respondents, totaling 400 participants nationwide.

Inclusion criteria included being teacher or educational personnel who had been continuously employed at the current school for at least six months, voluntarily consented to participate, and could read and write in Thai. Exclusion criteria included those on extended leave or not regularly engaged in teaching/ supporting roles-such as temporary contract teachers, teaching interns, or respondents with incomplete questionnaires. These criteria ensured that participants had direct experience in school work and could accurately assess their workplace environments.

2. Research Instruments

The primary instrument was a five-point Likert scale questionnaire, developed by the researcher based on standardized international instruments and previous studies. It consisted of four parts:

Part 1: Personal and Work Information-including gender, age, education level, position, and years of experience.

Part 2: Toxic Workplace Environment-14 items assessing negative workplace behaviors such as bullying, unfair use of power, favoritism, and unconstructive communication (Rasool et al., 2019). Respondents rated their perceptions over the past year using a 5-point scale (5 = highest, 1 = lowest). Total scores ranged from 14-70 and were categorized into three levels using Best's (1977) criteria:

$\qquad$ 14.0-32.7 = low

$\qquad$ 32.8-51.4 = moderate

$\qquad$ 51.5-70.0 = high

Part 3: Perceived Organizational Support (POS)-18 items measuring perceptions of fairness, respect, and managerial support for career development (Eisenberger et al., 2020). Ratings were made on a 5-point scale (5 = highest, 1 = lowest). Total scores ranged from 18-90, interpreted as:

$\qquad$ 18.0-42.0 = low

$\qquad$ 42.1-66.0 = moderate

$\qquad$ 66.1-90.0 = high

Part 4: Work Success-22 items evaluating work performance, leadership, emotional control, and enthusiasm (Mir & Pinnington, 2014). Ratings were made on the same 5-point scale (5 = highest, 1 = lowest). Total scores ranged from 22-110, interpreted as:

$\qquad$ 22.0-51.3 = low

$\qquad$ 51.4-80.6 = moderate

$\qquad$ 80.7-110.0 = high

Instrument validity and reliability were ensured through expert review and internal consistency testing. Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) values ranged from .67 to 1.00. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were .947 for toxic workplace

environment, .797 for perceived organizational support, and .963 for work success-indicating high reliability and strong internal consistency.

3. Data Collection

The researcher contacted the randomly selected schools with formal written requests addressed to the school directors, including a research summary and study objectives, and sought permission to distribute questionnaires to teachers. Questionnaires were provided in both paper-based and online (Google Form) formats through designated school coordinators. Data collection took place between September and October 2025, after receiving ethical approval from the Burapha University Human Research Ethics Committee (IRB No. 4-314/ 2025). Participants were assured of confidentiality and informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. Completed questionnaires were reviewed for completeness before being entered into the data analysis process.

4. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using statistical software. The normality of data distribution was assessed using the Shapiro–Wilk test.

1. Descriptive statistics included mean and standard deviation for normally distributed variables, or median, minimum, and maximum values for non-normal distributions. Qualitative data were summarized as frequency and percentage.

2. Inferential statistics were employed to meet the study objectives: Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to examine pairwise relationships among toxic workplace environment, perceived organizational support, and work success. Linear regression analysis was conducted to identify predictors of work success, using toxic workplace environment and perceived organizational support as independent variables. A significance level of $p < 0.05$ was adopted for all inferential analyses.

Results

General Information and Work history

Among the 400 participating teachers, approximately three-fourths (76.0%) were female, with a mean age of 36.78 ± 9.03 years. The majority held a bachelor's degree (67.3%) and were single (57.0%), followed by those who were married or cohabiting (36.5%).

Regarding work experience, participants had been teaching for an average of 10.07 ± 8.37 years. The largest proportion held the Professional Level 2 (K.S.2) teaching rank (27.3%), followed by Professional Level 1 (K.S.1) (22.0%). Teachers reported an average working time of 9.29 ± 2.76 hours per day. (Table 1).

Table 1 General Information and Work history (n=400)

Variable	Information/Unit	n	%	Mean ± SD
Gender	Male	96	24.0	
	Female	304	76.0	
Education level	Bachelor's degree	269	67.3	
	Higher than bachelor's degree	131	32.7	
Marital Status	Single	228	57.0	
	Married/Cohabiting	146	36.5	
	Widowed/Divorced/Separated	26	6.5	
Position	Temporary	47	11.7	
	Government employee	22	5.5	
	Assistant teacher	54	13.5	
	K.S.1	88	22.0	
	K.S.2	109	27.3	
	K.S.3	80	20.0	
Age	Year			36.78±9.03
Experience	Year			10.07±8.37
Working hours	Hours/day			9.29±2.76

Key Variables of the Study

The analysis of the main study variables revealed the following findings:

1. Toxic Workplace Environment: Most teachers experienced a moderate level of toxic workplace environment (55.2%), followed by a high level (26.8%).

2. Perceived Organizational Support (POS): Overall, the majority of teachers perceived a moderate level of organizational support (54.7%), while 37.0% perceived low support.

3. Work Success: Regarding work success, half of the respondents (50.5%) reported low levels, while 42.2% were at a moderate level (Table 2).

Table 2 Levels of Key Study Variables (n = 400)

Variable	Score Range	n (%)
Toxic Workplace Environment (X_1)		
Low	<32.8	72 (18.0)
Moderate	32.8-51.4	221 (55.2)
High	>51.4	107 (26.8)
Perceived Organizational Support (X_2)		
Low	<42.1	148 (37.0)
Moderate	42.1-66.0	219 (54.7)
High	>66.0	33 (8.3)
Work Success (Y)		
Low	<51.4	202 (50.5)
Moderate	51.4-80.6	169 (42.2)
High	>80.6	29 (8.3)

Note: Scores are divided according to the criteria of Best (1977).

Correlations Among Study Variables

The results of the Pearson's correlation analysis revealed that the toxic workplace environment was negatively correlated with both perceived organizational support (r = -.44, p < .01) and work success (r = -.23, p < .01).

Conversely, perceived organizational support showed a positive correlation with work success ($r = .51$, $p < .01$) (Table 3).

Table 3 Pearson's Correlation Coefficients Among Key Study Variables

Variables	X_1	X_2	Y	Mean ± SD
X_1	1.0	-.44**	-.23**	3.08±0.84
X_2	-	1.0	.51**	2.66±0.72
Y	-	-	1.0	2.40±0.73

Notes: Y = Work Success; X_1 = Toxic Workplace Environment; X_2 = Perceived Organizational Support.
*$p < .001$ (2-tailed)

Factors Influencing Work Success

The results of the multiple regression analysis showed that the predictive model was statistically significant ($F = 140.95$, $p < .001$) and explained 26.0% of the variance in work success (Adjusted $R^2 = .26$). Both predictors-toxic workplace environment and perceived organizational support–significantly influenced teachers' work success. Specifically, the toxic workplace environment had a negative effect ($\beta = -.23$, $p < .001$), while perceived organizational support had a positive and stronger effect ($\beta = .51$, $p < .001$) (Table 3).

Table 4 Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Work Success (n = 400)

Variables	B	SE	β	t	p	95%CI
Constant	23.429	2.579	-	9.096	<.001**	18.365 to 28.493
X_1	-.316	.066	-0.233	-4.770	<.001**	-.446 to - .186
X_2	.627	.053	.511	11.872	<.001**	.523 to .730

$R^2 = .262$, Adjusted $R^2 = .260$, $F = 140.953$, $p < .001$

Notes: Y = Work Success; X_1 = Toxic Workplace Environment; X_2 = Perceived Organizational Support;
**$p < .001$ (2-tailed)

Unstandardized regression equation:

$$Y = 23.429 - .316(X_1) + .627(X_2)$$

Interpretation: When teachers perceive a one-unit increase in toxic workplace environment, their work success score decreases by 0.31 points. Conversely, a one-unit increase in perceived organizational support raises work success by 0.62 points.

Standardized regression equation:

$$Z_Y = - .233Z_{X1} + .511Z_{X2}$$

Interpretation: A one standard deviation increase in perceived organizational support increases work success by 0.51 standard deviations, while a one standard deviation increase in toxic workplace environment decreases work success by 0.23 standard deviations.

Discussion

The discussion is organized according to the study findings. It begins with a description of the levels of toxic workplace environment, perceived organizational support, and work success, followed by an examination of the factors predicting teachers' work success. The results are discussed in detail below.

The findings revealed that most teachers worked in moderately toxic environments, perceived a moderate level of organizational support, yet reported low levels of work success. This aligns with Çelik (2025), who found that many schools still possess stressful atmospheres-haracterized by unfair use of authority, negative communication, and lack of recognition from administrators-all of which directly diminish teachers' morale and job satisfaction. Similarly, Li (2022) and Joseph & Mathew (2025) emphasized that when employees perceive that

their organization supports, values, and acknowledges their roles, they demonstrate greater motivation and commitment to their work. However, an important work-related issue identified in this study concerns excessive working hours, which may contribute to fatigue and reduced work success. The findings indicate that teachers spent an average of 9.29 ± 2.76 hours per day at school, exceeding the standard working hours legally prescribed for many other occupational groups in the private and industrial sectors (i.e., 8 hours per day or 48 hours per week). Supporting this observation, a previous study among educational personnel in urban areas of Chonburi Province reported that teachers devoted an average of 9.53 ± 2.43 hours per day to school-related duties and engaged in overtime work averaging 5.53 ± 4.62 hours per week. Notably, working more than eight hours per day was found to be significantly associated with increased stress (OR = 2.04; 95% CI = 1.01-4.09) (Hongsa & Polyong, 2024).

However, the present study shows that the organizational support perceived by teachers remains insufficient to fully counteract the negative effects of workplace toxicity, resulting in overall low levels of work success. The moderate level of perceived organizational support observed in this study may reflect a predominant emphasis on structural and procedural support rather than on socio-emotional support. Although school administrators may acknowledge teachers' opinions, recognize their performance, and attend to their welfare to some extent, the absence of continuous, tangible, and context-responsive support may limit its effectiveness in addressing teachers' actual work-related challenges. This finding is consistent with the Social Exchange Theory (Eisenberger et al., 2020), which posits that employees reciprocate organizational care and fairness through greater effort and performance. When such support is ambiguous or when the environment remains conflictual, motivation and productivity decline. This aligns with Mdhlalose (2025), who reported that working in toxic environments leads to increased stress, reduced job satisfaction,

and a general decline in organizational performance. In Thailand, Hongsa et al. (2025) similarly found that workplace bullying among teachers was significantly associated with reduced work efficiency.

The multiple regression analysis demonstrated that toxic workplace environment and perceived organizational support jointly explained 26.0% of the variance in work success (Adjusted R^2 = .26). This proportion is relatively substantial in organizational behavior research, where numerous factors typically influence performance outcomes. The results are consistent with studies conducted in both educational and corporate settings (Wang et al., 2020; Imran et al., 2020), indicating that organizational support and work environment factors interactively influence job performance.

In this study, perceived organizational support exhibited the strongest standardized coefficient (β = .51), making it the most influential predictor of work success. Teachers who perceived tangible forms of support-such as respect, active listening, professional development opportunities, and fair policies-were more likely to achieve higher levels of work success. This pattern may indicate a gap between teachers' work intentions and actual performance outcomes. Although teachers may demonstrate high levels of effort, openness to new ideas, and a strong commitment to achieving optimal work outcomes, such efforts may not be effectively translated into work success due to structural constraints and contextual factors within schools. These constraints include excessive workload, non-teaching administrative responsibilities, evaluation systems that prioritize documentation over instructional quality, as well as limited organizational resources and support. This finding supports Social Exchange Theory and echoes the results of a meta-analysis by Kurtessis et al. (2015), which found that perceived organizational support was strongly and positively related to work outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance.

Meanwhile, toxic workplace environment negatively influenced work success (β = −.23), although its effect size was smaller than that of organizational support. This suggests that while toxicity in the workplace cannot be entirely eliminated, perceived organizational support can partially buffer its negative effects. International research, such as Wang et al. (2020) and Rasool et al. (2021), reported similar patterns, showing that supportive organizations can mitigate the detrimental consequences of toxic environments.

Although toxic workplace environment and perceived organizational support together explained 26.0% of the variance in work success, a substantial proportion (74.0%) remained unexplained by the variables included in this model. This finding indicates that teachers' work success is influenced by a complex and multidimensional set of factors, encompassing individual-level, job-related, and organizational-contextual determinants.

From an educational management perspective, it may be unrealistic to eradicate all aspects of organizational toxicity in the short term. However, school administrators should prioritize enhancing organizational support systems, including training leaders in fairness and emotional intelligence, creating open communication channels, and implementing transparent performance evaluation systems. Such initiatives are crucial for improving teachers' job success, strengthening morale, and sustaining the human capital that underpins the quality of the educational system.

Recommendations

Recommendations for practical implications

1. Strengthen organizational support systems: Educational institutions should implement tangible and systematic support strategies-such as respect for teachers' input, recognition of performance, and opportunities for career development-to enhance motivation, engagement, and organizational commitment.

2. Reduce toxic workplace factors: Schools should establish monitoring and prevention mechanisms for negative behaviors, including misuse of authority and interpersonal conflict, through positive communication practices and regular organizational climate assessments.

3. Promote supportive leadership: School administrators should model fairness, empathy, and transparency to foster trust, strengthen perceived organizational support, and mitigate the adverse effects of toxic work environments, thereby supporting sustainable improvements in teachers' work success.

Recommendations for future research

1. Future studies should examine mediating and moderating variables to clarify the mechanisms linking toxic workplace environment and perceived organizational support to teachers' work success. Potential mediators include job satisfaction, burnout, work-related stress, and organizational commitment, while moderators such as leadership style, school culture, and workload may influence the strength of these relationships.

2. Mixed-methods approaches are recommended to capture the complexity of toxic workplace environments. Integrating qualitative methods (e.g., in-depth interviews or focus groups) with surveys may provide richer insights into toxic behaviors, administrative communication, and teachers' lived experiences in Thai school contexts.

3. Context-specific measurement instruments should be developed and validated for Thai educational settings. Future research should employ rigorous validation techniques, including confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM), to establish reliable and standardized tools for assessing toxic workplace environments in schools.

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