



Original Research Article

CONSEQUENCES OF ABUSIVE SUPERVISION

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ABSTRACT

The overarching objective of this article is to study and integrate the accumulated evidence that survey the causes and consequences of abusive supervision in work organizations. This research work also tries to examine the influence of abusive supervision on Emotional Exhaustion and Work Alienation. The study uses survey research method. This study is primary in nature, using a questionnaire tool for the data collection. Data is collected from 100 employees of different organizations working in Pakistan like Armed Forces, Health Sector, Marketing, Finance and Administration. Regression and Correlation analysis are used to measure the relationship between the dependent and independent variable. Analysis shows that abusive supervision has positive impact on emotional exhaustion and Work Alienation. Thus in conclusion the employees' mental health and job satisfaction are affected due to Abusive Supervision. A survey was conducted in different sectors such as, Health, Government, Semi-government and schools located at Rawalpindi, Pakistan. The study investigated and applied PL-SEM to discuss the positive effects of abusive supervision of subordinates on Emotional Exhaustions and Employees' Work Alienation within the service-based organization of Pakistan. Our empirical results revealed that abusive supervision significantly affects Emotional Exhaustions and employee's Work Alienation at the workplace.

Key words: Abusive Supervision, Emotional Exhaustion and Work Alienation

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INTRODUCTION

Abusive supervision, defined by Tepper (2000) as a type of destructive leadership, refers to subordinates' perceptions of the extent to which supervisors engage in sustained display of hostile verbal and non-verbal behaviors, excluding physical contact. Abusive supervision describes a key aspect of interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace that employees receive at the hands of their supervisor. For instance, Ashforth (1997) found that abusive supervision triggers employee feelings of frustration, helplessness, and alienation.

From the social interactionist perspective (Tedeschi 2001), abusive supervision may cast employees into negative self-identity, making them weak and ineffectual. However, people who suffer from abusive supervision often manage to restore their personal identities (Bies and Tripp 1998), by countering abusive supervision, which shows subordinates' strength, courage, and competence (Tedeschi 2001). To restore their personal identities, employees may seek retaliation to save their face and maintain their personal honor (Bies and Tripp 1998), taking revenge on their supervisors by engaging in deviant behaviors (Mitchell and Ambrose 2007; Tepper et al. 2009; Thau and Mitchell 2010; Thau et al. 2009). Abusive supervision depresses employee psychological state (such as undermining interactional justice perception) and leads to deviant behaviors directed towards the organization, the supervisor, and/or non-supervisory co-workers

Previous researchers have defined on the effects of perceived over qualification from a psychological perspective (Liu and Wang 2012; Liu et al. 2015). When individuals find their education to be higher than those required by their jobs, they turn to feel disappointed (Burriss 1983), upset (Johnson and Johnson 1996), angry (Liu et al. 2015), and emotionally exhausted (Navarro et al. 2010). According to relative prevention theory (Crosby 1984), when employee's education/qualifications are higher than the job demand, they turn to feel the gap between their work and their chance/ expectations, which would in turn generate the feeling of being disadvantage and ultimately cause negative emotions. Since being disadvantage is a "relative" subjective feeling, the degree of feeling the needy is affected by an organizational situational factors (Hu et al. 2015).

Work alienation is a separate psychological state between employees and work because the work cannot meet their needs or expectations (Banai et al. 2004). Work alienation reflects employees' perceptions of the relationship between the work and themselves, which emphasizes individual psychological feelings. The main cause of work alienation is that work cannot meet employees' needs and expectations. (Shantza et al. 2014).

Abusive supervision often involves rudeness, hostility, public criticism, and loud and angry tantrums. This supervisory mistreatment can cause low levels of perceived organizational justice, leading to higher levels of turnover and emotional exhaustion, and less favorable attitudes toward the job and the organization (Tepper 2000). In addition, abusive supervision has been found to trigger retaliatory and counterproductive work behaviors in organizations (Jones 2009).

Despite the general increase in the labor supply in recent years, most human resource managers are still faced with the unique challenge of cutting costs while simultaneously increasing innovation. As such, understanding the causes of voluntary employee turnover remains an important topic, as the exit of a single employee could represent costs in the range of one and a half times the employee's annual salary (Cleveland 2005). Costs of recruiting and re-training a replacement, as well as the costs associated with the lost productivity of the employee, all contribute to the total cost of voluntary turnover.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Abusive Supervision and Emotional Exhaustion

Peltokorpi (2018) states that subordinates' interaction avoidance has a positive mediating role between abusive supervision and subordinates' emotional exhaustion. The findings, supporting these predictions

and the moderated mediation model, provide several theoretical contributions and practical implications.

Wu, Tsung-Yu (2008) states that, justice perception mediates the relationship between abusive supervision and emotional exhaustion. In this study, he hypothesize that emotional labor serves as another mediator. In addition, He investigates how the moderating role of perceived supervisory power plays on the relationship between abusive supervision and the two mediators (justice perception and emotional labor). Research conducted in Taiwan using survey research techniques. The results show abusive supervision predicts emotional exhaustion not only through subordinates, justice perception, but also through subordinate's emotional labor. In addition, subordinates, perception of supervisory power is found to moderate the relationship between abusive supervision and emotional labor, but not the relationship between abusive supervision and justice perception. Finally, abusive supervision is found to be more strongly related to emotional labor when individuals perceive more supervisory power.

Emotional exhaustion occurs when the emotional demands exceed what an individual is able to afford during interpersonal interactions at work (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). When an individual chronically works under stress that is induced by interpersonal interactions, emotional exhaustion can further result in emotional overextension. Because leadership requires interpersonal interactions between the supervisor and the subordinate, abusive supervision may also induce emotional exhaustion in subordinates. According to the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989), people have a basic tendency to obtain, retain, and protect their resources. Individuals experience psychological stress when confronted with the threat of resource loss, actual loss, or the failure of resource gain after the investment of resources.

In the context of abusive supervision where subordinates feel mistreated by supervisors, subordinates must expend a great deal of psychological effort to handle the interpersonal stressor. By doing so, the psychological resources of subordinates may be gradually consumed and become exhausted, which leads to the condition of emotional exhaustion. As one would expect, evidence suggests that abusive supervision results in psychological discomfort. For example, subordinates' perceptions of mistreatment may induce unfavorable psychological consequences such as hostility, anxiety, or depression (Richman, Flaherty, Rospenda, & Christensen, 1992). Ashforth (1994) found that negative comments from a supervisor are related to the subordinate's frustration and resistance. Tepper (2000) indicated that as subordinates' perceptions of abusive supervision increase, so too do subordinate psychological discomforts such as depression, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion.

Hypothesis 1: Abusive supervision is positively related to Emotional Exhaustion

Abusive Supervision and Work Alienation

Work alienation is a common phenomenon in the field of philosophy and sociology, paying attention to life-family balance plan, scholars in psychology and management field started to explore work alienation at 1970's (Huang Li & Chen Weizheng, 2011; 2012). The newest researches showed that in a company, nearly 20% of the employees had a strong feeling of work alienation (Nair & Vohra, 2007). All levels of employees in organizations felt work alienation in varying degrees, mainly embodied in the low level of work participation and input, the poor control ability to their work and the sense of tedious and repetitive tasks. The increasingly diminished control ability of input and output to work resulted in a series of negative emotions. Work alienation will lead to negative attitudes toward the staff, engendering job burnout, weakening the organizational identification and organizational commitment (Mendoza & Lara, 2007), inducing passive behaviors, which includes offending organizational rules and regulations, excessive drinking, drug abuse, and so on. Therefore, it is an urgency problem of human resource management to reduce employees' work alienation and promote individuals and organizations growth.

Work alienation refers to an isolated and limited psychological state which caused by the unmet needs and aspirations through work, it's a sign of decline in motivation (Banai, Reisel & Probst, 2004). Ashforth

(1989) identified the 'work alienation' as a sense of separation between staff and job, workplace, as well as himself. Work alienation represents that staff are less committed to work who have a low-level work-role identification and participation (Hirschfeld & Field, 2000). They also proved that work alienation was strongly correlated with individual locus of control, work self-discipline, and affective organizational commitment. Seeman (1959) identified five alternative meanings of alienation: sense of powerlessness, normlessness, meaninglessness, and isolation.

Over the years, many scholars have explored the factors of work alienation. The following factors are studied: demographic characteristics and personal traits (Steitz, 1984), education (Dipietro, 2008), locus of control (Hirschfeld & Field, 2000), organization and job characteristics (Kakabadse, 1986), autonomy (Banai, Reisel & Probst, 2004), social culture (Adya, 2008), leadership (Ramaswami, 1993), and so on.

Up to now, there is no literature published refers to the study on abusive supervision and work alienation. Kanungo (1992) pointed out, who is one of the authoritative scholars in the field of work alienation, although employees' work alienation will be affected by organizational structure and job characteristics, the daily interaction between employees and their direct supervisor will have a larger impact on employees' sense of alienation. Besides, Banaia, Reiselb and Probst (2004) suggested that supportive leadership had a significant negative effect on employees' work alienation.

Hypothesis 2: Abusive supervision is positively related to Employee work alienation.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework is consisting of the conceptual framework which gives an idea or direction about which is the independent variable and which is dependent variable.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

Abusive Supervision

DEPENDENT VARIABLE

Emotional Exhaustion

Work Alienation

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sample And Data Collection Procedures

For current study, we collected data from employee of Pakistan who are working in different organizations like health sector, Armed Forces, Finance, Marketing and Administration. The data was collected through Google docs link/ Online questionnaires. A cover letter was attached with each questionnaire to explain the purpose of the study and to ensure confidentiality of data provided by the respondents. The respondents completed self-report. Furthermore, each respondent also provided his or her demographic information such as age, gender, nature of job, work experience, education, and recent job status. No major events took place during the collection of data in these organizations. In this research paper we were four authors distributed 100 questionnaires, received 100 complete surveys with a response rate of 100%. The demographic results revealed that the majority of respondents (59 %) were male and 41% were female. About 70 % respondents had ages up to 18 to 30 years, 19 % had

ages between 31 to 40 years, 08 % were 41 to 50 and 03 % were 51 and above. The sample showed significant variations across experience levels.

RESULT

Table 1. SOCIO DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

	PROFILE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE		PROFILE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Gender	Male	59	59%	Age	18-30	70	70%
	Female	41	41%		31-40	19	19%
	Total	100	100%		41-50	08	08%
			Above 51		03	03%	
Tenure	01 to 03	43	43%	Education	Bachelor	38	38%
	04 to 05	17	17%		Masters	31	31%
	06 to 10	29	29%		MS	19	19%
	Above 10	11	11%		PHD	02	02%
			Others		10	10%	
Service Based Organization	Health	21	21%				
	Marketing	13	13%				
	Finance	14	14%				
	Administration	26	26%				
	Others	26	26%				

Self-Calculation: N=100

Measures

All the responses were accessed using a 5-point Likert-type scale with anchors 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

IV: - Abusive Supervision

We used 15-items scale to measure Likert scale developed by Tepper (2000) to measure abusive supervision. A sample item was 'My Boss Tells me my thoughts or feelings are stupid. Cronbach's alpha reliabilities of abusive supervision are **0.74**.

DV: - Emotional Exhaustion

Emotional exhaustion was assessed by 09 items scale given by Maslach (1996). Each item was rated on a five-point scale, which included items such as "I feel drained in fulfilling my functions at work". The reliability of this measure was **0.745**

DV: - Work Alienation

Work Alienation were measured by an 8-items scale of Hinkin (1995) which included items such as "I don't enjoy work; I just put in my time to get paid." and "I do not feel connected to the events in my workplace. The reliability of this measure was **0.88**.

Table 2. Mean standard deviation, correlation and reliability.

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Gender	1.03	0.18									
Age	1.3	0.70									
Experience	1.44	0.71									
Education	4.3	5.2									
Abusive supervision	3.7444	0.48						0.306**	0.323**	0.165	(0.74)
Emotional exhaustion	3.8306	0.49					.306**		.416**	.298**	(0.745)
Employee Work Alienation	3.8111	0.88					.165	.298**	.837**		(0.88)

Table 02 shows the descriptive statistics, bivariate correlations, and the alpha reliabilities. Correlations of abusive supervision with emotional exhaustion ($r = 0.306$, $p < 0.01$), were significant and in expected directions except for Employee Work Alienation which was although positive, but not significant ($r = 0.165$, NS).

N = 100; Cronbach's alpha presented in parenthesis

* $P < 0.05$ ** $P < 0.01$

Regression Analyses

Multiple linear regression analysis was used to test all main effect hypotheses. Regression results for main effects of emotional exhaustion and Employees' Work Alienation on abusive supervision in Table 2.

(IV)	Emotional Exhaustion (DV)		Employee Work Alienation (DV)	
	B	ΔR^2	B	ΔR^2
Abusive supervision	0.306***	0.093	0.165	0.019

TABLE 3. Results of regressions analysis

N = 120 { * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$ }

Hypothesis Testing- Main Effect

Hypothesis 1

H1: Abusive supervision is positively related to Employee Work Alienation

Results of the regression analysis reveal that independent variable Abusive Supervision has a positive significant impact on dependent variable Employees' Work Alienation with the β value of .165 (N.S) Thus, the results support the Hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 2

H2: Abusive supervision is positively related to Emotional Exhaustion.

Results of the regression analysis reveal that independent variable Abusive Supervision has a positive significant impact on dependent variable Emotional exhaustion with the β value of .306 at significant level of less than 1% ($P=.000^{***}$).

CONCLUSIONS

Employees' mental health and job satisfaction are affected due to Abusive Supervision. A survey was conducted in different sectors such as, Health, Government, Semi-government and schools located at Rawalpindi, Pakistan. That study investigated and applied PL-SEM to discuss the positive effects of abusive supervision of subordinates on Emotional Exhaustions and Employees' Work Alienation within the service-based organization of Pakistan. Our empirical results revealed that abusive supervision significantly affects Emotional Exhaustions and employee's Work Alienation at the workplace.

LIMITATIONS

Abusive supervision, work alienation and emotional exhaustion, are all variables of employees' subjective feelings, all measures were rated by employees. The use of self-reports for all variables may lead to a common method bias. Although there is no common method bias problem through the statistical method test, the objective measurement method may be more explanatory. Future research should have at least collected these perceived variables with some objective indices. Although the proposed model is grounded in Relative Deprivation theory and the hypothesized relationships are consistent with previous study on Abusive Supervision., the results could be more convincing if the causal relationship between variables can be determined through longitudinal studies. Third, in addition to relative deprivation theory, the relationship between abusive Supervision and emotional exhaustion can be explored from different theoretical perspectives, such as conservation of resource theory, person-job fit theory, and equity theory. Future efforts are needed to provide a clearer understanding of the potential benefits.

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