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**Original Research Article**

**THE IMPACT OF ABUSIVE SUPERVISION ON EMPLOYEE WORK PLACE DEVIANCE, EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION, AND TURNOVER INTENTION**

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**ABSTRACT**

This research work tries to examine the influence of abusive supervision on employee work place deviance behavior, emotional exhaustion and employee turnover. 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 (Armed Forces, Health Sector, and telecommunication Sector). 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, employee workplace deviance and employee turnover. In this, understanding the contextual factors of abusive supervision gives researchers and practitioners important insights into the procedure. Employees' mental health and job satisfaction are affected due to Abusive Supervision. Abusive supervision are more likely to act out towards co-workers in an abusive manner suggests that these employees can make a toxic environment more toxic. This study investigated that the positive effects of abusive supervision of subordinates on Employee Workplace Deviance, Emotional Exhaustion and Turnover Intention within the service-based organization of Pakistan. Our empirical results revealed that abusive supervision significantly effects on Employees Workplace Deviance, Emotional Exhaustion and Turnover Intention at the workplace.

**Key words:** Abusive Supervision, Emotional Exhaustion, Employee Turnover, Employee Workplace Deviance.

**Author contributions:** The authors have materially participated in the research and in article writing. 1. Conception, Study design, data collection & processing, critical review. 2 & 4 Conception & study design, data collection & processing. 3-4 Data Analysis and/or interpretation. 3 Drafting of manuscript. 4 Drafting of manuscript, critical review.

## 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.

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).

Workplace deviance is a purposeful behavior that violates organizational norms and is intended to harm the organization, its employees, or both (Bennett and Robinson 2003). Robinson and Bennett (1995) developed a widely accepted typology of workplace deviance, categorizing it into two basic types: organizational deviance and interpersonal deviance.

Organizational deviance refers to deviant behaviors directed toward the organization (e.g. shirking work, purposefully extending overtime). Interpersonal deviance refers to deviant behaviors directed toward individuals (e.g., verbal abuse, sexual harassment). Recent research suggests that it is meaningful to distinguish between deviant behaviors targeted toward supervisors and those aimed at other individuals, such as colleagues (Herscovits et al. 2007).

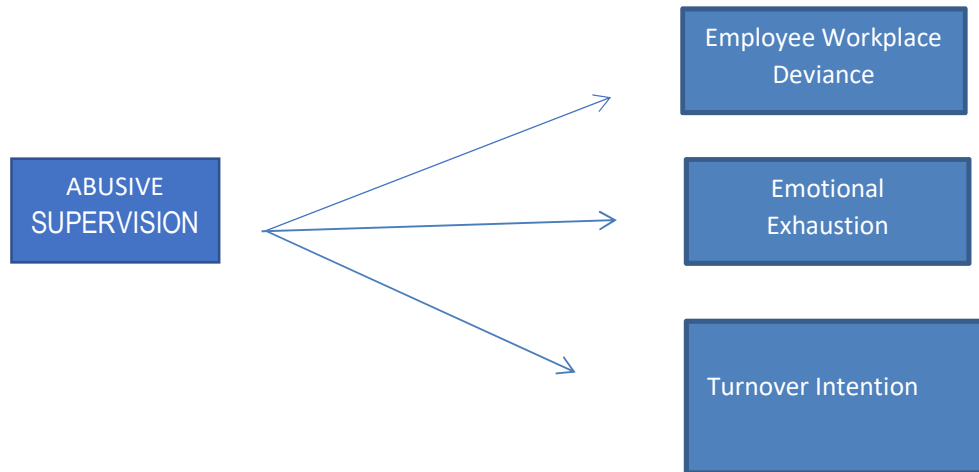
Interpersonal mistreatment is a central component of abusive supervision and a driving factor in deviant behaviors (Robinson and Greenberg 1998). Ample empirical evidence suggests that employees respond quite negatively to supervisor mistreatment by engaging in behaviors that are harmful to the organization and its members (Aquino, Tripp and Bies 2006; Bies and Tripp 1998; Folger 1993; Mitchell and Ambrose 2007). For example, Folgers (1993) found that supervisors who fail to meet an acceptable standard of demeanor promote employee retaliation. Bies and Tripp (1998) found that victims of abusive leaders undermine their supervisors in private as well as openly. Moreover, Aquino, Tripp and Bies (2006) demonstrated that individuals at the lower level of the organizational hierarchy are more likely to seek revenge than are higher level individuals.

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

## **METHODOLOGY**

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

### **Outcomes of abusive supervision (RESEARCH MODEL)**



### **Sample and Data Collection Procedures**

For current study, we collected data from employee of Pakistan Armed forces (Officers, Airmen & Cadets). The data was collected through self-administered 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. In time 1, 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. Of the distributed 120 questionnaires, received 120 complete surveys with a response rate of 100%. The demographic results revealed that the majority of respondents (96.7 %) were male. About 80 % respondents had ages up to 25 years, 20 % had ages between 26 to 50 years. The sample showed significant variations across experience levels.

### **Measures**

All the responses were accessed using a 5-point Likert-type scale with anchors 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree.

#### **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**.

#### **Employee workplace deviance**

We used Mitchell and Ambrose's (2007) 14-item scale to measure employee workplace deviance behavior, A sample item was "I take property from work without permission. Cronbach's alpha reliabilities of abusive supervision are **0.91**.

**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**

**Turnover Intention**

Turnover intentions were measured by a 3-items scale of Vigoda (2000) which included items such as “I often think about quitting this job” and “Next year I will probably look for a new job outside this organization.” The reliability of this measure was **0.88**.

**Measure**

**Descriptive Statistics and Correlations**

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics, bivariate correlations, and the alpha reliabilities. Correlations of abusive supervision with emotional exhaustion ( $r = 0.306, p < 0.01$ ), workplace deviant behavior ( $r = 0.323, p < 0.01$ ) were significant and in expected directions except for turnover intention which was although positive, but not significant ( $r = 0.165, n.s.$ ).

**RESULTS**

**Table 1.** Means, standard deviations, correlations, and reliabilities

N = 120 ; Cronbach’s alpha presented in parenthesis

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
1.Gender	1.03	0.18									
2.Age	1.3	0.70									
3.Experience	1.44	0.71									
4.Education	4.3	5.2									
5.Abusive supervision	3.7444	0.48						0.306**	0.323**	0.165	(0.74)
6.Emotional exhaustion	3.8306	0.49					.306**		.416**	.298**	(0.745)
7.Workplace deviant behavior	3.8071	0.62					.323**	.416**		.837**	(0.91)
8. Turn over intention	3.8111	0.88					.165	.298**	.837**		(0.88)

\*  $p < 0.05$  \*\*  $p < 0.01$

**Regression Analyses**

Multiple linear regression analysis was used to test all main effect hypotheses. Regression results for main effects of emotional exhaustion, workplace deviant behavior and employee turnover intention on abusive supervision in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Results of regression analysis

(IV)	Emotional Exhaustion (DV)		Workplace Deviant Behavior (DV)		Turnover Intention (DV)	
	B	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$
<b>Abusive supervision</b>	0.306***	0.093	0.323***	0.097	0.165	0.019

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

**Hypothesis testing- Main Effect**

**Hypothesis 1**

**H<sub>1</sub>: Abusive supervision is positively related to Employee workplace deviant behavior.**

Results of the regression analysis reveal that independent variable Abusive Supervision has a positive significant impact on dependent variable Employee Workplace deviant behavior with the  $\beta$  value of **.323** at significant level of less than 1% (P=.000\*\*\*) which fulfills the criteria of significance (P value less than 0.05 is significant). Thus, the results support the Hypothesis 1.

**Hypothesis 2**

**H<sub>2</sub>: Abusive supervision is positively related to employee turnover intention**

Results of the regression analysis reveal that independent variable Abusive Supervision has a positive significant impact on dependent variable Employee turnover intention with the  $\beta$  value of **.1615** (n.s) Thus, the results support the Hypothesis 2.

**Hypothesis 3**

**H<sub>3</sub>: 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  $\beta$  value of **.306** at significant level of less than 1% (P=.000\*\*\*) . Thus, the results support the Hypothesis 3.

**DISCUSSION**

**a. Abusive supervision and workplace deviance**

Individuals heed the interpersonal treatment that they receive from organizational authorities (Lind and Tyler 1988). Fair and respectful interpersonal treatment leads people to be satisfied and to believe they are valued (Judge, Scott and Ilies 2006; Skarlicki and Folger. 1997). According to the social exchange theory, people reciprocate the benefits they receive in the workplace (Blau 1964; Gouldner 1960). In addition, abusive supervision has been found to trigger retaliatory and counterproductive work behaviors in organizations (Jones 2009).

Workplace deviance is a purposeful behavior that violates organizational norms and is intended to harm the organization, its employees, or both (Bennett and Robinson 2003). Robinson and Bennett (1995) developed a widely accepted typology of workplace deviance, categorizing it into two basic types: organizational deviance and interpersonal deviance. Organizational deviance refers to deviant behaviors directed toward the organization (e.g., shirking work, purposefully extending overtime). Interpersonal deviance refers to deviant behaviors directed toward individuals (e.g., verbal abuse, sexual harassment). Recent research suggests that it is meaningful to distinguish between deviant behaviours targeted toward supervisors and those aimed at other individuals, such as colleagues (Hershcoviset al. 2007). This research investigates organizational deviance and both types of interpersonal deviance as reactions to abusive supervision. 2004). From the social exchange perspective, when individuals suffer unanticipated punishment, they may become angry and engage in

aggressive behaviors. Prior research also provides evidence that employees who are subjected to abusive supervision will seek revenge against those who have harmed them and engage in destructive behaviors that target those whom they perceive as threatening (Bies and Tripp 1996)

**Hypothesis 1: Abusive supervision is positively related to Employee workplace deviant behavior.**

**b. Abusive Supervision and employee turnover intention**

This supervisory mistreatment can cause low levels of perceived organizational justice, leading to higher levels of turnover and psychological distress, and less favorable attitudes toward the job and the organization (Tepper 2000).

In one study, Tepper (2000) found that abusive supervision positively predicted self-reported voluntary turnover and that this indirect effect was explained by organizational justice perceptions. Clearly, there is a need for a more nuanced examination of the quitting behavior of abused employees. Future research should examine the incremental predictive power of abusive supervision (relative to better-established predictors) in the process by which abused subordinates make the decision to quit their jobs or to execute other forms of withdrawal such as absenteeism and tardiness.

Haar, Fluter and Brougham (2015) states after conducted a study in New Zealand that abusive supervision has a negative effect on turnover intentions, suggesting that abusive supervision signals an inequitable social exchange with subordinates, which ultimately encourages them to seek employment elsewhere. Moreover, this research added to the research domain by examining the mediating role of POS, and confirmed that POS may potentially mediate the relationship between abusive supervision and turnover intentions

**Hypothesis 2: Abusive supervision is positively related to employee turnover intention**

**c. 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.

**Hypothesis 3: Abusive supervision is positively related to Emotional Exhaustion**

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.

**CONCLUSION**

In this, understanding the contextual factors of abusive supervision gives researchers and practitioners important insights into the procedure. Employees' mental health and job satisfaction are affected due to Abusive Supervision. Abusive supervision are more likely to act out towards co-workers in an abusive manner suggests that these employees can make a toxic environment more toxic. This study investigated that the positive effects of abusive supervision of subordinates on Employee Workplace Deviance, Emotional Exhaustion and Turnover Intention within the service-based organization of

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