

Article

Abusive Supervision and Turnover Intentions: A Mediation-Moderation Perspective

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Abstract: This study intended to provide and test a unique model describing how abusive supervision increases workers' turnover intentions, with a mediating role of emotional exhaustion and moderating role of self-esteem. We argued that emotional exhaustion exacerbates the association between abusive supervision and turnover intentions of the workers, while self-esteem buffers this relationship, based on the unfolding model of voluntary turnover as an overarching theory. The study design reflected that abusive supervision and turnover intentions are mediated by emotional exhaustion, while the relationship between abusive supervision and emotional exhaustion is further moderated by self-esteem. A well-structured and self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from 290 respondents. The data were analyzed, and hypotheses were tested using PLS-SEM. The study findings confirmed that there exists a positive and significant link between abusive supervision and turnover intentions through the indirect effect of emotional exhaustion. On the other hand, the findings regarding moderating effect indicates that self-esteem has a significant impact among abusive supervision and emotional exhaustion. This research identified a feasible way for supervisors to grasp how diverse the responses of various workers may be using the unfolding model. These research findings have important academic and practical implications for government representatives, policymakers, and entrepreneurial educational institutes that can use these findings.

Keywords: abusive supervision; emotional exhaustion; self-esteem; turnover intentions



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1. Introduction

Researchers have recently focused their attention on unfavorable workplace behaviors and their effects due to their unprecedented costs to businesses. Negative supervisory behaviors, particularly non-violent but hostile workplace behaviors, are consistently gaining academics' 'interest' [1]. The topic of abusive supervision has grown in popularity among scholars and practitioners, who are continuing to investigate its various detrimental effects [2]. "Abusive supervision is perception subordinate of extent to which his/her supervisor engage in sustained display of hostile verbal and non-verbal attitudes excluding physical contact" [3].

For instance, some examples of this include contemning workers in front of everyone, shouting, being violent in the course of dialogues without using force, not following through on commitments, hiding essential information from subordinates as mentioned

by [3], and shouting at subordinates [4]. A substantial study on abusive supervision examined its many detrimental effects on employee well-being and, as a result, job results [5,6]. A worker's desire to quit the workplace is one of the negative results of abusive supervision, which may be highly expensive for businesses [7], resulting in the loss of a lot of their yearly income [8]. The employees' turnover behavior, which includes brooding thoughts of quitting from one group and joining another, is referred to as "intention to depart" or "employee's turnover intension" [9]. Though researchers have looked at the influence of abusive supervision on employees' turnover intentions in previous studies, there are few studies that look into techniques that might buffer or lessen its effects [10]. Very few research studies have focused on the factors that could increase or decrease the effect of abusive supervision in the workplace [11]. According to [12], after evaluating almost 200 publications on abusive supervision, it was concluded that only fragmentary models emerged from all of the investigations. As a result, it is difficult to make broad conclusions from such research.

Similarly, the fundamental process that causes abusive supervision to result in varied consequences is unknown [12,13]. Very few research studies have sought to investigate the moderated mediating functions between abusive supervision and turnover intention, particularly those moderators that could buffer the harmful effects of abusive supervision on workers' turnover intentions [10,11]. According to previous research, it is very difficult to eliminate abusive supervision from the organization immediately, nevertheless, mitigating its harmful repercussions through moderating factors requires additional investigation [10,14].

By using the unfolding model, the researchers tested the direct effect of abusive supervision on employees' turnover intentions using a novel model, and found out the relationship between abusive supervision and employees' turnover intentions using emotional exhaustion as mediator. Furthermore, this research adds to the unfolding model's theoretical underpinnings in order to explain how people make decisions when faced with abusive situations.

This study aimed to fill up the gaps described above by expanding the existing work using two methods. Initially, the researchers investigated the employees' turnover intentions due to abusive supervision with the mediating effect of emotional exhaustion, and then the researchers used self-esteem as a moderator to investigate the relationship between abusive supervision, emotional exhaustion, and turnover intentions. A recent research analysis by [12] highlighted the need of determining the basic process through which abusive supervision motivates workers' turnover intentions. Although prior studies have concentrated on the direct effect of abusive supervision on emotional exhaustion [11,15], emotional exhaustion is thought to be a significant mediator between abusive supervision and the turnover intentions of employees [3]. According to [16], emotional exhaustion is a mental state in which concerns and needs surpass a person's capacity to concentrate at work. As per [17], emotional exhaustion badly influences the working performance of workers. Abusive supervision and emotional exhaustion are strongly linked to each other; however, this relationship may be influenced by other factors, such as self-esteem [2]. As a result, we investigated self-esteem as a moderator between abusive supervision and emotional exhaustion. As an overall theory, the present research used the "unfolding model" of voluntary turnover [18] and COR presented by [19], along with the behavioral plasticity notion presented by Brockner, Grover [20], to support our research study. The behavioral plasticity idea is important since Hofstede [21] focused on the concept of "self-esteem", a major factor in this research work, and claimed that a variety of internally and externally influences can influence an individual's self-esteem. The underlying link is more clearly explained if we use this notion to support our overall argument.

Second, the data collection from education systems existing in developing countries, i.e., universities in AJK working under the Higher Education Commission (HEC), enhances the study's uniqueness. In comparison to western nations, where the majority of research work on "abusive supervision" is centered, Pakistan belongs to a high power distance

culture [22]. Power distance is the acceptance of employees to the unfair distribution of organizational resources [23]. From this statement, it is estimated that, in contrast to investigations conducted in the West (e.g., the United States and the European Union), in nations having low power distance, in Pakistani settings, abusive supervision seems less impactful, since workers are more likely to take harsh monitoring [11]. Nonetheless, there is insufficient empirical data to support this assumption. A limited research study is available on this important issue in context to Pakistan by [13], where the population of the study was from a police department. This particular research is unique from previous studies in two ways: (1) this research was on Pakistan's educational institutions, including public sector universities working under HEC (contractual employee's/visiting/ad hoc), where employees have low job security with high expectations, and (2) this study is unique due to the moderating and mediating variables considered in this study.

2. Literature Review and Development of Hypothesis

The culture of Pakistan differs from that of the Western world, where the majority of studies about "abusive supervision" are undertaken. In Pakistan, hierarchy is held in higher regard than in Western nations. At the same time, it adopts a collaborative approach that encourages collaboration and partnerships [24]. As a result, supervisors often misuse their power, and they almost always get away with it. People's reactions to abusive supervision in these civilizations, as rare as they may be, may not be as gentle as in the West. As a result, investigations from "high-power" distant nations would add a fresh theoretical approach to existing work on abusive supervision.

2.1. Abusive Supervision and Turnover Intentions

Mitchell and Ambrose [25] proposed a comprehensive model called the "unfolding model" to explain how the employees who have turnover intentions choose one of five behavioral choice routes when they leave their jobs. "A shock" (an experience that causes a worker to think again about his service, such as an unexpected job opportunity), "a script" (an unplanned reaction towards distress), "Image contravention" (the feeling of ego/insult and impression), an assessment of comfort, and a search for alternatives are the major components of this model. It is referred to as the "best model" by [26], as it thoroughly describes the psychological process of a quitter. In this model, there are four choice paths: (1) a foregoing strategy is activated by a shock, which indicates that an employee quits a job without thinking about it after experiencing a shock, as if he or she had a pre-planned exit strategy. For example, if a boss ever asked an employee to perform something unlawful, the employee already have made his mind not to obey the order of the boss (according to a script). (2) The worker's image is harmed as a result of a shock, prompting him or her to reconsider their relationship with the institution. As a result, the person quits the job without considering other options. A huge business scandal, for example, might have an impact on a worker's moral values. (3) In contrast to second path judgment, in which an employee quits the job and does not wait for a substitute, the same shock may have an emotional impact an employee's image; however, as an alternative to brusquely quitting, the worker begins looking for substitutes and leaves once he is successful in his search. (4) In this course of action, the employee does not experience a shock; however, his happiness is diminished due to abusive supervision, which leads to rapid resignation. (5) On this path, an employee re-examines their relationship with the business and begins seeking for alternatives as a result of decreasing work satisfaction. Abusive supervision creates anxiety among subordinates which force them to leave the workplace [27,28]. Employees' creative activities are affected by the abusive behavior of supervisors [29]. Abusive supervision is responsible for low-performance of employees as it creates demotivation among the employees of the organization [28,30].

Using this model to examine the effects of "abusive supervision", the researchers assumed that subordinates would experience "abusive supervision" as an undesirable shock (e.g., public admonishment), as the employee would feel shocked, shamed, or

embarrassed. We thought the subordinate would not immediately quit from his work, as Pakistan belongs to a high power distance culture, where workers are more likely to accept this conduct [21,27]. Therefore, pathways one, two, and four may not apply, because they all lead to quick resigning. Moreover, in high power distance cultures, leaders keep a larger social distance towards their subordinates to avoid immediate resignation from employees [29]. One more rationale for this theory is that the country's bad financial situation and limited work possibilities [31] may deter subordinates from quitting their jobs prematurely. Instead, the workers may take choice path three or five and begin seeking other engagements [13], since the employees' commitment towards the organization would have decreased as a result of the shock caused by the supervisor's abusive behavior. According to research, abusive supervision, which is the most powerful determinant of employee turnover intentions [32], affects employees' turnover intentions [13]. Employees who are subjected to abusive supervision are more likely to leave their jobs, according to previous research [12,13]. Similarly, many employees are quitting their jobs, which may be attributed to a variety of factors, including poor working conditions, a lack of growth chances, and supervisors' abusive conduct [33,34]. As per the findings of Tepper [3], "employee's whose superiors were more aggressive stated more turnover intentions" in this regard. As a result, we relied on that when confronted with abusive supervisory behavior, workers in underdeveloped nations with high power distance positioning would postpone withdrawal and, in that disappointed or unhappy condition, begin looking for substitutes, as clarified in the "unfolding model", discussed in the third and fifth parts. As a result, we suggested:

Hypothesis 1. *Abusive Supervision and Employees' turnover intentions have a positive relationship.*

2.2. Emotional Exhaustion Plays a Mediating Influence

"A persistent condition of physical and emotive depletion that emerges from overwhelming employment expectations and ongoing difficulties" is what emotional exhaustion is [35,36]. It occurs when an employee is unable to perform organizational tasks in due to stress factor [37]. According to studies, work-related stress is an indication of emotional exhaustion due to burnout and chronic workplace stress [37]. In the COS presented by Hussain, Nazir [38] expressed employees' turnover intentions as result of abusive supervision. Employees working in an organization suffering from the abusive behavior of managers are less productive and more stressed due to the bad attitude of the managers, and most of these workers suffer from psychological strain [15]. Recent studies confirmed that employees who suffer abusive behavior from managers feel psychological distress as result of the withholding of necessary information from the side of supervisor [11,39]. Employees with less will power and less ability to handle the stress are more emotionally exhausted emotional exhaustion reduces the creative activity of the worker which is very harmful for the organization [40,41].

Abusive supervision creates a sense of inequality among the workers of an organization [2]. Subordinates feel a sense of job insecurity when they experience abuse from supervisors, and they feel that their social image may be disturbed due to such practices from supervisors [40]. Workers become less productive and receive more psychological distress and high emotional exhaustion as result of abusive supervision, which ultimately motivates them to leave the workplace [42].

Bad remarks from supervisors result in enhancing subordinates' irritation and resistance [43]. According to [44], emotional depletion develops when a worker perceives that a manager is abusing him/her, and organizational resources are not available for him/her when he/she needs it to accomplish the assigned to them; as a result, the employee engages in more absenteeism, less productive, less creative and less will-power to manage the organizational activities in due time [45,46]. This concept is consistent using model paths three and five, in that workers do not leave the institution immediately; rather, he/she becomes more disappointed, unsatisfied, and emotionally tired, and then he/she looks for an alternative job. Emotional exhaustion is a factor responsible for an employee's

stress [37], which motivates the employee to leave the workplace [2], with high turnover intentions [38,47]. So, we can hypothesize:

Hypothesis 2. *Emotional Exhaustion mediates the relationship between abusive supervision and employees' turnover intentions.*

2.3. Self-Esteem Plays a Moderating Influence

Abusive supervision has a positive association with workers' emotional exhaustion and other contextual elements such as self-esteem which can lessen the effect of this link [15]. Pierce and Gardner [48] argued that employee self-esteem is "how much a person perceives himself to be talented, important, and deserving as a member of an organization". Employees' feelings might be inferred from their personal, institutional, and interpersonal capabilities [48]. Employees with great self-esteem view themselves as significant, relevant, and capable inside the workplace [26]. Workers having greater self-esteem have the belief that "he/she is essential part of the organization".

The existing work regarding self-esteem investigated its function in mediating the relationship between job ambiguity and its consequences [23]. Such reasoning is grounded in Schuler's [49] notion, which states that individuals with greater self-esteem would rely more on their talents and capabilities for doing an assignment, while persons having lower self-esteem would rely more on the work atmosphere. With the exception of a few studies, for example, [48,50], the moderating effect of self-esteem has received little attention [51]. Pierce and Gardner [48] argued that management must take practical steps to build confidence among the workers to handle the uncertain situations.

Our justification for self-esteem's moderating effect in the relationship of abusive supervision with emotional exhaustion among employees was established on the base of work presented by Brockner, Grover [20], with the behavioral plasticity concept. This idea illustrates the scope of external influences on individuals. Individuals' sensitivities to diverse environmental indicators differ from one another, and hence, their attitudes and actions differ, as well. Hui and Lee [52] focused on individual self-esteem in understanding the differences in plasticity responses. According to behavioral plasticity, workers having less self-esteem are more impacted by external contextual influences, and hence, respond more harshly than the workers having greater self-esteem [20]. Various researchers have already supported this hypothesis, finding that those with poor self-esteem had a greater negative reaction to role ambiguities [53].

On the basis of this reasoning, we expected that workers in organizations having high self-esteem would hold less destructive reactions towards negative signals as compared to the persons who have less self-esteem. Abusive supervision exists in many organizations. Workers having less self-esteem struggle to cope with abusive supervision, as compared to the workers having greater self-esteem, which creates high emotional exhaustion, as well as a negligent attitude among the workers, such as high turnover intentions of employees, as described in the unfolding model's third and fifth paths. People with high self-esteem are thought to cope well with negative cues (such as abusive supervision) by exhibiting a high intrinsic drive and organizational obligation [52], as per the findings of Pierce and Gardner [48], which established a link between greater self-esteem levels and the desire to quit the workplace and argued that workers who believe they are capable and valuable to their organizations are less likely to leave than those who believe they are less competent or vital to their firms. Similarly, Payne and Youngcourt [54] explained that workers with low self-esteem are involved in less productive activities. Many researchers confirmed the moderating effect of self-esteem. [48,52,55].

Hypothesis 3. *Employees' Self-Esteem moderates the relationship between Abusive supervision and Emotional Exhaustion.*

The research model in Figure 1 expresses the relationships explained in the above literature.

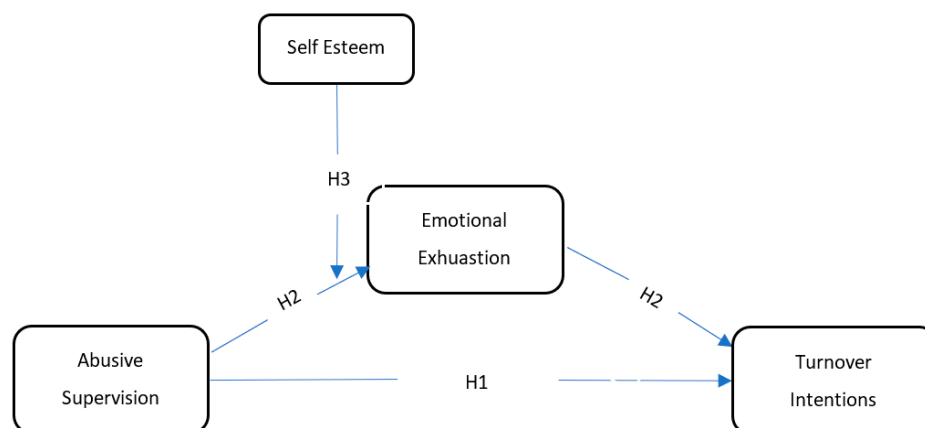


Figure 1. Research Model.

3. Materials and Methods

In comparison to western nations, where the majority of the research work on “abusive supervision” is centered, Pakistan belongs to a high power distance culture [22]. Power distance is the acceptance of employees to the unfair distribution of the organizational resources [23]. From this statement, it is estimated that, in contrast to investigations conducted in the West (e.g., the United States and the European Union), in nations having low power distance, in Pakistani settings, abusive supervision seems less impactful, since workers are more likely to take harsh monitoring [11]. Due to this reason, we collected data from the contractual/contingent/visiting employees of universities working in AJK under the Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan. Overall, there were 5 universities, with more than 3500 contractual/contingent/visiting employees working in these universities. Overall, 400 questionnaires were distributed among these staff members, using a two-time lag technique to control the common method variance effect. Time-1 questionnaires were collected back after three weeks, and time-2 questionnaires were given to them. After three weeks, the time-2 questionnaires were taken back from the employees. A total number of 310 questionnaires were received back, among which 290 were properly filled out and fulfilled the criteria to include them for final consideration; the response rate was 72 percent.

3.1. Abusive Supervision

A five-point Likert measurement scale was used, which ranged from “1 (Strongly disagree)” to “5 (Strongly Agree)”. A 15-item scale was used to assess abusive supervision given by Tepper [2]; the statement “My boss ridicules me” is a representative item from this scale. Cronbach alpha (α) was found to be 0.97 [48].

3.2. Self-Esteem

We used the 10-item scale proposed by Pierce [45], to assess self-esteem. The statement “I count about here” is a representative item from the scale. The Cronbach alpha (α) value for this scale was 0.95.

3.3. Emotional Exhaustion

Emotional exhaustion was assessed by a 6-item questionnaire developed by [3] and adapted from [37]. For instance, “I wondered if anything is valuable” is a representative item from this scale. The Cronbach alpha (α) was 0.96. EE items were assessed on a 4-point Likert scale, which ranged from “1 = (never)” to “4 = (often)”.

3.4. Employee Turnover Intentions

The four-item scale developed by [56] was used to assess employee turnover intentions. For instance, “I’m thinking about quitting this institution” is a representative item from this scale. The Cronbach alpha (α) was 0.96.

4. Results

4.1. Correlation Analysis

“Table 1” given below shows the correlation analysis, mean, and standard deviation. Results shown in Table 1 show that abusive supervision and self-esteem had no significant correlation ($r = 0.03$; $p < 0.01$). Abusive supervision had a significant correlation with turnover intentions ($r = 0.511$; $p < 0.01$) while abusive supervision and emotional exhaustion ($r = 0.49$; $p < 0.01$). There was no significant relationship established between self-esteem and turnover intentions ($r = 0.05$; $p > 0.01$), while self-esteem and emotional exhaustion had a negative but significant correlation ($r = -0.19$; $p < 0.01$). The results confirmed that turnover intentions and emotional exhaustion had a strong correlation with each other ($r = 0.59$; $p < 0.05$).

Table 1. Correlation Analysis.

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Age	2.12	0.69	-							
2. Gender	1.33	0.45	−0.21 **	-						
3. Qualifications	2.42	0.83	0.17 *	0.01	-					
4. Experience	2.51	1.15	0.59 **	−0.27 **	0.09	-				
5. Ab. Sup	2.89	1.53	0.05	0.07	0.05	0.04	-			
6. S.E	3.7	1.47	−0.03	−0.08	−0.04	−0.05	0.03	-		
7. T. int.	3.41	1.41	−0.06	0.04	−0.06	0.06	0.51 **	0.5	-	
8. Emo. Exh	2.89	1.28	0.166 **	−0.04	−0.07	−0.01	0.49 **	−0.19 **	0.59 **	-

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, two-tailed: Ab.Sup = abusive supervision; S.E = self-esteem; T.int = turnover intentions; Emo. Exh = emotional exhaustion.

4.2. Common Method Variance

We gathered the data in two different time durations to control the effect of common method variance. To reduce the CMV, it was necessary to collect the data in different time lags [57]. The researchers used a single factor (model one) and loaded all the items in to verify model fit values. Then, we have added abusive supervision and self-esteem on one factor, while using turnover intentions and emotional exhaustion in model two to verify the model fitness. Then, we compared the values of model one and model two with a four-factor model and analyzed that all values fit in model three. Table 2 shows the outcomes of common method variance. Results confirmed that common method variance did not threaten this research work.

4.3. Interpretation of Findings

We examined PROCESS macro to check the direct effect of abusive supervision on turnover intentions, with emotional exhaustion as a mediator. Results shown in “Table 3” show the significant influence of abusive supervision (both direct/indirect), such as (direct effect = 0.2331; SE = 0.0451; LLCI = 0.1354; ULCI = 0.3278) and (indirect effect = 0.2215; SE = 0.0355; LLCI = 0.1354; ULCI = 0.2965). On the basis of these results, hypothesis 1 was accepted, as abusive supervision has a direct impact on turnover intentions, and hypothesis 2 was also accepted because emotional exhaustion has a partial mediation effect on the relationship between abusive supervision and turnover intention.

Table 2. Common Method Variance (CMV) and Model Fit.

Model	χ^2	χ^2/df	RMSEA	NFI	CFI
One factor (4 variables)	7611.21	14.32	0.25	0.51	0.53
Two factors (Ab.Sup and SE on one factor, Emo.Exh and T.int on other)	6371.79	11.65	0.29	0.57	0.59
Four factors (variables)	987.03	2.01	0.04	0.89	0.96

Ab.Sup = abusive supervision; S.E = self-esteem; T.int = turnover intentions; Emo.Exh = emotional exhaustion; χ^2 = chi square; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; NFI = normed fit index; CFI = comparative fit index.

Table 3. Direct effect of abusive supervision on turnover intentions with mediating effect of emotional exhaustion.

Predictor	Criterion	Effect	SE	t	LLCI	ULCI
Ab. Sup	T.int	Direct 0.2331	0.0451	4.79	0.1455	0.3278
		Indirect 0.2215	0.0355		0.1354	0.2965

Ab.Sup = abusive supervision; S.E = self-esteem; T.int = turnover intentions; LLCI = lower level confidence interval; ULCI = upper level confidence interval. Bootstrap samples = 5000; $p < 0.01$; $p < 0.05$.

4.4. Moderation Effect

To evaluate the results of the moderation variable, self-esteem, on abusive supervision and emotional exhaustion, we used Model 7 of PROCESS macro. Results are given in Table 4, which confirmed that self-esteem moderates the relationship between abusive supervision and turnover intentions via emotional exhaustion as a mediator. Table 4 shows these values: (EE = 0.3051, $p < 0.01$; LLCI = 0.2565; ULCI = 0.4155 at 1.6; EE = 0.1881, $p < 0.01$; LLCI = 0.1654; ULCI = 0.2932 at 4.5 and EE = 0.1633, $p < 0.01$; LLCI = 0.0987; ULCI = 0.2641).

Table 4. Moderating effect of self-esteem on abusive supervision, emotional exhaustion, and turnover intentions.

Criterion	Mediator	Predictor: SE				
		T.int	Effect	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
Ab. Sup	Emotional Exhaustion	1.6	0.3051 **	0.0601	0.2565	0.4155
		4.5	0.1881 **	0.0398	0.1654	0.2932
		4.9	0.1633 **	0.0477	0.0987	0.2641

Control variables: age, gender, qualification, and experience; Ab.Sup = abusive supervision; S.E = self-esteem; T.int = turnover intentions; LLCI = lower level confidence interval; ULCI = upper level confidence interval. Bootstrap samples = 5000; ** $p < 0.01$.

4.5. Discussions

We used a “moderated mediation model” using “self-esteem” as a moderator and “emotional exhaustion” as a mediator to evaluate the influence of “abusive supervision” on employees’ turnover intentions.

Research findings showed that abusive supervision has a significant impact on the turnover intentions of the workers. Previous studies also confirmed our findings [13], which argued that abusive supervision from the managers leads the subordinates towards negative emotions, such as the employees’ turnover intentions. Moreover, the findings were intriguing in that, of the five diverse stages suggested in the “unfolding model”, our findings were only compatible with paths three and five, implying that workers do not quit the workplace straightaway. Employees must consider substitute job offers before leaving the organization as alternative [18]. Moreover, the outcomes of the research also confirmed that EE mediates the relationship between abusive supervision and employees’ turnover intentions. This study supports Tepper’s [2] investigation in that abusive supervision creates pressure, worry, less creativity, and EE among workers. Consequently, emotional exhaustion is an influential predictor of employees’ turnover intentions.

Ultimately, we determined that self-esteem plays a moderating function in the mediating link between abusive supervision and employees' turnover intentions via emotional exhaustion. This research supports the plasticity theory, which claims that employees having less self-esteem are more impacted by outside workplace pressure [20]. Employees with less self-esteem assessed a greater negative reaction to abusive supervision as compared to the workers having a greater level of self-esteem, shown in (Table 4). However, the impact of the moderator "self-esteem" was maintained at three points, e.g., less (1.6), average (4.5), and greater (4.9).

5. Conclusions

This present study adds to the existing body of knowledge about the link between abusive supervision and employees' turnover intentions. Emotional exhaustion was examined as a mediator and self-esteem as a moderator. The perspective of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan's culture provided more context. This research has a number of theoretical and practical ramifications. Finally, a few prospective possibilities for expanding the literature on abusive supervision were suggested.

5.1. Theoretical Implications

This study has a number of theoretical ramifications. First, we tested the direct relationship between abusive supervision and employees' turnover intentions using the unfolding novel model, and found out the relationship between abusive supervision and employees' turnover intentions using emotional exhaustion as a mediator. Furthermore, this research adds to the unfolding model's theoretical underpinnings in order to explain how people make decisions when faced with abusive situations. Furthermore, according to Lee, Kim [17], by expanding on the unfolding model, this study explained the processes and motivations for quitting. Very few researchers examined this particular issue [13,26]; hence, we can claim it as innovate research work in this particular issue. We discovered that because AJK, Pakistan has a greater level of power distance perspective [21], personnel in this nation can only use paths three and five of the "unfolding model" [18].

Moreover, the researchers employed emotional exhaustion as a mediator between abusive supervision and employee turnover intentions, which is a unique finding in the literature on abusive supervision. The results of this research study also confirmed [2] the claim that emotional exhaustion is a forecaster of employees' turnover intentions in a non-Western culture. Our research findings also align with the findings of the conservation of resource theory presented by Hobfoll [58], which argues that abusive supervision is responsible for employees' turnover intention.

Moreover, the study of characteristics which can possibly buffer the effect of abusive supervision on undesirable employee attitudes was highlighted by different researchers [11,12,14] in previous studies. As a result, by applying the behavioral plasticity idea in our investigation, we were able to fill a critical gap in the existing literature [20]. We conclude that, as per the findings of the previous studies, it is very difficult to immediately eliminate abusive supervision from organizations [31]; however, the reaction to abusive supervision can be minimized by self-esteem. Employees with less self-esteem, in contrast to the employees having greater self-esteem, suffer more difficulties while suffering under abusive supervision (see Table 4). As per outputs, self-esteem can help to alleviate the harmful effects of abusive supervision, such as emotional exhaustion, that can motivate employees' turnover intentions. This research also backs up the idea that self-esteem is an essential moderator. Our reasoning supports the earlier claim that workers having less self-esteem are more responsive than the workers having greater self-esteem [52].

Similarly, in this research model, the researchers focused on a developing nation, where people's actions differ from those of Western societies [21]. Because Pakistan is a developing nation and holds a collectivist culture, the results of this research may be applied to other Asian nations with a high-power distance orientation, such as Bangladesh, Japan, India,

Indonesia, Thailand, China, and Sri Lanka [8]. As a result, multicultural examinations of abusive supervision could aid in the development of theories and policies by multinational enterprises operating in similar communities. Despite the fact that the results support our assumptions, it is worth noting that Pakistan's response to abusive supervision is comparable to that of Western countries. So, the conclusion regarding abusive supervision has the same impact in all nations, regardless of whether they have a high or low power distance. This result, however, differs from the findings of [59], which claimed that persons in high power distance cultures are not damaged through abusive supervision.

Our key investigation was to differentiate among workers belonging to high power distance nations and the workers belonging to low power distance nations, using [18] an unfolding model. Employees belonging to low power distance cultures, such as the United States, have been observed to suddenly abandon their jobs while facing abusive supervision [17]; however, this situation is the opposite in high power distance regions such as AJK. Individuals in civilizations where workers are more receptive to and more likely to accept authority may have a milder reaction, and workers' reactions may not be like immediate resignation, which differs from research performed in Western nations. This difference was hazy in prior research on abusive supervision, but with the aid of this study, it is now clarified.

5.2. Practical Implications

This research has a number of practical consequences. Initially, we recognized a feasible way for supervisors to grasp how diverse the responses of various workers may be using the unfolding model. The choice routes themselves allow firms to recognize and know the different categories of individuals that work along them, enabling them to change their care appropriately. Secondly, the present research study backs up the existing body of knowledge, which indicates abusive supervision should be limited, as it has critical harmful consequences. So, a detailed organizational approach to control abusive supervision among different organizational stages is very important [13]. This can be accomplished by arranging training and development programs so managers realize the harmful effects of abusive supervision on subordinates.

Likewise, to avoid emotional fears, tiredness, and stress in subordinates, it is necessary to have a complete internal check and balance from the top-level management towards different supervisors, and top-level management must take feedback from subordinates on a regular basis [13,33]. As numerous scholars have stated, the elimination of abusive supervision in organizations is difficult, but safeguarding systems should be implemented to reduce its consequences [23,31]. One potential benefit is to improve employees' self-esteem. Because self-esteem is context-specific, businesses must build settings for their employees, i.e., develop tactics and experiences that will improve their self-esteem. Individuals having greater self-esteem place a greater emphasis upon their talents and abilities and face fewer difficulties in difficult organizational matters as compared to individuals having low self-esteem [53,59], which will also improve creativity and productivity among workers [60].

Another option for increasing their self-esteem is to build a favorable business environment and ethics, such as the subordinate's easy access to supervisors while reducing the communication gap between both of them. This is significant information for senior managers, who are responsible for designing vision, goals, and moral codes for their institutions, to think about. Subordinates must have some forums where they can raise their voices against the abusive behavior of managers. If a supervisor is unconcerned with his or her employees' self-esteem, effective corporate policies would have a role in improving employee self-esteem. Workers with high self-esteem would be less harmed in such circumstances than employees with low self-esteem.

Such a technique would have a double-edged sword in that it would promote employee self-esteem while also assisting institutions in detecting abusive leaders for essential counseling. An additional useful aspect of the present research is that it shows that man-

agers need to improve self-awareness regarding their work practices. In particular, the education sector employs highly skilled individuals who are better aware of their civil rights and obligations. Top-level management of organizations must conduct surveys from the subordinates from time to time to know the perceived behavior of their supervisors so that training and development programs can be arranged accordingly. Another important thing to mention is that the notion that workers belonging to greater power-distance civilizations, such as Azad Jammu and Kashmir, are less influential is inappropriate. Actually, organizations suffer more losses in the case of later subordinate turnover (for the abused subordinate). The third and fifth paths in the unfolding model shows that employee work satisfaction may decline, resulting in greater turnover intentions.

The longer a dissatisfied worker remains with the organization, the riskier it is for the organization, because the worker may be receiving the financial benefits from the organization, but his productivity is not up to the expected level, so during his stay with the organization, he may engage in anti-organizational activities, such as less commitment, more negligent behavior, counterproductive work behavior, etc. We believe that these consequences are similarly crucial for other Asian nations that have a high-power distance orientation, such as China, Bangladesh, India, and so on.

5.3. Limitations and Future Directions

This study has various limitations that should be considered while evaluating its conclusions. First, the research was cross-sectional in nature. However, numerous measures were taken, as indicated by [57], starting from the process of data collection, data was collected in two time periods through the data analysis process, such as testing for CMVs; however, the total elimination of CMVs using cross-sectional research is not attainable. So, further longitudinal research would aid in the validation of our findings. Second, we used data from AJK, Pakistan, which may have generalizability difficulties. Similar investigations may be conducted by researchers in other nations. Third, this research study was limited to a particular educational sector of AJK, Pakistan under HEC; for more detailed inquiry population of the research can be replaced with other industries in future studies. Fourth, we investigated self-esteem as a moderator in the relationship between abusive supervision and emotional exhaustion on employees' turnover intentions. On the basis of comprehensive literature, the moderation effect of other variables, such as organizational based self-esteem, intrinsic motivation, trait emotional control, and supervisor trust in employees, could be used as moderators for future studies.

A further limitation of this research is that our logic believes that, because Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan has a greater power distance-oriented society [21], workers would have a greater power distance orientation. This concept can differ while collecting more detailed data from other departments [59]. Upcoming investigations may use surveys to measure people's power distance, which could then be evaluated using our suggested model.

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