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## **Does Higher Emotional Exhaustion Lead To Turnover Intention When Employees Have Perceived External Employability?**

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*Keywords:*

*Turnover Intention,  
Abusive Supervision,  
Emotional Exhaustion,  
External Employability,  
Mediation*

*ABSTRACT*

*Employees nowadays go through a lot of emotional trauma. Few of which are personal factors while others are due to work related factors. The aim of this article is to pin down the subordinate's perceptions towards their abusive supervisors and its effect on emotions. Employees when emotionally exhausted are likely to leave the organization provided they have better job opportunities especially when they are unable to handle those emotions due to abuse. Reactance theory and conservation of resource theory has been applied to explain the phenomenon of emotional exhaustion and turnover intention. Data from 155 employees was collected from various banks in Karachi, Pakistan which identified that abusive supervision indirectly increases turnover intention via emotional exhaustion. 32.9% of the variation in turnover intention is due to abusive supervisors and emotional exhaustion. Also, if employees have higher perceived external employability, they are more likely to quit from their jobs in the organization under the leadership of abusive supervisors.*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In the past couple of years, researchers have thus focused on managerial behaviors and their respective subordinates responses. Managers who become dictatorial and cruel towards their subordinates have deleterious outcomes for the organization (Tepper, 2007; Harvey, Stoner, Hochwarter, & Kacmar, 2007; Harris, Harvey, & Kacmar, 2011; Tepper, Henle, Lambert, Giacalone, & Duffy, 2008; Tepper, 2000) and thus, germinates the dark side of organization through dysfunctional workplace behaviors (Duffy, Ganster, & Pagon, 2002; Bennett & Robinson, 2000). Tierney and Tepper (2007) proposed that leaders or superiors also have a dark side. They can be destructive as compared to being constructive as well. According to Hershcovis and Barling, (2010) a wide array of studies conducted on abusive supervision has shown considerable damaging effects on the workplace. These detrimental effects are not physically dangerous as much as emotionally and psychologically damaging (Harris, Harvey, Harris, & Cast, 2012).

Although the growth of studies in this direction has identified various attitudinal and behavioral responses of abusive supervision (Burton & Hoobler, 2006; Tepper et al., 2009; Harris, Kacmar, & Zivnuska, 2007; Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007; Tepper, 2007), there is still much to learn about the social and psychological processes of the subordinates who experience abusive supervision.

Abusive supervision is defined based on perceptions and subjectivity (Tepper, 2000). Subordinates based on their psychological and cognitive state interpret a supervisor's behavior as abusive or not abusive. Internal attribution of employees determine which supervisory behaviors are active or inactive (such as public humiliation or silent treatment). In this study, emotional exhaustion has been taken from social psychological literature which is the affective mechanism between abusive supervision and turnover intention.

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### **Significance of the study**

According to estimates, more than 13 percent of employees in U.S.A have become targets of abusive supervision, or hostility of nonphysical type carried out by employees' immediate superiors (Schat, Frone, & Kelloway, 2006). Consistent and continuous exposure to such abusive behaviors is linked with serious negative outcomes for victims, employers and families (Tepper, 2000; Bamberger & Bacharach, 2006; Dupre, Inness, Connelly, Barling, & Hopton, 2006; Inness, Barling, & Turner, 2005; Duffy, Ganster, & Pagon, 2002; Hoobler & Brass, 2006). These negative outcomes accumulate losses of an estimated \$23.8 billion in health care, workplace withdrawal, and productivity (Tepper, Duffy, Henle, & Lambert, 2006).

### **Problem Statement**

Abusive supervision is the most neglected phenomenon; yet it has most prominent effects on worker's attitudes. Empirical studies suggest that abusive supervision is linked to lower levels of satisfaction, reduced commitment, and justice perceptions, and increased levels of turnover, role conflict, and psychological distress (Ashforth, 1997; Tepper, 2000). Research shows that abusive supervision does not leave physical wounds as much as mental or emotional wounds (Harris, Harvey, Harris, & Cast, 2012). The image of an autocratic boss comes to mind whose sole purpose is to humiliate his subordinates. It is very important to understand the effects of abusive supervision especially for front line employees because the effects are directly detrimental to organizations customers and ultimately performance (Ahmad, 2016).

Previous studies have played a pivotal role in explaining the phenomenon on abusive supervision, with respect to job satisfaction and turnover intention. As such the issue of abusive supervision, and turnover intention needs to be re-examined in the light of emotional exhaustion as a mediator and perceived external employability as a moderator. Also, research into abusive supervision has mostly been done in western contexts. However, there is much call to examine abusive supervision in non-western contexts to highlight and solve this global problem. This study will give specific insights into the mechanism of abusive supervision and help managers and supervisors to understand the negative psychological effects that their behavior creates.

### **Objectives**

- To analyze the mediating effect of emotional exhaustion between abusive supervision and turnover intention.
- To investigate the moderating effect of perceived external employability between emotional exhaustion and turnover intention.

### **Research Questions**

Three questions will be answered through this research;

- First, what is the impact of abusive supervision on emotional exhaustion?
- Second, what is the impact of emotional exhaustion on turnover intention?
- Third, whether emotional exhaustion mediate between abusive supervision and turnover intention?
- Fourth, whether perceived external employability moderate emotional exhaustion and turnover intention?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Abusive Supervision**

Abusive supervision includes non-verbal and verbal demonstration of hostile and aggressive behavior excluding physical abuse. Abusive supervision includes yelling and screaming, intimidating and insulting, belittling, withholding information, silent treatment, staring and humiliating subordinates (Tepper, 2000; Keashly, 1998).

Abusive supervision is subjective therefore an individual may perceive a supervisors behavior as abusive in one situation while non-abusive in another situation, and two subordinates may have different perceptions of the same supervisor.

There are related concepts such as, workplace aggression (Newman & Baron, 1998), workplace deviance (Robinson & Bennett, 1995) and petty tyranny (Ashforth, 1994), but there are meaningful differences which require abusive supervision to be a separate construct.

Petty tyranny involves personal gain or using organizational policies unethically, it does not involve hostility (Ashforth, 1994) while aggression is designed to cause harm. Workplace deviance is a negative variable which is continuously counter to the organizations policies while abusive behavior may sometimes conform to the organizations policies (Ashforth, 1997). Abuse include belittling, inconsideration and punishment which leads to, frustration, estrangement and helplessness.

When abused, subordinates attempt to protect their freedom when they are threatened or feel loss of control, thus they may respond (directly or indirectly) against frustration to reinstate the balance (Ashforth, 1997). However, the status quo differences between the supervisor and subordinate does not allow the subordinate to enact the same tit for tat abuse as individuals cannot treat their supervisor with the same actions as his/her powerful abuser (Lord, 1998). Thus, the subordinate will not involve in supervisor directed abuse to restore a sense of autonomy because it will trigger further abuse from the instigator.

Abused subordinates will be victimized and display negative emotions such as anger, hurt, anxiety or fear which leads to cynicism (Harris et. al, 2007; Cortina & Magley, 2003; Aquino, Tripp & Bies, 2001). Abuse is a stimuli which creates stressful reactions such as; physical health (Bowling & Michel, 2011), job tension (Breux, Perrewé, Hall, Frink, & Hochwarter, 2008), insomnia (Rafferty, Restubog, & Jimmieson, 2010), emotional exhaustion (Yagil, 2006) and burnout (Carlson, Ferguson, Hunter, & Whitten, 2012). Moreover, abusive supervision is also linked to organizational commitment (Duffy & Ferrier, 2003), work withdrawal and work–family conflict (Chi & Liang, 2013; Hoobler & Hu, 2013).

Zhang, and Bednall (2016) studied abusive supervision using meta-analysis comprising of 74 studies and 30,063 participants. The results identified four types of antecedents of abusive supervision; supervisor, organization, subordinate, and demographic based. In addition, moderators as well as significance of different factors was also explained.

Frieder, Hochwarter, and DeOrtentiis, (2015) examined individual level characteristics of victims under abuse. They studied the factors that diminish the negative affective and behavioral reactions of abusive supervision using the Job Demand-Control model. According to their study, individuals who proactively voice as well as manage their resources will not be dissatisfied, emotionally exhausted, they will have less turnover intentions, and will not reduce in work effort when faced with abuse.

### **Emotional Exhaustion**

Emotional exhaustion denotes the depletion of one's physical and emotional resources (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2008). It is the first element of burnout. The second element is depersonalization, which is detachment whereas the third element, is known as reduced personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion reflects strain created by organizational stressors. Emotional exhaustion is understood as fundamental in the burnout model (Shirom, 1989). Emotional exhaustion is activated when subordinates have insufficient emotional resources to manage the stressors in the workplace. The consistent experience with abusive supervision reduces the subordinate's personal resources, like social support, and thus it aggravates emotional exhaustion. Therefore, abusive supervision puts a psychological strain on the employee which leads to emotional exhaustion (Lee and

Ashforth, 1996). This research has focused on the relationship between emotional exhaustion and abusive supervision.

### **Abusive Supervision and Emotional Exhaustion**

Several theories have given the premise of abusive supervision such as conservation of resources theory, moral exclusion theory, organizational justice perspective (Mitchell, & Ambrose, 2007), reactance theory, victim precipitation theory and social dominance theory (Khan, Moss, Quratulain, & Hameed (2016). This research will work on the basis of conservation of resources theory and reactance theory.

The conservation of resources (COR) theory states that individuals seek to obtain, preserve, and safeguard emotional resources and reduce the risk of resource loss (Hobfoll, 2002). Subordinates come across stressful conditions due to interpersonal interactions (such as abusive supervision) and experience mental fatigue and low energy. They are unable to regain their depleted coping resources necessary to meet the emotional demands of the stressful situations (Maslach et al., 2001) and thus experience emotional exhaustion. To sum it up, when there is a discrepancy between the emotional demands and the available resources, emotional exhaustion occurs (Tepper, 2000). It is hypothesized that supervisors' abuse increases emotional exhaustion at work (Tepper, 2000, 2007; Wu & Hu, 2009).

Several researches have conducted drawing their empirical studies on Conservation of Resource theory with respect to emotional exhaustion and abusive supervision perceptions such as; Lam, Walter, & Huang, (2017), who conducted two different studies, one on a manufacturing company and another on customer service firm. They studied supervisor's emotional exhaustion and subordinates' abusive supervision perceptions with moderating variables of subordinate performance, and self-monitoring of supervisors. Results highlighted that emotional exhaustion of supervisor's triggers abusive behavior with lower self- monitoring when faced with an underperforming subordinate.

Another study using the conservation of resource theory identified how abusive supervision is a dysfunctional behavior that has a destructive impact (Xu, Loi, & Lam, 2015). Xu, et al (2015) highlighted how the moderated mediation of abusive supervision leads to subordinate's silence through emotional exhaustion, with leader member exchange acting as a moderator. They found that abused subordinates remain silent because of emotional exhaustion and high leader member exchange makes it even worse.

Lee, Kim, & Yun, (2018) used the conservation of resource theory to examine the influence of abusive supervision on knowledge-sharing behaviors via emotional exhaustion whereby organizational justice moderates this relationship. Results identified that as abusive supervision increases, employees suffer exhaustion, which decreases knowledge sharing behaviors. Moreover, when distributive justice is high, this negative effect is attenuated.

Han, Harms, & Bai, (2017) examined the double mediation of emotional exhaustion and sleep deprivation between abusive supervision and employee creativity. Results showed that abusive supervision indirectly effects employee creativity via both sleep deprivation and emotional exhaustion.

Lam, (2016) in another study examined the consequences of stress reduction programs. Self-regulatory resource theory was used in the model which explained that stress reduction programs reduce emotional exhaustion and abusive supervision of supervisors. Also, lower emotional exhaustion increases team performance.

### **Turnover intention**

Research suggests that aggressive behavior by supervisor evokes retaliation among employees like, social humiliation lead to retaliation. Previous empirical research has identified that employees retaliate against perceived injustices, identity threat, violating trust and personal offense (Greenberg & Alge, 1998; Aquino et al. 2001; Aquino & Douglas, 2003).

In case of mistreatment and abuse, individuals deliberately and sometimes rationally retaliate. Reactance theory has been used to explain the relation between abusive supervision and turnover intention. Reactance theory explains employee reactions to abusive supervisors because they want to achieve and retain power,

control and status quo (Zellars, Tepper, & Duffy, 2002).

Organizations also wish to understand the causes of turnover intentions because there is a high total cost due to turnover (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablinski and Erez (2001) which include; replacement costs and work disruption costs, and orientation and training costs (especially in service industry) (Addae, Parboteah & Davis, 2006). Besides that, employee's turnover reduces effectiveness of the organization (Dawley and Andrews, 2012) and its performance (Addae et al, (2006) therefore it is important to identify the predictors of turnover intention (Low, Cravens, Grant & Moncrief, 2001).

It is essential for organizations to observe and halt withdrawal behaviours such as turnover intentions and job search because these behaviours lead to actual turnover. When employees leave their organizations and move to another, it is known as actual turnover. Before the actual turnover, there is a turnover intention which is comprised of three parts; first is when employees think of quitting, second is the intention to search for a new job and third when they intend to quit their job (Rahman and Naz, 2013; Carmeli & Weisberg, 2006).

### **Abusive supervision and Turnover Intention**

Abusive supervision develops and intensifies with time. The relationship between a supervisor and a subordinate gives more insight to the turnover decisions taken that subordinate. After experiencing a negative relationship with their supervisors, subordinate may re-evaluate their situation and may become sceptical about it (Zapf and Gross, 2001; Turnley & Feldman, 1999). It is highly possible that being the target of injustice in an abusive relationship and contemplating future injustice of the same kind, they may look for other job opportunities outside their organization. A lot of times subordinates leave their jobs because of the mistreatment by their supervisors.

Abusive supervision affects organizational citizenship behaviour and task performance indirectly, while it directly affects emotional exhaustion and turnover (Liu et al., 2009; Tepper, 2000). Therefore, if organizations take the necessary steps in time to manage and prepare supervisors for these relationships, then they may reduce turnover and retain their intellectual assets.

### **Moderating Mediation of perceived external employability**

In a dynamic environment where the concept of long term employment has become redundant, an important goal for individuals is to maintain and enhance himself in the labor market (Arthur, 1994). Abusive supervision is less stressful (eventually less emotionally exhaustive) when subordinates have attractive opportunities outside their organizations. It is true when they think that they can detach themselves from the source of their frustration and misery (Tepper, 2000).

They will tolerate abuse and keep working if they feel they won't be able to find a job elsewhere (lack of job mobility) anticipating that abuse will end one day. Abusive supervision is less worrisome when individuals have better employment opportunities outside the organization and they feel they can control their emotional exhaustion.

### **Hypotheses**

The hypotheses for the model are as follows;

*H1: Abusive supervision increases emotional exhaustion at work*

*(path a)*

*H2: Abusive supervision increases turnover intention*

*(path c')*

*H3: Emotional Exhaustion increases turnover intention*

*(path b)*

*H4: Abusive supervision increases turnover intention indirectly through emotional exhaustion (path c)*

*H5: The strength of the association between emotional exhaustion and turnover intention depends on the perceived external employability*

To sum it up, emotional exhaustion is taken as an affective state which acts as a mediator between abusive supervision and turnover intention. Perceived external employability acts as a moderator in this relationship. Following hypothesized theoretical model explains the relationship.

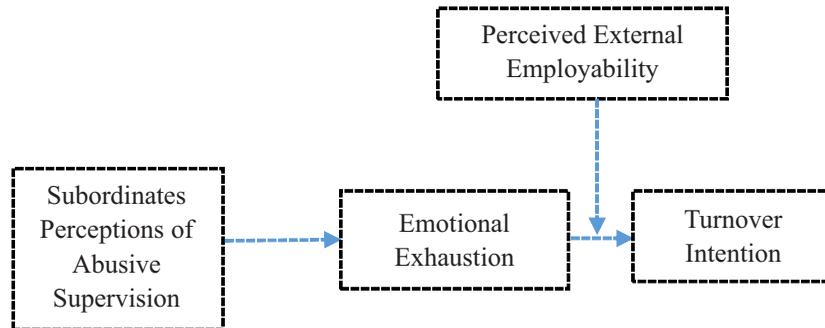


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

## METHODOLOGY

The research approach in this study is Explanatory research i.e. testing an already established theory and the research design used in this study is causal research. The data was collected by means of primary respondents through survey questions.

### Sampling Procedure

The target population are employees but it is difficult to collect data from so many employees therefore, population is focused only on the employees of banking sector. It has been testified that bankers at least 40% of stress as compared to other professionals. A recent study conducted by the Association of bankers found that 69% of banking staff feel their jobs as stressful while 50% conveyed psychological distress (Ehsan, & Ali, 2018). Mostly bankers get stress due to lack of job security, late sittings, repetitiveness at work and lack of autonomy (Ehsan, & Ali, 2018). As bankers feel mostly emotionally exhausted, therefore this study was conducted on the banking employees.

Respondents belonged to different commercial banks in I.I. Chundrigar Road, Karachi, Pakistan. Non-probability based convenience sampling technique was used. Sampling frame was very huge and dispersed nationally so the convenience sampling was used. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), convenience sampling is used to gather prompt data. In this study 155 sample sizes were used. Daniel Soper sample size calculator recommended minimum sample size of 150. These employees were contacted based on personal references of the author. In each of the banks, employees were randomly selected from head office. The banks include, JS Bank, Allied Bank, Habib Metropolitan Bank, Muslim Commercial Bank, Askari Bank, Soneri Bank, Faysal Bank, Summit Bank, Meezan Bank, and Burj Bank. Total of 10 commercial banks were part of this study out of 35 banks (State bank of Pakistan) and the data was collected from first line employees. The data was collected from 200 respondents on 34 items.

20 respondents were randomly selected from each head office. These respondents were middle level staff consisting of assistant managers, relationship officers, cash collection officers, and front desk officers. Most of them had a tenure of at least 1 year and maximum tenure was of 5 years. A cover letter was given along with the questionnaire which stated the purpose of this research and a consent form was duly signed which stated that their anonymity will be maintained and the data collected will not be used otherwise. 155 questionnaires were returned containing 76.5% response rate. Out of 155 respondents, 43 (27.7%) were female and 112 (72.25%) were male. Mostly respondents (94) lied between the age of 21 to 30 years while the most of the respondents (119) were graduated or post graduate.

### Measures

The questionnaires comprised of 34 items on 4 variables; Turnover Intentions, Subordinate perceptions of abusive supervision, Emotional exhaustion, and Perceived External Employability. Demographic variables such as, age, gender and education were also included. (see Appendix for questionnaire)

**Abusive Supervision.** This study has used a 15-item scale to measure abusive supervision. This measure used a five point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree (Tepper, 2000). Sample item include, “*My supervisor ridicules me*”.

**Emotional Exhaustion.** This study has used a nine-item scale to measure emotional exhaustion. Response options ranged from 1 being strongly disagree to 5 being strongly agree (Maslach and Jackson, 1981). Sample question include, “*I feel frustrated by my job*”.

**Turnover Intentions.** 3 items scale was used in this study. Response ranged from extremely unlikely (1) to extremely likely (5) (Cummann et al, 1979). Sample question include, “*I often think about quitting*”.

**Perceived External Employability.** A 7 item scale developed by De Witte (1992) was used to measure external employability. Response ranged from 1 to 5 where 1 denoted strongly disagree and 5 denoted strongly agree. Sample item include, “*I could easily retrain to make myself more employable elsewhere*”.

**Demographic variables.** Variables related to age, gender and education were also asked by the respondents.

### Statistical Technique

Confirmatory factor analysis was applied along with Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was applied in this study using Amos 18 software. SEM was applied in order to test the mediation and moderation of the model. As the indirect and direct effects of mediation and moderation can be studied using SEM, that is why SEM has been applied. Structural Equation Modelling is also known as second generation of multivariate analysis. It has enabled researchers to perform path analysis with latent variables (Fornell 1985). SEM provides greater flexibility to a researcher so he can interact with theory and data.

Researchers can use SEM to model relationships between numerous independent and dependent variables. SEM also allows for the construction of unobservable latent variables. It also provides model errors for observed variables. Furthermore, it can provide a substantial theoretical measurements against empirical data (confirmatory factor analysis). Thus, SEM is an extension of first generation procedures such as regression analysis, discriminant analysis and exploratory factor analysis (Chin, 1998).

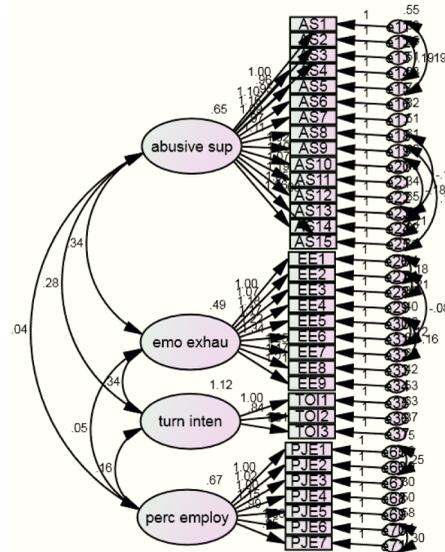
## RESULTS

Table 1 shows the Descriptive statistics, reliabilities and validities of Abusive Supervision, Emotional Exhaustion, Turnover Intention and Perceived External Employability used in the analysis. The correlations of Perceived External Employability show that they did not have significant correlation with other variables except Turnover Intention at \* $p < 0.05$  significance level. All the reliabilities; discriminant and convergent validities are good.

**Table 1. Descriptive Statistics, Reliabilities and Validities**

No	Variables	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1	TOI	0.855	0.664	0.206	0.982	2.9172	1.08773	-	-	-	-
2	AS	0.948	0.550	0.356	0.989	2.0719	.88286	.328**	-	-	-
3	EE	0.919	0.559	0.356	0.985	2.5076	.86713	.444**	.570**	-	-
4	PEE	0.899	0.561	0.043	0.979	3.3408	.90129	.177*	0.055	0.092	-

*N*=155 \**p*<.05; \*\**p*<.01; \*\*\**p*<.001.



**Figure 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

Confirmatory factor analysis was assessed using AMOS. All the variables error terms having modification indices of more than 10 were checked for its related correlation of error terms and they were correlated which improved the significance values. The goodness of fit indices such as TLI, CFI, RMSEA, and Chi Square and degrees of freedom were tested of the model. Table 2 presents the model fit indices of CFA Model.

**Table 2. Model Fit Indices of Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Mediation Analysis**

Index	Ideal Fit	Observed Fit CFA Model	Observed Fit Mediated Model
Tucker Lewis Index (TLI)	$\geq 0.90$	0.856	0.853
Root Mean Square Approximation of Error (RMSEA)	$< 0.06$ to $0.08$	0.079	0.091
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	$\geq 0.90$	0.870	0.870
X <sup>2</sup> / D.F ratio	less than or equal to 3	1.947	2.251
X <sup>2</sup> or Chi Square		988.924	700.153
DF		508	311

Table 3. Standardized Direct, Indirect and Total effects of Mediated Model.

VARIABLES	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect (ab + c'=c)	Lower	Upper	P
Abusive Supervision→Turnover Intention (path c)			0.329	0.152	0.485	0.002
Abusive Supervision→Turnover Intention (path c')	0.091	-		-0.148	0.289	0.513
Abusive Supervision→Emotional Exhaustion →Turnover Intention (path ab)	-	0.238	-	0.128	0.397	0.002
Abusive Supervision→Emotional Exhaustion (path a)	0.596	-	-	0.450	0.714	0.002
Emotional Exhaustion →Turnover Intention (path b)	0.399	-	-	0.209	0.592	0.003

**Mediated Model of Abusive Supervision, Emotional Exhaustion and Turnover Intention**

Mediation in literal terms mean is defined as a support of a third party between two interacting parties, which itself has no power to suggest outcomes (Wall, Stark & Standifler, 2001). According to Baron & Kenny, (1986) mediated variable is known as an intervening or process variable between independent and dependent variable. In a nutshell, the impact of the independent variable on the mediating variable results in affecting the dependent variable. There are several statistical methods to test mediation, but in the current study, the mediating effect of emotional exhaustion has been tested using Hayes (2013).

The mediation was tested using abusive supervision as the predictor, emotional exhaustion as the mediator and turnover intention as the outcome variable. Table 2 represents the model fit indices of the mediation model. The standardized direct effect, indirect and total effects are shown in table 3. The direct effect of Abusive SupervisionTurnover Intention (path c') is insignificant with p value 0.513 (threshold must be p<0.05). The indirect effect of

Abusive SupervisionEmotional Exhaustion Turnover Intention (path ab) is significant therefore emotional exhaustion fully (indirectly only) mediates the association between abusive supervision and turnover intention i.e. abusive supervision only indirectly effects turnover intention via emotional exhaustion with p value 0.002 (p<0.05). Total effect of Abusive SupervisionTurnover Intention (path c) is significant because of the indirect effect.

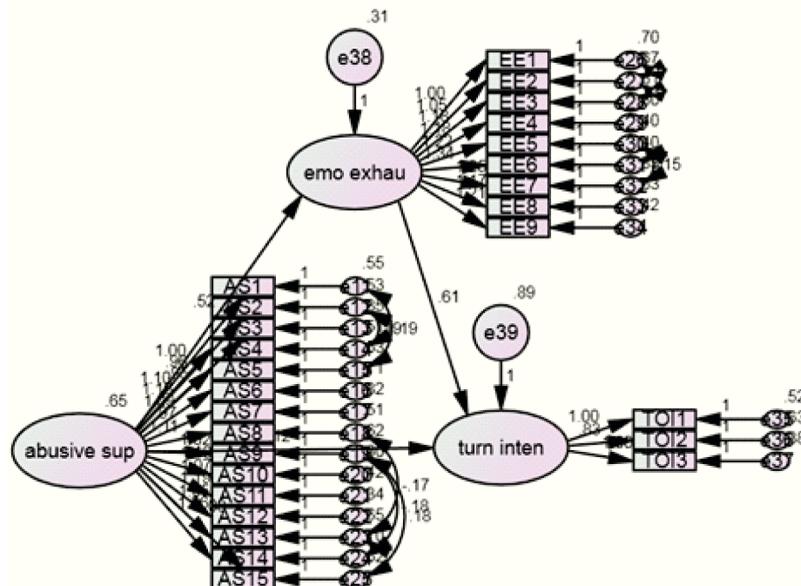


Figure 3. Structural Equation Modelling of Abusive Supervision, Emotional Exhaustion and Turnover Intention

### Moderated Mediation of Perceived External Employability

A Moderating variable is a variable which affects the strength and direction of the relationship between the independent and dependent variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Moderating variables can either strengthen or weaken the relationship between independent and dependent variables (Koeske, 2008). There are several statistical methods to test moderation but, in the current study, the moderating effect of perceived external employability has been tested using the Hayes analysis (2013). As such, mediation and moderation when occurring together is known as moderated mediation. It is also known as conditional indirect effects. This phenomenon occurs when independent variable effects the dependent variable via the mediating variable on different levels of moderating variable (Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007).

According to the model, emotional exhaustion is a very strong mediator between abusive supervision and turnover intention. Further perceived external employability was used as the moderator in the model. It was found that perceived external employability as the moderator was insignificant between the direct path of emotional exhaustion and workplace deviance but, the conditional indirect path or moderated mediation was found to be very significant on all the three values of the moderator i.e. first value 2.4395, the estimates were 0.2508 with lower bounds 0.0663 and upper bounds 0.4770. Also, as the value of moderator increased to 3.348, the moderator was significant with the estimates 0.2569 with lower bounds 0.1183 and upper bounds 0.3968. As the value of moderator increased to 4.2421, the moderator was significant with the estimates 0.2631 with lower bounds 0.0925 and upper bounds 0.4459. The indirect relationship between abusive supervision and turnover intention via emotional exhaustion is moderated by perceived external employability and is significant at all the values of the moderator. As abusive supervision increases, emotional exhaustion increases and chances of turnover increases if employee thinks he/she has external employability or job opportunity. The conditional indirect effects were very strong and supported the argument that if abusive supervision increases, employees are emotionally exhausted and thus intend to leave the organization and this intention strengthens if they perceive themselves as employable outside the organization (see table 4).

*Table 4. Conditional indirect effects of Abusive Supervision on Turnover Intention through*

#### Emotional Exhaustion at values of the Perceived External Employability

	PEE	Effect	Boot SE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
EE	2.4395	.2508	.1075	.0663	.4770
EE	3.3408	.2569	.0745	.1183	.3968
EE	4.2421	.2631	.0910	.0925	.4459

*Table 5. Hypotheses Assessment Summary*

Hypotheses	Summary
H1: Abusive supervision increases emotional exhaustion at work	Accepted
H2: Abusive supervision increases turnover intention	Rejected
H3: Emotional Exhaustion increases turnover intention	Accepted
H4: Abusive supervision increases turnover intention indirectly through emotional exhaustion	Accepted
H5: The strength of the association between emotional exhaustion and turnover intention depends on the perceived external employability	Accepted

Table 5 summaries all the hypotheses being tested in this study. The hypotheses assessment summary shows that abusive supervision increases emotional exhaustion directly (H1) but abusive supervision does not increase turnover intention directly amongst employees (H2). Further, emotional exhaustion increases turnover intention directly (H3). H4 is accepted as, abusive supervision increases turnover intention via emotional exhaustion. Also, H5 is also accepted as the strength of the association between emotional exhaustion and turnover intention depends on the moderating variable of perceived external employability. Four hypotheses are significant and have been accepted while one hypothesis is rejected. The results indicate that there is full mediation of emotional exhaustion between abusive supervision and turnover intention of employees when they have high external employability.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The overall estimates show that there is full mediation in the model. There was no moderation because the interaction effects (moderation) in the model were insignificant, however, the conditional indirect effects (moderated mediation) were significant in the model.

The indirect relationship between abusive supervision and turnover intention through emotional exhaustion is moderated by perceived external employability. The conditional indirect path (moderated mediation) was found to be very significant on all the three values of the moderator (i.e. 2.4395, 3.348, and 4.2421). As abusive supervision increases, emotional exhaustion increases and chances of turnover increases if employee has external employability. Both mediation and moderated mediation are relevant for turnover intention as compared to workplace deviance.

This analysis highlights the psychological mechanism of abusive supervision, along with the process by which abusive supervision influences employee behavior and actions. Through this study, the dynamics of perceived abusive supervision on turnover intention through emotional exhaustion was better understood with employability as a moderator. It is therefore clear that as abuse strengthens, emotionally employees become exhausted and they intend to leave the jobs. This intention will actualize when they have greater chances of getting a job elsewhere. Thus it is important for managers to understand that employees with greater job mobility and accessibility will leave the organization and it will be difficult for managers to then find a replacement for them.

Empirical research has associated supervisory abuse with greater psychological stress; emotional exhaustion and anxiety; job satisfaction; self-esteem; organizational commitment; organizational citizenship behavior; performance; employee resistance; counterproductive work behavior (Burton & Hoobler, 2006; Tepper, 2000; Tepper et al., 2009; Duffy & Ferrier, 2003; Tepper, 2000; Harris, Kacmar, & Zivnuska, 2007; Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007; Tepper, 2007) but none of the researches used an integrative model of the outcomes of emotional exhaustion and the conditions involved such as job mobility and turnover intentions. This study aimed to identify such situations and understand the psychology and perceptions of employees involved under abuse.

### **Practical Implications**

The interpersonal interactions between subordinate and supervisor are the outcomes of the work and in case of inappropriate responses, it can be compounded over time and create damage. In order to prevent the development of perceptions of mistreatment and its outcomes, organizations must detect and correct these abusive responses in early stages before they are strengthened. Organizations can enforce explicit policies to restrict mistreatment and provide a ballot box in which victims can write and report instances of mistreatment anonymously while HR department can then investigate upon it. Also, HRM practices such as conducting seminars and workshops on coaching and counseling, to encourage voice behaviors and identify acceptable and unacceptable behaviors can help improve interpersonal relationship between supervisor and subordinates (Mackey, Frieder, Brees, & Martinko, 2017).

Legislations such as Article 37e of the constitution of Pakistan says that the state shall provide provisions for just and humane working conditions for everyone. According to this policy, blue collar or white collar workers

must be treated with dignity, honor and respect in the workplace. Also, the harassment of women act 2010 also furthers this policy (Malik, Sattar, & Yaqub, 2018). Such legislation provides employees a platform to seek justice and resolution for any workplace abuse or mistreatment in civil court.

In Islam also, in the light of Holy Book, Quran says, “*O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them. And do not insult one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name of disobedience after [one's] faith. And whoever does not repent - then it is those who are the wrongdoers*” (Afridi, 2015).

Thus, with respect to above arguments and implications, organizations must institute policies to safeguard employees in the workplace for creating a healthy and conducive work environment.

### **Directions for Future Research**

Future research examining abusive supervision might include longitudinal or experimental designs to understand its causes, its development and its evolution. Also, future studies may examine the role of moderator's abusive supervision and its causes and consequences such as turnover. Future studies may assess a hierarchical emotional buildup or stages of emotional exhaustion involved between the abusive supervision and turnover intention relationship i.e. what is the degree of emotional exhaustion which leads to turnover among employees and what is their individual capacity to bear such abuse from their supervisors (Freeman et al., 2005). Future research may also validate the data measuring abusive supervision such as, perceptions of abusive supervision could be compared to grievances or complaints filed against supervisors or seen in acts through surveillance cameras (Mackey, et. al, 2017). Researchers can explore the dimensions of Tepper's (2000) abusive supervision measure such as passive-aggressive and active-aggressive abusive supervision. Finally, cross-cultural assessment is warranted across occupations and industries, like health care, military etc. Managers need to understand the psychology and emotional stability of their employees to better tackle them. This understanding will lead to better management of individuals and their motivation levels. This integrative study gives an insight to the managers how abuse can lead to psychological impairments and outcomes.

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