

Role of Burnout In the Relationship Between Dimension of Abusive Supervision And Turnover Intention

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ABSTRACT: The present study aims to investigate the role of burnout in the relationship between dimensions of abusive supervision and turnover intention. Questionnaires were filled by employees of textile industries in Karachi. In this study Structural Equation Models (SEM) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis were used as the statistical techniques. The results of the study revealed significant insights that all dimensions of abusive supervision significantly predict burnout and turnover intention in employees of textile industries. Findings supported the mediation model of burnout between dimensions of abusive supervision and turnover intention. Since, it is found that dimensions of abusive supervision and burnout are significant increases the turnover intention among employees it is recommended that managers of textile industries should not get involved in the abuse and maintain a respectful work environment at the workplace in order to reduce the burnout and turnover intention.

KEYWORDS: Dimensions of Abusive Supervision, Burnout, Turnover Intention

Introduction

Work environments with high pressure are often associated with abusive supervision, which in turn contributes to high employee turnover and burnout. Findings show that there is a positive and significant link between abusive supervision and turnover intentions, and emotional exhaustion indirectly affects the relationship (Ali et al., 2022). Yu et al. (2023) found that daily abusive supervision harms employee engagement and increases emotional strain, which is closely related to burnout. The textile profession is one of the high-pressure fields in which juniors face heavy workloads and strict supervision. Currently, many employees are joining the workforce with a significant number of abusive supervision reports. Research in the garment industry suggests that abusive supervision is the essential cause of high turnover of employees in the garment industry, where personnel's intentions toward job changes are high because of the abusive behavior from their supervisors (Sadiq et al., 2024). Unfortunately, there is minimal research conducted on abusive supervision, especially in Karachi, Pakistan. As stated, "there is a scarcity of studies that seek to study the relationship of the dimensions of abusive supervision with its antecedents and consequences". The findings will be useful to textile sectors, supervisors, and policymakers in improving work environments and retaining their employees.

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Literature Review

Theoretical Background

Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Blau, 2017): This theory explains how people evaluate relationships by comparing costs and benefits. It applies to all interactions where each person offers something the other values. This theory provides us with a clear vision of employees while they are working with any company; they are expecting the employer to provide them more than they are expecting. In this study, Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Blau, 2017) was adopted for the reciprocity between abusive supervision and employees' turnover intention and the mediating role of burnout. When employees feel hostility or disrespect from their supervisor on a daily basis after their dedication and hard work, they develop turnover intention, and it increases over time as a form of negative reciprocity. Hussain et al. (2020) Tested SET showing that abusive supervision encourages employees to leave when they face yelling, credit stealing, belittling, or scapegoating. In this study, SET supports the idea that employees from textile industries may lead to withdrawal behaviors when supervisors violate the cycle of exchange theory (Blau, 2017). Breaking down the principle of social exchange theory will always result in negative consequences in any situation. SET assumes the relationship between supervisor and employee should be reciprocal and fair. The supervisor fails to meet the expected behavior, which disrupts the exchange cycle, resulting in an increase in employee turnover intention. Nazir et al. (2023) use the Social Exchange Theory (SET) to measure employee outcomes when they experience abusive supervision; the results show that once the reciprocal cycle breaks, it harms employee outcomes, which results in turnover intention in employees. This theory strongly supports my research when employees are not getting expected behavior from their supervisor; they develop a stronger negative feeling, which results in turnover intention.

Abusive Supervision

For the last two decades, abusive supervision has been studied in various sectors and is considered a major reason for employee turnover. Tepper (2000) first introduced the definition of abusive supervision as the extent to which his or her supervisors consistently show negative behaviors, either verbal or nonverbal. Later, Tepper (2007) introduced the impact of abusive supervisors on employee performance. According to his findings, supervisors force their employees or juniors to perform well, or else they won't tolerate mistakes. Tepper et al. (2017) also explored that around 10% of the workforce is complaining about experiencing abusive supervision. Tepper (2000) introduces abusive supervision and found that this behaviour is very common in the workplace and that every gender faces this behaviour. The research findings are strongly aligned with Tepper (2000) ; all participants mentioned that they face abusive supervision in their junior years in different situations. By aligning the findings with Ghayas and Jabeen (2020) , the dimensions participants share are credit stealing, humiliation, and yelling from their supervisor, and these acts lead them to switch their current supervisor. Last, the literature also supports that any act of abusive supervision leads to turnover intention (Ali et al., 2022; Pradhan et al., 2019; Oliveira & Najnudel, 2022; Okpala, 2023). Abusive behaviour directly influences employees; earlier researchers show that abusive supervision is connected with human psychology. Hussain et al. (2020) Mentions that abusive supervision affects the psychological wellbeing of employees, and his findings explain that there is a positive relationship between abusive supervision and psychological wellbeing and turnover intention. Abdelhamed et al. (2025) find that nurses do face emotional exhaustion, but resilience is negatively correlated with turnover and abusive supervision. In another study, it measures the emotional impact of abusive leaders and found that abusive supervisors in higher education majorly impact emotionally. The study aligns with these research findings that abusive supervision affects psychological well-being and increases detachment from work, which leads to self-doubt and increases turnover intentions. Multiple studies on abusive supervision have summarized that there is a positive relation between abusive supervision and turnover

intention, keeping different variables as mediators in different industries. According to Ali et al. (2022), abusive supervision has a positive and significant relationship with employees' turnover intentions, with emotional exhaustion mediating this effect. Furthermore, Hussain et al. (2020) finds that abusive supervision positively impacts turnover intention among employees in service-based organizations. According to research conducted by Hussain et al. (2020), there is a variation of around 22% in turnover intention because of abusive supervision (directly or indirectly). Shows significant influence on turnover intention. Ashraf et al. (2023) survey indicates around 15% of employees face abusive supervision based on gender base evaluation. 16% of men face abusive supervision, relatively higher than females with 13%. It was found that females, young and less educated, found their leaders more abusive as compared to males, older and more educated; males who worked fewer years in private organizations found their leadership more abusive compared to those who worked more years in public organizations. Another study in Pakistan on lawyers found that younger lawyers face more stress and more problems as compared to senior lawyers. Lawyers' problems are positively linked with occupational stress and burnout.

Dimensions of Abusive Supervision

Ghayas and Jabeen (2020) proposed four distinct dimensions of abusive supervision: Credit Stealing (CS), Belittling Behavior (BLB), Yelling (Y), and Scapegoating (SG). Many studies confirm the role of burnout between abusive supervision and turnover intention. Findings from Pradhan et al. (2019) also indicate a positive connection between intention to quit and abusive supervision. The finding was conducted with the help of multi-mediation routes (via psychological contract breach and burnout). This reveals that, to some extent, psychological contract breach and burnout influence intention to quit. According to Ali et al. (2022), emotional exhaustion mediates the relationship between turnover intention and abusive supervision. Abusive supervision increases turnover intentions via emotional exhaustion. The four constructed dimensions of abusive supervision by Ghayas and Jabeen (2020) are as follows:

Credit Stealing: When the supervisor takes the credit of junior employees without acknowledgement of their effort is called credit stealing, this dimension is part of abusive supervision because this act conducted by supervisor with their subordinates. This is an act of taking the credit of employees. (Ghayas et al., 2025). It is also cited in one of the research in Indonesia language that credit stealing is a phenomenon in which supervisor tries to take the credit of task which was not done by him but rather done by his subordinate (Putri, 2025).

Yelling: This dimension mainly focuses how humiliating, scolding and shouting. When subordinates feel humiliated by his supervisor is known as yelling. scolding and shouting on subordinate by the supervisor is non-verbal abuse as Tepper (2000) mentioned any act which is non-verbal and non- physical is part of abusive supervision. Yelling is an act of shouting on employees in loud voice. This behavior is considered rude because the supervisor disrespects subordinates, but all employees should be treated in a respectful manner (Ghayas et al., 2025). Yelling is a dimension of abusive supervision because, in this behavior, the supervisor does not treat the subordinate with dignity. Yelling is an act where employees prefer being silent because this behavior is from their supervisor; retaliation is the option for subordinates (Putri, 2025).

Scapegoating: Supervisors usually blame their subordinate unfairly, whether it's not their fault; this is blaming (Putri, 2025). This act is intentionally done when a supervisor shifts the mistakes or failures to their subordinate. "Scapegoating which can be considered as the tendency of supervisors to shift the blame on subordinates is also classified as abusive supervision" (Ghayas et al., 2025).

Belittling Behavior: When a supervisor intentionally makes their subordinates feel inferior in front of others. This behavior is conducted by a supervisor to criticize, embarrass, and demeans the subordinate and making them

unimportant. This behavior always marked as negative and widely spreads with gossips (Putri, 2025). When supervisor make junior look less important which results the form of abusive supervision (Ghayas et al., 2025).

Hence, Ghayas and Jabeen (2020) argued and adopted all four are the dimensions of abusive supervision because Tepper (2000) only shared general definition of abusive supervision which later Tepper (2007) and (2010) discussed the negative impact but mentioned this behavior as one single dimension.

Burnout

Burnout occurs when employees face workplace stress that is not managed successfully. Burnout includes emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced professional efficacy. When employees feel exhausted, have no motivation towards work, and become less effective, it increases burnout. The main reason for burnout is ongoing job stress (World Health Organization [WHO], 2019). The term burnout was first introduced by Herbert Freudenberger in 1974. He used it to describe exhaustion and frustration among helping professionals (Freudenberger, 1974). Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT) was developed by Schaufeli et al. (2020); this is the revised version of the old scale.

Abusive supervision and burnout

Researchers found that abusive supervision increases employee stress and emotional exhaustion, which leads to burnout (Yu et al., 2023). When supervisors insult, humiliate, or mistreat employees, workers feel emotionally drained and burned out (Tepper, 2000). McCord and Yu (2024) find that employee burnout increases significantly and positively when employees face abusive supervision. Also, Ali et al. (2022) suggested that emotional exhaustion created by abusive supervision led to burnout.

H1: Abusive supervision has a significant relationship with burnout

- ▶ H1a: Credit stealing has a significant relationship with burnout.
- ▶ H1b: Belittling behavior has a significant relationship with burnout.
- ▶ H1c: Yelling has a significant relationship with burnout.
- ▶ H1d: Scapegoating has a significant relationship with burnout.

Abusive Supervision and Turnover Intention

All dimensions of abusive supervision affect the employee's turnover intention, as explained by Ghayas and Jabeen (2020); all four dimensions are part of abusive supervision and affect turnover intention negatively. A few research findings explain that overall abusive behavior increases turnover intention through emotional exhaustion (Ali et al. 2022). In Pakistan, research by Humayun et al. (2022) finds that when employees are satisfied with abusive behavior, it does not increase turnover intention. The study expresses that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between abusive supervision and turnover intention. In past literature, we can find that abusive supervision increases the stress level in employees, which results in turnover intention. One study by Oliveira and Najnudel (2023) concluded that abusive supervision increases stress and turnover intention while reducing engagement.

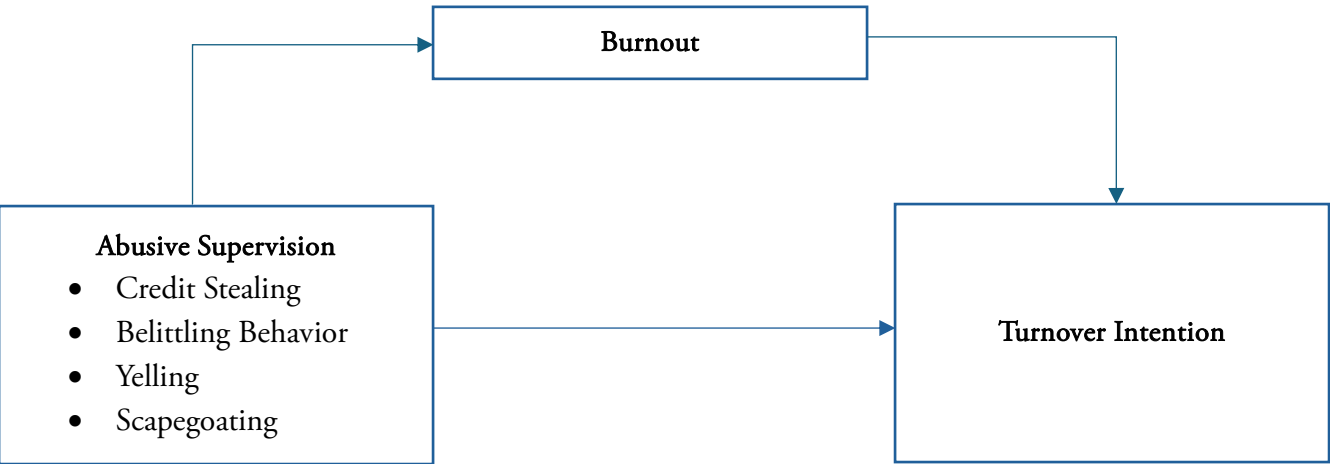
H2: Abusive supervision has a significant relationship with turnover intention.

- ▶ H2a: Credit stealing has a significant relationship with turnover intention.
- ▶ H2b: Belittling behavior has a significant relationship with turnover intention.
- ▶ H2c: Yelling has a significant relationship with turnover intention.
- ▶ H2d: Scapegoating has a significant relationship with turnover intentions.

Role of Burnout in the Relationship between Dimensions of Abusive Supervision and Turnover Intention
 Burnout was studied in many studies as a mediator role but with different dependent and independent variables in different industries. One of the studies explores the role of burnout as a mediator, meaning abusive behavior causes burnout, and burnout increases the desire to leave (Ali et al., 2022).

- H3:** Burnout mediates the relationship between abusive supervision and turnover intention
- ▶ H3a: Burnout mediates the relationship between credit stealing and turnover intentions.
 - ▶ H3b: Burnout mediates the relationship between belittling behavior and turnover intentions.
 - ▶ H3c: Burnout mediates the relationship between yelling and turnover intentions.
 - ▶ H3d: Burnout mediates the relationship between scapegoating and turnover intentions.

Conceptual Framework



Methodology

This study is quantitative research, using a non-experimental design to examine the role of burnout in the relationship between dimensions of abusive supervision and turnover intention in textile industries. The target population includes employees in textile industries in Karachi, Pakistan. The sample data were collected using convenience sampling by visiting big textile companies located in Karachi. All participants were informed about the research, and their participation was voluntary; confidentiality was also maintained for all participants. All constructs were measured using validated scales on a 5-point Likert scale. In this study, 3 questionnaires were adopted from different variable scales; the first questionnaire with 15 items was adopted from the study of the multi-dimensional abusive supervision scale of Ghayas and Jabeen (2020). For the mediator variable, a burnout questionnaire of 5 items was adopted from Schaufeli et al. (2020), who developed the Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT), and for the dependent variable turnover intention, three items were adapted from Cummann et al. (1979). Cronbach’s alpha values ranged from 0.78 to 0.89, indicating strong internal consistency.

Results

Convergent Validity

Table 1

Model Fit of CFA

CMIN/df	CFI	GFI	AGFI	NFI	RMSEA
1.812	0.921	0.911	0.816	0.915	0.076

Table 2
SFL, Cronbach Alpha, CR and AVE

Variables	SFL	Cronbach Alpha	CR	AVE
Credit Stealing		0.868	0.871	0.630
CS1	0.784			
CS2	0.812			
CS3	0.855			
CS4	0.717			
Belittling Behavior		0.861	0.871	0.629
BLB1	0.732			
BLB2	0.844			
BLB3	0.875			
BLB4	0.709			
Yelling		0.802	0.813	0.592
Y1	0.719			
Y2	0.773			
Y3	0.814			
Scapegoating		0.844	0.850	0.527
SG1	0.855			
SG2	0.731			
SG3	0.726			
SG4	0.746			
Burnout		0.877	0.894	0.630
B1	0.843			
B2	0.811			
B3	0.875			
B4	0.706			
B5	0.718			
Turnover Intention		0.823	0.831	0.623
TI1	0.839			
TI2	0.799			
TI3	0.725			

*SFL = Standardized Factor Loadings CR = Composite Reliability AVE = Average Variance Extracted

Discriminant Validity

Table 3
Discriminant Validity

Construct Item	CS	BLB	Y	SG	B	TI
CS	0.793*					
BLB	0.054	0.793*				
Y	0.125	0.181	0.769*			
SG	0.345	0.045	0.068	0.725*		
B	0.439	0.257	0.445	0.398	0.794*	
TI	0.451	0.355	0.395	0.487	0.411	*0.789

Note: * represents Square Root of AVE as the criteria

Table 4

Model Fit of CFA

CMIN/df	CFI	GFI	AGFI	NFI	RMSEA
1.812	0.921	0.911	0.816	0.915	0.076

Table 5

Results of Structural Equation Model

Independent Variables	Mediator	Dependent Variable	Effect of IV on Mediator	Direct Effect (c)	Indirect Effect (ab)	Degree of Mediation
CS	B	TI	0.199*	0.451*	0.406*	Partial
BLB			0.237*	0.231*	0.384*	Partial
Y			0.319*	0.224*	0.248*	Partial
SG			0.209*	0.236*	0.135*	Partial

Note: * represent sig value is less than 0.05

Discussion, Conclusion, Implications and Limitations

Discussion

This research examined the relationship between abusive supervision, burnout, and turnover intention; the results indicate that all measurements are within an acceptable threshold of validity and reliability. Table 1 reliability analysis showed that Cronbach’s alpha explains how strong or weak the internal consistency of each construct. The acceptable threshold is 0.70 or above, where the results show that all dimensions of Abusive Supervision are above 0.70, indicating strong reliability; the mediator variable Burnout is also above the threshold, and the independent variable Turnover Intention also meets the criteria. All variables show strong internal consistency and reliability. Convergent validity is evaluated through Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The thresholds are $CR \geq 0.70$ and $AVE \geq 0.50$; the results show that the dimensions of abusive supervision, burnout, and turnover intention have strong convergent validity. The measurement model performs well for all three variables with acceptable reliability and convergent validity. Composite Reliability values were also above 0.70, while AVE values exceeded 0.50, confirming convergent validity of the constructs (Hair et al., 2019; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). All values are well below 0.85, which indicates that discriminant validity is fully established among your three constructs. According to the Fornell–Larcker criterion, discriminant validity is established when the square root of AVE (displayed on the diagonal) of each construct is greater than the correlations between that construct and all other constructs (off-diagonal values). Discriminant validity is fully established according to the Fornell–Larcker criterion between all three variables (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). All model fit indices fall within acceptable to excellent ranges, indicating that the model demonstrates a good overall fit with the data. All indices—including Chi-square/df, CFI, GFI, AGFI, NFI and RMSEA—reflect excellent model fit. The structural model meets all required model fit criteria. Overall, the model demonstrates a strong and reliable fit. The structural model revealed a significant positive relationship between dimensions of abusive supervision and turnover intention, with a p-value less than 0.05. Furthermore, burnout significantly mediated this relationship, indicating that dimensions of abusive supervision increase burnout and burnout results in turnover intention.

Conclusion

The findings reveal positive support for social exchange theory supports that when employees perceive supportive leadership, it reciprocates their behavior in lower burnout and turnover intention. The research concludes that social exchange theory plays a significant role in improving turnover intention, both directly or indirectly through burnout.

All measurements show strong validity and reliability, and SEM also supported all the proposed hypotheses. These findings contribute to Social Exchange Theory in the context of Karachi and textile industries. Practically, organizations should promote training and improve supervisors' behavior to decrease the burnout of employees and their turnover intentions.

Theoretical implication

The study confirms the social exchange theory, as once the reciprocal cycle breaks, there is a negative impact or outcome. In this research abusive supervision breaks the cycle where employees do not expect this behavior from supervisor and once employee face abuse during employment it increases the burnout of employees and in the last turnover intention increase and employee leave the organization. Also, the study agrees with past literature that there is a positive and significant impact of abusive supervision and its dimensions on turnover intention; also, burnout mediates this relationship.

Practical Implication

The practical implication of this research is that it will be helpful for managers, authorities, and management. This paper suggests that seniors should appreciate juniors' work and dedication and give clear instructions for mistakes and corrections. Seniors should create a balanced job description where juniors can manage their workload and personal life. Seniors should counsel the team to help them psychologically and arrange some sessions for burnout management. The authority should bind seniors to avoid abusive behavior in the workplace. Seniors should treat all staff equally in terms of gender. All should be given equal nature of work in the initial stage; further, as per performance, the tasks and responsibilities should be revised. Authorities should inform all the employees and give them confidence that if they face any abusive supervision during their employment, they can approach the authority to report the complaint of their supervisor rather than tolerate and ignore the behavior, and the issue should be resolved anonymously.

Social Implication

The social implications of this study indicate that if we decrease abusive supervisors in the workplace and maintain a professional work environment, it will affect the employee and decrease turnover intention. Also, if the supervisor is good and doesn't abuse subordinates, it affects employee burnout; if burnout is low, this affects the turnover intention of employees. When the burnout level of an employee is low, it also affects the work output and overall performance of the employee.

Limitations

The study uses a cross-sectional design, which captures participants' experiences at one point in time. The study is limited to Karachi only in textile industries. The study includes only one mediator, burnout as a whole, not the dimensions of burnout. Experiences of abusive supervision and turnover intention may vary across different family backgrounds such as lower class, upper middle class, or higher class. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, which limits the findings and cannot be generalized to all lawyers.

Avenue for Future Researchers

It is recommended to future researchers to apply the same model but with dimensions of burnout as well, and also see the relationship of burnout with abusive supervision and turnover intention in different industries to explore more and clearer effects on dimensions of burnout as well. It is suggested to replicate the research in other cities of Pakistan to make the effect more generalized. The research can add moderators of gender, education, and organizational culture and see the results of burnout on turnover intention.

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