ABUSIVE SUPERVISION AND ITS INFLUENCE ON EMPLOYEE SILENCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY

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ABSTRACT

It is the need of every organization to maximize its profits by working with efficient and effective organizational tools and to make the best use of organizational resources. For a business to gain profit it is essential for managers and decision-makers to keep the pace of generating profits always at a certain mark. This study aims to identify potential managerial problems for businesses operating in Pakistan, specifically related to employee-supervisor relationships. The study is a novel attempt in this field as it intends to uncover the employee silence aspects in the event of abusive supervision and finds its impact on overall organizational performance. The research was carried out with a sample of 110 responses collected from public and private organizations in Pakistan. This research has identified that with the increase in abusive leadership, there will be a decrease in organizational productivity and employees' silence will also significantly increase. Meanwhile, employee silence has a comparatively larger effect i.e., 12% on the productivity of an organization, than the direct effect of abusive supervision on productivity. The study findings accentuate that the organizational leadership team should work on maintaining fair treatment of every employee and decrease the extent of abusive supervising behaviour at work in order to maximize profits and let employees use their potential creativity to give the best output that organizations really expect them to provide.

Keywords: Abusive Supervision; Employee Silence; Organizational Productivity; Human Resource Management; Leadership.

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INTRODUCTION

The leaders of organizations are always held responsible for the failures and accomplishments of a project. The best leaders are considered to be those who speak with their actions. Researchers and managers have differentiated between leaders and supervisors by defining that the supervisors are those who are selected by the top management of an organization (Wright & McMahan, 2011), while the leaders are chosen by the workforce, who can be anyone. The leaders can be from the list of the supervisors, or they can be from the assembly line (Yang, Phelps, & Steensma, 2010).

Researchers have affirmed that supervisors can perform leadership roles within an organization and tend to stand on the frontlines to face challenges and even establish new opportunities for their teams, as they are the ones who are held accountable for any failure and acknowledged for the success of a task or project (Yang, Phelps, & Steensma, 2010). The researchers and leading managers believe that the results of abusive supervision will always lead to moral disengagement and organizational deviance behaviour (Valle, Kacmar, Zivnuska, & Harting, 2019; Ko & Choi, 2019).

Abusive supervision is known to be the result of being a bad leader in an organization. Researchers use the organizational justice theory to explain and define abusive supervision (Avey, Wu, & Holley, 2015; Tepper, 2000). Another theory which researchers claim to be associated with the relationship of the employer and the employee is known as Social Exchange Theory. This theory also supports the concept of abusive supervision leading to the bad outcomes of employees (Kacmar, Harris, & Zivnuska, 2007; Cole, Shipp & Taylor, 2016).

The Social Exchange Theory (SET) suggests that abusive supervision will lead to the misconduct of employees at work, stealing from the workplace, late arrivals to work and leaving work early. Employees will rebel and will break the rules, and eventually, these employees will show deviant behaviour to display a balance in the relationship between the employee and the employer resulting in the employee silence phenomenon (Bennett & Robinson, 2000; Tepper, 2000).

Employee Silence is another concept that is discussed and its association with abusive supervision is explored in this study. The term employee silence is referred to employees withholding important information respective to their workplaces (Xu, Loi, & Lam, 2015). Keeping the importance of employee silence and its impact on the success rate of the organization in mind, it has been noticed that very limited work has been done on the said

variables and very few studies have focused on the relationship between abusive supervision and its impact on employees' silence (Rai & Agarwal, 2017; Bowen & Blackmon, 2003). At the beginning of the year 2018, research had been conducted which focused on the effect 'bullying behaviour' has on employees' silence. In the study, it was understood that employees wanted themselves to remain silent and bear with the abusive behaviour to remain on track and not lose their jobs as the job market is scarce and switching jobs is difficult. Therefore, they endure the misconduct of supervisors and ignore these mistreatments for the sake of their livelihoods (Rai & Agarwal, 2018).

Furthermore, this term has been explained in various studies and different situations, for example, when employees intentionally keep or withhold important information, ideas and personal concerns from the management or their immediate supervisors due to their uneasiness in sharing information with them (Brinsfield, 2012; Dyne, Ang, & Botero, 2003). This behaviour has been considered as one of the most destructive factors of an organization's growth because these organizations display fewer concerns about being creative in the market (Park & Ono, 2016). This problem has also been considered as the most passive and most significant issue of mistreatment that employees face at their workplace (Xu, Loi, & Lam, 2015; Cole, Walter, & Bruch, 2008; Dedahanov & Rhee, 2015).

Similarly, to further investigate abusive leadership and employee silence at the workplace, another variable used in this study is organizational productivity. It is defined as the ratio of the output provided by processes and the input consumed by processes (Allen & Bunn, 2013). Researchers have explained organizational productivity as the efficient use of resources to achieve required goals (Djellal & Gallouj, 2013). The other measure of organizational productivity is in its profitability, which means that; higher the productivity of an organization the higher the profits it makes (Duffy, Martin, Bryan, & Raque-Bogdan, 2008; Allen & Bunn, 2003).

Relating to the three variables discussed above, this study is mainly designed to measure the impact of abusive supervision (Shao, Resick, & Hargis, 2011), which is considered by the researchers and the organizational practitioners as one of the most destructive factors for the organizations. Hence, the relationship of abusive supervision with employee silence and organizational productivity is discovered. This study focuses on investigating the selected variables in the manufacturing organizations in Pakistan which have been surrounded by organization related issues and problems regarding abusive supervision, employees' output, and overall organizational productivity.

Abusive Supervision

There are always two broad possibilities of a work supervisor, either they can be good or bad for their subordinates (Valle, Kacmar, Zivnuska, & Harting, 2019). Abusive supervision refers to subordinates being negatively affected by the supervisor's behaviour at work, and it is the supervisor's aggression over the employee and the employee's perception of the supervisor (Schat, Frone, & Kelloway, 2006; Rai & Agarwal, 2017).

It has been considered that abusive supervision influence the destructive elements of the organizations, more specifically it can destruct an individual's productivity leading to a loss in organizational productivity. Thus, the forces that deprive employee's creativity eventually result in employees being uncommunicative, even when the organization is in dire need of new ideas and critique (Tepper et al., 2009). It is thus essential that the supervisors are hired based on their logic and their ability to lead. They try not to make mistakes or generally avoid activities such as abuse of power which lead to the downfall of an organization.

Leadership and Supervision have always been a great deal for the success and failure of organizations. These two terms seem to be different but actually, they are very much similar to each other in some ways, as a leader can be anyone in the organization, who may be from the top management or the influencing person from the lower staff. An organization can never assign or point out directly to anyone that says he or she is the leader of the organization (Valle, Kacmar, Zivnuska, & Harting, 2019; Hogan & Kaiser, 2005).

Leaders always speak themselves via their speech, action, or influencing character. Meanwhile, supervisors are being appointed by the C-level management of any organization. Supervisors can also perform the leadership role within the organization and most of the time they tried to stand in the front line to face hurdles, challenges and even opportunities for their organizations. As they are the ones who are always accountable for any failure and considerable of any success of the task or project. The researchers and leading managers believe that results of abusive supervision will always lead to moral disengagement strategies and then in organizational deviant behaviour (Valle, Kacmar, Zivnuska, & Harting, 2019).

Abusive supervision is a broad concept within organizations, which is perceived among the most expensive, bearing a lot of extra costs for the management. Researchers use organizational justice theory to explain and define abusive supervision (Aryee, Chen, Sun, & Debrah, 2007; Tepper, Moss & Duffy, 2011). Social Exchange Theory (SET) support the concept of abusive supervision leasing to the bad results of the employees/subordinates (Kacmar, Whitman, &

Harris, 2013). SET suggest that abusive supervision will lead employees to conduct a miss behave, stealing from the organization, late arrivals on the work and early leaving from the organization, they will break the rules and regulations of the organization, or they will just consider themselves among the silent employees as according to SET employees and employers will try to create the balance in the behaviour of their side; eventually, these employees will show deviance behaviour to display the balance in the relationship between employee and employer which eventually lead to the staff into the term called employees' silence (Bennett & Robinson, 2000).

All of the above studies provided similar stances that employees do not own all those organizations where they observe abusive supervision. Thus, the outcomes of the abusive supervision have provided much evidence to claim that in any demographic or in any industry the factor will prove to be destructive. But there is still a need to explore the antecedents of the term abusive supervision much more than its consequences (Shoss, Eisenberger, Restubog, & Zagenczyk, 2017) because managers collectively proclaim that they must need to close all the possible entrances of the abusive supervision behaviour within the workplace premises so that to avail the competitive edge (Martinko, Harvey, Brees, & Mackey, 2013; Breux, et al., 2009).

In previous studies various antecedents of abusive supervision have been identified in various forms, the most influencing antecedents have been included as the culture of the organization. Breux et al. (2009) identified the norms to be the most imperative factor of the organizational culture and as the most influencing antecedent of abusive supervision (Breux, et al., 2009). Furthermore, in another study, it has been identified that antecedents of abusive supervision also include aggressive norms and the sanctions of the said organizations. These both factors have been named as the most common and most influencing factors which are also known as the basic antecedents of abusive supervision (Zhang & Bednall, 2016).

Furthermore, the authors explained the aggressive norms of an organization as a shared perception of the deviance behaviour in the organization which shows the result of the outrage and resentment behaviour of the supervisors within the premises, which they name as the basic antecedent of the abusive supervision. The second term identified as the antecedent of the abusive supervision was the sanction of the organization which they referred to the authorities of that particular organization that does not impose the sanctions and regulations against workplace aggression which in result gives birth to abusive supervision (Zhang & Bednall, 2016; Schat, Frone, & Kelloway, 2006). As this concept is very complicated, organizations are hesitant to impose sanctions on workplace aggression. Although such sanctions allow

organizations to avoid the destruction which causes abusive supervision to proliferate, it is observed that even if organizations are keen to introduce such sanctions the cultural norms resist this approach (Zhang & Bednall, 2016).

Bandura (1973), proposed social learning theory in which he mentioned and also emphasized to support the argument, that the subordinates will adopt the hostile patterns if they feel that their supervisors do not show mercy and behave appropriately. It was because they believe that their supervisors have adopted a continuous pattern to display abusive supervision (Bandura, 1973).

Employee Silence

Employee silence is considered a very critical and sophisticated factor for competitive organizations. It is deliberated to be the most influencing avoidance element in the organizations in order to attain the competitive edge (Brinsfield, 2012; Xu, Loi, & Lam, 2015). It is actually the concept in which employees of any particular organization withhold his/her ideas, creative approaches towards any of the problems or challenges, their concerns for their work departments or organizations, agonize commitment, and even the employee withhold the personal opinions which can be much supportive and helpful for the organizations just because they have been treated badly they feel comfortable in keeping silent and let the things go on however they are going (Brinsfield, 2012).

Consequently, employees try to keep all information (informative or non-informative) at their end and do not disclose it even if it brings a positive result for the organization (Xu, Loi, & Lam, 2015). Keeping in view the significance of employee silence and its impact on the success rate of the organization, it is, in fact, to be very atypical to observe that inconsequential research has been conducted on the said variable and very few studies have focused on the relationship of abusive supervision leading bullying behaviour and its impact on employee's silence, especially it has very fewer implementations within the organizations (Rai & Agarwal, 2017).

At the beginning of 2018, research conducted on bullying behaviour considering it to be a triggering point towards the employees' silence as the employee wanted themselves to remain mute to stay on their job track and not to fall out due to less tendency of job switching options and capabilities. Thus, they bear the misconducts and ignore all these mistreatments and keep themselves on the silent employees' list (Rai & Agarwal, 2018).

Researchers have defined the term employee silence as in a certain condition when employees intentionally keep or withhold the important information, the ideas, their concerns regarding any problem solving, and their personal opinions from the top management or their immediate supervisors due to feeling discomfort in sharing with the management (Brinsfield, 2012; Dyne, Ang, & Botero, 2003). This behaviour has been considered as the most destructing factor of the organization's growth because such organizations display fewer concerns about being creative in the market (Park & Ono, 2016). Whereas this problem has been also considered as the most passive and significant issue of employees mistreatment (Xu, Loi, & Lam, 2015; Cole, Walter, & Bruch, 2008).

Researchers also described the term as it influences in delaying the problem-solving activity within the premises, as employees who are working at the prime lines of manufacturing and services can only describe the actual problem prevalent to the organization, and when they withhold the information it ultimately causes a delay in solving the matters (Glasø & Notelaers, 2012; Pinder & Harlos, 2001).

Organizational Productivity

Since 2007, the economy of the United Kingdom has seen an upsurge in economic boom as in 2013, the country has reported the highest ever proportionate employment rate which was 30.19 million as compared to any other economies (England, 2015). Thus, the increase in employment helped to increase the organization's growth (Wu, 2013). Whereas researchers have found that organizational growth highly relates to the individual's growth. It ultimately conjures that organizational productivity is heavily related to the organization's productivity. Therefore, if companies need to increase the organizational productivity, they are supposed to increase the individual's growth and productivity in parallel to enhance the managerial activity, support, and work-life balance in their working environment (Linna, Pekkola, Ukko, & Melkas, 2010).

Organizational productivity is the ratio of the output provided by the processes and the input consumed by the processes (Allen & Bunn, 2003). Djellal and Gallouj (2013) explained organizational productivity as the efficient use of organizational resources ascertained to achieve the targeted goals to maximize productivity (Djellal & Gallouj, 2013). The other measure of organizational productivity is its profitability. This means higher the profit any organization does obtain will have ultimately a higher level of productivity (Duffy, Martin, Bryan, & Raque-Bogdan, 2008). Hence, there arises a question that how organizations measure

productivity. Because researchers and managers have identified vast factors that can, directly and indirectly, imbalance the level of organizations productivity besides abusive supervision. Therefore, it will always be a question mark to know why productivity is measured (Martin, Horne, & Chan, 2016). So, this action will bring the direction of the actual problem, and from this step managers and the organizational developers can look into the problem in a particular direction. Just like in this paper the organizational productivity will be measured against the abusive supervision along with the employees' silence (Duffy, Martin, Bryan, & Raque-Bogdan, 2008).

There are several approaches to measure productivity within organizations. It could be the economics perspective, the managerial or the accountants' perspective. All these perspectives vary from one another (Zelkowitz, et al., 2015). These approaches are defined as follows:

The economic perspective of measuring productivity is known to be ideal. The economic perspective of productivity is the ratio of the input and output expressed in real, quantifiable measures. This means that the units of the input and the output must be numerically represented. Thus simultaneously, researchers' direct the productivity to the total efficiency of the organization. Whereas, if the organization refer the productivity against the work produced by exerting labor's working hours then it is referred to as labor-productivity (Glenngård, 2013). On the other hand, if organizations need to know the overall productivity, then they require to exert the total activities of the organization in a sense of expenses as input and require to measure it against the output in a sense of revenue generated, this technique produces the total organizational productivity. This paper intends to measure the impact of abusive leadership which influence the increase in expenses due to an increase in employee silence and producing less output which affects organizational productivity (Djellal & Gallouj, 2013).

The second perspective is from the accounting side of the organization. The accounting perspective of productivity is almost very similar to the economics perspective. It includes the money or the profitability at the end. From the accountant perspective, the ratios of input and the output are used to be the financial ones. In this case, the output and input ratios are calculated in money currency (Gosselin, Lemyre, & Corneil, 2017), like in Pakistan based organizations, the accountant will calculate the productivity in rupees. The accountant will write rupees in the column of input as the total expenses exerted by the company against the total rupees earned as a reward or the output of the company. After dividing both the factors the results will produce the accountant perspective of organizational productivity.

There are more factors that can potentially influence productivity which are under investigation, or some other perspectives that have already been investigated. So far as the above factors are concerned, they positively or negatively influence organizational productivity (Gosselin, Lemyre, & Corneil, 2017). This perspective of productivity has been known to be the managers' perspective of measuring the organization's productivity. Thus, for this study, we intend to investigate and measure the impact of abusive supervision on employee silence and an organization's productivity (Maben et al., 2016).

Problem Identification

Abusive supervision is found to be a challenging task for the C-level management so as to identify it and deliberately be avoided so that to enhance the productivity and creativity within the organizations (Valle, Kacmar, Zivnuska, & Harting, 2019). To meet these challenges, the organizations usually conduct several survey programs or they opt for conducting the feedback from the employees so that every reasonable issue could be highlighted in due time to avoid further destructions (Brinsfield, 2012). Meanwhile, it is very obvious for competitive organizations to have a proper and inclusive check & balance of every activity within their organizations which can potentially harm their productivity and creativity. Thus, this study is therefore meant to measure the impact of abusive supervision on employee silence and organizational productivity in Pakistan. These study findings can further help organizations to significantly have inclusive measures within their premises so that they can enhance their goals and compete in the market.

This problem has been largely highlighted recently after the rapid increase in technology and globalization. Companies have now expanded beyond the borders and the competition has become much strengthened (Rai & Agarwal, 2018). With the rapid phases of change and dynamic approaches adopted by the organizations, it has become very obvious to work under diverse workforce and varying circumstances. Consequentially, organizations have faced problems like favouritism, bias, abusive behaviours, and so on. On the other end, the workforce demand to have a work-life balance, to ease their working and family activities altogether have also increased (Gabler & Hill, 2015). Hence, every organization needs to check these problems inclusively and act to overcome them immediately. This study thus is an attempt to help organizations to know the impact of abusive supervision on employee silence and organizational productivity and intends to meet the following objectives.

- To measure the impact of abusive supervision on employee silence.
- To measure the impact of abusive supervision on organizational productivity.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ1: Does abusive supervision impact employee silence?

RQ2: Does abusive supervision impact organizational productivity?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous literature suggests that abusive supervision leads employees to conduct misbehavior, stealing from the organization, late arrivals and early leaving from work, they will break the rules and regulations of the organization, or they will just consider themselves among the silent employees as according to the Social Exchange Theory (SET) when employees and employers try to create balance to the behaviour of their side; eventually, the employees show deviant behaviour to display the balance in the relationship between their connection with the employer which ultimately leads to the staff into the term called employees' silence (Bennett & Robinson, 2000).

Previously, researchers have identified various aspects of the variables like abusive supervision, employee silence, and organizational productivity (Harris, Kacmar, & Boonathanum, 2005; Inness, Barling, & Tumer, 2005; Liu, Liao, & Loi, 2012). This rapid growth of studying of the consequences of abusive leadership has appeared from its deleterious impact on the employees at the workplace, which has gathered the attention of the researchers and the practitioners to rethink and redesign the policies which should be based on the prevention of abusive supervision (Biron, 2010; Harvey, Harris, & Kacmar, 2011).

In this regard, the researchers presumed and have later proved that organizations will get a competitive edge while adopting a positive supervision approach, and giving right to the employees to speak and provide solutions to the problems faced by organizations (Hoobler & Hu, 2013). According to various research studies, damaging effects of abusive supervision have been identified which include role performance (Haggard, Robert, & Rose, 2011); deteriorate employees' well-being (Lin, Wang, & Chen, 2013), besides it was found that organizational citizenship behaviour is also affected with the abusive supervision (Zellars, Tepper, & Duffy, 2002).

Abusive Supervision

Abusive supervision has recently evolved to be considered as a big threat to the employee's commitment, deviant behaviour, and has proved to be a killing agent of creativity and innovation (Valle, Kacmar, Zivnuska, & Harting, 2019). The researchers have also found that abusive supervision has a positive and significant relationship with the deviant behaviour of

the employees in the presence of moral disengagement as a mediating variable; whereas, the studies have also marked leader-member exchange theory (LXM) as a moderating factor to check the effects on the relationship (Valle, Kacmar, Zivnuska, & Harting, 2019). In this paper, however, the researchers have attached this research work based on the social exchange theory and likewise proposed the model which later showed implications based on their proposed hypothesis.

Previously various researchers identified different paths of measuring the impacts of abusive supervision and employee silence (Valle, Kacmar, Zivnuska, & Harting, 2019), where the researchers identified the positive influence of abusive supervision on the deviant behaviour of the employees. Most of the relationships that employees build within their workplace are usually based on two core purposes. It can be an economic exchange or the social exchange phenomena of the relationship, the social exchange phenomena have been renamed as the social exchange theory by the researchers (Casimir, Ng, Wang, & Ooi, 2014). The economic exchange remains another form of social exchange theory, it is based on the pay scale against the work output, it has no concerns about any psychological contracts or other similar elements, these employees and employers are much cornered with their pay and outcomes instead of human relations, work flexibility and other concerns relating to organizational relationships (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

This economic form of social exchange does not spell out generally neither it is considered as the regular element of social exchange theory, very often this term has been discussed by various authors during defining the SET (Social Exchange Theory) (Middlemiss, 2011). The real form of SET concern with social behaviours and concerns, it included the psychological contracts, the value of terms, and reputations. The term psychological contracts have been defined by Rousseau in 1989 as ‘employer’s promises and employees’ perception regarding terms with no written evidence is known as the psychological contract between the employer and employee, it will be then their concerns how effectively both the parties keep their words, a psychological contract will rarely allow the third party to intervene’ (Rousseau et al., 2014; Rousseau, 1989).

The previous studies followed the trend of proving abusive supervision as the dark side of organizations. Researchers have identified that abusive supervision will lead employees to deviant behaviour (Brown & Mitchell, 2010), further it’s also been proved that abusive supervision is an oppressive behaviour of the supervisors at the workplace (Tepper & Henle, 2010). Whereas, researchers also proved that this particular behaviour is hostile and destructive

for the organizations (Duffy, Martin, Bryan, & Raque-Bogdan, 2008). Furthermore, the researcher also identified that the consequences of abusive supervision have harmful consequences for subordinates like employees will feel psychological distress and burnout due to consistent abusive treatment of the supervisors (Tepper, 2000). This behaviour also increases to demolish the self-efficiency of employees and increase their health complaints as a result of burnout and stress elements (Tepper, Moss, & Duffy, 2011). Abusive behaviour also forces employees to leave or intend to leave the organization, thus increases the turnover rate, it decreases the employees' in-role and even the extra-role performances (Zellars, Tepper, & Duffy, 2002).

Hoobler & Brass (2016) found that besides the self-damage of employees, abusive supervision also significantly influences the family undermining. As a result, employees found an increase in dissatisfaction, morale, and commitment level. The behaviour also increases the absenteeism level, turnover rate and increases the lack of moral support of employees at the workplace and in society (Hoobler & Brass, 2016). Furthermore, the cost of abusive leadership in the shape of turnover has been calculated around \$23.8 billion annually in the United States-based organizations. Researchers further explored that this cost has been estimated around \$17000 to \$24,000 per single case of abusive supervision (Sheehan, McCarthy, Barker, & Henderson, 2001). That's why top management of organizations and researchers equally putting much effort to study and control organizational behaviour (Tepper & Henle, 2010; Tepper, Moss, & Duffy, 2011).

It is important for all organizations to timely determine abusive supervision behaviour at the workplace. The abusive supervision can be identified from three functions of the management (Osenbach, et al., 2014). It can be identified from the appraisal system; the emotional experiences of the employees; and during the behavioural response of the supervisors. Supervisor's abusive behaviour will lead employees to anger, fear, and silence. Further, it can cause an increase in the distance between employee and the employer, distance in interacting with the top management, and eventually, employees will start leaving the organization to seek better opportunities (Oh & Farh, 2017).

Employee Silence

Deviance, as explained by Valle, Kacmar, Zivnuska, and Harting (2019) is also the joint route of breaking the written and psychological contracts. Usually, this is considered as the breaking words of the psychological contract which ultimately lead an employee to silence.

Morrison (2014) found that employee silence is found very commonly in the practices of the employees within the organizations, which always provides dysfunctional results which are not found to be favourable for leading organizations (Morrison, 2014). The term is significantly negatively associated with the employees' low commitment (Knoll & Dick, 2013), it reduces the motivation level of the employees at the workplace (Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2018), it burst the confidence level of the employees and produces the element of slowing down the employees' innovation capabilities (Vakola & Bouradas, 2015). The factor also significantly increases the cynicism element in the employees which makes them indolent besides being creative (Wang & Hsieh, 2013).

The researchers have also elaborated further that employee silence has been considered similar to withholding the critical information regarding problems by the employees, which may lead organizations to identify the exact problems which hinder them from advancing, and when organizations become unaware of the problem they will not be able to fix them which is also a bad gesture for the profitability and survival of those organizations (Morrison & Milliken, 2010; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2018). Therefore, it has become a need for businesses to understand the reasons and the consequences of employee silence to understand the problems caused by this particular factor (Dedahanov & Rhee, 2015).

Rai and Agarwal (2017a) have identified in their study regarding the relationship of employee silence and the employees' workplace bullying behaviour as significantly positive to each other, furthering the argument, they claim that organizations, where employees are found to have bullying behaviour, means employees' silence will also take place within the culture (Rai & Agarwal, 2017) and consequently will become challenging for the organizations to extract out the element from its roots. Thus, the organizations looking to profit have to take proactive measures to ban the bullying behaviour and provide adequate chances to their employees to participate at different forums and subsequently bring changes to the system (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2011).

Certain factors cause employee silence, these factors include fear, lower level of ethical responsibility, embarrassment factors (Beheshtifar, Borhani, & Moghadam, 2012), people who want their colleagues to be silent for their job sake (Bogosian, 2011), the confidence on available skills and knowledge (Bowen & Blackmon, 2003), and the lack of opportunity leads to employee silence. This behaviour is so influencing that the affected employee remain unresponsive even in times of need. The managers usually call these employees "get along and go along" (Beheshtifar, Borhani, & Moghadam, 2012), which is harmful to both, the

employees' personal growth and the organization's profitability. Employee silence also affects the communication system at the workplace which eventually results in misunderstandings and create a lack of balance among the employees and the employers (Donaghey, Cullinane, Dundon, & Wilkinson, 2017).

According to the researchers, if employee silence is not controlled or if an organization does not successfully break the silence (McGowan, 2012), they must at least regulate it with certain rules and regulations at the workplace. Because if organizations fail to even regulate it, they would probably fail to carry the operation for a longer period (Panahi, Veisheh, Divkharc, & Kamarid, 2012).

Researchers have emphasized motivation as a supreme tool to decrease the level of employee silence at the workplace (Wall, et al., 2004). The higher the motivation level of employees, the more it provides confidence to the employees to speak and share the problems and discover solutions to various problems they face. This way, employers also earn the confidence of their employees and organizations work efficiently (Wall, et al., 2004; Panahi, Veisheh, Divkharc, & Kamarid, 2012).

Previously a research study conducted in Pakistan shows that employee silence has a negative relationship with the Innovative Work Behaviour (IWB), but at the same time it has been seen that the flow of the employee silence is found to be positively associated with the IWB. Furthermore, the researchers also tested the model with the perceived time pressure as the moderator of the employee silence and IWB (Maqbool, Černe, & Bortoluzzi, 2019). In the situation when employees absorb a certain level of work pressure IWB is found to be produced as well and the situation is found to be favorable in reducing employee silence. Thus, it helps the organizations to increase the innovative approach of organizational growth with a lower level of employee silence (Bennett, Tepper, Sherry, & Michelle, 2016; Maqbool, Černe, & Bortoluzzi, 2019).

Organizational Productivity

When employees are expected to do more and put in an extra effort to work overtime, their satisfaction and productivity level deteriorates (Ko & Choi, 2019). This situation has been found for the organizations working in western culture, where the density of the population is low and it is easier to find another job without incurring much cost and effort (Sung & Choi, 2014). But, in the countries like Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh employee's satisfaction and organizational productivity may increase with overtime as employees want extra income

and usually don't bother working overtime (Sturman & Walsh, 2014). Thus, culture and the regional economy changes the situation of employment and the antecedents of increasing and lowering the level of organizational productivity (Ko & Choi, 2019).

The components of hindrance stressors are also found to be influencing factors that lead to abusive supervision behaviour and influence organizational productivity and employee silence. The factors of the hindrance stressors like unnecessary organizational politics and role ambiguity can decrease employee's performance and organizational productivity (Boswell, Buchanan, & LePine, 2004). Whereas, the challenge stressors have a significant and positive relationship with employee's performance and organizational productivity (Böckerman & Ilmakunnas, 2012). The components of challenge stressors are high workload and time pressure. In both these situations either employees have a high-level workload or have time pressure which creates a challenging situation for the employees, or the talented employee will try to put some extra effort to cope-up with the challenging situation. Whereas, putting too many challenge stressors can cause employees burnout and lowers the level of job satisfaction (Dineen, Noe, Shaw, Duffy, & Wiethoff, 2007; Boswell, Olson-Buchanan, & LePine, 2004; Ng & Feldman, 2008).

The literature given above summarizes that abusive supervision has a positive link with employee silence which is supported by previous studies that as the abusive supervision increases the employee silence will increase. On the other hand, the organization productivity was found to have a negative relationship which asserts that as there is an increase in abusive leadership the organizational productivity will decrease. It has been found that in the circumstances of abusive leadership employers are being very harsh with their subordinates and the employee's perception of the supervisor being considered to be very unusual or unwanted. The term abusive supervision has been considered by most managers, organizational practitioners, and developers as destructive for productivity and creativity (Rai & Agarwal, 2017; 2018). Therefore, researchers have suggested competitive organizations take exclusive control over management, making sure it has stringent measures and have no leakages which lead to abusive supervision behaviour.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study will have one independent variable which is abusive supervision and the rest two variables are the dependent ones including employee silence and organizational productivity,

which are sketched to be dependent on abusive supervision. The research model is given in figure 1. below:

HYPOTHESIS

H1: There is a positive and significant relationship between abusive supervision and employee silence.

H2: There is a negative relationship between abusive supervision and organizational productivity.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This cross-sectional research study will measure the impact of abusive supervisors on employee silence and organizational productivity. Therefore, the questionnaire was distributed to the organizations based in twin metropolitan cities of Pakistan to get the individuals personal opinions regarding the experience they have faced in their organizations. The items of all three scales (abusive supervisor, employee silence, and organizational productivity) were adopted so that to make sure the scale is validated and reliable.

Further, Cronbach's Alpha test was applied to a pilot study to measure the reliability of the scale while measuring the behaviour of the employees from Pakistan. Therefore, this approach helped to support the research study and its validation. The responses were collected via personally visiting the local, multinational and single owned enterprises and meeting the real employees to make sure that the study is purely surveyed and has targeted the relevant population.

Population of the Study

The population of this study include the real-time working employees of the organizations based in the twin metropolitan cities of Pakistan and their surroundings. These organizations include private, public, domestic, multinational, and educational institutes as well.

Sampling Techniques

A convenient and systematic random sampling technique was adopted as the sampling technique for this study. As the study has a wide and unknown population size, the employees were picked randomly on a convenience basis due to time and resource limitations.

Instrument and Measures/ Research Tools

The adopted close-ended questionnaire based on the five-point Likert scale was used to measure the significance and impact of abusive supervision on employee silence and organizational productivity. Three scales were used in this study to measure abusive supervision, employee silence, and organizational productivity respectively. In order to measure abusive supervision, 10 items were used and were adopted from the previous studies of Bennett, Tepper, Sherry, and Michelle (2016) and Agarwal and Avey (2020). Furthermore, the second scale, employee silence had 5 items adopted from the previous studies of Detert, and Edmondson (2011). Lastly, as productivity has been seen from many different dimensions, this variable required much attention and deep research to get the appropriate, valid and reliable scale to measure against the lean supply chain management for the organization's productivity. For this matter, the study has adopted 13 items for measuring productivity adopted from Djellal and Gallouj (2013).

The same procedure was utilized for double-checking the productivity item and to gain a valid and reliable approach to conduct the study. Additionally, to measure the scales and to get appropriate required statistical results, SPSS software was used. Tests like descriptive stats, Cronbach's Alpha, correlation, and regression were applied to get valid results and find the influence and the relationship of the variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results generated from the statistical techniques are mentioned in the following tables:

Table 1. Reliability Statistics

	N	%
Cases Valid	110	98.2
Excluded ^a	2	1.8
Total	112	100.0

Cronbach's Alpha = 0.714

N of items = 28

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Above table 1 shows the results of the reliability statistics of the scale of study. The total number of items was 28 and according to Cronbach's alpha, the reliability of the scale is 71.4%. The results include a total of 112 respondents. It is much important to measure the reliability test, to confirm that the items of the scale have been taken appropriately and are well reliable to each other. So, the scale adopted for this study has reliable enough items to be considered for measuring to further test the hypothesis of the study (Bagozzi, 2011; Bennett, Tepper, Sherry, & Michelle, 2016).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

		Age	Gender	Education
N	Valid	112	112	112
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		2.16	1.35	1.56
Median		2.00	1.00	1.00
Mode		2	1	1
Std. Deviation		.717	.479	.641
Sum		242	151	175

The descriptive statistics are given in the above table (2), which shows the results of the demographics of the study. Whereas the detailed results of the age, gender, and education-wise are given as follows:

Table 3. Age of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20 - 26 Years	21	18.8	18.8	18.8
	27 - 33 Years	52	46.4	46.4	65.2
	33 and above	39	34.8	34.8	100.0
	Total	112	100.0	100.0	

The above table demonstrates that the study has included 18.8% of the respondents from the age bracket of 20 to 26 years of age. Whereas, the rest of the respondents are above 26 years of age which is a total of 81.2%. So, the respondents who participated in this study are mature enough and have experience of the nature of the market and the organizations they serve.

Table 4. Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	73	65.2	65.2	65.2
	Female	39	34.8	34.8	100.0
	Total	112	100.0	100.0	

This study has conducted without any bias regarding gender, colour, race, or religion. Only the right and potential participants who have been involved in the working environment were considered. The above table has been presented for the gender description of the study. It shows that 65.2% of the sample of the population is male and the rest 34.8% were females. It has been considered a very fair rate in Pakistan's scenario because the female proportion is less than the male in the private and public organizations of Pakistan.

Table 5. Education Description

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	BS / BE	58	51.8	51.8	51.8
	MS / ME	45	40.2	40.2	92.0
	Ph.D.	9	8.0	8.0	100.0
	Total	112	100.0	100.0	

The educations wise distribution of the respondents has been displayed in the above-mentioned table (5). It shows that 51.8% of respondents have got 16 years of education. Whereas, the rest of the respondents have received more than 16 years of education, which is a good sign for the significance of the study. If we see that 100% of the response rate belongs to the participants having a minimum of 16 years of education. This shows that the response rate of this current study is valid enough to be taken under consideration, and could be cast for further testing the hypothesis process.

Table 6. Correlations

		Abusive Supervision	Organization Productivity	Employee Silence
Abusive Supervision	Pearson Correlation	1	-.029	.639**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.764	.000
	N	110	110	110
Organization Productivity	Pearson Correlation	-.029	1	-.120
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.764		.208
	N	110	112	112
Employee Silence	Pearson Correlation	.639**	-.120	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.208	
	N	110	112	112

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlations in Table 6 show the result of the relationship between every two variables. Like as mentioned in the table that when abusive supervision increases the organizational productivity decreases, whereas the employee silence increases. On the other hand, the relationship between employee silence and organizational productivity seems much similar but more influencing than abusive supervision and organizational productivity. It shows that when employee silence increases the organizational productivity decreases at the rate of 12%, which is even greater than the rate between abusive supervision and organizational productivity which is only 2.9%.

Table 7. Regression Analysis

R Square = 0.001					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	38.803	4.208		9.221
	Abusive Supervision	-.030	.099	-.029	.764

Dependent Variable: Organizational Productivity

The above regression table shows the values of the R square which is very less and shows that beta is negative which means variables have an inverse relationship between them. This table represents the values for the first model of the study which is the impact of abusive supervision on organizational productivity.

Table 8. Regression Analysis

R Square = 0.408

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	9.362	1.373		6.817	.000
	Abusive Supervision	.279	.032	.639	8.623	.000

Dependent Variable: Employee Silence

In the case of the second model, which is the impact of abusive leadership on employee silence, there is a significant and positive influence. The model fitness is 40.8% at alpha 0.000 which certainly support the model of the study.

STUDY FINDINGS

It has been found that abusive supervision has an inverse relationship with organizational productivity with beta value -0.029 and alpha value 0.764. Whereas, on the other hand, the relationship between abusive supervision and employee silence has been found positive. In that case, beta is 0.639 and alpha is 0.000 which is at the 100% confidence level and the relationship was found to be significant. Furthermore, it has been found that with the increase of the employee silence the organizational productivity decreases. Both the variable has a significant and inverse relationship with each other. It has been found that there is a 12% correlation between organizational productivity and employee's silence.

The model fitness of abusive supervision and employee silence shows that the value of R square is .408 which is considered to be a highly influencing number. It means that employee silence has been affected by abusive supervision at the rate of 40.8% and there are certainly other factors that influence and lead employees to show silent behaviour in the work environment.

Thus, this study accepts both the hypothesis i.e., the first hypothesis which states that abusive supervision has a positive and significant relationship with employee silence has been proved by the findings and results. While the second hypothesis, that abusive supervision has a negative relationship with organizational productivity is also proved with the findings of this study. In parallel to these key findings, it has also been identified that organizational productivity has been influenced more by employee silence rather than abusive supervision. There is a very smaller percentage of chance that organizational productivity may get hurt by abusive supervision in parallel to employee silence. Thus, managers should consider this factor as the main feature which obstructs productivity. This study findings hence, add to the literature pool implying that among multifarious factors which decrease organizational productivity, abusive supervision is one of the core low productivity factors and should be dealt with stringently.

CONCLUSION

This study was designed to measure the impact of abusive leadership on employee silence and organizational productivity in Pakistan based organizations. The results of the study are based on the data collected from 110 respondents from public and private organizations of Pakistan. The study identified that with an increase in abusive leadership there will be a decrease in organizational productivity and employee silence will increase 2.9% and 63.9% respectively. Meanwhile, employee silence has a comparatively larger effect which is 12% on organizational

productivity than the direct effect of abusive leadership on productivity. Managers and organizational developers are required to work on maintaining fair treatment and decrease the abusive leadership behaviour at the workplace in order to maximize the profits and let employees use their potential creativity to give the best output.

Correspondingly, the results of both the models of the study are very important. As the first model shows the negative relationship of abusive supervision and organizational productivity will affect organizations in their competitive approach and the second model has been found much stronger in the sense that the first model has only 2.9% influence whereas the second model has 63.9% loss of creative approach of employees which is due to employee silence.

Subsequently, the model fitness of the abusive supervision and the employee silence shows that the value of the R square is .408 which is considered to be a highly influencing number. It means that employee silence has been affected by abusive supervision by a rate of 40.8% and certain other factors can influence and lead employees to be show silent behaviour in the work environment. Thus, this study accepts both the proposed hypothesis.

FUTURE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has been conducted in a single time frame and a minimum period and resources. There is much work needed on every single factor that affects organizational productivity, employee silence and abusive supervision. Therefore, looking at the literature, it is highly recommended to consider training and development as mediating variables and other factors like organizational alignment and payroll as other independent variables to extend the study. The model fitness of the second model shows that there is a huge gap in the influence of the variables to be identified. It has been identified in this study that abusive supervision has a 40.8% influence on employee silence. Thus, there is a gap of 59.2% which need to be identified in future studies which may help ascertain all other factors that are responsible for employee silence.

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