
A Study on the Effect of Abusive Supervision on Knowledge Hiding: Mediated by Emotional Exhaustion and Moderated by Coworkers Support

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Abstract

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This study was conducted to assess the effects of abusive supervision on knowledge hiding, taking into account the moderating influence of coworker support and the mediating function of emotional exhaustion. The current study's model suggests that when supervisors are abusive, people become emotionally exhausted and hide knowledge. Our study proposed that employees who experienced abusive behaviors were more likely to withhold information and knowledge from others in the organization. There was a strong association between abusive supervision and emotional exhaustion. This means that employees who experienced abusive behaviors from their supervisors were more likely to feel emotionally drained and depleted. Another purpose of the research was to know whether coworker support moderates the relationship between abusive supervision and emotional exhaustion. Coworker support may offer a sense of support and social connection, which can help employees cope with the stress associated with abusive supervision. The model was supported by Social exchange theory. Convenience sampling was used to gather data from 181 workers in the telecom sectors of firms in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Adapted questionnaires with five-point Likert scales for each variable were used. Results indicated that abusive supervision has a positive and significant relationship with knowledge hiding. The mediating role of emotional exhaustion between abusive supervision and knowledge hiding was also supported by results. However, contrary to expectations, moderating the role of coworkers' support, between abusive supervision and emotional exhaustion gained no acceptance. By incorporating specific training on recognizing and avoiding abusive behaviors from the outset, organizations can set clear expectations for supervisory conduct and create a culture that discourages abusive practices. Regular policy reviews will help the organization adapt to evolving challenges and best practices in preventing abusive supervision, ensuring that policies remain relevant and contribute to a positive work environment. Limitations and future directions are also provided.

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Introduction

The telecom sector is a demanding and fast-paced environment, characterized by high competition, demanding targets, and constant change (Meena, 2022). Unfortunately, these factors can create fertile ground for abusive supervision, leading to negative consequences for both employees and organizations (Balducci, Conway, & Van Heugten, 2021). Organizations can get a competitive advantage over other organizations solely through knowledge, which is their most significant asset. Knowledge sharing at work fosters creativity, innovation, and overall organizational performance (Ali, Khan, & Ahmad, 2018; Rubbab et al, 2022). However, efforts to facilitate knowledge transfer are difficult because employees participate in knowledge concealing, which has detrimental effects on organizations. According to a study, employees' tendency to conceal knowledge may be influenced by abusive supervision (Feng, & Wang, 2019). Knowledge hiding, according to Connelly, Zweig, Webster, and Trougakos (2012), is the conscious attempt to withhold information from others when requested, posing a threat to positive outcomes. The argument posits that the term "knowledge hiding" is not synonymous with a lack of knowledge sharing, as it entails withholding information that someone else has requested (Connelly et al., 2012).

Researchers have studied the harmful effects of supervisors' attitudes and behaviors—such as physical aggression, emotional violence or hostility, and intimidation—in great detail during the last 15 to 20 years (Lyubikh, Dupré, Barling, & Turner, 2022). Researchers have given this destructive leadership several different names, but the term "abusive supervision" has been used in much of the work done up to this point (Tepper, 2000). Research suggests a higher prevalence of abusive supervision in the telecom sector compared to other industries. Factors like high workload, tight deadlines, and organizational pressure contribute to this trend. A study by Ali et al. (2018) found that nearly 30% of telecom employees reported experiencing abusive supervision. Another study by Khan et al. (2020) revealed that abusive supervision was the most significant predictor of exhaustion among telecom employees.

Employees' perception of "the extent to which colleagues in the organization offer psychological support is referred to as "coworker support," according to Chiabaru and Harrison (2008). Additionally, prior research has shown that in situations where a supervisor abuses their power, the support of coworkers emerges as a significant source of social support. This basic research flow is based on the idea that finding moderators who can significantly lessen the harmful consequences of abusive supervision may aid subordinates in lessening its impact (Whitman et al., 2014; Khan et al, 2020; Frieder et al., 2015).

Employee hostility is rising daily in nations like Pakistan (Waseem, 2016), particularly in the telecom industry (Shan, & Adeel, 2021). Despite the vast amount of research on abusive supervision, there are still some issues that need to be addressed and brought to light. In particular, there aren't many studies that look at whether or not abusive supervision causes people to conceal knowledge. Research is focused on developed nations, with little attention given to developing countries such as Pakistan.

Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) is in favor of this model. There is no universally accepted theoretical framework for abusive supervision builds, despite significant efforts to define, clarify, and interpret abusive supervision practices (Tepper, 2007). Managerial mistreatment fosters retaliatory conduct, as per social exchange doctrines (Blau, 1964; Mitchell and Ambrose, 2007). People who experience abuse at the hands of their supervisors

may attempt to exact revenge in one way or another (Skarlicki & Folger, 2004). Knowledge hiding is examined in this model as a result of abusive supervision. Furthermore, this theory contributes to the explanation of the association between coworker support and knowledge hiding (Wang & Noe, 2010) and the discovery that inadequate coworker support results in knowledge hiding rather than sharing. Using Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) in the proposed model helps us understand how workplace interactions are shaped by reciprocal exchanges. This theoretical framework provides insights into the mechanisms through which negative experiences with supervisors can impact employees, and how coworker support can influence these dynamics, ultimately affecting knowledge-sharing behaviors and emotional well-being in the workplace. In the dynamic and competitive landscape of the telecom sector, concerns regarding abusive supervision have gained prominence due to their potential adverse effects on employee well-being and organizational outcomes. However, the specific ramifications of abusive supervision on knowledge hiding, a critical factor in knowledge-intensive industries, remain largely unexplored within this sector. Our paper aims to study the impact of abusive supervision on knowledge hiding in the telecom industry, seeking to understand the extent of the problem with mediation of emotional exhaustion and moderation of coworker support between abusive supervision and employees' emotional exhaustion. By addressing this gap in the literature, the research aims to provide actionable insights for organizations in the telecom sector to foster healthier work environments and promote knowledge sharing, ultimately contributing to the industry's sustained growth and success. There are certain research questions that our study aimed to do i.e. whether abusive supervision contributes to the manifestation of knowledge-hiding behavior among employees. Secondly, whether knowledge hiding and abusive supervision are mediated by emotional exhaustion? Thirdly is there a moderating effect of coworker support on the relationship between emotional exhaustion and abusive supervision? To answer these research questions, we focused on determining the role of abusive supervision in influencing employees to hide knowledge. Secondly, our study focused on the role that emotional exhaustion plays as a mediator between knowledge hiding and abusive supervision. Lastly, we aimed to investigate the role of supportive coworkers in mitigating the effects of abusive supervision on emotional exhaustion.

Literature review

The Effect of Abusive Supervision on Knowledge Hiding

An increasing body of evidence documents the unfavorable effects of abusive supervision at the workplace, particularly regarding the expenses incurred by organizations and their workforce (Liu, Liao, & Loi, 2012). According to Tepper (2000), abusive supervision may result in decreased job satisfaction, increased turnover, and poorer performance. Numerous studies conducted to date have focused on coping with the psychological effects of abusive supervision without foreseeing them; in other words, adopting a reactive approach rather than a preventive one (Ali, Khan, & Ahmad, 2018; Rubbab et al, 2022; Tepper, 2007).

This study uses the Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) as a likely illustrative framework to predict the role of abusive supervision on employees' knowledge hiding. SET (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) applies to the impact of abusive supervision on knowledge hiding as hostile management creates a negative social exchange. Abusive behaviors like yelling, insults, and threats violate employees' sense of fairness and reciprocity (Hoobler, & Hu, 2013). This leads to feelings of distrust, resentment, and

reduced commitment to the organization. When faced with abusive supervision, employees may see knowledge hiding as a way to protect themselves and their resources (Rubbab et al., 2022). By withholding knowledge, they reduce their dependence on the abusive supervisor and avoid potential retaliation (Neuman, 2014).

Gouldner (1960) states that correspondence, or reimbursement in kind, is a fundamental tenet of social exchange theory. As a result, followers may compensate for abusive supervision by concealing their awareness. A small but growing body of research on abusive supervision has highlighted the fact that exposure to abusive supervision makes workers less willing to go above and beyond to carry out actions that benefit their companies (Zellars et al., 2002). This may include withholding information that may influence the organizations badly.

Knowledge hiding, also known as knowledge hoarding or knowledge concealment, refers to the intentional act of individuals within an organization keeping valuable information or expertise to themselves instead of sharing it with their colleagues (Connelly, Zweig, Webster, & Trougakos, 2012). This phenomenon can manifest in various ways, such as reluctance to provide insights, withholding critical data, or avoiding collaboration on projects. Knowledge hiding is often driven by factors like job insecurity, fear of losing one's competitive edge, or concerns about job redundancy (Rubbab et al., 2022; Connelly et al., 2012). However, while individuals engaging in knowledge hiding may believe they are safeguarding their position, it can have detrimental effects on team dynamics, innovation, and overall organizational performance. Research on knowledge hiding explores the intricate social and psychological factors influencing this behavior and emphasizes the importance of fostering a culture of openness and collaboration within workplaces to harness collective intelligence for sustainable success (Connelly et al., 2012).

Hypothesis 1: Abusive Supervision has a significant and positive effect on Knowledge Hiding.

The Effect of Abusive Supervision on Emotional Exhaustion

According to Harvey et al. (2007) and Tepper (2000), abusive supervision is linked to emotional exhaustion as a stressor in the workplace. The ability of employees to respond to that claim is included in the current study's definition of abusive supervision, which also includes resource deprivation in ways that hinder leadership. According to some, emotional exhaustion occurs when workers start to believe they are no longer equipped to handle the stressor that is challenging them (Lee & Ashforth, 1996).

Abusive behaviors from supervisors can lead to chronic stress, emotional depletion, and reduced job satisfaction (Tepper, 2000). Employees under abusive supervision are prone to hoard knowledge and expertise, hindering innovation and collaboration (Khoreva & Wechtler, 2020). Abusive supervision can lead to decreased motivation, increased absenteeism, and turnover, impacting organizational performance (Khan et al., 2020). Abusive behaviors can create a hostile and toxic work environment, leading to increased conflict and decreased morale (Zapf & Gross, 1999). According to earlier research, employees with significantly higher social acceptability aptitudes report less job strain and, consequently, emotional exhaustion when they are under abusive supervision (Mackey et al., 2013). By examining behavior, particularly knowledge hiding that abused employees may turn to reduce stress, and by extending the research on the mediating role of emotional exhaustion in abusive supervision, this examination continues to supplement the extensive body of previous writings.

It is clear from earlier studies (Tepper, Duffy, Henle, & Lambert, 2006; Duffy, Ganster, & Pagon, 2002; Hoobler, & Ensley, 2004) that abusive supervision causes negative outcomes for organizations and the people who belong to them, which raises several issues. Psychological stress manifested as emotional exhaustion is a common side effect of abusive supervision (Duffy et al., 2002; Tepper, 2000). SET (Blau, 1964) is related to this phenomenon because abusive supervision creates a negative social exchange. Abusive behaviors violate employees' sense of fairness and reciprocity. This generates feelings of distrust, resentment, and reduced commitment to the organization. The chronic stress associated with abusive supervision depletes employees' emotional resources, leading to feelings of fatigue, cynicism, and reduced efficacy.

Hypothesis 2: Abusive Supervision has a significant and positive effect on Emotional Exhaustion.

The Effect of Emotional Exhaustion on Knowledge Hiding

Emotional exhaustion causes some major negative effects, such as absenteeism, low morale, and increased job turnover, based on the research that is currently available (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Grandey, 2003). According to earlier studies, emotional exhaustion affects both a person's psychological and physical health (Lee & Ashforth, 1993), which has an impact on job satisfaction.

This study tends to discuss how emotional exhaustion causes knowledge to be hidden in organizations, as supported by earlier research. Since there hasn't been much research on the relationship between emotional exhaustion and knowledge hiding, this study will take that relationship into account and attempt to infer it. It is abundantly clear from earlier research that emotional tiredness hurts one's performance at work.

SET (Blau, 1964) provides the underlying mechanism for the relationship between emotional exhaustion and knowledge-hiding behavior. Due to chronic stress and negative emotions, individuals experiencing emotional exhaustion have fewer emotional resources available. People who are emotionally exhausted could hide their knowledge to preserve what little they have left and lighten their workload.

Hypothesis 3: Emotional exhaustion has a significant and positive effect on knowledge hiding.

Mediation of Emotional Exhaustion between Abusive Supervision and Knowledge Hiding

Numerous studies have found that interpersonal conflict between the abusive supervisor and the victim, as well as continuous pressure on the victim's confidence and self-efficacy, are the main causes of the association between emotional exhaustion and abusive supervision (Harvey et al., 2007). The employee who is being abused may become weak and have fewer emotional resources available to them to decide how to respond to the abuse as a result of this extremely persistent attack (Wright & Hobfoll, 2004). As a result, followers engage in knowledge concealing.

Abusive supervision, a type of stress brought on by work environment stressors, is the precursor to emotional exhaustion. Thus, the focus of this study was on emotional exhaustion, a pressure side effect that acts as a mediator between knowledge hiding and abusive supervision. Tepper et al. (2007) found a significant association among reports of anxiety, emotional exhaustion, and depression among employees and abusive supervision.

Therefore, emotional exhaustion is viewed in this study as a mediator mediating the relationship between knowledge hiding and abusive supervision.

Hypothesis 4: Emotional Exhaustion mediates between abusive supervision and knowledge hiding.

Moderation of Coworker Support between Abusive Supervision and Emotional Exhaustion

Employees are shielded from the negative effects of stressful situations by their coworkers. Research has shown that social support, particularly from coworkers, reduces stress by either making frightening and threatening events seem less serious or by offering helpful coping mechanisms for when stress does arise (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). The impact of abusive supervision is lessened by this coworker's support.

According to Janssen et al. (1999), there is a negative association between coworker support and emotional exhaustion. Colleagues are the essential basis of the work environment, and supervisors may manage their impact on staff members (Barker, 1993). Coworker relationships are now essential to the expansion and success of an organization. Sadly, coworkers' contributions to keeping their subordinates on the job and their assistance in seeing that employees complete their work-related responsibilities are not often taken into account (Felps, 2009). High-achieving coworkers play a crucial role in creating a positive work environment by offering crucial resources and support that improve employees' productivity and emotional health. One important source of social support for employees is their coworkers. Prior studies typically demonstrate the critical role that peer support plays in fostering an employee's mindset and conduct (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008).

SET (Blau, 1964) explains the moderation of coworker support. Abusive supervision creates negative exchange in a way e.g. insults, threats, and excessive criticism violate employees' sense of fairness and reciprocity. This leads to feelings of distrust, resentment, and reduced commitment to the organization, ultimately contributing to emotional exhaustion. Positive interactions with supportive colleagues create a sense of belonging and social connection. This support can offer emotional and practical assistance, replenishing the emotional resources depleted by abusive supervision.

Hypothesis 5: Coworker Support moderates between Abusive Supervision and Emotional Exhaustion in such a way that a high level of coworker support significantly weakens the relationship between Abusive Supervision and Emotional Exhaustion.

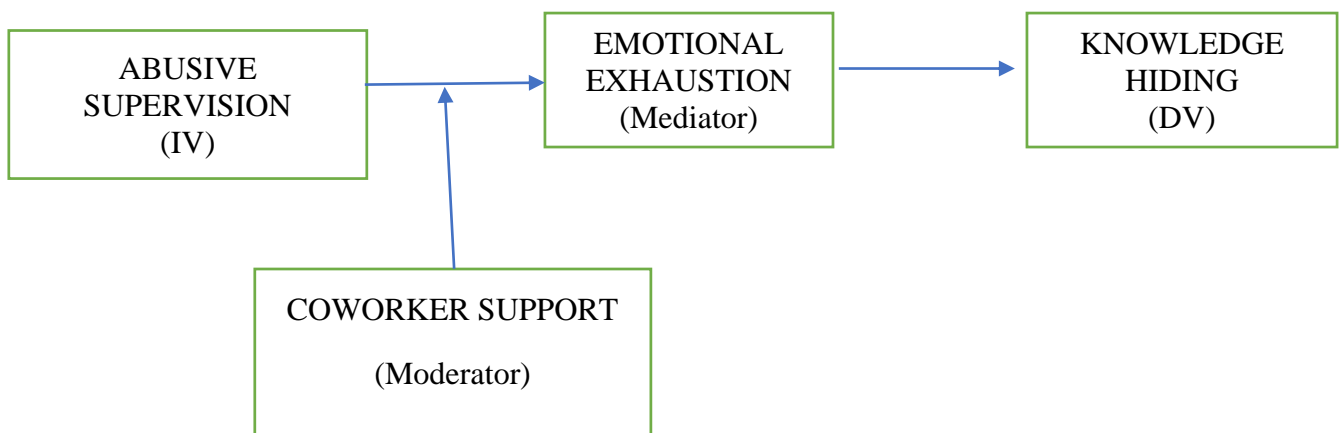


Figure 1: Theoretical framework

Methodology

Research Design:

Employees of Pakistan's telecom companies, namely Mobilink, Zong, Ufone, and Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL), are the subjects of this quantitative study, which uses a pre-designed questionnaire. Given that the questionnaire was distributed to employees within the company, the convenience sampling technique was applied. The results of the moderation and mediation process were analyzed after the data collected from the distributed questionnaire was entered into SPSS. The research focuses on individuals, specifically employees, as the unit of analysis. Employee answers are obtained via questionnaires.

The researcher contacted the administrations of several organizations and obtained permission from the workers of those organizations to obtain information after observing the study's components through the manipulation of the prepared questionnaires. 225 employees were given an English-language questionnaire with four variables—abusive supervision, knowledge hiding, coworker support, and emotional exhaustion—to assess.

A total of 225 questionnaires were given to telecom companies' employees. 189 completed questionnaires were eventually gathered for data input. All questionnaires were reviewed for accuracy and 8 of them were found to be incomplete. Hence 181 questionnaires were used for analysis. There are more male responders than female ones. Every respondent expressed willingness to complete the questionnaire voluntarily, believing that the subject matter is highly significant and that the questions are all easily comprehensible.

Among the various non-probability sampling methods, convenience sampling is a part of this broader category. Convenience sampling was selected to get around constraints on time and resources. Convenience sampling is straightforward to implement. It helped to quickly identify and approach readily available participants, making it a practical choice with limited logistical support.

The survey methodology employed in this study involved the distribution of questionnaires among employees of various telecom organizations. Specifically, questionnaires were distributed to workers of various companies belonging to Mobilink, Telenor, Ufone, Warid, Zong, and PTCL. The distribution process included various methods such as reaching out to individuals with contacts within the organizations, personal circulation among employees, utilization of online forms, and dissemination through email channels. This multipronged approach aimed to gather diverse perspectives from employees across different telecom entities, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

Version 20 of the IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) was utilized to review the data obtained via questionnaires. Correlation, regression, moderation, and mediation analysis have all been performed on the data. Correlation analysis is used to look at the extent of the relationship among factors. To investigate the influence of predictors on outcome variables, regression analysis was performed.

Instrumentation

Abusive Supervision:

The study used a 15-item scale of Tepper's (2000) to assess abusive supervision on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 showing strongly disagree and 5 showing strongly agree. An example item contains "My boss makes fun of me". Cronbach reliability of the scale for this study was .92.

Emotional Exhaustion:

The Maslach Burnout Inventory's 9-item subscale was used in this study to measure emotional exhaustion (Maslach and Jackson, 1986). On a 5-point Likert scale, the responders gave their answers where 5 showed strongly agree and 1 showed strongly disagree. An example item is "I feel burned out at work". Cronbach reliability of the scale for this study was .91.

Coworker Support:

A six-item Mossholder (2005) scale is used to measure the level of support from coworkers was used. An example item is "My coworkers are concerned about me". Respondents indicated how frequently their managers displayed each behavior on a 5-point Likert scale where 5 is for strongly agree and 1 is for strongly disagree. Cronbach reliability of the scale for this study was .77.

Knowledge Hiding:

Knowledge hiding was measured using a scale adapted from Connelly et al. (2012). It has 12 items. Sample items include "Do not share innovative achievements". It was measured on a 5-point Likert scale where 5 was used for strongly agree and 1 was used for strongly disagree. Cronbach reliability of the scale for this study was .94.

Data Analysis and Findings

Table 1: Demographic Analysis of Data

Variables		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Men	95	52.5	52.5
	Women	86	47.5	100.0
	Total	181	100.0	
Age	18-29 years	58	32.0	32.0
	30-49 years	109	60.2	92.3
	50-64 years	11	6.1	98.3
	65 years & above	3	1.7	100.0
	Total	181	100.0	
Experience	1-3 years	45	24.9	24.9
	4-6 years	47	26.0	50.8
	7-9 years	56	30.9	81.8
	10 years & more	33	18.2	100.0
	Total	181	100.0	
Education	A Levels/ Fsc	3	1.7	1.7
	Graduation	35	19.3	21.0
	MA/MS	81	44.8	65.7
	Diplomas	62	34.3	100.0
	Total	181	100.0	
Income per Month	Below Rs 20000	8	4.4	4.4
	Rs 20000 – Rs 60000	57	31.5	35.9
	Rs 60000 – Rs 100000	70	38.7	74.6
	Above 1 lac	46	25.4	100.0
	Total	181	100.0	

Of the 181 respondents, 95 were men and 86 were women, making up 52.5% and 47.5% of the sample as a whole. Consequently, there were more male employees in this study than female counterparts. The majority of the 181 respondents were middle-aged; 58 (32%), 109 (60.2%), 11 (6.1%), and 3 (1.7%) were between the ages of 18 and 29 and 30-49, 50-69, and 60 years and above. Regarding the years of experience of the respondents, 45 (24.9%) had 1-3 years, 47 (26.0%) had 4-6 years, 56 (30.9%) had 7-9 years, and 33 (18.2%) had 10 years or more. In a similar vein, the respondents' educational backgrounds include 3 A-level graduates (1.7%), 35 bachelor's graduates (19.3%), 81 master's graduates (44.8%), and 62 technical graduates (34.3%). Regarding monthly income, there were eight that fell below Rs. 20,000 (4.4%), 57 that fell between Rs. 20,000 and Rs. 60,000 (31.5%), 70 that fell between Rs. 60000 and Rs. 100000 (38.7%), and 46 that fell above Rs. 1 lac (25.4%).

Table 2: Correlation Analysis

Variables	AS	EE	CS	KH
AS	1	(.92)		
EE	.56**	1	(.91)	
CS	-.46**	-.34**	1	(.77)
KH	.62**	.53**	-.43**	1 (.94)

Notes: ** $p < 0.01$, AS=Abusive Supervision, EE=Emotional Exhaustion, CS=Coworker Support, KH=Knowledge Hiding. Reliability is given in parenthesis.

Correlation analysis is shown in Table 2. There is a substantial correlation between all four variables. Abusive Supervision has a positive and significant correlation with Emotional Exhaustion (.56**), a negative significant correlation with Coworker Support (-.46**), and a positive and significant correlation with Knowledge Hiding (.62**). Emotional Exhaustion has a positive significant correlation with Knowledge Hiding (.53**) and a negative significant correlation with Coworker Support(-.34**). Coworker Support and Knowledge Hiding were correlated (.43**).

Table 3. Regression Results for Direct and Indirect Effects

Direct effects		Effect	ΔR^2	p
H1	Abusive supervision → Knowledge hiding	.66**	.38	.000
H2	Abusive supervision → Emotional Exhaustion	.54**	.31	.000
H3	Emotional Exhaustion → Knowledge hiding	.58**	.28	.000
(Mediation of Emotional Exhaustion)				
Indirect effects		Effect	ΔR^2	p
H4	Abusive supervision → Emotional Exhaustion → Knowledge hiding	.57**	.25	.05

Notes=,** $p < .01$, $n = 181$, * $p < .05$

Hypothesis 1 states that abusive supervision has a positive effect on knowledge hiding. Abusive supervision has a positive impact on knowledge hiding, according to Table 3's results ($\beta = 0.66$, $p = 0.000$, $R^2 = 0.38$). H1 was therefore approved. Based on the findings, it can be inferred that employees are less likely to engage in knowledge hiding when their superiors treat them with respect and are not aggressive toward them.

According to Hypothesis 2, emotional exhaustion is positively impacted by abusive supervision. according to table 3's findings, abusive supervision has a positive impact on emotional exhaustion ($\beta = -.54$, $p = 0.000$, $R^2 = 0.31$). H2 was therefore supported.

According to Hypothesis 3, knowledge hiding is positively impacted by emotional exhaustion. the findings corroborate hypothesis 3 by suggesting that emotional exhaustion has a positive effect on knowledge hiding ($\beta = 0.58$, $p = 0.000$, $R^2 = 0.28$).

The mediation analysis between abusive supervision and knowledge hiding through the mediation of emotional exhaustion is displayed in Table 3. Baron and Kenny's (1986) mediation analysis was used. The findings presented in Table 3 indicate that there is a regress between abusive supervision and knowledge hiding in the presence of a mediator ($\beta = 0.57$, $p = 0.05$). The findings thus demonstrated that emotional exhaustion acts as a mediator between knowledge hiding and abusive supervision.

Moderation Analysis

Moderation analysis was performed using Baron and Kenny(1986).

Table 4. Moderation Analysis

	<i>B</i>	ΔR^2	<i>p</i>
Abusive supervision → Emotional Exhaustion	.53**	.03	
Coworker Support → Emotional Exhaustion	-.15 *	.42	
Abusive supervision X Coworker Support → Emotional Exhaustion	.10	.01	.065

Table 4 depicts that moderated analysis used for hypothesis 5 which states “Coworker Support moderates between Abusive Supervision and Emotional Exhaustion in such a way that high level of coworker support significantly weakens the relationship between Abusive Supervision and Emotional Exhaustion” Here, analysis of Baron and Kenny (1986) a three-step process was performed.

Coworker support was significant ($\beta=-0.15, p=0.02$.) in step 1. Step 2 was run for conducting moderation. The interaction term was found insignificant ($\beta=-0.10, p=0.65$), thus, our fifth hypothesis was not supported. If this theory is wrong, it means that colleagues in Pakistani culture do not encourage one another. This is due to their lack of support, which stems from their adherence to the abusive supervisory culture within the firm. Workers may be less considerate and caring toward their fellow employees. Employees who lack empathy and support for their coworkers will have a detrimental effect on the company. Rather than weakening the link between abusive supervision and emotional exhaustion, this will negatively impact the employees of those supervisors and cause them to become emotionally spent at work because they are not receiving support from their peers.

Conclusions and Discussion

In this study, the direct relationship between knowledge hiding (dependent variable) and abusive supervision (independent variable) is being examined. Social exchange theory suggests that people may perceive their employers' abusive actions as a reflection of their own (Schneider, 1987). In other words, employees who experience abusive behavior from their bosses are more prone to engage in the knowledge-hiding phenomenon.

According to earlier research (Tepper et al., 2004; Zellars et al., 2002), abusive supervision has a detrimental impact on employee behaviors as well as people's motivation to engage in and support positive behavior. The study also supports the claim that abusive supervision encourages people to engage in negative behavior (i.e. Knowledge hiding). More precisely, a wide spectrum of individual deviance is positively correlated with abusive supervision.

Workers may begin to exhibit more negative work practices in addition to fewer corporate citizenship activities (Martinko et al., 2013). This study examines the connection between abusive supervision and knowledge hiding using employees' emotional exhaustion as a mediator. The potential harm that abusive supervision can do should serve as a caution to organizations. Employers typically view supervisory abuse as a result of injustice, which can have implications for an employee's approach, attitude, and overall well-being. Low

and negative morale have well-documented consequences, such as absenteeism, resignation, and reduced extra-role behaviors of employees. The association amid emotional exhaustion other forms of emotional distress and abusive supervision is concerning as well because even the mildest symptoms can have serious collective and monetary repercussions for workplaces. An emotionally depleted employee, for instance, may not sleep well at night, feel exhausted during the day, or struggle to get along with colleagues. These individuals may also considerably increase the healthcare expenses of the organization (Hill & Ross, 2005).

According to Harvey et al. (2007), abusive supervision creates a toxic environment and makes victims (i.e., employees) feel helpless and vulnerable. As a result, victims of abuse who believe they are powerless to stop or manage their abusive bosses will experience emotional exhaustion. Tired workers typically turn to knowledge hiding from other workers as a last resort. Previous research has shown that people will either tend to the upsetting situation or remove themselves from it by using coping strategies (Ito & Brotheridge, 2003; Lee & Ashforth, 1993).

According to Mikkelsen and Einarsen (2007), the mere introduction of abusive negative supervision at work is correctly associated with elevated levels of stress among employees, or emotionally exhausted workers. This is because emotionally drained employees tend to see current events more adversely. Therefore, mental exhaustion mediates the association between abusive supervision and knowledge hiding by influencing the previously indicated relationship. The study's findings corroborate previous conclusions (Harvey et al., 2007; Aryee et al., 2008; Tepper, 2000).

Research indicates that individuals who experience abusive supervision may conceal knowledge as a result of emotional exhaustion, which diminishes the resources of the abused. As a result, they might not have as many useful resources to focus on at work, which would lead to a decrease in their commitment to their jobs. It would also encourage them to make the most of whatever resources they do have by not abusing them, which would reduce their involvement in collaborative activities like sharing knowledge and assisting coworkers.

With the assistance of a coworker acting as a moderator, the current study tends to examine the impact of abusive supervision on employees' knowledge hiding. The hypothesis is that coworker Support moderates between Abusive Supervision and Emotional Exhaustion in such a way that a high level of coworker support significantly weakens the association between abusive supervision and employees' emotional exhaustion. The hypothesis is not supported for several good reasons. First of all, considering the supervisor's main objective, employee assistance may not have enough of an impact to mitigate the harmful consequences of abusive supervision. (Ng & Sorensen, 2008; Kim & Yun, 2015). Second, research on employee associations also illustrates the potential influence of the relationship between an employer and employee on terms of exchange among colleagues (Sherony & Green, 2002). This implies that abused workers might have emotional conflict with their non-abused colleagues, which might keep them from making full use of peer support. Moreover, the current study could be interpreted from a cultural perspective. Pakistan has a relatively high power distance culture in contrast to Western cultures, which have relatively low power distances (Hofstede, 1980). In this way, peer support's capacity to lessen the impact of the manager's abusive behavior may lose some of its significance.

Colleagues at work can provide employees with both instrumental and emotional support. Employees can receive instrumental support by being reassured when they leave early due to family matters, and emotional support by having someone listen to them and share their problems (Mesmer-Magnus, 2012). According to research, employees who seek out social support from their peers are better able to deal with emotional challenges brought on by abusive supervisors and other related situations. Employees who do not seek out support from their peers are more likely to experience emotional exhaustion and other related outcomes related to abusive supervision (Barreara et al, 1981).

Coworkers are in a unique position to provide their employees with better guidance regarding their tasks and undertakings within the organization, as well as guidelines on how to achieve their desired goals. Previous studies have indicated that employee conduct and behavior are significantly influenced by the support of colleagues (Chiabaru & Harrison, 2008). Such support is crucial for developing employees' hedonic tones, which means that when coworker support is scarce within the company, employees may experience negative effects such as emotional exhaustion, especially if their supervisors are also mistreating them. Employees' strong reactions to coworker support will be excellent if support is high and terrible if support is low.

For the first time in the telecom industry, coworker support is considered a moderator in the abusive supervision-emotional exhaustion model. The startling findings show that employees in Pakistani settings do not support their peers, and if their supervisor is abusive, they are also more likely to experience emotional exhaustion from their work, which will likely lead to low job performance.

To sum up, the results align with the social exchange theory proposed by Blau (1964) and Cropanzano & Mitchell (2005). According to the theory of social exchange, workers may limit their efforts to improve open-to-choice procedures if they anticipate favorable results or if their coworkers cooperate (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). The present study is significant because it integrates supervisors and coworkers—two key exchange partners in a work environment—into a unified framework. It also examines how positive interactions between partners may be able to lessen the damaging impact of bad behaviors on the emotional exhaustion of workers.

Practical Implications

The first and most obvious conclusion is that every attempt should be made to lessen the possibility of abusive supervision taking place. Suitably allocating organizational resources to supervisor training and performance monitoring will guarantee that supervisors, rather than engaging in abusive supervisory behaviors, work with employees or subordinates in a healthy and appropriate manner. Furthermore, it is important to support supervisors in their ongoing self-evaluations and feedback-seeking so they can accurately determine how their management style is perceived by their staff. To completely eradicate abusive supervision, organizations can also create policies and procedures that encourage anonymous reporting of such incidents.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Firstly, due to time constraints, this study was cross-sectional rather than longitudinal, which would have required more resources and a longer time frame. Abusive

supervision has only been measured once, even though there is always room for levels to fluctuate as experienced by subordinates over varying periods. As such, going forward, a longitudinal design study would be a better fit for investigating the links this research looked at.

Secondly, though data were collected from several sources, the telecom industry constituted the entirety of the data, raising doubts about the extent to which the findings can be extrapolated outside of this sector, even within Pakistan.

Thirdly, it is recommended that future researchers shift their focus from the effects and outcomes of abusive supervision to the characteristics that predispose managers to abusive behaviors (Tepper, 2007).

Fourthly, future studies would also benefit from focusing on implementing initiatives in businesses that encourage people to report instances of abusive supervision at work as well as precautionary actions to stop abusive supervision.

Lastly, research on the relationship between abusive supervision and outcomes should focus more on the cultural effects, particularly those related to power distance. In addition to allowing researchers to draw conclusions that are unique to their home cultures, this will also increase the generalizability of study results across a wider range.

Conclusion

Using emotional exhaustion as a mediator and coworker support as a moderator, the current study investigated the association between abusive supervision and knowledge hiding. The survey was conducted among Pakistani telecom workers and it was found that there is a positive relationship between abusive supervision and employees knowledge hiding. Additionally, based on the findings, it was suggested that the association between abusive supervision and knowledge hiding is mediated by emotional exhaustion. Upon reviewing all available data regarding coworker support, which functions as a moderator, the findings indicate that it is ineffective in moderating abusive supervision and the relationship between emotional exhaustion.

This study's primary goal is to give practitioners a solid foundation by examining the body of current research on abusive supervision and its effects on knowledge hiding—a possible side effect of abusive supervision that hasn't been examined in previous studies. Subsequently, organizations can leverage this basis to detect and terminate abusive supervision before it escalates and causes significant grief and financial losses for the organization. When abused individuals engage in hiding information at work, it can negatively affect the way the business operates.

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