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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ABUSIVE SUPERVISION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract

Abusive supervision refers to the pattern of hostile verbal and non-verbal behavior exhibited by supervisor towards their subordinate. Abusive supervision is considered to be highly noxious in research working environment. It is considered a major source of research student's performance and success in their career. The current research proposed to investigate the "Relationship between Abusive supervision and psychological empowerment of university students". the purpose of the study was to investigate the perceptions of university students and find out the effect of psychological empowerment on abusive supervision. To achieve the research purpose the quantitative research design followed and survey method used for data collection. The sample of 603 university students enrolled in MPhil and PhD research work are participated in this study. The questionnaire of abusive supervision, and psychological empowerment developed by the researcher were used to collecting data. The collected data were recorded in SPSS sheet. The descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyzed the collected data. However, the findings of this study revealed that abusive supervision has no significant difference on psychological empowerment of the university students.

Key words: Abusive supervision, psychological empowerment.

Introduction

In the contemporary educational landscape, the relationship between students and academic authorities plays a pivotal role in shaping the overall learning experience. One crucial aspect of this dynamic is the phenomenon of abusive supervision, which encompasses behaviors by authority figures that are harmful, degrading, or undermining (Tepper 2000). The impact of abusive supervision on students' intentions to leave their academic pursuits is a multifaceted phenomenon, influenced by various psychological and contextual factor (Tepper 2000). Examining the mediating role of psychological empowerment, this study offers a novel lens to understand student well-being. It expands our understanding of the multifaceted dynamics at play within the academic environment, contributing to the ever-growing body of research in this area (Graham, Yoo, and Kristal 2022). Effective research supervision increases students' psychological empowerment which can lead to positive outcomes. Psychological empowerment can be described as an individual's conception of his or her role and ability to influence outcomes (Lyu et al. 2019).

While existing literature highlights numerous studies that have examined how supervision styles can influence individuals' knowledge hiding behaviors, there remains a gap in understanding the knowledge hiding behaviors of research students in the academic place (Srivastava, 2015; Avotra, 2021). Further exploration into contextual factors is necessary. Building on this, the present study hypothesizes that abusive supervision may serve as a predictor of knowledge hiding (Khalid et al., 2018; Pradhan et al., 2022). Although literature indicates a variety of studies that have documented the knowledge hiding behaviors of individuals being influenced by leadership styles, there is still a limited amount of knowledge pertaining to knowledge hiding behaviors of employees at work (Srivastava 2015), 2006) and contextual factors need to be investigated at large (Avotra 2021). Consistent with this view, this study anticipates that abusive supervision can be a predictor of knowledge hiding (Khalid et al. 2018),(Pradhan, Agrawal, and Nigam 2022).

Additionally, due to the negative psychological effects of abusive supervision, students are more likely to engage in destructive behaviors both at work and at home. However, these chains of events are not inevitable. There are various interventions that organizations and individuals can undertake to prevent the harmful outcomes of abusive supervision (Graham et al. 2022).

Review of related studies:

Research Supervision:

In a study carried out by researchers, it was found that research supervision is becoming a more and more crucial role for faculty members in any educational institution (Newble and Cannon n.d.). In another study, research supervision should be seen as a bigger concept that involves not just face-to-face teaching and coaching, but also tasks like training, evaluating, managing, and making revisions (Braun, V 2006). The student's interactions can be seen as examples of supervision because they show the same important people skills needed in face-to-face talks. Traditionally, research supervision has been seen as a type of teaching, suggesting that you need to be a good teacher to be a good supervisor (Stan Taylor, 2000),(Newble and Cannon n.d.). The most rewarding qualities of a supervisor from the students' point of view were academic competence, adequate length of supervision time, inspiration, sociability and interpersonal relationships (Ville Remes 2000).

Newble highlights that a crucial part of being a good educator is serving as a research supervisor, meeting the needs of students to help them successfully finish their research projects(Newble and Cannon n.d.). Improving the teaching and supervisory skills of faculty members not only elevates the caliber of education but also fosters the attainment of desired learning and research objectives among students (Newble and Cannon n.d.). Moreover, recent literature highlights an increasing focus on the excellence of research supervision and the resultant scholarly output, as perceived by students, their respective institutions, and the supervisors themselves (Kiley and Mullins 2002).

Research supervision has been regarded as an integral aspect of the academic duties of faculty members. There has been a prevailing assumption that academic staff possess innate capabilities for supervising others, rooted in their own research experiences (Kiley 2011).This study underscored the multifaceted nature of research supervision, emphasizing the importance of acknowledging and integrating various factors to enhance research supervisory skills (Newble and Cannon n.d.).

Abusive Supervision:

Abusive supervision is characterized by persistent instances of nonphysical aggression exhibited by supervisors towards their direct reports. This encompasses the manifestation of both hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors. Recent research has delved into the ways in which abusive supervision extends its impact beyond the workplace, influencing not only the professional lives of students but also reverberating into their family dynamics (Peter Scontrino n.d.) In particular, abusive supervision has the effect of diminishing students' sense of institutional inclusion (Rice, Taylor, and Forrester 2020).

Abusive supervision leads to a decline in work satisfaction for the students subjected to such mistreatment. This diminished satisfaction has been demonstrated to correlate with reduced productivity, heightened grievances, and an increased likelihood of turnover. Abusive supervision is defined as the sustained exhibition of nonphysical forms of hostility by supervisors towards their direct reports (Patterson n.d.).

Past studies examining the predictors of abusive supervision have predominantly concentrated on factors associated with the leader, follower, and institution. However, these studies have tended to overlook potential relational antecedents that could either facilitate or constrain instances of leader abuse (Hee Man Park 2017).

The Psychology of Abusive Supervision

Abusive supervision, characterized by students' perceptions of sustained hostile behaviors from their supervisors, has a broad spectrum of detrimental outcomes for both students and their institutions. To comprehend the psychology behind abusive supervision, it is crucial to consider both students' perceptions and supervisor behaviors, as various factors contribute to the emergence of abusive supervision.

- **Abusive Supervision Epidemiology**

Epidemiological studies reveal that abusive supervision is significantly more prevalent than instances of physical violence or sexual harassment in the professional realm. Shockingly, one in seven students reports experiencing abusive behavior from their current supervisor. The statistics further indicate that around 50% of students can anticipate encountering an abusive supervisor at some juncture in their working life. Female bullies often resort to social manipulation tactics, including spreading rumors and making insulting comments. Conversely, male bullies tend to employ more covert aggression, engaging in acts that may appear rational on the surface, such as unfairly appraising targets and impeding them from expressing themselves. These findings underscore the prevalence and varied manifestations of abusive supervision, highlighting gender-specific trends in the strategies employed by abusers (Rogel berg 2006).

Psychological Empowerment:

Psychological empowerment embodies the motivational framework for an intrinsic task, encompassing four cognitions that unveil a personal orientation, competence, meaning, self-determination, and impact. It reflects cognitive orientations regarding their role in the research work (Gretchen M Spreitzer 1995).

Psychological empowerment represents a significant motivational resource that can enhance students' engagement with their research work. Previous research has indicated that personality traits, such as core self-evaluations and self-esteem, play crucial roles in psychological empowerment. Therefore, we suggest that trait emotional intelligence serves as an important antecedent of psychological empowerment. Additionally, research has demonstrated that

psychological empowerment positively influences research work satisfaction and strongly predicts work engagement. A meta-analysis further emphasizes that empowerment is a critical precursor for favorable work outcomes.

Psychologically empowered students experience heightened fulfillment of intrinsic needs through their research work, leading to increased satisfaction. Moreover, research suggests that psychological empowerment acts as a mediator, influencing the relationship between the work context and outcomes. Building on this, we propose that psychological empowerment serves as a mediator in the association between trait emotional intelligence and research work satisfaction.

- **Four Dimensions of psychological empowerment**

- **Meaningfulness**

Meaning is the value of a work goal or purpose, judged in relation to an individual's own ideals or standards. It involves a fit between the requirements of a work role and an individual's beliefs, values, and behaviors (Gretchen M Spreitzer 1995)

- **Competence**

Competence, or self-efficacy, is an individual's belief in their capability to perform activities with skill. It is analogous to agency beliefs, personal mastery, or effort performance. In this context, the focus is on efficacy specific to a work role rather than a global efficacy (Gretchen M Spreitzer 1995).

- **Self-determination**

Where competence is mastery of behavior, self-determination is an individual's sense of having a choice in initiating and regulating actions. It reflects autonomy in the initiation and continuation of work behaviors and processes, such as making decisions about work methods, pace, and effort (Gretchen M Spreitzer 1995).

- **Impact**

Impact is the degree to which an individual can influence strategic, administrative, or operating outcomes at work. It is the opposite of learned helplessness. Importantly, impact is distinct from locus of control; while impact is influenced by the work context, internal locus of control is a global personality characteristic that endures across situations (Gretchen M Spreitzer 1995).

Material & Method:

This research was descriptive in nature and the quantitative method used for data collection. The purposive sampling techniques are used for select a sample. The sample consisted of 603 university students. M.Phil. and PhD research work students are participant in this study.

For the purpose of measuring abusive supervision, 30-items scale has been used in this study developed by the researcher having acceptable reliability and validity. The Responses have been rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = s Agree, 2 = Somewhat Agree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Somewhat Disagree, 5 = Disagree). Sample items include ("My supervisor is ridiculous to me", "My supervisor undermines my work or abilities")

In order to measure students' psychological empowerment, a 12 items scale developed by the researcher has been used. All responses have been rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Agree, 2 = Somewhat Agree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Somewhat Disagree, 5 = Disagree). The sample items include "I am confident about my ability to do my research work," "the research work that I do is important to me", "I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my research

work.

The researcher selected the 9 universities located in Punjab. The researcher frequent visit preferred universities and the data was collected by uniform procedure for related department. There are three faculties’ arts and social sciences, physical sciences and management sciences are selected. The researcher explains the purpose and opportunity of the review to the students and appealed their conscious involvement and cooperation and informed the respondent that their given information will be dealt confidentially and only used for conducting research.

In the first aspect of data investigation was keeping record of the data. If the data was collected the researcher reported the data in SPSS (version 23). The statistical package of social sciences is generally used in study strategy of social sciences. There are many refined and authentic data reasoning that are useful for parametric and non-parametric test. In the other aspect of data investigation was the formulation of accuracy and effectiveness of the assessment of instruments. The effectiveness of the instrument was also protected previously administrate the study.

The collected data were analyzed in two phases, descriptive and inferential statistics. In descriptive statistics the frequency, percentage and mean sore of student’s responses on individual statement are measured. In inferential statistics T-test, ANOVA and correlation are measured.

Results

Following are the results of inferential statistics

Table 1.1

Results of Independent sample t-test to compare the prevalence of abusive supervision in the female and male university student

Indicator	Mean Male	Mean Female	MD	T-value	Sig. Value
Abusive supervision	3.66	3.69	-0.02	-0.45	0.938

The table 1.1 data reveals that the results of independent sample t-test to compare the prevalence of abusive supervision in the male and female university students. the “Abusive supervision” show the value of “t” -0.45 is insignificant at the level of 0.05. it shows that no significant difference between male and female university students in the quest of abusive supervision. The female (M=3.69) is relatively higher as compared to the male(M=3.66).

Table 1.2

Results of Independent sample t-test to compare the prevalence of psychological empowerment in the female and male university student

Indicator	Mean Male	Mean Female	MD	T-value	Sig. Value
Psychological empowerment	1.83	1.84	-0.01	-0.27	0.86

The table 1.2 data shows the results of independent sample t-test to compare the prevalence of psychological empowerment in the male and female university students. the “Psychological empowerment” show the value of “t” -0.27 is insignificant at the level of 0.05. it shows that no significant difference between male and female university students in the quest of psychological empowerment. The female (M=1.84) is relatively higher as compared to the male(M=1.83).

Table 1.3

Results of Independent sample t-test to compare the prevalence of abusive supervision in the degree programmed

Indicator	M. Phil Mean	P.hd Mean	MD	T-value	Sig. Value
Abusive supervision	3.67	3.70	-0.02	-0.30	0.23

The table 1.3 data shows the results of independent sample t-test to compare the prevalence of abusive supervision in the M.Phil. and PhD university students. the “Abusive supervision” show the value of “t” -0.30 is insignificant at the level of 0.05. it shows that no significant difference between M.Phil. and PhD university students in the quest of abusive supervision. The PhD researcher (M=3.70) is relatively higher as compared to the M.Phil. students (M=3.67).

Table 1.4

Results of Independent sample t-test to compare the prevalence of psychological empowerment in the degree programmed

Indicator	M. Phil Mean	Ph.D. Mean	MD	T-value	Sig. Value
Psychological empowerment	1.85	1.76	0.09	1.66	0.50

The table 1.4 illustrates the results of independent sample t-test to compare the prevalence of psychological empowerment in the M.Phil. and PhD university students. the “Psychological empowerment” show the value of “t” 1.66 is insignificant at the level of 0.05. it shows that no significant difference between M.Phil. and PhD university students in the quest of psychological empowerment. The M.Phil. students (M=1.85) is relatively higher as compared to the PhD students (M=1.76).

Table 1.5

Results of general linear model to show the effects of faculties on the indicator of abusive supervision

Indicator	ANOVA	Sum	of	DF	Mean	F	Sig.
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		Square		Square	Value	
Abusive supervision	Between group	13.84	2	6.92	12.25	0.00
	Within Group	338.84	600	0.56		
	Total	352.68	602			

The table 1.5 demonstrates the results of general linear model of abusive supervision on the indicator of faculties. The table shows that the value of $F(2,600)= 12.25$ is significant at the level of .001. it reveals the significant difference exist in the prevalence of “Abusive supervision” in the faculties of arts and social science, physical science and management sciences.

Table 1.6

Results of LSD post-hoc test to compare the presence of different dimension of quest abusive supervision in the faculties of arts and social sciences, physical sciences and management sciences university students

Indicator	Group (I)	Group(J)	MD	Sig. Value
Abusive supervision	Arts and social sciences	Physical sciences	-0.37	0.00
		Management Sciences	0.21	0.00
	Physical Sciences	Management Sciences	0.58	0.00

Table 1.6 demonstrates the results of LSD post-hoc test to compare the presence of different dimensions of quest abusive supervision in the arts and social sciences, physical sciences and management sciences faculties of the university students. the value of mean difference (-0.37) shows that the prevalence of abusive supervision is greater in the arts and social sciences students than their management sciences students (MD=0.21). the prevalence of abusive supervision is greater in the physical sciences students then their management sciences students (MD=0.58).

Table 1.7

Results of general linear model to show the effects of faculties on the indicator of psychological empowerment

Indicator	ANOVA	Sum Square	of DF	Mean Square	F	Sig. Value
Psychological	Between group	1.31	2	0.65	1.91	0.14

empowerment	Within Group	206.32	600	0.34
	Total	207.64	602	

The table 1.7 demonstrates the results of general linear model of psychological empowerment on the indicator of faculties. The table shows that the value of $F(2,600) = 1.91$ is significant at the level of .001. it reveals the significant difference exist in the prevalence of “Psychological empowerment” in the faculties of arts and social science, physical science and management sciences.

Table 1.8

The Pearson correlation matrix

		AS	PE
AS	R	1	
	p	0.00	
	N	603	
PE	R	-.176	1
	p	0.00	
	N	603	603

Note: AS= Abusive Supervision, PE= Psychological Empowerment, “r”= Pearson Correlation, P= Significance (2-tailed)** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2- tailed).

The table 1.8 presents the statistical findings of the Pearson correlation among abusive supervision and psychological empowerment of the university students. The further data demonstrates the significant and the direct relationship between the abusive supervision and psychological empowerment at the level of 0.01. The r value for this association is -.176 insignificant at the level of 0.01. It states that the no significant difference between abusive supervision and the psychological empowerment of the university students.

Discussion:

The research on abusive supervision has been increasing over the last few decades. Recent studies indicate that abusive supervision does not correlate with or psychological engagement. However, it's noteworthy that knowledge hiding emerges as a significant negative factor, leading to decreased psychological engagement among research students. These findings underscore the importance of addressing knowledge hiding behavior, which detrimentally effects cognitive engagement. These results resonate with earlier research highlighting the adverse effects of knowledge hiding on psychological engagement (Agarwal, Nunes, and Blunt 2021; Wang & Feng 2019)

Abusive supervision may involve different forms through which it is expressed/exercised so, defining different possible ways of abusive behaviors will also be point of discussion. This phenomenon has detrimental effects on the well-being of students and on the institution as a whole. This study will help the management of the public sector universities to encourage interpersonal communication so that students can discuss the important ideas, concerns and information with their supervisors timely.

Psychological empowerment stands as a vital psychological asset that research students towards growth and continuous academic development. Serving as the research supervisors wield significant influence over students' internal motivation. Thus, administrators of academic institutions must prioritize the cultivation of supervision capabilities. Alongside fostering positive supervision traits, the author underscores the importance of addressing and mitigating negative supervision behaviors. One approach involves implementing zero-tolerance policies toward such behaviors. Drawing inspiration, the Institution highlighted the importance of research student interpersonal skills in supervisors to effectively manage negative behaviors. Consequently, research supervisor must proactively create avenues for growth and development, enabling students to realize their full potential.

The main objectives of this study were to find out the effect of psychological empowerment on abusive supervision and to find out the effects of demographic variables on abusive supervision and psychological empowerment of university students. It was current that higher than 80% of them accepted the approval of the instruments as well as their adoption. The remaining authority also recognized the instruments with some adjustment in the explanation. It was courageous that the field of authority and instructor acknowledge the thought and strategy of this research. the scale reliability, abusive supervision shows the 0.93 reliability and the psychological empowerment shows the 0.90 reliability.

The results of independent sample t-test to compare the prevalence of abusive supervision in the male and female university students. The "Abusive supervision" show the value of "t" -0.45 is insignificant at the level of 0.05. it shows that no significant difference between male and female university students in the quest of abusive supervision. the "Psychological empowerment" show the value of "t" -0.27 is insignificant at the level of 0.05. it shows that no significant difference between male and female university students in the quest of psychological empowerment. The results of general linear model of abusive supervision on the indicator of faculties shows that the value of $F(2,600)= 12.25$ is significant at the level of 0.01. it reveals the significant difference exist in the prevalence of "Abusive supervision" in the faculties of arts and social science, physical science and management sciences

Results of general linear model of psychological empowerment on the indicator of faculties shows that the value of $F (2,600)= 1.91$ is significant at the level of .001. It reveals the significant difference exist in the prevalence of "Psychological empowerment" in the faculties of arts and social science, physical science and management sciences. statistical findings of the Pearson correlation among abusive supervision and psychological empowerment of the university students demonstrates the significant and the direct relationship between the abusive supervision and psychological empowerment at the level of 0.01. The "r" value for this association is -.176 insignificant at the level of 0.01. It states that the no significant difference between abusive supervision and the psychological empowerment of the university students.

Conclusion:

This research investigates the correlation between abusive supervision among university students and its detrimental impacts on psychological empowerment. It also examines how the support for abusive supervision interacts with psychological empowerment through the supervisor-student relationship. The findings indicate no significance relationship between abusive supervision and psychological empowerment. The supervisor-student relationship serving as a mediator for positive moderating effects. These findings enrich the existing body of literature on abusive

supervision and psychological empowerment, shedding light on the mechanisms underlying the reduction of psychological empowerment due to abusive supervision. Supervisors should aim to optimize leadership behavior comprehensively and address both positive and negative essentials of leadership to promote students psychological empowerment.

Recommendations:

Abusive supervision may be controlled in academic institutions on degree level by making a comprehensive policies/SOPs by the Higher Education Commission and regularly follow ups to minimize the impact of psychological empowerment among research students. Future researchers should prioritize efforts towards preventing abusive supervision in the academic institutions. While there is abundant practical knowledge available regarding the implications of research on abusive supervision, it would be highly advantageous to begin testing theoretical implications within actual institutional settings. In this regard, future researchers could draw on recent efforts to establish a mistreatment-reduction climate through initiatives such as promoting aggression-preventive supervisor behaviors and implementing existing programs aimed at fostering a positive academic climate for research students to reduce mistreatment. Given that abusive supervision is a distinct form of research work mistreatment, leveraging such approaches could prove particularly beneficial.

Researchers are urged to shift their focus from merely examining the outcomes and implications of abusive supervision to exploring the attributes and characteristics that could potentially drive supervisors toward such behaviors (Tepper 2007). This shift promises to be highly productive and feasible in terms of preventing abusive supervision, compared to the conventional approach of primarily studying its adverse outcomes. Additionally, future researchers should explore the academic-specific effects of abusive supervision, as this could aid in identifying segments of academic institutions where a deeper understanding of abusive supervision is most urgently required.

Supervisors should strive for a comprehensive optimization of leadership behavior, acknowledging and tackling both the positive and negative aspects. This approach is crucial for fostering research students' psychological empowerment and bolstering their internal motivation. By doing so, the generalizability of study findings can be broadened, enabling researchers to derive culturally specific implications that contribute meaningfully to their respective native cultures.

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