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**Employees in the Face of Abusive Supervision:  
Using Personal, Social and Environment Resources as Coping  
Mechanisms**

A thesis  
submitted in fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree  
of  
**Doctor of Philosophy**  
in  
**Leadership Communication**  
at  
**The University of Waikato**  
by  
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THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WAIKATO**  
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## Abstract

Abusive supervision and its effects on employee work outcomes and well-being has been the focus of attention of academic researchers and practitioners for the last two decades. Not everyone has the confidence and support to report these abusive supervisory behaviours or access to alternate job opportunities due to economic and financial constraints. This thesis explores what employees do in the face of abusive supervision with an overarching question, *“How do employees cope with abusive supervision?”*.

In order to explore this in detail, three studies were carried out as part of the thesis. The study 1 was a systematic literature review of all the coping mechanisms studies carried out until 2020. The literature review found that employees use resources (personal, social, or environment) as moderating mechanisms to buffer or cope with the detrimental effect of abusive supervision. It also analysed the key theories used to understand the operations of the coping mechanisms and provide some significant future research directions that guided the framework for two empirical studies included in the thesis.

Next, the study 2 analysed multiple coping strategies for abusive supervision, as pointed out in the literature review. It addressed the gaps by examining employee’s personal (psychological empowerment, resilience), social (workplace friendships) and environment (structural empowerment) resources to cope with the effects of abusive supervision. Utilizing the tenets of COR theory, the study found that damage to psychological empowerment plays a significant role in diminishing the work engagement and creativity of employees, as compared to structural empowerment. While workplace friendships play a significant role in buffering the effects of abusive supervision on work engagement and creativity of employees via structural empowerment.

Lastly, study 3 is guided by the future research directions of study 1 and 2. This study explored the coping mechanisms of employee mindfulness (a personal resource) on abusive supervision and employee well-being (work engagement and burnout) via organizational identification (a social resource) in two different cultural contexts: Pakistan and New Zealand. Drawing on the conservation of resources (COR) theory, the study found that organisational identification mediates the relationship between abusive supervision and employee work engagement for both samples. However, employee mindfulness only buffered the harmful impact of abusive supervision in the Pakistan sample. The study reveals new insights into the impact of personal, social and environment/ organisational resources on abusive supervision, providing directions for future research and practice.

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*So which of the favours of your Lord would you deny?*

Ar-Rehman 55:16 (The Quran)

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

*“An eye for an eye will only make the whole world blind.”*

-Anonymous

The adapted version of an old maxim somehow points towards the debate we are about to start here. The world's history is full of such events where people, teams, organisations, or nations have fully acted upon the famous maxim “an eye for an eye”, and the outcomes were disastrous for both entities. Whenever we talk about teams or organisations, we think of people with the same values, ethics, and beliefs and who behave according to certain norms prevalent within the group or organisational environment. Idealised concepts of teams and work organisations invoke rosy images of people working together to achieve a specific goal, led by an individual who has a sense of authority over them. However, the role of a leader is not just to command people to follow orders blindly. Instead, leaders should inspire others to follow them as a result of their own actions speaking louder than words. Often, problems between leaders and followers arise when leaders exploit their position of authority and engage in behaviours that take full advantage of the lesser powers of their subordinates’.

Research scholars, critics, and practitioners have always given considerable attention to constructive, positive, and successful forms of leadership. Destructive, ineffective, and damaging forms of leadership have attracted less scholarly attention. Indeed, most early researchers did not regard negative leadership as part of leader behaviours and described this phenomenon as an absence of leadership (Ashforth, 1994).

Abusive supervision has the capacity to negatively impact on the work environment of employees, leading them to lose their resources (Carlson et al., 2012). Abusive behaviours by leaders give rise to negative employee outcomes (Tepper, 2000), increasing their turnover intentions and risking financial loss for the organisation (Mackey et al., 2017; Tepper et al., 2007). Confrontation within an organisational environment, especially with those who are in higher levels of the organisational hierarchy, causes stress and leads to a loss of employee resources (Khan, 2015). Abusive supervision has been described as a potential source of workplace stress (Carlson et al., 2012; Tepper, 2000). Abusive supervisory behaviours involve employees or followers perceiving the behaviours of their supervisors towards themselves as consistently hostile, whether this is verbal or non-verbal in nature (Tepper, 2000). When followers perceive that their supervisors are constantly abusing them, there is a decline in their job satisfaction, affective commitment, work engagement and organisational citizenship behaviours (OCBs), and they will feel emotionally exhausted and burnt out (Tepper, 2007).

Research suggests that when employees try to resist the abusive behaviour of their supervisors, their personal, social, and organisational resources start diminishing (Bakker et al., 2004; Khan, 2015). As a result, such employees become even more vulnerable to abusive supervision and experience emotional strain (Harvey et al., 2007; Khan, 2015; Tepper, 2000). In turn, this leads to burnout and a reduction in work performance (Aryee et al., 2008). To avoid this continuous loss of resources, employees will try to utilise their personal skills or resources to cope with the stress at work (Halbesleben et al., 2014). The social and psychological resources of employees will play a vital role in moderating the abusive behaviours of their supervisors.

This study sets out to examine how employees cope with abusive supervision and understand the role different resources play to buffer the effects of that abusive supervision. It begins with a literature review discussing the research on coping mechanisms used by employees in the

face of abusive supervision. The review focuses on research involving the personal, social and environment resources of employees, especially the interplay of psychological empowerment and structural empowerment. Based on the findings of the literature review, this thesis then conducted two empirical studies to ascertain how organisational identification, resilience, workplace friendships, and mindfulness influence employee outcomes and well-being in the presence of abusive supervisory behaviours.

## **Problem Statement**

Leaders have the ability to inspire, motivate and mobilise their followers by providing them with the vision, guidance, and strategy to achieve their goals (Kotter, 2000). Dysfunctional leaders have some or all of these characteristics along with dysfunctional personality traits that lead them to misuse their power or authority. Dysfunctional leadership can also be intentional or unintentional, depending on the level of dysfunctional characteristics possessed by a leader (Rose et al., 2015). Research has also shown that dysfunctional leadership encompasses a continuum of dysfunctional behaviours from mildly inappropriate behaviours, such as being rude, to extreme dysfunction, such as directly abusive (Rose et al., 2015).

Dysfunctional leadership becomes a greater problem when leaders start abusing their follower intentionally and consistently. The recurrence of these behaviours leads followers to feel detached, not only towards their leaders, but also towards their job, minimising their effectiveness and making them a burden for the organisation. It is very important for organisations to be aware of how employees perceive the behavioural dispositions of their leader, and how these behaviours, if abusive, affect the psychological resources, attitudes, and behaviours of employees in the long run. When employees feel that their leader is consistently abusing them or belittling them in front of others, their level of engagement, creativity, and job satisfaction declines (Tepper, 2000, 2007). Of course, because everyone's psychological

makeup is unique, what one employee regards as unacceptable behaviour by their supervisor may be accepted by another employee. Every employee will have their own particular perception of their leader's behaviours and, accordingly, respond to these based on their own capacity. This is why an in-depth examination of the role played by employees' resources is so important.

This thesis examines the workforce context of New Zealand and Pakistan. New Zealand has been found to have the second worst rate of workplace bullying among the developed countries with almost one in five employees being affected by this top-down hostile behaviour (Redmond, 2016). According to a recent report by the Institute of Business Ethics (2018) on work ethics in NZ, Australia and UK, New Zealand has the highest rate of workplace misconduct, about 26%, compared to 24% in the United Kingdom and in Australia. More worryingly, it is estimated that approximately 34% of workplace misconduct in New Zealand goes unreported because employees fear losing their jobs or because they do not believe that any kind of corrective measures will be taken (Dondé & Somasundaram, 2018). Conversely, in a developing country such as Pakistan, studies suggest that employees are more exposed to higher levels of top-down workplace bullying than in European or Australian workplaces (Ahmad et al., 2021). Studies also show that the majority of these destructive behaviours were underreported owing to Pakistani employees fearing retaliation, lacking assertive skills to deal with the situation, and feeling trapped by the lack of alternate job opportunities (Cassum, 2014). This raises a key question: if bullying/abusive behaviours are underreported and many employees continue to retain their roles, how do they cope with this workplace stress?

As stated earlier, this study sets out to determine what kind of coping resources are useful for employees when they experience abusive supervision. It seeks to provide an understanding of how employees cope with abusive supervision by drawing on their own personal

(psychological empowerment, resilience, and mindfulness), social (workplace friendships), and environment (organisational identity and structural empowerment) resources. The research objectives listed in the following section contribute to answering the overarching question posed by this thesis:

***“How do employees cope with abusive supervision?”***

## **Research Objectives**

This thesis is designed to achieve the following objectives:

- To carry out a systematic literature review of studies on the buffering mechanisms of abusive supervision and to identify the theoretical perspectives underpinning these studies.
- To extend the research on coping mechanisms of abusive supervision by finding out the over-arching theoretical support for buffering of resources.
- To come up with key coping mechanisms, thereby extending the literature on coping mechanisms of abusive supervision research.
- To present key directions for future research and some significant practical implications for organizations to deal with the harmful effects of abusive supervision.

## **Research Questions**

The overarching research question raised in the previous sections of this thesis is:

- How do employees cope with abusive supervision?

A systematic literature review was carried out and the future directions set out in that review led us to raise the following research questions: -

- How does employees' perceptions of abusive supervision affect their psychological and structural empowerment, work engagement, creativity, and job burnout?
- Does the psychological and structural empowerment of employees mediate the relationship between employees' perceptions of abusive supervision and their work engagement, creativity, and job burnout?
- Do employee resilience and workplace friendships moderate the relationship between employees' perceptions of abusive supervision and their psychological and structural empowerment?
- How do employee resilience and workplace friendships moderate the mediated relationship between employees' perceptions of abusive supervision, their psychological and structural empowerment, work engagement, creativity, and job burnout?
- How do employee perceptions of abusive supervision affect their organisational identification, work engagement, and job burnout?
- Does organisational identification of employees mediate the relationship between employees' perceptions of abusive supervision and their work engagement and job burnout?
- Does employee mindfulness moderate the relationship between employees' perceptions of abusive supervision and their organisational identification?
- Does employee mindfulness moderate the mediated relationship between employees' perceptions of abusive supervision, psychological and structural empowerment, work engagement and job burnout?

## **Methodology**

Initially an extensive literature review of research on abusive supervision and coping mechanisms of abusive supervision was carried out. The research gaps and theoretical

implications that were revealed as a result of the systematic review enabled the development of the theoretical frameworks used for the two empirical studies.

A quantitative research methodology, Hayes PROCESS (2013) using SPSS, was used to analyse the direct, indirect, and moderating relationships between the variables in the theoretical framework. For the first empirical study (Chapter 3), full-time or part-time working postgraduate students in New Zealand universities were asked to participate in the quantitative study using online questionnaire surveys. For the second empirical study (Chapter 4), employees working in the service industry in Pakistan and in New Zealand were asked to participate in the quantitative study using online questionnaire surveys.

### **Cross-Cultural Context**

This thesis includes a cross-cultural empirical study conducted in two very different cultural contexts: Pakistan and New Zealand. According to Hofstede's cultural insights, at slightly above 50, Pakistan scores highly in terms of power distance orientation compared to New Zealand with a score of 22 (see <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/>). People with a high-power distance orientation are considered to be more accepting of unequal distributions of power and are easily manipulated by people with power (Carl et al., 2004). As a result, employees with a high-power distance orientation may accept abusive supervisory behaviours as a sign of power from their leader.

Research on abusive supervision and its impact on employees' work outcomes has been on the rise in the last few years in Pakistan. Studies found that abusive supervision results in increased turnover intentions (Arif et al., 2017; Khan et al., 2010; Raza et al., 2017; Saleem et al., 2018), emotional exhaustion (Khan, 2015), employee silence (Phulpoto et al., 2021), supervisor-directed deviance and workplace deviance (Javed et al., 2018; Laila et al., 2019; Raza et al.,

2019), knowledge hiding behaviours (Ayub et al., 2021; Islam et al., 2021; Khalid et al., 2018) and decreased employee performance (de Clerq et al., 2021), Organizational Citizenship behaviour (OCB) (Ahmed et al., 2019; Qaiser Danish et al., 2019). Recent research studies have also looked into some of the coping mechanisms of abusive supervision (Ahmad & Begum, 2020; Malik et al., 2020; Raza et al., 2019; Saleem et al., 2018). Religion holds a significant value in Pakistan's culture. That's why, Islamic work ethics is found to be the most studied buffering mechanism and has been found to have significant buffering effects in the relationship between abusive supervision and knowledge hiding behaviours (Islam et al., 2021; Khalid et al., 2018), knowledge sharing behaviours (Islam et al., 2021), deviant workplace behaviour (Javed et al., 2018), and workplace gossip (Hashim et al., 2019).

On the contrary, New Zealand is a country with low power distance but still 1 in 5 New Zealanders have reported workplace bullying (Redmond, 2016). A study by de Fluiter (2011) found that high levels of perceived organizational support (POS) and perceived supervisor support (PSS) increased job satisfaction and life satisfaction of employees while decreasing their anxiety and depression of employees in spite of abusive supervision. Another study by Haar et al. (2016) found that abusive supervision increased employee turnover intentions via low perceived organizational support (POS). Subsequently, Powell (2020) found that abusive supervision negatively impacts employees' work engagement and increases their job burnout, while trait mindfulness failed to buffer the effects of abusive supervision. The dearth of abusive supervision literature in context of New Zealand raises all the more questions to further explore this area of research especially when workplace bullying incidences from top-down are increasing.

One of the questions explored in this thesis, particularly in chapter 4, is how different cultural contexts and the cultural value orientations of people affect their responses to abusive

supervision. For instance, in a country such as Pakistan, with high levels of unemployment, poverty, and families often relying on sole breadwinners for their survival, what other coping mechanisms do employees use other than Islamic work ethics when they are compelled to endure abusive supervision? In New Zealand, a country in which employees are less tolerant of overbearing forms of leadership, how do they cope with behaviours that are perceived as unacceptable and abusive?

## **Significance of Research**

Abusive supervision has been researched extensively in the past two decades, but knowledge gaps still exist. This thesis extends the literature on abusive supervision by providing a synthesis of studies on the coping mechanisms of abusive supervision. The first paper employs a resource perspective in its review and synthesis of recent studies on the coping mechanisms of abusive supervision, from which promising directions for future research are identified. The second paper of the thesis tests the comparative efficacy of personal, social and environment resources in the relationship between abusive supervision and employee outcomes (work engagement, creativity, job burnout). This empirical study highlights a combination of resources that is particularly effective in helping employees to buffer the harmful effects of abusive supervision. The study is novel in utilising the resource caravan perspective of COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989) to investigate how resilience (personal resource) and workplace friendships (social resource) work in tandem to lessen the damage caused by abusive supervision on the psychological (personal resource) and structural empowerment (environment resource) of employees. The third paper in this thesis contributes to the rare corpus of cross-cultural research in abusive supervision by conducting cross-cultural empirical study of employees in Pakistan and in New Zealand. It is one of the very few studies to explore how differences in the power distance value orientations of respondents from different

countries may affect the ability of employees to cope with abusive supervision.

## **Outline of Thesis**

Chapter 1 presents an overall introduction of the problem at hand and the significance of the research conducted

Chapter 2 presents a systematic literature review of studies on the buffering mechanisms of abusive supervision. Titled “Coping Mechanisms of Abusive Supervision-A Resource Perspective”, a shorter version of this paper is ready to be submitted to a refereed journal.

Chapter 3, “Abusive Supervision and Employee Empowerment-Coping Mechanism of Employee Resilience and Workplace Friendship”, presents the first empirical study of this research. This paper was published in the *Journal of Leadership and Organization Studies* in 2021.

Chapter 4 presents the cross-cultural empirical study of this thesis with a paper entitled “Cross Cultural Comparison of the Impact of Abusive Supervision on Employee Engagement and Job Burnout via Organisational Identification: The Moderating Role of Mindfulness”. The paper has been submitted to the *Journal of Business Ethics* and is in the review process.

Chapter 5 presents the conclusion of the thesis and discusses the theoretical and practical implications of its findings before outlining some future research directions.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **STUDY ONE**

#### **Paper Title**

Coping Mechanisms of Abusive Supervision: A Resource Perspective

#### **Declaration**

I carried out the systematic literature review. I synthesized all the information and wrote the full first draft of the paper. The theoretical contributions in the paper are my own. My two supervisors (co-authors) provided feedback on the theoretical aspects of the paper and editing. Overall, I contributed 70% to this paper and they contributed 30% to it.

#### **Publication Status**

The paper is ready to be submitted to a refereed journal for publication.

The following paper follows the APA layout, referencing and language generally required by the journal editors.

## **Abstract**

Research has shown that employees use resources (personal, social, or environment) to buffer or cope with the detrimental effect of abusive supervision. While there is considerable research on abusive supervision and its antecedents and consequences, there is little synthesis of the research on the coping mechanisms used by employees in the face of abusive supervision. Drawing together strands from various literature, this paper explores how resources serve as buffering mechanisms by moderating the abusive supervision-outcome relationships. It also analyses the key theories used to understand the operations of the coping mechanisms and it suggests directions for future research.

**Keywords:** Abusive supervision, conservation of resources theory, coping mechanism, resources, moderators

## **Introduction**

Abusive supervision is “subordinates’ perceptions of the extent to which supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviours, excluding physical contact” (Tepper, 2000, p. 178). It includes a wide array of hostile behaviours, such as publicly insulting or ridiculing employees, criticising them, reminding them of their past mistakes, threatening them, or using foul language against them, which ultimately causes them stress and strain (Harris et al., 2011; Tepper, 2000). Abusive supervision involves a consistent behaviour on the part of supervisors rather than being a one-off incident and it is also based on employees’ subjective perceptions (Tepper, 2000).

In the last 20 years, several studies have attempted to understand and explore the adverse effects of abusive supervision on employees, both on their work outcomes and well-being (Lian et al., 2012; Mackey et al., 2015). These studies have found that abusive supervision increases employees’ turnover intentions (Tepper, 2007), work-family conflicts (Hoobler & Brass, 2006), psychological distress (Harvey et al., 2007), and diminishes employee creativity (Liu et al., 2012), job performance (Priesemuth et al., 2014) and employee trust (Xiaqi et al., 2012), costing organisations billions of dollars (Tepper, 2007). With the increase in research on abusive supervision in the past two decades, several review articles have been published. The majority of those review papers are meta-analyses synthesising research on abusive supervision (e.g., Tepper, 2007; Martinko et al., 2013; Tepper et al., 2017; Mackey et al., 2017). Other studies have a sharper focus, for example, examining the antecedents of abusive supervision (e.g., Zhang & Bednall, 2016), consequences of abusive supervision (e.g., Zhang & Liao, 2015), OCB (organisational citizenship behaviour) and CWB (counterproductive work behaviours) as outcomes of abusive supervision (Zhang et al., 2019), abusive supervision and employee deviance (Park et al., 2019), abusive supervision research in the hospitality sector (Yu et al., 2020), and content analysis of abusive supervision research (e.g., Zhang & Liu,

2018). Some of these reviews (Tepper et al., 2017; Zhang & Liu, 2018) emphasise the need to explore buffering mechanisms that mitigate the effects of abusive supervision, because rooting out abusive supervision may not be possible (Harvey et al., 2007). Indeed, an area that has not been sufficiently addressed is how employees utilise their psychological and/or social resources to cope with the effects of abusive supervision. Resources are valuable entities for individuals, or they may help individuals to achieve valuable outcomes (Hobfoll, 2002). Coping refers to the “constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts designed to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person” (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 141). Research has shown that the effects of abusive supervision on employee work and personal outcomes depend on how they cope with it (Chi & Liang, 2013). When faced with abusive supervision situations, employees cope differently. According to Tepper et al. (2007), abusive supervision does not affect all employees in the same way because different employees have different skills and capabilities to cope with the stressful situations presented by abusive supervisors (Chi & Liang, 2013). Employees who use effective coping strategies can minimise resource loss or even acquire new resources (Hobfoll, 2002). To understand these underlying mechanisms, we have synthesised various studies on coping or buffering mechanisms with respect to abusive supervision and the effect of these mechanisms on employee outcomes.

The first section of the paper describes the search strategy to gather all the relevant papers for review. The second section describes the resources used by employees to cope with abusive supervision, and how these resources buffer the relationship between abusive supervision and employee outcomes. The resources alter the strength of the relationship between abusive supervision and employee outcomes and hence act as moderators in the relationship. The third section identifies the major theoretical perspectives on coping/buffering responses to abusive

supervision. The fourth and final section synthesises the review's key findings and presents potential future research directions.

## **Methodology**

We searched for published research articles using a variety of databases including Scopus, Emerald Insight, ScienceDirect, Google Scholar and ProQuest, using specific keywords such as “abusive supervision”, “abusive leader”, “moderation”, “moderator,” “moderated-mediation”, “consequences”, “buffering”, “coping” and different combinations of these keywords. The inclusion criteria required the studies to be: 1) empirical studies, 2) published journal articles, 3) peer reviewed articles with abusive supervision as the antecedent in a relationship, and 4) articles based on coping/buffering mechanism of abusive supervision only. We searched articles up to the time period December 2020.

Our keywords search in google and other electronic databases came up with more than 5000 articles. Following a rigorous process of screening articles based on our inclusion criteria, a total of 51 articles were left for our review.

## **Findings**

### **Moderators of Abusive Supervision-Outcome Relationship**

In order to understand, how resources act as moderators in the relationship between abusive supervision and employee outcomes, and therefore, how resources help individuals to cope with abusive supervision, we need to understand the concept of resources and the various types they comprise. Resources are entities that either have their own value (e.g., self-esteem, self-efficacy, etc.), or they act as a means to obtain value (e.g., social support, money, or work structure, etc.) (Hobfoll, 1988; Holahan et al. 1999). Researchers have defined these resources

differently; some have labelled them using dichotomies such as internal and external, biological and cultural, or distal and proximal to the self (Hobfoll, 2002). While researchers such as Halbesleben et al. (2014) have defined resources as anything that helps an individual to achieve his/her goals, resources are also defined as anything that hold a value for a certain group of people sharing the same cultural values (Hobfoll, 2002). For example, self-efficacy is not a resource for all people, but it has acted as a resource for most people in western cultures in a wide range of contexts (Bandura, 1977; Hobfoll, 2002). Conservation of Resources theory (COR) theory has been the most commonly used of the integrated resource theories (see table 4 for more details). COR divides resources into four categories: 1) *Objects* (assets, products, or money); 2) *Conditions* (interpersonal relationships, social support, social desirability/status); 3) *Personal characteristics* (personal traits, psychological emotional capabilities, and value systems); 4) *Energies* (time, knowledge and situational contexts to obtain other resources) (Hobfoll, 1989). For this paper, we label “conditions” as “social resources”, “personal characteristics” as “personal resources”, and “energies” as “environment resources” (given that they help people obtain other valuable resources). This review focused only on these three categories of resources.

### ***Personal Resources***

Personal resources may consist of personality traits (e.g., agreeableness from the Big Five), psychological characteristics (e.g., resilience), emotional capabilities (e.g., emotional intelligence) or a value orientation (e.g., power distance orientations). Table 1 below lists and summarises the findings of recent studies that have explored how personal resources buffer the harmful effects of abusive supervision on employees. For this paper, we use the term ‘buffering’ and ‘coping’ interchangeably, and deal with ways that individuals use their resources to mitigate the harmful effects of abusive supervision. These resources alter the

strength of the relationship between abusive supervision and an outcome variable (i.e., as moderators). The studies are listed from the most to the least recent, and includes the theory used.

*Table 1 Personal Resources Buffering Abusive Supervision*

<b>Author/Year</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Moderators</b>	<b>Mediators</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Studies and Sample</b>	<b>Theory</b>	<b>Findings</b>
Huang et al. (2020)	Taiwan	Job Crafting	Emotional Exhaustion	Psychological Withdrawal Behaviour	N=267 high-tech industry employees	JD-R framework	High job crafting buffered the negative effects of abusive supervision on psychological withdrawal behaviour of employees via reduced emotional exhaustion.
Peng et al. (2020)	USA, China	Cognitive Reappraisal, Emotional Suppression	N/A	Supervisor-directed Deviance	N=499 full-time workers through MTurks N= 318 Chinese full-time workers	COR Theory	High cognitive reappraisal attenuated the positive association between abusive supervision and supervisor-directed deviance while emotional suppression exacerbated the relationship.
Sungu et al. (2020)	Kenya	Goal Commitment	Motivation Control, Self-Defeating Cognition	Job Performance, Organisational Deviance	N=127 media house workers, Time-lagged study in 3 phases,	Goal-Commitment Theory	High goal commitment buffered the relationship between abusive supervision and organisational performance and organisational deviance via motivational control.
Lopez et al. (2020)	USA	Core Self-Evaluations (CSE)	N/A	Student-Athlete Performance	N=145 student athletes	Core Self-Evaluations Theory	High CSE attenuated the negative relationship between abusive supervision and student-athletes' performance.
Yang et al. (2020)	China	Dispositional Forgiveness	Performance-Promotion Attribution	Job Performance	N=318 employees with 89 supervisors, three-wave field survey	Attribution Theory	High dispositional forgiveness buffered the relationship between abusive supervision and performance via high performance promotion attribution.
Malik et al. (2020)	Pakistan	Light Triad Traits	Psychological Contract Violations	Malevolent Creativity	N=297 junior doctors	Affective Events Theory (AET)	Employees high on light triad traits participated less in malevolent creativity caused by abusive supervision.

Author/Year	Country	Moderators	Mediators	Outcomes	Studies and Sample	Theory	Findings
Shen et al. (2020)	China	Proactive Personality	Feedback Seeking Behaviour (FSB)	Employee Creativity	N=341 manager–employee dyads	Substitutes for Leadership	Highly proactive personality buffered the relationship between abusive supervision and employee creativity via maintained FSB.
Wu et al. (2020)	China	Lone Wolf Tendency	Moral identity	Interpersonal Deviance	N=234 supervisor–subordinate dyads; three wave study	Social Cognitive Theory	High lone wolf tendencies alleviated the negative effects of abusive supervision on employee interpersonal deviance via moral identity.
Ahmed & Begum (2020)	Pakistan	Organization-based Self Esteem (OBSE)	Emotional Exhaustion	Intention to Leave	N=277 banking sector employees; two wave study	Behavioural Plasticity Theory	High OBSE attenuated the effects of abusive supervision on employees' intention to leave via emotional exhaustion.
Srikanth (2020)	India	Agreeableness, Seeking Social Support	N/A	Contextual Performance	N=652 full-time employees	Transactional theory of stress and coping	High agreeableness and social support seeking behaviour mitigated the negative relationship between abusive supervision and contextual performance.
Ghani et al. (2020)	China	Psychological Ownership	Psychological Contract Breach	Knowledge Hiding	N=344 employees; Time lagged study	Social Exchange Theory, Psychological Ownership Theory	Psychological ownership buffered the harmful effects of abusive supervision on knowledge-hiding behaviours of employees
Afsar et al. (2019)	Pakistan	Moral Efficacy, Moral Attentiveness	N/A	Moral Courage	N=359 nurses and nurse head dyads;	Behavioural Plasticity Theory	High moral efficacy and moral attentiveness mitigated the negative effects of abusive supervision on moral courage of employees.

Author/Year	Country	Moderators	Mediators	Outcomes	Studies and Sample	Theory	Findings
Peltokorpi (2019)	Japan	Power Distance Orientation	Interaction Avoidance	Emotional Exhaustion	N=600 employees; three wave study over a 12-month time period	Transactional Model	High power distance buffers the positive relationship between abusive supervision and emotional exhaustion via interaction avoidance.
Zhao & Guo (2019)	China	Proactive Personality, Resource Management Ability (RMA)	N/A	Helping Behaviours	N=353 employees of ten hotels	COR Theory	High proactive personality and RMA weakened the negative relationship between abusive supervision and helping behaviours of employees.
Al-Hawari et al. (2020 <sup>o</sup> )	UAE	Employee Resilience	Emotional Exhaustion	Self-reported Capacity to Satisfy Customers, Supervisor-rated Service Performance	N=192 supervisors-subordinate dyad	COR Theory	Resilience did not moderate the relationship between abusive supervision and employees' capacity to satisfy customers and service performance via emotional exhaustion.
Burton & Barber (2019)	China	Mindfulness	Interactional Justice	Retaliation	N=230 employees; cross-sectional design; N=263 undergraduate students using a scenario-based, experimental study	Social Exchange Theory	High mindfulness exacerbated the relationship between abusive supervision and employee retaliation via interactional justice.
Wang et al. (2019)	China	Locus of Control	Job Insecurity	Innovative Behaviour	N=641 manufacturing sector employees	COR Theory	High locus of control (external) buffered the negative relationship between abusive supervision and innovative behaviours of employees via job insecurity.
Khalid et al. (2018)	Pakistan	Islamic Work Ethics	Interpersonal Justice	Knowledge Hiding Behaviours	N=224 hospitality employees	Islamic Work Ethics (IWE)	IWE mitigated the effects of abusive supervision on knowledge-hiding behaviours via interactional justice.

Author/Year	Country	Moderators	Mediators	Outcomes	Studies and Sample	Theory	Findings
Pradhan & Jena (2018)	India	Emotional Intelligence	N/A	Intention to Quit	N=353 healthcare professionals; two time points	COR Theory	High emotional intelligence had reverse buffering effect and increased intentions to quit.
Zheng & Liu (2017)	China	Employee Mindfulness	Self-Efficacy	Employee Creativity	N=287 employees and 79 leaders	Social Cognitive Theory	High mindfulness buffered the negative effects of abusive supervision on employees' creative performance via self-efficacy.
Gu et al. (2016)	China	Face	Departmental Identification	Creativity	N=207 full-time employees in China	Social Identity Theory	High face buffered the negative effects of abusive supervision on employee creativity via departmental identification.
Kim et al. (2016)	South Korea	Learning Goal Orientation (LGO); Self-enhancement Motive	N/A	Knowledge Sharing	N=245 supervisor-subordinate dyads	COR Theory	High LGO buffered the relationship between abusive supervision and knowledge sharing while high self-enhancement exacerbated the effects of abusive supervision on knowledge sharing.
Khan (2015)	Pakistan	Intimidation, Recognition	N/A	Job Tension, Emotional Exhaustion, Turnover Intentions	N=504 telecommunication sector employees	COR Theory	Intimidation and recognition did not moderate the relationship between abusive supervision and employee job tension, emotional exhaustion and turnover intentions.
Frieder et al. (2015)	USA	Proactive Voice Behaviour, Resource Management Ability	N/A	Job Satisfaction, Turnover Intentions, Emotional Exhaustion, Work Effort	N=143 employees, N=202 medical personnel in a hospital	JD-C model	Highly proactive personality and high RMA buffered the relationship between abusive supervision and employee outcomes.

Author/Year	Country	Moderators	Mediators	Outcomes	Studies and Sample	Theory	Findings
Zhang et al. (2014)	China	Core Self-Evaluations (CSE)	Intrinsic Motivation	Creativity	N=235 employees in three-wave study	Behavioural Plasticity Theory	High CSE buffered the negative effects of abusive supervision on creativity via intrinsic motivation.
Chi & Liang (2013)	Taiwan	Cognitive Reappraisal, Expressive Suppression	Emotional Exhaustion	Work Withdrawal	N=283 officers from Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence	COR Theory	High cognitive reappraisal buffered the effects of abusive supervision on work withdrawal via emotional exhaustion while high expressive suppression exacerbated the effects.
Lin et al. (2013)	China	Individual Power Distance Orientations	N/A	Mental Health, Job Satisfaction	N=762 employees, cross-sectional study; N=347 employees, two-wave study	Cognitive Appraisal Theory	High Power Distance Orientation buffers the relationship between abusive supervision and employee mental health and job satisfaction
Mackey et al. (2013)	USA	Social Adaptability	N/A	Job Tension, Emotional Exhaustion, Job Satisfaction, Work Effort	N=240 employees; N=275 employees; two-wave study	COR theory, Self-Regulation Theory	Social adaptability buffered the relationship between abusive supervision and all the outcomes
Wu et al. (2012)	China	Boundary Strength at home	Work-to-family Conflict	Family Undermining	N=209 employees from a manufacturing company	Boundary Theory	Boundary strength at home attenuates the relationship between abusive supervision and family undermining via work-to-family conflict.

The section below reviews the various personal resources that moderate the abusive supervision-outcomes relationship. We define each of these resources and illustrate how they have been used in recent empirical studies.

*Proactive Personality* refers to an individual's capacity to take action, identify opportunities, and initiate change mechanisms in their work environment (Bateman & Crant, 1993). Individuals with a highly proactive personality are better able to cope with stressful situations by initiating change and updating their knowledge and skills by adapting to the current environment (Crant, 2000). Shen et al. (2020) found that a proactive personality is an effective buffering condition for the relationship between abusive supervision and employee creativity, mediated by feedback-seeking behaviour. The study shows that highly proactive employees continue to seek feedback from their supervisors and to adapt to the situation by learning new skills and knowledge to achieve creativity despite continuous abusive supervision. Zhou and Guo (2019) also hypothesised the moderation of proactive personality and resource management ability (RMA) to offset the harmful effects of abusive supervision on help-seeking behaviours of employees. Resource management ability (RMA) refers to a can-do attitude to maintain and mobilise resources effectively (Hochwarter et al., 2007). Zhou and Guo (2019) found that employees with high RMA are more likely to utilise a proactive personality to minimise the detrimental effects of abusive supervision on helpful behaviours within the organisation (Zhou & Guo, 2019).

*Proactive Voice Behaviour* refers to an individual's voicing out of their opinions, suggestions, or concerns regarding work-related issues (Morrison, 2011). Frieder et al. (2015) hypothesised the joint buffering mechanism of employees' proactive voice behaviour and resource management ability (RMA) on the relationship between abusive supervision and job satisfaction, turnover intentions, emotional exhaustion, and work effort. They found that

employees with high levels of proactive voice behaviours and RMA have better job satisfaction and put in more work effort while those with low proactive voice behaviours and RMA were more exhausted and had high turnover intentions.

*Cognitive Reappraisal* refers to an individual's ability to reappraise stressful situations through a more positive lens, thereby buffering its negative emotional impact (Gross & John, 2003). Cognitive reappraisals protect individuals from losing their valuable resources and can alter the emotional impact of a stressor by the individual reassessing it. According to a study by Peng et al. (2020), cognitive reappraisals can replenish and protect employee emotional and mental resources ways that reduce employees' supervisor-directed deviance and repair the damaged relationship with the supervisor owing to abusive supervision.

*Locus of control* refers to an individual's ability to believe the extent to which they have control over the outcomes of the events around them instead of regarding them as external factors beyond their control (Shanteau, 1987). Wang et al. (2019) hypothesised and found support for the buffering mechanism of employees' locus of control on the negative relationship between abusive supervision and innovative employee behaviours via their job insecurity. They found that individuals with an external locus of control (instead of internal locus of control) attribute their task failures to external factors and save their psychological resources, hence they are better able to minimise their job insecurity and practice innovative behaviours in spite of encountering abusive supervision.

*Emotional Intelligence* refers to an individual's capacity to fully understand emotions and the feelings attached to them, and to manage these emotions effectively (Goleman, 1995). Emotionally intelligent individuals are more capable of managing stressful situations due to better psychological and mental well-being and they perform better than those with low emotional intelligence (Slaski & Cartwright, 2002). However, Pradhan and Jena (2018) found

a reverse buffering effect for individuals with high emotional intelligence. Such individuals, who have a better ability to recognise and deal with their emotions in a stressful and abusive environment, had higher intentions to quit their job.

*Mindfulness* helps employees detach themselves from stressful situations and to think about their response to the challenges they encounter (Shapiro et al., 2006). According to a study by Zheng and Liu (2017), employee mindfulness buffers the relationship between abusive supervision and employee creativity via their self-efficacy. They found that employees with high levels of mindfulness can disconnect themselves from the stressful environment and rethink their automatic reactions to abusive supervision. Such self-regulatory behaviour helps them to maintain their self-efficacy and creativity. Conversely, Burton and Barber's (2019) study found reverse buffering effects for mindfulness in the relationship between abusive supervision and employee supervisor-directed retaliation via interactional justice. They found that employees who have high levels of mindfulness regard abusive supervision as unfair, which lowers their perception of the organisation's interactional justice, leading to more retaliation (hostility/disrespect directed towards the supervisor) by employees.

*Face* relates to an individual's idea of self-esteem, personal appearance, and knowledge-sharing to build connections with people around them (Huang et al., 2008). Gu et al. (2016) used face as a moderator of the relationship between abusive supervision and employee creativity via departmental identification. They found that employees who care about face have higher departmental identification and placed more value on the people they share knowledge with, rather than focusing on their supervisor's negative attitude towards them.

*Psychological Ownership* refers to an individual's sense of belonging towards the target (i.e., organisation) or towards part of a target (i.e., a team or department) (Pierce et al., 2003). Ghani et al. (2020) found that employees who have a high sense of psychological ownership

at work are thoughtful about their actions and thus display lower knowledge-hiding behaviours despite encountering high levels of abusive supervision. A high sense of psychological ownership gives employees a sense of belonging and efficacy towards their organisation and its goals. This, in turn, helps employees to be more thoughtful about their actions and avoid retaliation (through knowledge-hiding behaviours) in the face of workplace stressors (i.e., abusive supervision).

*Self-Efficacy* refers to an individual's capacity to carry out a specific task (Bandura, 1997). Park et al. (2020) found that employee self-efficacy buffered the negative relationship between abusive supervision and employee task performance. Employees with high self-efficacy will have more determination and resolve to maintain their performance despite the abusive supervision compared to their counterparts.

*Core Self-Evaluations* (CSE) provide individuals with a positive self-view, motivation, and confidence to perform their job while suppressing their weaknesses (Bono & Colbert, 2005). According to Zhang et al. (2014), employees high in CSE are less sensitive to abusive supervision by being intrinsically motivated in their jobs, which weakened the indirect negative effect of abusive supervision on employee creativity. A study by Lopez et al. (2020) on student athletes found that abusive leadership by coaches harmed athletes' performance. However, students who were high in CSE buffered the negative effects and still performed better than those with low CSE.

*Self-Enhancement*, another important personal motivational resource, helps individuals to see oneself in a positive light (Pfeffer & Fong, 2005). Employees with high self-enhancement motives are more concerned with what others think of them and, therefore, are more motivated to make good impressions on people around them (Yun, Takeuchi, & Liu, 2007). For example, a study by Kim et al. (2016) hypothesised a reverse buffering effect on employee self-

enhancement. They found that abused employees with high self-enhancement motives choose to save their resources only for required tasks. They get the job done and indulge in knowledge sharing behaviours with their limited resource pool, as compared to their counterparts with low self-enhancement motives. Similarly, the study by Choi et al. (2019) showed that when employees with high self-enhancement motives were faced with abusive leaders, they tried to maintain a positive relationship with their hostile leader (i.e., LMX), to sustain their positive image. They found that high self-enhancement motives led employees to engage more in knowledge-sharing behaviours via LMX and to enhance their positive self-image in the minds of people around them, thus buffering the diminishing effects of abusive supervision on knowledge sharing via LMX.

*Organisation Based Self-Esteem* (OBSE) refers to the degree to which an employee feels oneself as necessary, capable, effectual, and a worthy member of the organisation (Pierce & Gardner, 2004). Ahmad and Begum (2020) found that employees with high OBSE can mitigate the effects of abusive supervision on their intentions to leave via emotional exhaustion. High OBSE employees think of themselves as valued members of the organisation and thus do not consider leaving their organisation compared to people with low OBSE. Comparatively, people with low OBSE think of themselves as unvalued and insignificant within the organisation.

*Lone Wolf Tendency* refers to employees who prefer to work alone as they consider people around them as less effective and attentive to their work context, including supervisors (Dixon et al., 2003). Wu et al. (2020) studied the mitigating role of lone wolf tendency on the negative relationship between abusive supervision and the moral identity of employees, resulting in high organisational and interpersonal deviance. They found that employees with high lone wolf tendencies pay less attention to the role models in their social environment such as their supervisor's behaviours. Because their moral identity is less affected by others in their social

environment, these employees are less likely to demonstrate deviant behaviours as compared to their counterparts with low lone wolf tendencies.

*Intimidation*, a negative impression management tactic, refers to the extent to which individuals want to be viewed as threatening or intimidating by others in their workplace (Jones & Pittman 1982). A study by Khan (2015) hypothesised the buffering effect of employees' intimidation tactics on the relationship between abusive supervision and employees' job tension, emotional exhaustion, and turnover intentions, but no moderation effect was found.

*Dispositional Forgiveness* is not only an individual's tendency to forgive other people for their unethical behaviours based on the circumstances with time (Thompson et al., 2005), it also explains the behavioural reactions of the victims of unethical behaviours, especially in the workplace (Weinberg et al., 2014). Yang et al. (2020) studied the buffering impact of employees' dispositional forgiveness in the relationship between abusive supervision and employee performance via performance-promotion attribution. They found that employees with high dispositional forgiveness will attribute abusive supervision to their supervisor/leaders' tough love to enhance their performance, and as a form of encouraging them to perform better.

*Power Distance Orientation (Individual)* refers to an individual's personal values regarding authority, status, and dynamics of power in one's relations and within the organisation. Employees with high individual power distance orientation have more acceptance of hierarchy and power imbalances within the organisation and are more obedient towards their bosses or supervisors (Farh et al., 2007). Conversely, employees with low individual power distance orientation believe in an equal distribution of power between supervisors and subordinates, such as in the negotiation of employment policies. Leaders with low individual power distance orientation are more accepting of disagreement and criticism by subordinates regarding

organisational practices (Tyler et al., 2000). Our review found mixed results for the moderating role of the individual power distance orientation of employees on the relationship between abusive supervision and employee outcomes. Lin et al. (2013) found that employees with high individual power distance orientation are able to buffer the negative effects of abusive supervision on their well-being (i.e., mental health and job satisfaction) because they are more accepting of unequal distributions of power and feel that it is not relevant to their well-being. Peltokorpi (2019) also found that employees with high individual power distance orientation experience less emotional exhaustion as a result of abusive supervision as they use less interaction avoidance strategies compared to employees with low power distance orientations. In addition, Richard et al. (2020) found that employees with a high individual power distance orientation showed a stronger relationship between abusive supervision and interpersonal aggression via turnover intentions than employees with a low individual power distance orientation. They argued that because employees with high individual power distance orientations are more accepting of power imbalances, they are less inclined to retaliate against their abusive supervisors and therefore demonstrate higher turnover intentions. Comparatively, employees with low individual power distance orientation tend to respond to abusive supervision by engaging in deviant behaviours and in finding their support and motivation from other external sources.

*Light triad traits* (i.e., Kantianism, faith in humanity and humanism; Kaufman et al., 2019) is a direct contrast of dark triad traits (i.e., narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism; Paulhus & Williams, 2002). Individuals high on light triad traits are empathetic, cooperative, forgiving, and endeavour to sustain quality relationships with others. They are highly concerned with how their behaviours and actions may impact others (Kaufman et al., 2019). Malik et al. (2020) studied the buffering role of light triad traits on the impact of abusive supervision on malevolent creativity (dark side of creativity) via psychological contract

violations. They found that the devaluing effects of abusive supervision have less influence on individuals high on light triad traits, because these individuals are more empathetic and forgiving. They also avoid destructive reactions and look for constructive ways to cope with the abuse, as compared to their counterparts.

*Moral Efficacy*, a personal psychological resource, refers to an individual's belief that they have the ability to handle ethical issues positively and can find constructive and ethical solutions to the ethical issues at work (May et al., 2014). *Moral attentiveness*, another personal psychological resource, refers to the innate capacity of an individual to persistently judge the moral aspects in one's day to day experiences (Reynolds, 2008). For example, Afsar et al. (2019) found that high moral efficacy and moral attentiveness buffered the negative relationship between abusive supervision and the moral courage of health care employees. People high in moral efficacy believed that they have a better capacity to effectively deal with ethical /moral issues at work (Hannah & Avolio, 2010), avoiding the external environment or organisational factors (in this case abusive supervision) by being behaviourally plastic (Saks & Ashforth, 2000) and by focusing more on ethical aspects of their job tasks (Xu et al., 2017) and practising moral courage. Moreover, individuals with high moral attentiveness are more sensitive to recognising and remembering ethical issues in their daily experiences. Abusive supervision is highly unethical and a violation of the fundamental rights of employees, and employees with high moral attentiveness pay attention to all of these supervisory behaviours. Even so, they do not allow their moral courage to be affected by abusive supervision compared to their counterparts with low moral attentiveness.

*Islamic Work Ethics (IWE)* is an individual construct having its roots in the teachings of the Quran and the life of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) (Ali & Al-Owaihnan, 2008; Yousef, 2001). Khalid et al. (2018) studied the buffering impact of IWE in the relationship between abusive

supervision and knowledge-hiding behaviours. They found that employees with high IWE refrain from indulging in knowledge-hiding behaviours because, according to Islamic teachings, these are unfair, despite one being on the receiving end of abusive supervision. IWE tend to encourage individuals to fulfil their work objectives and goals as moral obligations, motivating people to share their knowledge even in the absence of a fair work environment.

*Learning Goal Orientation (LGO)* refers to an individual's internal drive and motivation to learn new skills and to explore novel ideas (Gong et al., 2009). A study by Lee et al. (2016) hypothesised the buffering mechanism of LGO and found that individuals with high LGO tend to adapt quickly to the changing environment and cope effectively with stressful situations such as abusive supervision. Such individuals will be open to knowledge sharing at work despite the abuse.

*Goal commitment* refers to the determination and resolve of an individual to achieve a goal despite difficulties and challenges (Latham, 1990). Accordingly, Sungu et al. (2020) found that goal commitment mitigates the harmful effects of abusive supervision on job performance and organisational deviance via motivation control and self-defeating cognition. They found that employees with high goal commitment have less self-defeating cognitions and engage in less deviant behaviours compared to employees with low goal commitment.

*Job Crafting*, another valuable personal resource, is a self-initiated ability to match job demands with job resources (Tims et al., 2012). A study by Huang et al. (2020) found that when employees are job crafters, they adapt according to the job demands or build up resources to mitigate adverse effects of abusive supervision on emotional exhaustion and ultimately have less psychological withdrawal behaviours.

*Boundary strength at home* refers to the boundary theory in the workplace context wherein individuals try to keep their work and family domains separate to avoid any spill over (Ashforth et al., 2000). Wu et al. (2012) found that employees with high boundary strength at home are less inclined to face work-to-family conflicts due to abusive supervision and have minor incidences of family undermining than employees with low boundary strength at home.

### ***Social Resources***

Social resources may consist of interpersonal relationships (e.g., group trust), social support (e.g., co-worker support, organisational support) or social desirability (e.g., recognition). Table 2 lists and summarises the findings of recent studies that have explored how social resources buffer the harmful effects of abusive supervision on employees. The studies are listed from the most to the least recent. It offers a snapshot of the types of social resources that are utilised to buffer the effects of abusive supervision and provides insights into the underlying mechanisms of these resources.

*Table 2 Social Resources Buffering Abusive Supervision*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Moderators</b>	<b>Mediators</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Studies and Sample</b>	<b>Theory</b>	<b>Findings</b>
Samian et al. (2020)	Indonesia	Affective Trust, Cognitive Trust	N/A	Leader Endorsement	N=165 government employees, time-lagged study	Social Exchange Theory	Affective trust buffered the relationship between abusive supervision and leader endorsement while cognitive trust exacerbated the negative effects.
Park et al. (2020)	South Korea	Perceived Co-worker Support, Perceived Self-Efficacy	N/A	Task Performance	N=192 supervisor–subordinate dyads in the South Korean Army	COR Theory	High co-worker support and high self-efficacy attenuated the effects of abusive supervision on the task performance of employees.
Kirrane et al. (2019)	Online	Team Psychological Empowerment	N/A	Work Engagement (Vigour, Dedication, Absorption)	N=191 full-time workers via Syracuse University StudyResponse service (Stanton & Weiss, 2002)	JD-R framework	High team psychological environment buffered the effects of abusive supervision and improved employee vigour and dedication.
Choi et al. (2019)	South Korea	Psychological Contract Fulfilment, Self-Enhancement Motive	LMX	Knowledge Sharing	N=184 supervisor-subordinate dyads	Social Exchange Theory	High psychological contract fulfilment and self-enhancement motive both moderate the negative relationship between abusive supervision and knowledge sharing via job insecurity.
Lopes et al. (2019)	UK	Perceived Organisational Support (POS)	Paranoia	Sinister Attribution Error, Employee Well-being	N=90 employees N=100 employees	ABC (Antecedents-Beliefs-Consequences) model	POS buffered the effect of abusive supervision on paranoia via reduced sinister attributions.

Year	Country	Moderators	Mediators	Outcomes	Studies and Sample	Theory	Findings
Xu et al. (2019)	China	Organisational Identification, Positive Affectivity	N/A	Proactive Behaviour	N=65 dentists and 41 supervisors in hospitals N=226 employee-supervisor dyads from a transportation company	Transactional model of stress	High positive affectivity supported the buffering mechanism of organisational identification on the relationship between abusive supervision and proactive behaviours of employees.
Tariq & Ding (2018)	China	Family Motivation	Intrinsic Motivation	Job Performance, Turnover Intentions	N=133 supervisors and 540 subordinates; N=320 employees, three wave survey	Action Identification Theory	Family motivation attenuated the effects of abusive supervision on job performance and turnover intentions via intrinsic motivation.
Pradhan & Jena (2018)	India	Perceived Co-worker Support	Emotional Exhaustion	Intention to Quit	N=382 Health care employees	COR Theory	Co-worker support mitigated the effects of abusive supervision on intention to quit via reduced emotional exhaustion.
Xu et al. (2018)	Ecuador	Co-worker Emotional Support, Co-worker Instrumental Support	Perceived Organisational Support	Turnover Intentions	N=305 senior undergraduate students	JD-R framework	Co-worker emotional support buffered the positive relationship between abusive supervision and employee turnover intentions via improved organisational support.

Year	Country	Moderators	Mediators	Outcomes	Studies and Sample	Theory	Findings
Caesens et al. (2018)	UK	Perceived Co-worker Support	Organisational Dehumanisation	Job Satisfaction, Affective Commitment, Turnover Intentions	N=212 N=431 N=306 cross-lagged panel design	COR Theory	Reverse buffering effects of perceived co-worker support were found for the relationship between abusive supervision and employee outcomes via increased organisational dehumanisation.
Wu & Lee (2016)	Taiwan	Group Trust	Psychological Capital	Knowledge Sharing	N=49 group members of 55 working group	COR Theory	Group trust buffered the relationship between abusive supervision and knowledge sharing via improved psychological capital.
Kim et al. (2015)	South Korea	Organizational Support, Co-worker Support	N/A	Knowledge Sharing	N=128 supervisor–subordinate dyads	Social Exchange Theory	High organisational support buffered the negative relationship between abusive supervision and knowledge sharing of employees.
Khan (2015)	Pakistan	Intimidation, Recognition	N/A	Job Tension, Emotional Exhaustion, Turnover Intentions	N=504 telecommunication sector employees	COR Theory	Recognition didn't buffer the effects of abusive supervision.

This section reviews the different types of social resources that moderate the abusive supervision-outcomes relationship. We define each of these resources and illustrate how they have been used in the empirical studies.

*Family motivation* refers to a desire to support one's family, giving employees a sense of meaningfulness and motivation greater than intrinsic motivation work (Menges et al. 2017). Tariq and Ding (2018) studied the buffering role of family motivation (i.e., a social resource) to diminish the harmful effects of abusive supervision on employee job performance and its effects on turnover intentions. They found that family motivation gave abused employees who did not feel valued at their work a reason to stay in their organisation and attach a sense of meaning to their work. Family motivation also helped employees to maintain their performance at work while lowering their turnover intentions.

*Perceived co-worker support* refers to the employees' beliefs regarding the extent to which their co-workers acknowledge their contributions and support them (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). Having co-worker support is a resource gain for employees and co-worker support positively impacts on employee well-being outcomes (Ng & Sorensen, 2008). It has been identified in several studies as the important buffering mechanism between abusive supervision and its outcomes (like, Caesans et al., 2018; Park et al., 2020; Pradhan & Jena, 2018; Xu et al., 2018). These studies reveal that perceived co-worker support has mixed effects as a moderating variable in the relationship between abusive supervision and employee outcomes. For example, Park et al. (2020) and Pradhan and Jena (2018) found that perceived co-worker support buffered the negative effects of abusive supervision on the subordinate's task performance and employees' intentions to quit via emotional exhaustion, respectively. Similarly, the study by Xu et al. (2018) supported these findings by using co-worker emotional support as a buffering mechanism to weaken the positive relationship of abusive supervision

on employee turnover intentions via co-worker incivility and perceived organisational support, respectively. In contrast, Caesans et al. (2018) found that perceptions of high co-worker support had an exacerbating effect on the organisational dehumanisation of employees in the presence of abusive supervision. These results were also supported by Srikanth's (2020) study which found that social support exacerbated the effects of abusive supervision on employees' contextual performance.

*Team Psychological Empowerment (TPE)* refers to a cognitive agency resource (Ugwu et al., 2014) that helps individuals to deal with harmful workplace challenges (Seibert et al., 2011). Experiencing psychological empowerment as a team boosts the functional resources of employees and helps them to deal with stressful job demands (Lee et al., 2011). A study by Kirrane et al. (2019) found that TPE buffered the relationship between abusive supervision and employee work engagement in terms of vigour and dedication.

*Trust in Supervisor*, a valued social resource, refers to the extent to which employees support the actions of their leaders (Holland et al., 2017). Trust has two dimensions: affect based (trust based on emotional and personal ties with the supervisor) (Yang & Mossholder, 2010) and cognition-based trust (trust based on the supervisor's job-related competence) (De Jong et al., 2016). Samian et al. (2020) found that affect-based trust mitigated the negative effect of abusive supervision on the endorsement of leaders by employees. In this study, followers had an emotional bond with the supervisor, which prompted them to find reasons to justify the abusive behaviours of their supervisors. Conversely, cognitive trust had a reverse buffering impact in increasing the negative relationship between abusive supervision and leader endorsement as employees lost hope in their supervisor's actions and job competency.

*Group Trust* helps group members to expect assistance and support from their colleagues whenever needed (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2015). A high level of group trust means a high

level of cooperation and of sharing resources and knowledge (Rosanas, 2008). Wu and Lee (2016) studied the buffering impact of group trust on the relationship between abusive supervision and knowledge sharing via psychological capital. They found that employees with high group trust had an external resource to draw on for support which helped them improve their psychological capital and maintain knowledge sharing, despite experiencing abusive supervision.

*Psychological Contract Fulfilment* is an essential organisational resource that refers to the kind and extent of support, valuable resources, and fair treatment an organisation provides to its employees, as described in the contract (Rousseau, 1990, 1995). Employees with high psychological contract fulfilment feel more responsible towards their organisation (Turnley et al., 2003), even in the presence of abusive supervision. Accordingly, Choi et al. (2019) found that high psychological contract fulfilment buffered the negative relationship between abusive supervision and knowledge sharing via LMX. Employees with high psychological contract fulfilment felt obligated towards the organisation and decided to maintain their LMX to fulfil these obligations by engaging in knowledge sharing behaviours.

*Perceived Organisational Support* refers to the organisation and supervisor's positive interactions and ethical practices to increase employee performance (Yang, 2014). Kim et al. (2015) found that employees with high organisational support could buffer the harmful effects of abusive supervision as they have positive affiliations with the organisation to support their discretionary behaviours like knowledge sharing. Lopes et al. (2019) also found that perceived organisational support buffers the positive association between abusive supervision and employee paranoia and helps to make employees feel supported in stressful situations.

*Organisational identification* refers to the sense of belonging employees feel in their organisation (Dutton et al., 1994). Xu et al. (2019) found that when employees have high

organisational identification, it helps them to buffer the harmful effects of abusive supervision and allows them to be more proactive within the organisation, especially in the presence of high positive affectivity.

*Recognition* refers to acknowledging an employee's efforts and performance by the top management of an organisation (Bishop, 1987). A study by Khan (2015) hypothesised its buffering effect and found no interaction effect for abusive supervision and recognition on employees' job tension, emotional exhaustion, and turnover intentions.

### ***Environment Resources***

Environment resources may consist of knowledge (e.g., role clarity) or situation context (e.g., supportive HR climate). Table 3 below lists and summarises the findings of recent studies that have explored how environment resources buffer the harmful effects of abusive supervision on employees. The studies are listed from the most to the least recent. Our review took into consideration the theory used in each study as well as the moderators, mediators, and outcomes used.

*Table 3 Environment Resources Buffering Abusive Supervision*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Moderators</b>	<b>Mediators</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Studies and Sample</b>	<b>Theory</b>	<b>Findings</b>
Richard et al. (2020)	China	Power Distance, Perceived HR Support Climate	Turnover Intentions	Supervisor-rated Interpersonal Aggression	N=324 subordinate–supervisor dyads	Social Exchange Theory, Psychological Contract Theory	High power distance employees had higher turnover intentions and interpersonal aggression due to high abusive supervision, while perceptions of high levels of HR support buffered the relationship between abusive supervision and interpersonal aggression via turnover intentions.
Al-Hawari et al. (2020b)	UAE	Customer Orientation	Employee Silence	Capacity to Satisfy Customers	N=335 FLEs of 57 hospitality organisations	COR Theory, Substitutes for Leadership	High levels of customer orientation buffer the impact of abusive supervision on employees' capacity to satisfy customers via reduced employee silence.
Fiset et al. (2019)	Online	Leader's Vision Content	N/A	Performance (Quantity, Practicality, Creativity) Affective Commitment	N=205 N=394	Emotions as social information (EASI) model	High leader vision content buffered the negative effects of abusive supervision on employee performance and affective commitment.
Feng & Wang (2019)	China	Mastery Climate (+), Performance Climate (-)	Job Insecurity	Knowledge-Hiding	N=155 two wave study	COR theory	High motivational climate reduced the direct effect of abusive supervision on knowledge-hiding behaviours of employees and indirectly via job insecurity.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Moderators</b>	<b>Mediators</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Studies and Sample</b>	<b>Theory</b>	<b>Findings</b>
Velez & Neves (2017)	Portugal	Job Resources Adequacy, Role Clarity	Distributive Justice	Job Satisfaction	N=253	Substitutes of Leadership	Job resources and role adequacy reduced the negative effects of abusive supervision on job satisfaction of employees via improved distributive justice perceptions of employees.
Velez & Neves (2016)	Portugal	Job Autonomy	Psychosomatic Symptoms	Production Deviance	N=170 supervisor–subordinate dyads from 4 organisations	JD-R Framework	High job autonomy attenuated the negative effects of abusive supervision on production deviance via reduced psychosomatic symptoms.
Aryee et al. (2008)	China	Work Unit Structure (Centralised/Decentralised)	Emotional Exhaustion	Interpersonal Facilitation, Job Dedication	N=285 subordinate–supervisor dyads	COR theory	Organic organisational structures buffered the negative effects of abusive supervision on interpersonal facilitation and job dedication. No moderation for abusive supervision-emotional exhaustion relationship.

This section reviews the various environment resources that moderate the abusive supervision-outcomes relationship. We define each of these resources and illustrate how they have been used in the empirical studies.

*Role Clarity and Job Adequacy* have been found to play a buffering role between abusive supervision and distributional justice (Velez & Neves, 2017). Role clarity relates to the written formalisation of job goals, objectives, schedules, and performance appraisals (Whitaker et al., 2007). Job resources adequacy impacts access to the knowledge and skills related to job tasks (Bacharach & Bamberger, 1995). When role clarity or job resource adequacy is high, employees have clear guidelines, directives, and knowledge about their duties, access to organisational resources to complete their tasks, and therefore feel a sense of control over their job. Their distributive justice does not decline as much and helps them improve their job satisfaction (Velez & Neves, 2017).

*Leader Vision* is a form of emotional expression that helps leaders to effectively bring a group of people together and make them work collectively to achieve a shared goal (Nemanich & Keller, 2007). A study by Fiset et al. (2019) found that high leader vision buffered the harmful effects of abusive supervision on employee performance (i.e., quantity, practicality, and creativity), despite the harmful effects of abusive supervision.

*Job Autonomy* refers to the extent to which employees have freedom to make job-related decisions like work schedules, work processes, and other job decisions (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Velez and Neves (2016) found that job autonomy (as a job resource) buffered the harmful effects of abusive supervision on production deviance (e.g., failure to do a task properly) via psychosomatic symptoms. They found that employees with high job autonomy have more control over their job, its processes, and scheduling, which helps them to escape from the detrimental consequences of abusive supervision. This, in turn, enables them to

perform their job effectively by avoiding production deviance, as compared to those with low job autonomy.

*Motivational Climate* refers to the employees' understanding of the behaviours that are rewarded in an organisation and whether the climate is collaborative or competitive. There are two types of climates: mastery climate (supporting learning, cooperation, and skill development) (Cerne et al., 2014) and performance climate (emphasising social comparison and competition among employees) (Ames, 1984). For example, Feng and Wang (2019) studied the moderating impact of the two dimensions of motivational climate on the relationship between abusive supervision and knowledge-hiding behaviours towards co-workers via job insecurity. They found that a high mastery climate reduced the effects of abusive supervision on job insecurity. Within a mastery climate, employees have more job autonomy and better work relations with peers which reduces knowledge-hiding behaviours. Conversely, the moderating effect of performance climate was detrimental for job security as competitiveness makes abusive supervision legitimate and interpersonal relationships weaker in most organisations.

*Work Unit/Structure* refers to the context and order in which tasks and labour are divided in an organisation (Mintzberg, 1979). It ranges from mechanistic (centralised authority and focus on specialisation and formalisation of tasks) (Ambrose & Schminke, 2003) to organic structure (decentralised authority and less emphasis on specialisation and formalisation of tasks) (Slevin & Covin, 1997). Aryee et al. (2007) studied the mitigating role of work unit/structures on the contextual performance of employees (interpersonal facilitation and job dedication). They found that organisations with organic structures experienced less effects of abusive supervision on employees' interpersonal facilitation and job dedication than mechanistic structured organisations.

*Customer Orientation* refers to the organisational environments that encourage and nurture employees to give positive feedback to satisfy customers (Mechinda & Patterson, 2011). Al-Hawari et al. (2020b) found that employees in a highly customer-oriented environment voice their opinions more which helps them buffer the harmful effects of abusive supervision on the capacity of employees to satisfy their customers.

*Perceived Human Resource (HR) Support Climate* refers to the organisation's friendly and supportive HR practices to help employees carry out their jobs effectively and deal with challenging situations (George et al., 1993). Richard et al. (2020) found that employees with a high HR support climate and low power distance orientation were able to weaken the positive effect of abusive supervision on interpersonal aggression via turnover intentions compared to employees with a high-power distance orientation and low HR support climate.

*Organisational Justice*, an environment or organisational resource, refers to perceptions of fairness by employees regarding either the outcomes (i.e., distributive justice) or procedures (i.e., procedural justice) (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). Lee et al. (2018) found that the high distributive justice perceptions of employees help them to buffer the harmful effects of abusive supervision on knowledge sharing via emotional exhaustion. Employees feel less exhausted as they do not have to spend many cognitive resources to make sense of their supervisor's negative behaviours in addition to holding positive perceptions around organisational justice, which helps them to exert their efforts on discretionary behaviours such as knowledge sharing.

### **Key Theoretical Perspectives**

In order to provide an overview of the underlying theoretical mechanisms of these buffering/coping and moderation/moderated mediation mechanisms of abusive supervision, we

have summarised all the identified theoretical frameworks in Table 4. We discuss some of the commonly used theoretical perspectives listed in the table to explain how they support the buffering mechanisms in the relationship between abusive supervision and employee outcomes. We also explore how these mechanisms can inspire future research.

*Table 4 Summary of Theoretical Frameworks*

<b>Theories</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Sources</b>
Conservation of Resources (COR) theory	Individuals strive to develop, sustain, foster, and protect the things they value the most in their life (Hobfoll, 1989)	Al-Hawari et al. (2020a); Al-Hawari et al. (2020b); Aryee et al. (2008); Bregenzer et al. (2019); Caesens et al. (2018); Chi & Liang (2013); Feng & Wang (2019); Khan (2015); Lee et al. (2016); Lee et al. (2018); Mackey et al. (2013); Park et al. (2020); Peng et al. (2020); Pradhan & Jena (2018); Pradhan & Jena (2018); Wang et al. (2019); Wu & Lee (2016); Zhao & Guo (2019)
Job Demands Resources (JD-R) framework	The mechanism through which job demands (act as stressors) and employees' job resources interact with each other to overcome their job strain (Demerouti et al., 2001; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).	Bregenzer et al. (2019); Huang et al. (2020); Kिरrane et al. (2019); Velez & Neves (2016); Xu et al. (2018)
Social Exchange theory	An interaction between entities where an exchange of resources is always expected in return (Blau, 1964)	Burton & Barber (2019); Choi et al. (2019); Ghani et al. (2020); Kim et al. (2015); Richard et al. (2020); Samian et al. (2020)
Social Cognitive theory	Individuals differ in their capacity to learn from their social environment depending on how much attention they pay to their environment (Bandura, 1986).	Wu et al. (2020); Zheng & Liu (2017)
Behavioural Plasticity theory	Individuals who have positive personal self-evaluations are less effected by external factors or external performance evaluations rather they will be more influenced by internal factors, as compared to those with less positive or negative self-evaluations (Brockner, 1988).	Afsar et al. (2019); Ahmed & Begum (2020); Zhang et al. (2014)
Transactional theory of stress and coping	This model utilizes cognitive appraisals as mediators in person-environment relation and their outcomes to cope with stressful situations (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987).	Lin et al. (2013); Peltokorpi (2019); Srikanth (2020); Xu et al. (2019)
Affective events theory (AET)	Employees' experiences and reactions to certain affective events happening in their life differs on the basis of their personal resources (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996).	Malik et al. (2020)
Substitutes for Leadership	Leader's behaviours are not the only influential factors for subordinate's behaviours and attitudes, some of the subordinate's task or organizational resources substitute for leader's effectiveness, either positive or negative (Kerr & Jermier 1978).	Al-Hawari et al. (2020); Shen et al. (2020); Velez & Neves (2017)

Goal-Commitment theory	Individual's determination and resolve to achieve one's goals despite difficulties, by investing all the cognitive and behavioural resources (Locke & Latham, 1990).	Sungu et al. (2020)
Attribution theory	Causal explanations given for a certain event or behaviour that shape judgement and behavioural responses towards those events (Kelley & Michela, 1980).	Yang et al. (2020)
Boundary theory	Individuals try to integrate or maintain segments/boundaries between work and family life to balance both (Ashforth et al., 2000).	Wu et al. (2012)
Action Identification theory	In the absence of intrinsic motivation at work, instead of giving in to the monotonous work routine individuals try to find meaningfulness in their work outcomes that not only act as substitutes for motivation but also align with personal values (Menges et al., 2017; Vallacher & Wegner, 1989).	Tariq & Ding (2018)
ABC (Antecedents-Beliefs-Consequences) model	ABC is a cognitive behavioural model, which works on the information processing mechanism by considering the effect of the antecedent event affecting the cognitive beliefs and biases leading to the consequences (Ellis, 1985).	Lopes et al. (2019)
Emotions as social information (EASI) model	Emotional expressions have the capacity to influence other's behaviours either through inferences deducted on the basis of emotions or the affective reactions in connection to the emotions experienced (Van Kleef, 2016, 2017).	Fiset et al. (2019)
Psychological Ownership theory	Individuals experience a cognitive affective state i.e., sense of ownership and belonging towards the target (Pierce et al., 2003).	Ghani et al. (2020)
Social Identity theory	Part of an individual's self-identity derived from one's membership and emotional attachment to a certain social group and its values (Tajfel, 1978).	Gu et al. (2016)
JD-C model	Takes into account the strain reactions due to job demands and extent of discretion (control) individuals have due to either their personal characteristics or the social resources available (Karasek, 1979)	Frieder et al. (2015)

In this section, we will review the widely used theoretical frameworks and discuss how each framework helps to explain the underlying mechanism of buffering resources and their effect on the relationship between abusive supervision and its outcomes.

*Conservation of Resources (COR)* theory is a motivational theory based on the human need to acquire and conserve valuable resources to face challenges in life (Hobfoll, 2018). COR theory suggests that individuals strive to develop, sustain, foster, and protect the things they value most in their life (Hobfoll, 1989). According to COR theory, stress occurs only when employees a) feel threatened that they may lose valuable resources; b) lose valuable resources; and c) fail to gain access to valuable resources (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001). In the context of COR theory, resources are objects (i.e., transport, housing), conditions (i.e., circumstances at work), energies (i.e., money knowledge, to obtain other resources) and personal or social characteristics (personal skills, job skills, attributes, or social skills) that help individuals to achieve their goals (Hobfoll, 1989, 1998).

COR theory suggests that individuals use their personal, social, and psychological resources to sustain themselves in and to maintain their performance at work in the face of stressful situations such as abusive supervision (Hobfoll, 1989). Abusive supervision harmfully affects employees by emotionally exhausting them, making them feel insecure about their job. This ultimately diminishes their capacity for innovation, willingness to share knowledge, capacity to satisfy customers, and increases their intentions to quit, retaliate, and engage in supervisor-directed deviance (Al-Hawari et al., 2019; Burton & Barber, 2019; Chi & Liang, 2013; Lee et al., 2018; Pradhan & Jena, 2018; Wang et al., 2019). Our review of empirical studies utilising COR theory found the buffering mechanism of personal resources such as cognitive appraisal (Chi & Liang, 2013; Peng et al., 2020), employee resilience (Al-Hawari et al., 2019), employee mindfulness (Zheng & Liu, 2017), resource management ability (RMA; Zhao & Guo, 2019),

and locus of control (Wang et al., 2019). COR theory also offers an understanding of the buffering mechanism of social resources that either directly attenuates the harmful effects of abusive supervision on employee outcomes or which helps employees to acquire more resources to offset the damaging effects of abuse (Hobfoll, 2018). Individuals with higher levels of social support are better able to gain or build up other valuable resources. Research shows that COR theory framework supports the buffering role of co-worker support to improve task performance (Park et al., 2020) and group trust to enhance the psychological capital of employees to maintain knowledge-sharing behaviours (Wu & Lee, 2016). Lastly, our review also found that COR theory helped to explain the coping effects of environment resources such as organisational structure (mechanistic versus organic) to improve interpersonal facilitation among employees (Aryee et al., 2008) and mastery climate to minimise job insecurity and knowledge-hiding behaviours among employees (Feng & Wang, 2019) to build up other valuable personal or social resources.

*Job Demand-Resources* (JD-R) framework refers to the mechanism through which job demands (acting as stressors) and employees' job resources interact with each other to overcome their job strain (Demerouti et al., 2001; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Our review of studies utilising the JD-R model found that abusive supervision has been recognised as a job stressor or job demand (Harris et al., 2007) that has the capacity to increase employees' mental and physical exhaustion (Demerouti et al., 2001). Conversely, job resources are psychological, social, or organisational resources related to the job that may help employees to reduce strain caused by job demands and which stimulates personal development (Demerouti et al., 2001). For instance, job personal resources like job crafting (Huang et al., 2020) and job autonomy (Velez & Neves, 2016) were found to have a buffering effect on employee's emotional exhaustion and psychosomatic symptoms while reducing their work withdrawal and production deviance behaviours arising as a result of abusive supervision. Moreover, job social

resource such as team psychological empowerment (Kirrane et al., 2019) and co-worker emotional support (Xu et al., 2018) buffered the effect of abusive supervision on work engagement, perceived organisational support (another job resource) and employee turnover intentions.

*Social Exchange Theory* (Blau, 1964) and norms of reciprocity (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) suggest that individuals change their behaviours on the basis of the treatment they receive from others. For instance, when one person favours another then there is often an expectation to return that favour, although it is not bounded by time or form of favour (Gouldner, 1960). Conversely, when supervisors abuse their employees or humiliate them in front of their co-workers, employees may feel victimized and their organisational efforts ignored. Consequently, abused employees respond with deviant or counterproductive behaviours. Knowledge is a unique resource acquired by employees with time and effort and when they feel they are undervalued or abused by their supervisors, they respond negatively and their knowledge sharing declines in accordance with the norms of reciprocity and social exchange theory (Zellars et al., 2002). Of course, supervisors are not the only social support available to employees within the organisation. When employees feel that organisational support is available to them, or the organisation is trying to fulfil its psychological contract obligations (Choi et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2015), they try to maintain knowledge-sharing practices despite experiencing abusive supervision. Affective trust is also an important part of the social exchange between supervisors and subordinates: when subordinates trust their supervisors and perceive that their abusive behaviours lack ulterior motives or vested interests, social exchange theory holds that this improves the employee's endorsements of the leader (Samian et al., 2020).

*Social Cognitive Theory* suggests that individuals differ in their capacity to learn from their social environment depending on how much attention they pay to it (Bandura, 1986). Social cognitive theory holds that individuals need role models to learn from within their environment, and this learning takes place through attention -- conscious and unconscious -- being paid to their role model's behaviours, attitudes, and actions. Social cognitive theory also relates to an individual's self-regulatory behavioural tendencies. Our review of studies utilising social cognitive theory found that, within organisations, supervisors enjoy a high status and therefore employees tend to follow in their foot-steps (Liu et al., 2013). Other research shows that employees who realise that their supervisor's behaviours are harmful or abusive tend to detach themselves from the environment through mindfulness (i.e., setting one's ego aside to assess the situation without taking it personally) and avoid allowing abusive supervision to affect their self-efficacy and creativity (Zheng & Liu, 2017). Conversely, employees with lone wolf tendencies are less prone to the role modelling process as they do not value others' ideas much. This detachment helps them to maintain their moral identity and minimise their organisational and interpersonal deviance (Wu et al., 2020).

*Behavioural Plasticity Theory* suggests that individuals who have positive personal self-evaluations are influenced by internal factors more than by external factors or external performance evaluations compared to those with less positive or negative self-evaluations (Brockner, 1988). In a work setting, an employee with high self-efficacy will be more focused on self-regulatory behaviours and will pay less attention to negative behaviours or evaluations from external factors such as abusive supervision while maintaining their positive self-evaluations to maintain their performance. As abusive supervisor behaviours are inconsistent with their positive self, they will pay less attention to them and remain focused on their goals at work. Our review of studies utilising behavioural plasticity theory found that employees' core self-evaluations (CSE) (personal resources) and moral efficacy helped them to remain

intrinsically motivated and creative (Zhang et al., 2014) in addition to attenuating the harmful effects of abusive supervision on the moral courage of employees (Afsar et al., 2019).

## **Discussion & Future Research Directions**

The objective of this paper was to review and synthesise the empirical studies on resources that buffer the relationship between abusive supervision and work outcomes. We looked at studies which aimed to alleviate/buffer the harmful effects of abusive supervision on the work and personal outcomes of employees. Overall, the review shows that there is an increasing interest in research on the buffering mechanisms of the relationship between abusive supervision and work outcomes.

Our review found that studies have incorporated a wide range of traits and characteristics as personal resources. These include the employee's resource management ability (RMA), locus of control, self-esteem, self-efficacy, moral efficacy, Islamic work ethics (IWE), employee voice behaviours, learning goal orientations, and lone wolf tendencies. The studies we reviewed also show that social resources play a vital role in helping employees offset the detrimental effects of abusive supervision on their work outcomes and on their turnover intentions. These social resources range from family motivation to organisational recognition, from co-worker support to organisational support, and from trusting the supervisor and attributing their behaviour to better performance to trusting the organisation and its policies through psychological contract fulfilment. The social resources are wide ranging and have positive buffering effects, thereby reducing the intention of employees to leave their job or diminishing their likelihood of becoming emotionally or physically exhausted and minimising their work effort. Lastly, our review of empirical studies using environment resources shows that these are scarce but varied. Our review found that studies have incorporated a wide range of characteristics as environment resources such as role clarity, job autonomy, perceptions of

organisational justice, the vision of leaders, the organisation's customer orientation, work unit structures, as well as climate factors such as support and motivation. We now highlight areas that can be addressed in future research.

### **Centrality of COR theory**

As evident from our review, COR theory has emerged as the most used theory in testing the moderating/buffering effects of abusive supervision on employee outcomes. COR theory (1989) is a motivational theory that suggests that individuals need to strive to gain and maintain resources in order to cope with stressful situations at work. This is not the only upside of COR theory -- it is also one of the most popular resource theories that take into account the integrated resources model. Although a number of studies in our review have used the theoretical tenets of COR theory in terms of motivation to cope with stress, as Table 4 shows, none of the studies have tried to encompass its full scope. For example, in taking into account the resource integration perspective, we would suggest testing a combination or interaction of personal, social, or psychological resources and seeing if they help each other to build up a resource caravan (multiplication of resources) that may help employees to cope with stressful situations at work and maintain their performance, so as not to fall into a loss spiral (where the loss of one resource leads to the loss of other valuable resources).

Another important aspect of COR theory is that it is embedded in socio-cultural contexts. This suggests that resources do not stand alone but share the same cultural niche (Hobfoll, 2002). Hence, testing the influence of personal resources and conditions or energies in the sociocultural context is important as it may lead to significant research and practical implications for organisations. The sections below build on the use of resource caravans, and the consideration of sociocultural contexts – more specifically cross-cultural contexts.

## **Building up Resource Caravans**

The resource integration mechanism of Conservation of Resources (COR) theory suggests that developmental pathways of resources create resource caravans. Resource gain or resource loss does not exist in isolation -- rather, the process multiplies. For example, individuals with high self-esteem will also have a high sense of mastery of their skills and a favourable social support mechanism (Hobfoll, 2002; Rini et al., 1999). Building on the idea of resource caravans, and Holahan and Moos's (1991) idea of creating a tandem of personal and social resources to face stressful situations such as abusive supervision, we suggest using a joint moderation (i.e., 2-way moderation) of dispositional optimism (i.e., a personal resource) and co-worker support (i.e., a social resource) in the relationship between abusive supervision and employee well-being outcomes. It would be interesting to see how co-worker support would moderate the dispositional optimism of employees working within an organisation and to ascertain if and how both personal and social resources would keep the damaging effects of abusive supervision at bay to maintain employee well-being. Dispositional optimism, a valuable personal resource, refers to the tendency of individuals to expect and believe that the future holds favourable positive outcomes (Scheier & Carver, 1985). It is a self-regulatory mechanism that can also be understood as a personal resource to offset the effects of abusive supervision, using the theoretical underpinnings of COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989) and self-regulation theory (Carver & Scheier, 1998).

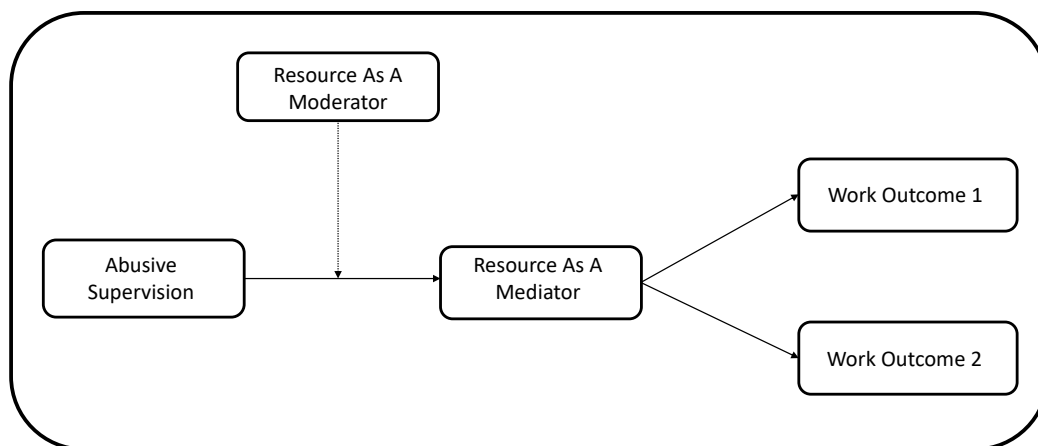
In line with suggestions by Tepper et al. (2017), we recommend testing the comparative efficacy of buffering resources on employees' different types of personal or job outcomes. Currently, only a few studies (Choi et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2016; Park et al., 2020; Srikanth, 2020) have tested the comparative efficacy of different personal, social, or environment buffering resources. We need to test and re-test the combined effects of personal, social, or

environment resources on employee health and well-being outcomes or job outcomes in order to consolidate understandings around how buffering mechanisms are used to cope with the effects of abusive supervision.

Moreover, it would be interesting to use a combination of personal, social, and environment resources as moderating mediators to build up resource caravans, in context of COR theory, to cope with abusive supervisory behaviours. Figure 1 shows how resources can act as moderators and mediators, as well as moderated mediation. There are a few studies included in the literature (like, Shen et al., 2020; Velez & Neves, 2016; Wu et al., 2020; Wu & Lee, 2016; Xu et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2018; Zheng & Liu, 2017) that have used resources both as moderators and mediators to buffer the effects of abusive supervision on employee work outcomes, but none of them actually expanded on the resource caravan perspective. For example, Wu and Lee (2016) conducted a study and found that high group trust (a social resource) moderated the relationship between abusive supervision and knowledge sharing, and this relationship is mediated by psychological capital (a personal resource). They used the resource gain perspective of COR (Hobfoll, 2001) theory where a resource gain (i.e., high group trust) can buffer the resource loss (i.e., low psychological capital) process. Furthermore, Xu et al. (2018) used co-worker emotional support (a social resource) as a moderator to buffer the relationship between abusive supervision and turnover intentions, via mediation of perceived organizational support (a social resource). The study used the Social Support theory (Cohen & Wills, 1985) and JD-R framework (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) to support the buffering mechanism of co-worker emotional support combined with perceived organizational support to reduce employee turnover intentions.

Similarly, we would like to suggest using employee empowerment (Laschinger et al., 2001) as an intervening mechanism (mediator) with a combination of a personal resource or a social

support resource as the moderated mediation between abusive supervision and employee well-being. Employee empowerment is divided into two components: psychological empowerment (i.e., a personal resource) and structural empowerment (i.e., an environment resource) (Laschinger et al., 2001). Psychological empowerment is more of an intrinsic motivator that boosts an employee's sense of self-efficacy (Conger & Kanungo, 1988) while structural empowerment is an extrinsic motivator that takes into account the employee's access to social structures within the organisation (Kanter, 1993). Employee empowerment is positively associated with employee well-being outcomes. It would be interesting to use it as an intervening mechanism in the relationship between abusive supervision and employee well-being with a combination of personal or social resource as moderators.



*Figure 1 A Moderated Mediation Framework with a Resource Caravan Perspective*

Moreover, we would also like to suggest that a combination of theories -- with COR theory used as an over-arching framework for resource-based perspectives -- can be used to investigate resource caravans to cope with abusive supervision. For example, social cognitive theory may be employed to highlight the learning of employees from their social context and this theoretical thread could be used alongside COR theory to study the social dimensions of employees' coping mechanisms.

## **Cross-Cultural Contexts**

Our review shows that almost two-thirds of the studies on the buffering mechanisms of abusive supervision have been conducted in an Asian cultural context. This reflects an increased interest in abusive supervision in non-western workplace settings, as pointed out by previous literature reviews (Tepper et al., 2017; Zhang & Liao, 2015, etc.). There is a need for more studies to explore the underlying mechanism of buffering resources in non-Asian contexts to see how employees' responses to abusive supervision differ in different cultural contexts. It would also be instructive to replicate some of the studies on personal, social, or environment resources in non-western contexts to western contexts. Our review also suggests that more cross-cultural studies are needed to test the effectiveness of buffering resources and their mechanisms across different cultures. We found only one such study in our review. The study, conducted in the United States and China, found that emotional regulation strategies had a significant role in Chinese culture compared to American culture (Peng et al., 2020). It would be interesting to test the efficacy of the same set of resources in different cultural contexts to extend our understandings of the coping strategies used by employees in different socio-cultural contexts.

## **Longitudinal Studies of Abusive Supervision**

Our review also suggests a need for longitudinal studies to analyse the buffering mechanism of employee resources in the relationship between abusive supervision and employee outcomes. The idea is to use the time context of COR theory and explore an employee's journey from the resource acquiring stage to the utilisation of the acquired resources stage and how it shapes their reactions to abusive supervision. It would be interesting to know how employees deal with abusive supervision when they are in the acquisition process, as compared to when they already possess the resource. Most of the coping mechanisms identified by abusive

supervision research deals with the dimension of the resources that employees already possess and not with the process of resource acquisition. An example of this would be the difference between the buffering mechanism of seeking social support from co-workers (Srikanth, 2020) and of perceived social support from co-workers (Park et al., 2020). Seeking social support is more about resource mobilisation or the acquisition process whereas perceiving social support is more about utilising resources that one already has (Prati & Piertrantoni, 2009; Srikanth, 2020). A study by Srikanth (2020), using a transactional theory of stress and coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987), found that high seeking social support behaviours had an exacerbating effect on the contextual performance of employees in the presence of abusive supervision. Srikanth (2020) argued that when employees seek support from their co-workers, it makes them realise the detrimental effects of abusive supervision, which exacerbates the effects of abusive supervision rather than attenuating them. Conversely, Park et al. (2020) found, in light of COR theory, that perceived co-worker support had a buffering effect on abusive supervision by maintaining employee performance. Park et al. (2020) argued that when employees collectively face abusive supervision or have support from their co-workers, it gives them emotional and psychological strength to deal with the deleterious effects of abusive supervision and enables them to maintain their job performance.

## **Conclusion**

The studies we reviewed help us to understand the different resources employees use to cope with abusive supervision. Every study on abusive supervision has reiterated that abusive supervision should be eliminated, but the reality is that it is mostly under-reported or improperly handled within organisations. Ongoing research on abusive supervision continues to grow as our understandings of coping mechanisms used by employees improve, and vice

versa. This, may help organisations to pre-empt abusive supervision, establish adequate support systems and identify resources for employees susceptible to such behaviour.

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## **CHAPTER 3**

### **STUDY TWO**

#### **Paper Title**

Abusive Supervision & Employee Empowerment: The Moderating Role of Resilience and Workplace Friendship

#### **Declaration**

I developed the theoretical framework for the paper. I executed and carried out the data collection. I did the data entry, screening and analysis using SPSS. I wrote the full first draft of the paper. Theoretical contributions are my own. My two supervisors (co-authors) provided feedback on the theoretical aspects of the paper, quantitative analysis and editing. Overall, I contributed 80% to this paper and my supervisors contributed 20% to it.

#### **Publication Status**

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The following paper follows the layout, referencing and language required by the journal editors.

## **Abstract**

Several studies have explored why employees leave their organization in the face of abusive supervision. However, there is a lack of research on what makes employees continue with employment despite being affected by abusive supervision. This study responds to the call made by Tepper *et al.* (2017) to analyse multiple mechanisms that employees use to cope with abusive supervision. It addresses this gap by examining employee's psychological and social resources that can mitigate the effects of abusive supervision. We specifically consider employee psychological and structural empowerment, as well as resilience and workplace friendship. This is a time-lagged study using a sample of 146 postgraduate students who have a minimum of two years of work experience. Utilizing the tenets of COR theory, we find that damage to psychological empowerment plays a significant role in diminishing the work engagement and creativity of employees, as compared to structural empowerment. We also find that workplace friendship plays a significant role in weakening the damaging effects of abusive supervision on structural empowerment. Future studies should consider other psychological and social mechanisms that can mitigate the effects of abusive supervision. Moreover, organizations should work towards developing a culture of sharing and support between co-workers.

**Keywords:** Abusive Supervision, Empowerment, Employee Resilience, Workplace Friendship

Abusive supervision is the “perceptions of subordinates of the extent to which supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviours, excluding physical contact” (Tepper, 2007, p. 178). A large proportion of workplace bullying incidents relate to abusive supervision (Kemper, 2016), and is a potential source of workplace stress (Carlson et al., 2012). Abusive supervision covers a wide array of behavioural dispositions including repeatedly criticizing subordinates, discouraging them, taking credit for their success, ignoring their efforts, shouting at them, expressing anger, disrupting their privacy, or implementing bullying and intimidating strategies (Tepper, 2007). Abusive supervision has several elementary characteristics that distinguish it from other destructive leader behaviours. Firstly, it is a subjective construct, solely based on the perceptions of employees regarding the practices of their supervisors (Tepper, 2000). Secondly, it involves employees perceiving that the hostile behaviour of their supervisors is intentional and persistent, rather than isolated instances of rudeness (Tepper, 2007).

Abusive supervision results in decline in employee job satisfaction (Mackey et al., 2013), job commitment (Kernan et al., 2016), job performance (Shoss et al., 2013), organizational citizenship behaviours (OCBs) (McAllister et al., 2018), and an increase in counter-productive work behaviours (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007), psychological distress (Tepper et al., 2007), turnover intentions and emotional exhaustion (Frieder et al., 2015). The current study takes into account three job outcomes affected by abusive supervision at work: employee work engagement, creativity, and job burnout.

Work engagement is “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind” (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p.74), resulting in employees engaging in their work with vigour, absorption, and dedication. Work engagement plays a vital role in fostering positive work behaviours within an organization (Kirrane et al., 2019, Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007), and is negatively impacted by

abusive supervision (Poon, 2011). Job burnout is “a state of physical, emotional or mental exhaustion caused by long-term involvement in situations that are emotionally demanding” (Schaufeli & Greenglass, 2001, p. 501). Employees’ job burnout costs organizations millions of dollars annually and is positively impacted by abusive supervision (Carlson et al., 2012). Creativity refers to the novel, unique and useful ideas or concepts initiated by employees regarding products, services or processes (Amabile et al., 1996). Research regarding the relationship between abusive supervision and creativity has been inconsistent with Liu et al. (2012) finding a negative relationship between these two concepts whereas Lee et al. (2013) found a curvilinear relationship. The reason for choosing these job outcomes for our study is the significant impact they have on the employees and their organization. Although the impact of abusive supervision on these job outcomes has been discussed previously, the underlying mechanisms through which these outcomes are affected by abusive supervision is less understood. Having a clearer understanding of these underlying mechanisms will not only enable future research to cumulate variables through which abusive supervision transmits its adverse influence but will also help practitioners identify mechanisms that can mitigate the negative consequences of abusive supervision.

In this study, we posit that employee empowerment mediates the relationship between abusive supervision and outcomes such as work engagement, creativity, and job burnout. An important variable that leaders’ behaviours affect is employee empowerment, which in turn effects their work behaviours and attitudes such as engagement (García-Sierra & Fernández-Castro, 2018) and innovative behaviour (Singh & Sarkar, 2018). For this reason, empowerment has been chosen as the mediating variable for the study. Employee empowerment has two components: psychological and structural empowerment (Laschinger et al., 2001). Psychological empowerment is an intrinsic motivational variable that enhances feelings of self-efficacy (Conger & Kanungo, 1988), while structural empowerment is the access employees have to

the social structures within their workplace that facilitates their realization of goals (Kanter, 1993). Our study incorporates both these components to understand how psychological and structural empowerment mediates the relationship between abusive supervision and work engagement, creativity, and job burnout.

In addition to empowerment mediating the relationship, our study also identifies certain psychological and social resources that moderate the relationships. In order to cope with the stress caused by abusive supervision, employees tend to utilize their personal resources (both psychological and social), such as psychological capital, mindfulness, self-efficacy, Leader-Member Exchange relationship (LMX), and co-worker support to achieve their personal goals at work (Agarwal, 2019; Halbesleben et al., 2014). Despite growing knowledge in this area, there is still a need for greater understanding of how employees' personal resources mitigate the effects of abusive supervision (Kirrane et al., 2019; Martinko et al., 2013). To do so, this study utilizes the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989). According to COR theory, abusive supervision leads to employees perceiving an actual or prospective resource loss such as feeling as if one's self-esteem has been diminished through repeated criticism, discouragement, or being shouted at (Farh & Chen, 2014; Tepper, 2007, Tepper et al., 2017); and that one's social support network is shrinking (Lee et al., 2017). COR theory holds that employees respond to workplace stressors differently, depending on individual differences, such as one's personal competencies, characteristics or skills, as well as one's specific work context (Hobfoll, 2001). Therefore, psychological and social resources of employees play a significant role in alleviating the adverse effects of a workplace stressor like abusive supervision.

We posit that employee's resilience (a psychological resource) and their workplace friendship (a social resource) are the moderators that mitigate the effects of abusive supervision (see

Figure 1). Our study specifically shows how employee's resilience mitigates the negative relationship between abusive supervision and psychological empowerment. Resilience is the capacity of an employee to bounce back from adverse situation, failures, or conflicts (Youssef & Luthans, 2007), and is therefore an important psychological resource for employees. We propose that resilient employees are better able to mitigate the impact that abusive supervision has on employee's sense of self-efficacy.

Our study also shows how employee's workplace friendship mitigates the negative relationship between abusive supervision and structural empowerment. Workplace friendship is the voluntary, person-specific, informal, and reciprocal relationship between employees working in an organization (Berman et al., 2002). It is associated with characteristics such as intimacy, open communication, open access to information, and timely assistance (Sias & Cahill, 1998). Even if abusive supervisors limit the access to organizational resources and information to their direct reports, workplace friendship can mitigate these losses through assistance when in need, informal access to information, and social and emotional support. For this reason, a social resource such as workplace friendship is an important variable to consider in the context of abusive supervision.

This study, therefore, contributes to the abusive supervision literature in several ways. Firstly, it extends our knowledge about how the underlying mechanism of employee empowerment mediates the relationship between abusive supervision and outcomes such as work engagement, creativity, and job burnout. Secondly, this study offers insights into how psychological and social resources are used to buffer the harmful effects of abusive supervision. This addresses the call by Tepper et al. (2017) to analyse multiple ways employees cope with abusive supervision in order to identify the most effective one. The exploration of two different moderators - resilience for psychological empowerment and workplace

friendships for structural empowerment - serves to shed light on which of the two moderators is more effective in mitigating the harmful effects of abusive supervision. The third contribution of this study is its broader focus on job burnout. Most other studies have tended to limit their focus to emotional exhaustion, which, according to Maslach et al. (2001), is a component of job burnout.

## **Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development**

### **Conservation of Resources Theory**

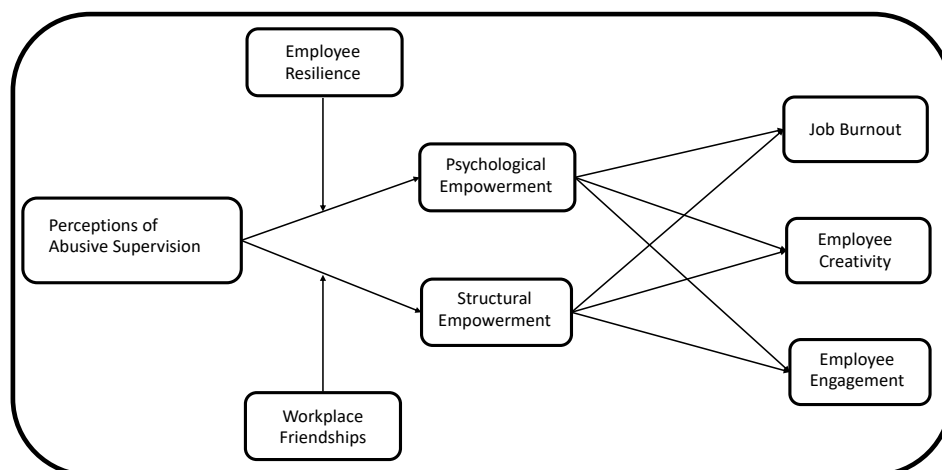
According to COR theory, when people are confronted with stressful situations they try to minimize their net resource loss. Resources are “objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that are valued by the individual” (Hobfoll, 1989, p. 516). Resources are important because: a) they play an instrumental role in helping people achieve valued outcomes; and b) they have symbolic value that helps people define who they are (Hobfoll, 1989). These resources can be exacerbated due to a stressor, can be ameliorated by tapping into other resources, or strategically compensated by withholding effort (Holmgreen et al., 2017). This study hypothesises that having a multitude of resources to help employees minimize and buffer the stressful effects of abusive supervision on their work outcomes.

Tepper et al. (2017) shows that abusive supervision is a harmful workplace stressor and COR theory provides a useful framework for explaining how individuals behave when an aggressor threatens or depletes their resources. Abusive supervision affects subordinates’ resources as: a) it requires more time and effort to minimize the occurrence of abusive behaviour (Harris et al., 2007); b) it makes them lose sense of control by not getting access to necessary resources to perform a job (Harris et al., 2007) or denied the right to have a say in making choices that affect them directly (Tepper, 2000); and c) it requires coping to deal with stress, anxiety, or

depression that comes with abuse (Carlson et al., 2012). Abusive supervision is resource demanding as it not only diminishes some of the employee resources but also requires effort by them to manage those resources by lining up some other valuable resources to cope with abusive supervision's diminishing effects.

COR theory works on two basic principles: 1) a resource loss is more impactful than a resource gain, and the former can sometimes lead to psychological distress (Hobfoll, 2001); 2) in order to cope with workplace stressors, individuals need to keep investing in resources to prevent future resource loss (Hobfoll, 1989). So, if a stressful situation is prolonged and not appropriately managed, individuals will continue to lose resources, resulting in a 'loss spiral' (Holmgren et al., 2017). However, individuals with more resources are better able to cope with workplace stress and they will also have more chances of acquiring resources. Our theoretical framework (see Figure 1) reflects the COR principles above. We posit that when employees' psychological and structural empowerment diminishes due to abusive supervision, they not only limit their work engagement and creativity, but also mobilize their other pool of valued resources (i.e., resilience and workplace friendships) to buffer the negative effects of abusive supervision. The following section discusses the study variables and their relationships with each other.

Figure 1 Theoretical Framework



## **Abusive Supervision & Employee Job Outcomes**

Nurturing employee engagement (Bakker et al., 2008) is a crucial for organizations to achieve numerous desirable outcomes (Joo et al., 2016) and to attain competitive advantage (Rich et al., 2010). The literature suggests that destructive leadership behaviours decrease employee engagement (Barnes et al., 2015) and abusive supervision is one of those destructive behaviours. The sustained display of hostile behaviours by the supervisor contributes towards psychological distress and emotional exhaustion of employees (Tepper, 2000). COR theory suggests that when job stressors caused by abusive supervision threatens the personal resources of employees, they feel anxious (Hobfoll, 1989), which in turn leads them to conserve their resources to manage this stress (Hobfoll, 2001). The abused employees lose interest and are less engaged in their work. In short, employees reduce their work engagement in order to conserve their resources. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

*H1a: Perceptions of abusive supervision negatively affect employee work engagement.*

For creativity to flourish, it needs a conducive environment, such as encouragement from leaders (Jiang et al., 2019), freedom from time constraints (Amabile et al., 1996), and necessary support and resources from the organization (Amabile & Conti, 1999). The absence of any of these factors significantly affects employee creativity (Amabile et al., 1996). There is limited empirical evidence about the relationship between abusive supervision and employee creativity (Lee et al., 2013). As, we have previously pointed out, abusive supervision causes psychological distress, anxiety and exhaustion for employees (Tepper, 2000) and such an environment is not conducive to boost employee creativity (Liu et al., 2012; Zhang et al., 2014). According to Han et al. (2017), the abusive behaviour of supervisors takes away employees' valuable resources and reduces their level of engagement in creative processes. In some cases,

employees may engage less in the creative process in order to conserve their energy to manage stressful situations (Hobfoll, 2001) such as abusive supervision. Therefore, we propose that:

*H1b: Perceptions of abusive supervision negatively affect employee creativity.*

Abusive supervision induces resource loss in employees and has the potential to cause psychological strain through emotional exhaustion (Carlson et al., 2012; Tepper, 2000). Several studies have discussed the relationship between abusive supervision and emotional exhaustion (Frieder et al., 2015, Mackey et al., 2013, Wu & Hu, 2009) and suggested that perceived abusive supervision depletes the emotional resources of employees and makes them feel less energetic about their work. On the other hand, less attention has been given to the relationship between abusive supervision and job burnout (Carlson et al., 2012) suggesting a need for further research in that area. Using COR theory, we suggest that employees will strive to safeguard and maintain the resources that help them to achieve their goals (Han et al., 2017). However, sustained abuse by their supervisors causes anxiety (Hobfoll, 2001), and when employees fail to conserve their resources, they become exhausted, fall into a loss spiral, and experience job burnout (Sliter et al., 2010). Drawing on COR theory, we hypothesize that:

*H1c: Perceptions of abusive supervision will positively affect employee job burnout.*

### **The Mediating Role of Psychological Empowerment**

Psychological empowerment is an intrinsic motivational variable that boosts feelings of self-efficacy (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). Psychological empowerment operates through four cognitive mechanisms: meaningfulness of work, competence, self-determination, and impact of work (Spreitzer, 2007). Meaningfulness of work refers to the value given by employees to their job in light of their personal beliefs (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003). Self-determination is an individual's perception of his/her ability to freely initiate or regulate actions to enhance task

performance. Competence is the extent to which an employee believes in his/her abilities and skills to perform better in different work situations (Spreitzer, 2007). Lastly, the impact of work involves the perception of employees about how their work behaviour influences work outcomes (Bandura, 1977). The joint effect of these four dimensions gives rise to a motivational construct that plays a significant role in enhancing work motivation and wellbeing at work (Jose & Mampilly, 2014).

In recent years, research on psychological empowerment has focused on finding positive antecedents, such as transformational leadership and organizational commitment (Larrabee et al., 2003), positive social resources (Quiñones et al., 2013), and empowering leadership behaviour (Rayan et al., 2018). However, research is scant on the negative antecedents of psychological empowerment such as abusive supervision. The majority of studies to date have focused on the negative impact of workplace bullying behaviours on the psychological empowerment of nursing employees in the health sector. The research indicates that bullying lowers employees' sense of empowerment and increases their psychological distress (Prymachuk et al., 2009), making them question their abilities (Laschinger et al., 2010). When employees face abusive supervision, their intrinsic motivation declines (Tepper, 2000), resulting in a decrease in their job autonomy (Davis & Bowles, 2018). When abusive supervisors remind their subordinates of their past mistakes or take credit for their work, these subordinates feel disconnected from their work, their sense of meaningfulness towards their work declines and they can lose their sense of competence (Rafferty & Restubog, 2011). In summary, employees' experiences fear and anxiety because of these resource losses (Tepper, 2000), which undermines the psychological empowerment of employees. Thus, drawing on COR theory, we propose that:

*H2: Abusive supervision negatively affect employee psychological empowerment.*

The way in which psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between abusive supervision and employee work outcomes is still unknown. To date, researchers have only discussed the mediating role of psychological empowerment in terms of positive leader behaviours (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2015; Raub & Robert, 2012). In light of COR theory (Hobfoll, 2001), we posit that when employees are continuously undermined and reprimanded by their supervisors, their sense of determination and meaningfulness declines and they see no possibility of resource gain in their work. In these instances, employees with an inadequate level of psychological empowerment will be unwilling to exert effort and vigour in their jobs, in order to conserve their remaining resources.

Research has shown that psychological empowerment positively affects employee engagement (Jose & Mampilly, 2014). Psychological empowerment drives employee motivation and performance through employees acquiring a sense of meaningfulness (May et al., 2004), competence (Jose & Mampilly, 2014), self-determination (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008), and impact (Kirrane et al., 2019) through their work. Abusive supervision will reduce the psychological empowerment of employees, resulting in lowered levels of motivation and engagement. Psychological empowerment has a positive impact on employee creativity (Zhang & Bartol, 2010) in facilitating the use of employees' creative instincts to solve problems (Sun et al., 2012) and to refine their work roles (Spreitzer, 1995). In the face of perceived abusive supervision, employees exhaust their psychological resources and their productivity declines as they deal with the stress (Han, Harms, & Bai, 2017). This sustained hostility from a supervisor combined with a lack of resources hurt the creative thinking process of employees (Lee et al., 2013). In addition, the stress constrains them to engage in any explorative process to find new ways and solutions at work (Lee et al., 2013).

Research has also shown that psychological empowerment negatively affects job burnout (Bhatnagar, 2012). When supervisors constantly reprimand employees, give unconstructive feedback, and make employees feel under-appreciated and incompetent, the psychological empowerment of employees decline and may result in job burnout.

Considering the above arguments, as well as H1a-H1c and H2, the following hypothesis proposes the partial mediating role of psychological empowerment:

*H3: Employee psychological empowerment partially mediates the relationship between abusive supervision and: a) engagement, b) creativity and c) job burnout.*

### **The Moderating Role of Employee Resilience**

Resilience is an individual's response to significant threats or harmful situations by positively adapting to specific situations and not losing one self in adapting to those changes (Bonanno, 2004). Resilient employees have the ability to withstand and cope with organizational challenges (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004) by acknowledging the risks inherent in the given situations. They invest time and energy into understanding the situation, and typically consider the situation as a challenge rather than a threat (Youssef & Luthans, 2007).

The concept of resilience has its roots in positive organizational psychology and is discussed in COR theory. Employees' response to workplace stressors varies according to the quantity and quality of the personal resources they possess, or they have acquired over time. This framework holds that resilient employees, when encountering workplace stressors, mobilize their coping mechanisms to secure their existing personal resources (Hobfoll, 2001). Employees with high resilience are better equipped to handle stressful situations and can positively adapt and accept challenges. Highly resilient people are in the habit of bringing out their positive emotions while dealing with stress, show persistence at work, and are better able

to deal with emotional stressors (Al-Hawari et al., 2019). When they face abusive supervision, they will be better able to tolerate the sustained hostility of their supervisors and be able to effectively ameliorate their psychological resources at work.

While the psychological empowerment of all employees will be compromised in the face of continuous abusive supervision, as hypothesized in H2, employees with low resilience will fare worse compared to their more resilient peers. They will not be able to buffer their personal resources in the facing of abusive supervision, leading to a loss spiral and strengthening the negative relationship between abusive supervision and psychological empowerment. We propose that resilience buffers the harmful effects of abusive supervision on psychological empowerment and enables employees to recognize their true potential, despite the hostility of their supervisors.

*H4: Employee resilience moderates the relationship between employee perceptions of abusive supervision and their psychological empowerment such that the negative relationship is weaker for employees who are more resilient.*

If employee resilience moderates the relationship between abusive supervision and employee psychological empowerment, it is possible that employee resilience will also moderate the mediated relationship between abusive supervision and work outcomes (i.e., mediation H3).

We, therefore, test the following moderated-mediation hypothesis:

*H4a: Employee resilience affects the strength of the mediated relationship among abusive supervision and job burnout, work engagement, and employee creativity. These relationships are weaker for employees with higher levels of resilience.*

## **The Mediating Role of Structural Empowerment**

Structural empowerment is the access employees have to the social structures within their workplace that facilitates their realization of goals (Kanter, 1993). It also pertains to the degree with which employees perceive their workplace conditions to be empowering (Laschinger et al., 2001). Structural empowerment has three dimensions: 1) the provision of organizational opportunities for employees to learn, grow and flourish; 2) employee access to information, support and resources and their ability to mobilize these, and 3) formal and informal support from peer groups within the organization (Kanter, 1993; Laschinger et al., 2013).

Although structural empowerment has been minimally discussed in relation to abusive supervision, the literature on abusive supervision (Tepper, 2000, 2007) makes it evident that abusive behaviours compromise the structural empowerment of employees. Due to their position in the organization, leaders have more access to resources. Employees are, therefore, largely dependent on their leader for access to organizational resources (Haugh & Laschinger, 1996). Abusive supervision makes employees lose their sense of control not only by limiting their access to necessary resources to perform at work (Harris et al., 2007) but also by denying them the right to have a say in making choices that affect them directly (Tepper, 2000). If leaders continuously abuse their power, limit their support, and mistreat employees, this jeopardizes their employees' means to flourish within the organization. Moreover, if employees are denied access to necessary information and resources, thus having their structural empowerment reduced, their efficiency and effectiveness will decrease. Therefore, we may hypothesize that:

*H5: Abusive supervision negatively affect employee structural empowerment.*

Studies conducted in the health sector found that nurses who perceive their leaders as authentic and empowering them with all the necessary resources and opportunities to grow, report high

work engagement and trust (Wong et al., 2010) and decreased levels of job burnout (Laschinger et al., 2013). On the whole, employee engagement improves when employees have greater job control (Bakker, 2011), access to necessary resources to accomplish tasks (Xanthopoulou et al., 2009), social support at work (Kahn, 1990), and when their managers take care of their essential needs (Harter et al., 2002). Conversely, a workplace lacking in empowering structures prompts feelings of powerlessness in employees and, in turn, an inclination to conserve their resources and effort, resulting in declined engagement. Moreover, organizations with empowering structures give more autonomy to their workers and shared decision-making is encouraged, which provides employees with the opportunity to be creative in their jobs (Gilson & Shalley, 2004). Since abusive supervision is negatively related to structural empowerment and structural empowerment is positively related to engagement, creativity and negatively related to job burnout; this leads us to the next hypothesis:

*H6: Employee structural empowerment partially mediates the relationship between abusive supervision and: a) engagement, b) creativity and c) job burnout.*

### **The Moderating Role of Workplace Friendships**

The concept of workplace friendships is multifaceted, diverse, and somewhat ambiguous. Berman et al. (2002) described it as a voluntary, person-specific, informal and reciprocal relationship between employees working in an organization. The concept hinges on a colleague being viewed as a whole person (Sias et al., 2004) rather than just someone doing their job. Workplace friendships generate a sense of community, trust, and shared values between co-workers. It is associated with characteristics like intimacy, open communication, open access to information, and timely assistance (Sias & Cahill, 1998). Workplace friendships help individuals to cope with stressful work situations by providing social and emotional support

(Sias, 2009) and they play a role in achieving positive organizational outcomes (Rai & Agarwal, 2018).

Research has also shown that workplace friendships have a positive effect on an employee's attitudes towards, and experiences of, an organization (e.g., Cranmer et al., 2017). Depending on the nature of the relationship, workplace friendships offer employees three different types of support. The first, emotional support, involves employees showing empathy and concern for each other. The second, informational support, involves employees sharing necessary information and bringing new perspectives to existing issues. The third, instrumental support, involves employees giving each other access to tangible and intangible goods and services to complete a task (Cranmer et al., 2017; Sias et al., 2004).

Workplace friendship is a social resource that includes having supportive interaction and perceived reception of support (Vaux, 1988). The ability to mobilize social support, and having the understanding that you have people at work with whom you can confide in and who care for you, is thus a valuable resource. There is evidence to suggest that abusive supervision is less harmful to employee outcomes if it is directed at all team members since they will respond by supporting each other (Hackney & Perrewé, 2018). According to COR theory, co-workers' support in the face of abusive supervision may serve as a resource refill (Wu & Hu, 2009). Friends at work are a means of growing one's social resources (i.e., emotional support, informational support, and instrumental support) and decrease the risk of resource depletion (Rai & Agarwal, 2018). Conversely, an employee with minimal networking skills and who has limited opportunities to interact with colleagues will be unable to expand his/her social resources.

Workplace friendships help employees to keep informal networks functional within the organization, even if they have an abusive supervisor who likes to blame his/her employees,

takes credit for their work, pass negative comments or remind employees of their past mistakes, and eventually limits their access to the organizational resources and information. Workplace friends can provide timely assistance to their colleagues and provide them with social and emotional support especially when they are aware of the boss's behaviour. We contend that, in the face of abusive supervision, employees will utilize their workplace friendships to gather information and support, all of which mitigates the capacity of abusive supervision to compromise structural empowerment.

*H7: Workplace friendships moderate the relationship between employee perceptions of abusive supervision and the structural empowerment of employees such that the relationship is weaker for employees with stronger workplace friendships as opposed to weak workplace friendships.*

If workplace friendships moderate the relationship between abusive supervision and the structural empowerment of employees, workplace friendships may conditionally influence the strength of the indirect relationship between abusive supervision and its work outcomes (i.e., mediation H5). This leads to the following moderated-mediation hypothesis:

*H7a: Workplace friendships affect the strength of the mediated relationship among abusive supervision and job burnout, work engagement, employee creativity. These relationships are weaker for employees with stronger as opposed to low levels of workplace friendships.*

## **Research Methodology**

### **Participants**

A study found that almost 17.8%, or one in five New Zealanders, experience workplace bullying (Redmond, 2016). Therefore, sample data from New Zealand is likely to capture

issues of abusive supervision. We conducted this study with postgraduate students from a university in New Zealand, all of whom had a minimum of two years of work experience. Participants were invited to take part in an online survey using the snowball sampling technique. The data were collected in two waves separated by a two-week interval to minimize the common method variance (CMV) (Podsakoff et al., 2003). We also assured the anonymity of respondents. In order to further test for CMV, we conducted Harman's one factor test. The single factor only accounted for 21% of total variance, which is below the threshold of 40%. This further confirms that CMV did not affect our data. Of the 220 invitations sent out in the first wave, a total of 185 responded, a response rate of 84.1%. Two weeks later, a follow-up questionnaire was sent to the respondents, from which 146 responses were received, a response rate of 78.92%. After carefully scrutinizing the data, 141 valid and complete responses were left for the data analysis. The sample consisted of 53.2% males, and the majority of the participants (51.8%) belonged to the age group of 25-34 years. There was a mix of domestic and international postgraduate students with 34% Asians, 21% NZ Europeans, 11% NZ Maori, 7.5% Americans, 9.5% Africans, 5% Europeans and 12% Others. The majority of participants (42%) were students from Management Sciences, 18.2% from STEM (Science, technology, Engineering & Mathematics), 15.5% Law, 13 % Education and 11.3% from Social Sciences. Although the sample consisted of postgraduate students, they had prior work experience. Since the students came from various disciplines, it is representative of the different work sectors they were involved in.

### **Procedures and Measures**

The data were collected using an online questionnaire designed on the Qualtrics platform. A message, containing a link to the questionnaire, was sent to prospective participants via email and Facebook. The message included a clear indication of the purpose of the study, explained

that participation was voluntary and that responses would be anonymous. In the first wave, questions related to demographic information, perceptions of abusive supervision, and psychological and structural empowerment were administered. In the second wave, questions focused on positive and negative affectivity (control variables), resilience, workplace friendships, work engagement, employee creativity and job burnout. All measures used a five-point Likert scale, with 1 measuring 'Never' or 'Strongly Disagree' and 5 measuring 'Very Often' or 'Strongly Agree'.

### ***Abusive Supervision***

Abusive supervision was measured using a 15-item scale designed by Tepper (2000). Sample items were "My boss ridicules me" and "My boss expresses anger at me when he/she is mad for another reason." Participants were asked to rate their perceptions about their leader/supervisor's abusive behaviours at work. Cronbach's alpha of the scale was 0.938.

### ***Psychological Empowerment***

Psychological empowerment was measured using a 12-item scale by Spreitzer (1995). Sample items included "The work that I do is important to me" and "The work I do is meaningful to me". It consisted of 4 dimensions of psychological empowerment: meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact. Cronbach's alpha of the scale was 0.904.

### ***Structural Empowerment***

Structural empowerment was measured using a 12-item scale from the Conditions of Work Effectiveness Questionnaire- II (CWEQ-II) designed by Laschinger et al. (2001). Sample items included "My job gives me the chance to gain new knowledge and skills" and "My organization provides me support by providing me with helpful hints or problem-solving advice". Cronbach's alpha of the scale was 0.864.

### ***Resilience***

Resilience was measured using a 9-item scale designed by Naswall et al. (2015). Sample items were “I effectively collaborate with others to handle unexpected challenges at work” and “I resolve crises competently at work”. Cronbach’s alpha of the scale was 0.752.

### ***Workplace Friendships***

Workplace friendship was measured using a 12-item scale designed by Nielsen et al. (2000). The scale has two parts. The first part evaluates the opportunities available for friendship at work, and the second part assesses the prevalence of workplace friendship. Sample items include “I have formed strong friendships at work” and “In my organization, I have the chance to talk informally and visit with others”. Cronbach’s alpha of the scale was 0.879.

### ***Employee Work Engagement***

Work engagement was measured using a 9-item work engagement scale designed by Schaufeli et al. (2006). Sample items include “At my work, I feel myself bursting with energy” and “My job inspires me”. Cronbach’s alpha of the scale was 0.856.

### ***Employee Creativity***

Employee creativity was measured using a 5-item scale designed by Ganesan and Weitz (1996). Sample items were “I try to be as creative as I can in my job” and “I experiment with new approaches in performing my job”. Cronbach’s alpha of the scale was 0.747.

### ***Job Burnout***

Job burnout was measured using a short 7-item Copenhagen work-related burnout scale designed by Kristensen et al. (2005). Sample items included “I feel exhausted in the morning

at the thought of another day at work” and “My work frustrates me”. Cronbach’s alpha of the scale was 0.814.

### ***Control Variables***

The study controls for the positive affectivity (PA) and negative affectivity (NA) of the respondents as they relate to employee perceptions of stress at work (Wu & Hu, 2009). Previous studies have controlled for negative affectivity to avoid distortion of employee perceptions of abusive supervision (Tepper et al., 2006; Harvey et al., 2014). Positive affectivity has connections with psychological wellbeing (Wu & Hu, 2009) and may distort how employees perceive their psychological resources. These variables were measured with eight items from the Positive and Negative affect schedule (PANAS; Watson et al., 1988). Positive affectivity measures the degree to which an individual is experiencing enthusiasm, determination, excitement, and interest. High PA shows that the person is fully engaged and has high energy while low PA describes a lack of energy and sadness. Negative affectivity measures the degree to which an employee is distressed, upset, afraid, and scared. High NA expresses distress and anxiety, while low NA expresses calmness. Cronbach’s alpha for PA and NA was 0.734 and 0.823, respectively.

## **Results**

### **Descriptive Statistics**

The descriptive statistics presented in Table I. The correlations were in expected directions supporting the hypothesized relationships in this study.

	Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Abusive Supervision	2.47	.85	1									
2	Psychological Empowerment	3.55	.61	-.47***	1								
3	Structural Empowerment	3.53	.62	-.62***	.53***	1							
4	Employee Resilience	3.49	.57	.01	-.01	-.01	1						
5	Workplace Friendship	3.60	.59	-.14	.24**	.24**	.22**	1					
6	Work Engagement	3.65	.66	-.44***	.48***	.31***	-.02	.23**	1				
7	Employee Creativity	3.45	.68	-.59***	.53***	.61***	-.02	.19*	.54***	1			
8	Job Burnout	2.89	.72	.25**	-.20*	-.16*	-.10	.02	-.31***	-.29***	1		
9	Positive Affectivity	3.19	.90	-.09	.16	.19*	-.09	.01	.22**	.27**	-.14	1	
10	Negative Affectivity	1.85	.83	.09	-.08	-.20*	.11	-.15	-.15	-.13	.03	-.14	1
***p<0.001**p<0.01, *p<0.05, N=141													

## Direct and Mediated Effects

As presented by unstandardized regression coefficients in Table II, we utilized PROCESS macro model 4 (Hayes, 2013) for the mediation path analysis. Abusive supervision was negatively related to employee work engagement ( $b=-.34, p<0.001$ ), employee creativity ( $b=-.47, p<0.001$ ) and positively related to job burnout ( $b=.21, p<0.01$ ), supporting hypotheses H1a, H1b, H1c, respectively. We found that abusive supervision was significantly and negatively related to psychological empowerment ( $b=-.34, p<0.001$ ), supporting H2, and psychological empowerment was significantly related to employee work engagement ( $b=.38, p<0.001$ ) after controlling for abusive supervision. The capacity for psychological empowerment to mediate the relationship between abusive supervision and employee work engagement (H3a) was confirmed. After controlling for psychological empowerment as a mediator, the relationship between abusive supervision and employee work engagement ( $b=-.21, p<0.001$ ) was still significant, which shows psychological empowerment partially mediates the relationship between abusive supervision and work engagement of employees (H3a). We also found that, after controlling for the effect of abusive supervision, psychological empowerment was significantly related to employee creativity ( $b=.36, p<0.001$ ). The capacity for psychological empowerment to mediate the indirect relationship between abusive

supervision and employee creativity (H3b) was confirmed. After controlling for psychological empowerment as a mediator, we found that the relationship between abusive supervision and employee creativity ( $b=-.35$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) remained significant, showing that psychological empowerment partially mediates the relationship between abusive supervision and employee creativity (H3b). After controlling for the effect of abusive supervision, we found that psychological empowerment had an insignificant relationship with job burnout ( $b=-.12$ ). This disproved our mediating hypothesis H3c.

Abusive supervision was significantly and negatively related to structural empowerment ( $b=-.45$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) but structural empowerment was insignificantly related to employee work engagement ( $b=.05$ ) and job burnout ( $b=-.00$ ) after we controlled for abusive supervision. Due to insignificant mediating effect of structural empowerment on the relationship between abusive supervision and employee work engagement and between abusive supervision and job burnout, H6a and H6c were disproved. We found that structural empowerment was significantly related to employee creativity ( $b=.44$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) after controlling for the effect of abusive supervision. Therefore, structural empowerment mediated the relationship between abusive supervision and employee creativity, confirming H6b. After controlling for structural empowerment as a mediator, we found that the relationship between abusive supervision and employee creativity ( $b=-.27$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) remained significant, which shows that structural empowerment partially mediates the relationship between abusive supervision and employee creativity (proving H6b).

Table II

## Direct and Mediation Analysis

Variables	<i>b</i>	SE	t	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	LL[95% CI]	UL[95% CI]
Direct and Total Effects					Indirect Effects	
<b>Step 1</b>						
Abusive Supervision→ Work Engagement	-.34***	.05	-5.86	.19		
Abusive Supervision →Creativity	-.47***	.05	-8.72	.35		
Abusive Supervision →Job Burnout	.21**	.06	3.16	.06		
<b>Step 2</b>						
Abusive Supervision →Psychological Empowerment	-.34***	.05	-6.40	.22		
Abusive Supervision →Structural Empowerment	-.45***	.04	-9.47	.39		
<b>Step 3</b>						
Abusive Supervision → Psychological Empowerment → Work Engagement	.38***	.08	4.37	.29	.20	.55
Abusive Supervision → Psychological Empowerment → Creativity	.36***	.08	4.50	.43	.20	.52
Abusive Supervision → Psychological Empowerment → Job Burnout	-.12	.11	-1.11	.07	-.34	.09
Abusive Supervision → Structural Empowerment → Work Engagement	.05	.10	.55	.20	-.14	.26
Abusive Supervision → Structural Empowerment → Creativity	.44***	.08	4.95	.45	-.31	-.10
Abusive Supervision → Structural Empowerment → Job Burnout	-.00	.12	-.05	.06	-.11	-.11
***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05, <i>b</i> =Unstandardized coefficients are reported, SE=Standard Error, LL= Lower Limit, UL= Upper limit,						

## Results for Moderation

After discussing the mediation effects in Table II, we examined whether the interaction between abusive supervision and employee resilience is significant in predicting the psychological empowerment of employees, and whether the interaction between abusive supervision and workplace friendship is significant in predicting structural empowerment, with PROCESS macro model 1 (Hayes, 2013). Table III shows that the interaction between abusive supervision and employee resilience is insignificant in predicting psychological empowerment ( $b = -.15$ ), rejecting H4. The interaction between abusive supervision and workplace friendship is significant in predicting structural empowerment ( $b = .22$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), supporting H7. This suggests that a negative relationship between abusive supervision and structural empowerment will be weaker for an employee with a healthy level of workplace friendships, as shown in Figure 2.

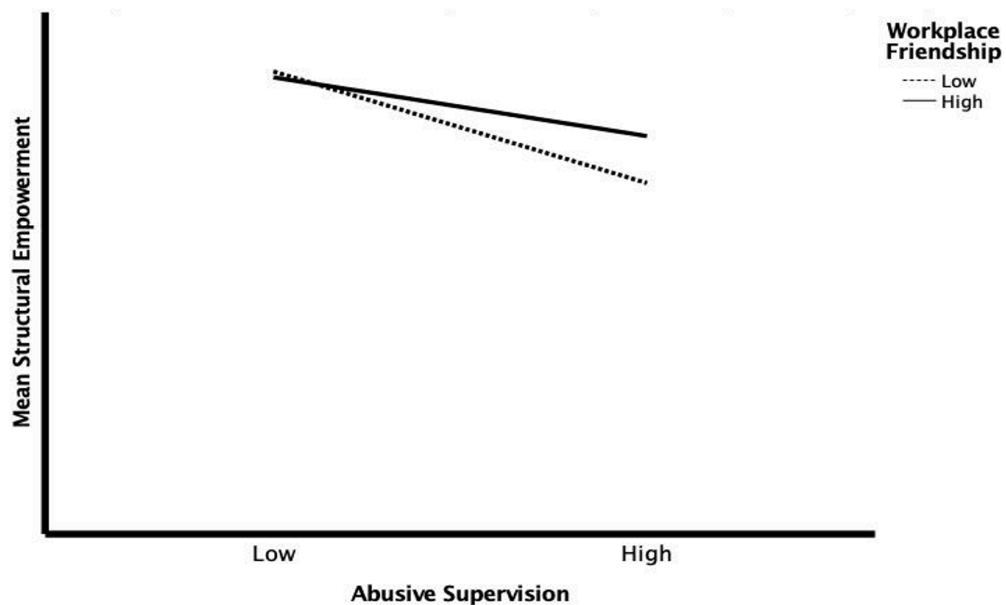
Table III

## Moderating Role of Employee Resilience and Workplace Friendship

Variables	Variables	
	Psychological Empowerment	Structural Empowerment
<i>Step 1: Controls</i>		
Positive Affectivity	.06	.08*
Negative Affectivity	-.01	-.08
<i>Step 2: Interaction Terms</i>		
Abusive Supervision × Employee Resilience	-.15	
Abusive Supervision × Workplace Friendship		.22**
$R^2$	.25	.48
$F$	9.26	25.78***
***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05		

Figure 2

## Moderating Role of Workplace Friendships



## **Results for Moderated Mediation**

Moderated mediation involves mediation effects that are conditional on the effects of another moderator variable. We used PROCESS macro model 7 to examine moderated mediation (Hayes, 2013). In order to examine how the mediative effects of psychological and structural empowerment are moderated, we analysed whether the strength of the relationship between abusive supervision and work engagement, employee creativity, and job burnout, all of which are respectively mediated by psychological empowerment and structural empowerment, differed when employees had varying levels of resilience and workplace friendships. We only test for the moderated mediations of the mediation hypotheses that were accepted, namely, H3a, H3b and H5b. We used PROCESS macro 7 for SPSS (Hayes, 2013) to calculate and assess the strength of these indirect and conditional effects. The high and low level of employee resilience and workplace friendship was operationalized as one standard deviation below and above the mean. Hypothesis H4a for employee resilience and psychological empowerment was rejected, while H7a was accepted only for employee creativity, showing that workplace friendship significantly moderated the mediated relationship between abusive supervision and employee creativity (where structural empowerment was the mediator). Table IV depicts how the mediative effects of abusive supervision are moderated across a high and low level of workplace friendship through bootstrap effects, standard errors and bootstrap confidence intervals.

Table IV

## Moderated Mediation Results for abusive supervision

Moderator	Effect	SE	Bootstrap LLCI	Bootstrap ULCI	Moderator	Effect	SE	Bootstrap LLCI	Bootstrap ULCI
Employee Resilience					Workplace Friendship				
	Dependent Variable = Work Engagement, Mediating Variable = Psychological Empowerment					Dependent Variable = Creativity, Mediating Variable = Structural Empowerment			
-1 SD	-0.08	0.03	-0.15	-0.01	-1 SD	-0.21	0.06	-0.33	-0.10
Mean	-0.11	0.04	-0.20	-0.03	Mean	-0.16	0.04	-0.25	-0.07
+1 SD	-0.14	0.06	-0.28	-0.02	+1 SD	-0.10	0.03	-0.18	-0.04
	Dependent Variable = Creativity, Mediating Variable = Psychological Empowerment								
-1 SD	-0.08	0.03	-0.14	-0.02					
Mean	-0.11	0.03	-0.18	-0.04					
+1 SD	-0.14	0.05	-0.25	-0.04					
Number of bootstrap samples = 5000, Level of confidence=95%, SE= Standard Error, LLCI= Lower level of confidence interval, ULCI= Upper level of confidence interval									

## Discussion & Conclusion

Drawing on the tenets of COR theory, this study examined the coping mechanisms of employees encountering abusive supervision. The study finds that abusive supervision is a workplace stressor that emotionally damages employees by making them feel burnt out when performing their job. Abusive supervision also has a negative influence on the creativity of employees, and in reducing their work engagement. However, the effect of abusive supervision on employees' work engagement and creativity were partially transferred through psychological empowerment. Consistent with the concept of the loss spiral in COR theory (Hobfoll, 2001), we find that employees who are stressed because of abusive supervision will experience a decrease in psychological empowerment. In order to conserve their resources, employees minimise their efforts toward work and activities involving creativity. Similar to

Davis and Bowles (2018), we found that employees feel less empowered and less competent with reduced autonomy at work, leading to lowered levels of intrinsic motivation to engage in work (Tepper, 2000).

The study also examined whether structural empowerment mediated the relationship between abusive supervision and work engagement, creativity and job burnout. Interestingly, the study finds that abusive supervision only affected employee creativity through reduced structural empowerment. When abusive supervision intensifies, employees feel less empowered and increasingly bereft of organizational information, knowledge and goals (i.e. lower structural empowerment), which is detrimental to their creativity. The effect, however, was partial, which means that the direct effect of abusive supervision was still strong enough, but also partially transferred through weakened access to organizational structures, information and resources. However, structural empowerment did not mediate the relationship between abusive supervision and work engagement. This is because work engagement is more closely related to the psychological wellbeing of employees and is only mediated through psychological empowerment. The results indicate that a reduction in psychological empowerment decreases employee work engagement to a greater degree than a reduction in structural empowerment. Compared to the direct impact of abusive supervision on employee engagement, a reduction in employee structural empowerment produces less damaging effects.

Abusive supervision has a more pronounced effect on the psychological empowerment of employees than on their structural empowerment. These findings are supported by COR theory (Hobfoll, 2001), which suggests that workplace stressors prompt psychological distress in employees, who, in fearing the loss of valuable personal resources, demonstrate a decline in job outcomes. Decreased psychological empowerment from lack of job autonomy, reduced self-efficacy, and diminished meaningfulness of work, mediates the relationship between

abusive supervision and decreased work engagement, and between abusive supervision and creativity.

Interestingly, neither psychological nor structural empowerment partially mediated the relationship with job burnout. None of the mediating variables proved to be significant in neutralising job burnout, which highlights the direct damage that abusive supervision wreaks on the emotional and mental health of employees.

We found that resilience, a psychological resource, did not buffer the impact of abusive supervision on the psychological empowerment of employees. The effect of abusive supervision was so strong on employee's psychological empowerment that even resilience did not have any moderating effect. On the other hand, workplace friendships, a social resource, acted as a mechanism that buffers employees from structural disempowerment when faced with abusive supervision. This study found that employees with friends in the workplace are less prone to the ramifications of abusive supervision than those without collegial support. Friendship networks provided employees with better access to information and resources within the organization by enabling them to draw support from their peers, making them immune to the harmful effects of abusive supervision on creativity. In contrast, employees who lacked friends in the workplace were more affected by abusive supervision and experienced a higher decline in structural empowerment.

It would be interesting to consider which aspect of workplace friendship helps employees cope with abusive supervision. Is emotional support more effective than informational or instrumental support? This might depend on the context in which abusive supervision happens. In any case, these are questions that should be investigated in future research.

## **Theoretical and Practical Implications**

The finding that a social resource such as workplace friendship mitigates the negative effect of abusive supervision on work outcomes is an important contribution to COR theory. Our study has identified, and empirically validates, workplace friendship as an important resource that can buffer the negative effects of workplace stressors (Hobfoll & Shirom, 2001).

Our study also contributes to the literature examining how employees are affected by, and cope with, the effects of abusive supervision. We find that abusive supervision declines work engagement and employee creativity more strongly through psychological empowerment as compared to structural empowerment. Moreover, we could not find any underlying mediating mechanism for the relationship between abusive supervision and job burnout, which highlights the direct and destructive nature of sustained abusive supervisory behaviour that result in employee burnout.

As with other studies, we also highlight the importance of organizations introducing or reinforcing programs to ameliorate the mental health of employees (Carlson et al., 2012; Wu & Hu, 2009) and to encourage positive behaviours at work, especially collegial support (Zhang & Liao, 2015). Given that our study shows workplace friendships to be a key mechanism for individuals to deal with the harmful effects of abusive supervision, we suggest the importance for organizations to facilitate a collective spirit in trying to achieve common goals. For existing employees, this can be facilitated through peer mentoring schemes. Employees can be put into small groups and encouraged to meet together as part of their work, to share their work journey. Such activities strengthen social networks and workplace friendships. New employees can also be buddied with existing employees in order to develop social networks and to socialize them into the organization.

## **Limitations and Future Research Directions**

Firstly, a limitation of the study is that data comes from the same source and from the focal employees' perspective. However, as the definition of abusive supervision suggests a sustained and repetitive behaviour; future studies can be done using longitudinal data gathered from multiple sources to analyse patterns of abuse supervision over time. Secondly, apart from job burnout and employee engagement, it would also be interesting to apply the COR theoretical framework to other variables such as work withdrawal behaviours and organizational citizenship behaviours. Thirdly, this study aimed to address the call by Tepper et al. (2017) to simultaneously analyse ways employees cope with the damaging effects of abusive supervision in order to measure their relative efficacy. We only examined one psychological resource (resilience) and one social resource (workplace friendships) in this study. Future studies could investigate other coping mechanisms such as psychological withdrawal, seeking sympathy from peers, denying the occurrence of the stressor, or focusing on the learning from the aggressor (highlighted by Craver et al. (1989) and Tepper et al. (2017)) and test their comparative efficacies. Finally, our data included respondents working in New Zealand but coming from a variety of backgrounds (different nationalities and cultures) which can have different power structures. For example, some studies have shown that Asians are more tolerant to abuse and consider abusive behaviour from authority figures as acceptable and normative because of the high power distance culture (Zhang & Liu, 2018). The cultural variety in our sample is a limitation but it simply reflects New Zealand multiculturalism. However, future research could be more culturally focussed and study the influence of employees' cultural background in relation to abusive supervision.

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## **CHAPTER 4**

### **STUDY THREE**

#### **Paper Title**

Cross Cultural Comparison of the Impact of Abusive Supervision on Employee Engagement and Job Burnout via Organisational Identification: The Moderating Role of Mindfulness

#### **Declaration**

I developed the theoretical framework for the paper. I executed and carried out the data collection. I did the data entry, screening and analysis using SPSS. I wrote the full first draft of the paper. Theoretical contributions are my own. My two supervisors (co-authors) provided feedback on the theoretical aspects of the paper, quantitative analysis and editing. Overall, I contributed 80% to this paper and my supervisors contributed 30% to it.

#### **Publication Status**

This paper has been submitted to the Journal of Business Ethics and is under review.

The following paper follows the layout, referencing and language required by the journal editors.

## **Abstract**

This study explores the coping mechanisms of abusive supervision in two different cultural and national contexts: Pakistan and New Zealand. Drawing on the conservation of resources (COR) theory, we examine if the psychological resource of employee mindfulness can buffer the destructive effects of abusive supervision on employees' work engagement and job burnout via the personal resource of organisational identification. We collected data from Pakistan and New Zealand using two separate studies and find that organisational identification mediates the relationship between abusive supervision and employee work engagement for both samples. However, employee mindfulness only buffers the harmful impact of abusive supervision in the Pakistan sample. Our study reveals new insights into the impact of psychological resources on abusive supervision, providing directions for future research and practice.

**Keywords:** Abusive supervision; organisational identification; mindfulness; work engagement; burnout

## Introduction

Abusive supervision refers to a subordinate's "perceptions of the extent to which supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and non-verbal behaviours excluding physical contact" (Tepper 2000, p.178). These hostile supervisory behaviours not only violate employees' basic rights for dignity and respect and disrupt the normative standards of an ethical workplace, but also pose a threat to employees' safety and well-being (Ünal et al. 2012). Abusive supervision is an interpersonal stressor (Arshad et al. 2021) that may lead to employee turnover or loss of productivity. Studies using conservation of resources (COR) theory suggest that abusive supervision reduces employees' necessary resources to cope with the abuse. As a result, abused employees try to either conserve their remaining resources (Tepper 2007; Tepper et al. 2017), or utilise their psychological and/or social resources to cope with abusive supervision (Tepper et al. 2011).

Research on employees' perceptions of abusive supervision and their work outcomes has been increasing in the last 20 years (Mackey et al. 2017). However, researchers such as Tepper et al. (2017) have nevertheless argued that we know very little about how employees utilize their psychological and/or social resources to help them cope effectively with these abusive supervisory behaviours. Apart from a recent study by Arshad et al. (2021) showing the importance of cultivating workplace friendships (a social resource) to minimize the damaging effects of abusive supervision, there has been minimal research in this area. Given the substantial financial cost attached to abusive supervision (Tepper et al. 2006), it is imperative to understand how employees use their psychological and social resources as coping mechanisms to mitigate the adverse effects of abusive supervision.

An important social resource for an employee is their identification with their organisation. Organisational identification is "an individual's perception of belonging to an organisation" (Mael and Ashforth 1992, p. 104). A sense of belonging, whether it is relationally

with someone, or collectively to a group or an institution, relates to one's positive state and social circumstances and is hence a resource (Schabram and Heng 2021). This sense of social identification is enhanced when employees feel respected leading to higher work engagement (He et al. 2014; Zhang et al. 2017), and lower job burnout. Employees will feel disrespected when abused, and this can affect their identification with their organisation. Furthermore, this creates negative emotions that depletes their self-regulatory resources. Being mindful can help them to detach from these negative emotions, evaluate them in a non-judgmental way, and not embody them, better enabling them to cope with abusive supervision. Mindfulness is defined as "a mental state related to focused attention and awareness on present experiences" (Brown and Ryan 2003, p. 822). Therefore, examining how employees utilize their mindfulness to buffer the effects of abusive supervision is an important line of investigation, responding to the call by Tepper et al. (2017) to examine different mechanisms to cope with the effects of abusive supervision. Using mathematical jargon, our research utilises employee mindfulness (i.e., a psychological resource) as a moderator. We examine how mindfulness moderates the relationship between abusive supervision and organisational identification (i.e., a social resource); as well as how mindfulness moderates the mediated relationship between abusive supervision and work engagement and job burnout via organisational identification (see Figure 1 for the theoretical framework).

This study makes two significant contributions. First, we explicate the mechanisms through which abusive supervision impacts on employee outcomes (i.e., work engagement and job burnout). More specifically, considering the combination of resources at a social level (i.e., organisational identification) and at a psychological level (i.e., mindfulness) that employees draw on when experiencing abusive supervision gives us greater insights into how abusive supervision can be mitigated, insights which contribute significantly to both theory and practice.

The second contribution of this study lies in its cross-cultural examination of abusive supervision. We examine how the psychological resource of mindfulness and social resource of organisational identification mitigates the effects of abusive supervision on work engagement and job burnout in two cultural contexts – Pakistan and New Zealand (NZ). The pathways that the two resources (i.e., organisational identification and mindfulness) takes to mitigate the effects of abusive supervision (see Figure 1) is expected to be the same in both cultural contexts, although the size of its effect may differ due to cultural differences. The intention is to examine how effective is mindfulness as a moderator, as well as the extent to which organisational identification mediates the relationship between abusive supervision and work engagement and job burnout, for employees from Pakistan and NZ. It is indeed possible that employees from different cultures may accept abusive supervision differently.

### **The cultural contexts**

Research on abusive supervision in NZ and Pakistan reveal that both countries are affected by abusive supervision. NZ has the second worst rate of workplace bullying among the developed countries, with almost one in five employees being affected (Redmond 2016). According to a recent report by the Institute of Business Ethics (2018) on work ethics in NZ, Australia and UK, NZ has the highest rate of workplace bullying - about 26%, compared to 24% in the UK and in Australia.

Studies about abusive supervision in Pakistan suggest that employees from that country are more exposed to higher levels of workplace bullying than in European or Australian workplaces and most of this behaviour is top-down in nature (Ahmad et al. 2021). Studies also show that the majority of abusive supervision behaviours are underreported owing to Pakistani employees fearing retaliation or losing their jobs (Sarwar et al. 2019), lacking assertive skills and personal control to deal with the situation (Ghani et al. 2020; Gul et al. 2021), and feeling trapped by the lack of alternate job opportunities (Cassum 2014).

In so much as there is supervisory abuse in both countries, there are also important differences between the two cultures. One such difference is power distance value (Hofstede, 2001). NZ and Pakistan have significant differences in cultural values orientation, especially in terms of power distance. Pakistan is a high power distance society (see <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/>). Hofstede's cultural insights indeed shows that, at slightly above 50, Pakistan scores highly in terms of power distance orientation compared to NZ which is at 22. Power distance is the degree to which less powerful members of organisations or institutions accept unequal distribution of power (Clugston et al. 2000; Hofstede 2001). The concept of power distance is particularly appropriate for this study. Power distance affects the power relationships between employees and their leaders. When power distance is high, abusive supervision tend to be relatively common (Khan et al. 2018), and there is greater desire for employees to keep silent (Imran et al. 2014; De Clercq et al. 2021) and accepting of the abuse (Carl et al. 2004). It is therefore possible that that employees in a high power distance society may view abusive supervision as a part of organisational life, thus affecting the extent to which abuse affects their identification with the organisation and the extent to which their mindfulness can buffer the relationship.

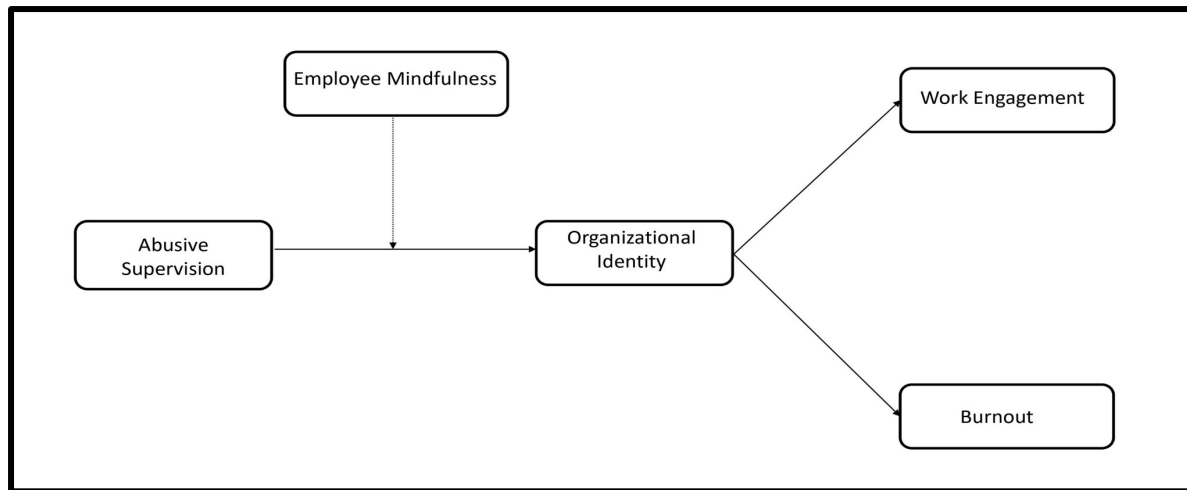
By conducting separate studies using the two different cultural contexts, the study answers the calls from researchers (e.g., Cole et al. 2010; Peltokorpi and Ramaswami 2021) for more cross-cultural studies of abusive supervision, especially using non-western samples. Our research therefore adds to the very small body of knowledge on cross cultural comparison of abusive supervision, and sheds new light on areas that cannot be easily grasped through a study involving a single culture.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Conservation of Resources Theory**

Conservation of resources (COR) theory is an instrumental theory to comprehend the response of subordinates to stress caused by abusive supervisory behaviours (Harris et al. 2013). We therefore use COR theory to build our theoretical model. COR theory takes a resource-based approach regarding stressors, as stressors can cause the loss or diminishing of resources. Resources can be material things that are valuable to people (house, land, cars), social resources (social support, co-worker support, job security, social identification), and personal resources (self-esteem, resilience, mindfulness) (Hobfoll 1989). The basic tenet of COR theory is that individuals strive to acquire, retain, and preserve valuable resources (Hobfoll 1989, 2011). Moreover, the idea of a potential or actual resource loss, despite investing in them, causes psychological stress in individuals. This ultimately leads to resource depletion in the long run (Hobfoll 1989). According to COR theory, individuals either: (1) invest more resources to offset any resource loss in stressful situations, (2) conserve their remaining resources to avoid further resource loss, or (3) use counterproductive strategies (Hobfoll 1998, 2001). Research shows that certain psychological or social resources (e.g., resilience, self-esteem, co-worker support) can help individuals buffer the adverse effects of workplace stressors (Hobfoll and Shirom 2001; Arshad et al. 2021). Recent COR theory developments suggest that resource caravans (i.e., the linkage of resources) are formed and retained within a resource caravan passageway. Caravan passageways consist of the environmental conditions that support, facilitate, and promote personal resources (Hobfoll 2011).

COR theory provides us with a theoretical underpinning to explore the adverse effects of abusive supervision on employee work engagement and burnout through organisational identification; and how mindfulness buffers the relationships. Figure 1 represents this study's theoretical framework.



*Figure 1 Theoretical Framework*

### **Abusive Supervision and Employee Outcomes**

As previously mentioned, abusive supervision is the perception by employees that someone overseeing their work is engaging in sustained hostile behaviours that may be verbal and non-verbal (Tepper 2000). Examples of abusive supervision include humiliating or ridiculing employees in public, mocking or belittling them in front of their co-workers, being rude to them, or taking credit for their work (Tepper 2000, 2007). Abusive supervision has several key characteristics: a) it is a subjective perception of employees and different employees may have different perceptions of abuse from the same supervisor; b) it must be done intentionally by the supervisor; c) it has to be a "sustained display" rather than a one-off event; and d) it should not include any physical contact (Harris et al. 2007). Several studies have explored the significant effects of abusive supervision on employee work outcomes, such as reduced organisational citizenship behaviours (Aryee et al. 2007), low job performance (Harris et al. 2007), feedback avoidance (Whitman et al. 2014), counterproductive work behaviours (Mitchell and Ambrose 2007) and supervisor-directed aggression (Lian et al. 2014).

This study examines two work outcomes of abusive supervision: work engagement (Kahn, 1990) and job burnout (Maslach et al. 2001). Although they have been studied previously (e.g., Mackey et al. 2013; Carlson et al. 2012; Frieder et al. 2015), there has been

minimal investigation into how intervening mechanisms such as organisational identification and employee mindfulness affect these outcomes in the face of abusive supervision. Drawing on COR theory (Hobfoll 1989), we posit that abusive supervision is a stressor that leads employees to conserve their resources by putting in less effort, ultimately reducing their work engagement (Avey et al. 2015; Tepper 2000). In addition, exposure to continuous abuse from supervisors makes employees physically and mentally exhausted due to psychological strain (Carlson et al. 2012; Tepper 2000), and hence drains their psychological resources. Employees work hard to sustain their resources, and failure to do so leads to job burnout (Hobfoll 2001; Sliter et al. 2010).

### **Mediating Role of Organisational Identity**

Organisational identification is an employee's perception of oneness with the organisation which involves considering the organisation's successes and failures as one's own (Mael and Ashforth 1992). It is a form of social identification (Tajfel and Turner 1979) that helps employees associate strongly with the organisation. Organisation identification develops when an organisation satisfies four key needs of employees: uncertainty reduction, belonging, self-esteem, and a sense of self-worth (Hogg and Terry 2000).

Abusive supervision may threaten these four needs and ultimately undermine employees' identification with the organisation. Hostile and coercive leader behaviours make employees feel helpless and create ambiguity in their minds about their future (Tepper et al. 2009), which impair their need for uncertainty reduction. Abusive supervisors intimidate employees by humiliating them and making them feel detached from their organisations (Aryee et al. 2007; Tepper et al. 2004); reducing their sense of belonging. Abusive supervisors publicly criticise employees, mistreat them, and lead employees to question their value in the organisation (Burton and Hoobler 2006). Abused subordinates may feel disrespected and doubt their skills and competency in the workplace, which harms their self-esteem (Keashly and

Harvey 2005; Liu et al. 2012). Moreover, persistent abuse from supervisors reduces employees' psychological well-being. Abusive supervisors hardly appreciate good work of their employees, making them feel that their contribution is less valuable to the organisation and disregarding their need for a sense of self-worth (De Roeck and Delobbe 2012; Rafferty and Restubog 2011). Therefore, abusive supervisory behaviours can reduce the four basic needs of employees to build organisational identification.

Leaders are thought to embody the values of the organisation, and therefore the actions of leaders reflect that of the organisation (Baran 2012). It is important to recognize that employees tend to personify the organisation they work for depending on the quality of the exchange relationship they have with their leaders (Kim et al. 2004). Abusive leaders undermine the four key needs as discussed previously. Being representatives of the organisation, such abusive behaviours can be perceived to be organisational actions undermining organisational identifications. Employees in such stressful conditions are less likely to defend their organisation's public image (Decoster et al. 2013), and their perceptions of oneness with the organisation's values decrease (Tajfel 1981). Conversely, leaders who are consistent in their behaviour and strongly support employees, would enhance the four key needs of uncertainty reduction, belonging, self-esteem, and a sense of self-worth. In other words, such actions of leaders are perceived as being enacted by the organisation, thereby enhancing identification with the organisation. Taken together, this leads us to hypothesise the following:

*H1: Abusive supervision negatively affects employees' organisational identification.*

In the light of COR theory (Hobfoll 1989), we posit that employees' resources are diminished when they face interpersonal stressors such as abusive supervision (Harris et al. 2013). Deficiency in social resources (such as organisational identification) make individuals

vulnerable (Hobfoll 2002). Their sense for belonging declines, and they are more likely to feel drained because they consume more self-regulatory resources to overcome negative impulses and emotions. To conserve resource depletion, they exert less effort in their work thereby affecting their work engagement. Constant draining of self-regulatory resources puts people in a vulnerable state, which eventually progresses towards burnout.

Employees who feel a strong sense of identification with their organisation exert more effort and dedication to their work, are more engaged even in the presence of high workload (Guarana, 2010), and they derive personal satisfaction from their work (Lee et al. 2015). A strong sense of identification to the organisation is a significant resource to help minimize stress level of employees (Haslam et al. 2005) and minimize burnout (Jetten et al. 2012). It also helps employees to voluntarily contribute to organisational goals without utilizing any regulation strategies (Bhowmick and Mulla 2021). Therefore, drawing on the COR theory, we hypothesise that:

*H2: Employees' organisational identification mediates the relationship between abusive supervision and a) engagement and b) job burnout.*

### **Moderating Role of Employee Mindfulness**

Mindfulness has its roots in Buddhism (Purser and Milillo 2014). It is related to a person's attention and awareness of the current moment without any reaction or judgement (Baer et al. 2006; Brown and Ryan 2003). Mindfulness varies from person to person (Brown and Ryan 2003) but, overall, mindfulness-based practices help people self-regulate themselves and function better (Glomb et al. 2011).

There are two core mental processes encompassing mindfulness, as described by Glomb et al. (2011). Firstly, individuals with a high level of mindfulness can detach their ego from experiences, emotions, and thoughts, thereby making them less self-relevant. Secondly,

individuals with a high level of mindfulness experience a decline in automaticity of thoughts and mental processes, ultimately reducing constrained thinking patterns and impulsive reactions to harmful events and experiences. As such, mindfulness can help individuals stay fully aware of the moment and counter dysfunctional thinking patterns and behaviours arising from adverse events (Zheng and Liu 2017).

The role of employee mindfulness in the workplace has been well researched (e.g., Dane 2011; Ray et al. 2011; Weick and Putnam 2006). Mindfulness is a psychological resource that helps employees detach themselves from stressful situations at work, understand and process them in a less damaging way (Haun et al. 2018). Mindfulness intervention maximizes employees' resources to achieve organisational outcomes (McNall et al. 2021). Drawing on the tenets of COR theory, we posit that employees utilise their psychological, and social resources to deal with stressful situations such as abusive supervision at work (Hobfoll 1989, 2001). Mindfulness can disrupt habitual negative thought patterns, enabling individuals to detach themselves from the situation (Garland et al. 2015), serving as a buffering resource to minimize the negative effects of abusive supervision (Weintraub et al. 2019). Mindful employees are better able to stand back, analyse the situation, and calmly cope with negativity that arises due to abusive supervision rather than becoming consumed by it. Employees with high levels of mindfulness are less likely to take things personally when faced with abusive supervisory behaviour and separate them from the organisation's actions, thus causing less harm to their organisational identification. While employees with low level of mindfulness are more susceptible to the emotions caused by abusive supervisor behaviours and are not able to separate such behaviours from organisational actions, which, in turn, strengthens the negative relationship between abusive supervision and organisational identification. This leads us to hypothesise that:

*H3: Employee mindfulness moderates the relationship between employee perceptions of abusive supervision and their organisational identification such that the negative relationship is weaker for employees who are more mindful.*

As mindful employees are better placed to buffer the negative effects of abusive supervision, we contend that they are less likely to feel that their resources, particularly their social and psychological resources, are being drained as a result of the negative situation they face at work. It will reduce the negative impact on employees' organisational identification, be less destructive to employees' work and engagement, and minimise their job burnout. This leads to our third hypothesis:

*H4: Employee mindfulness affects the strength of the mediated relationship between abusive supervision, (a) work engagement and (b) job burnout. This relationship is weaker for employees with higher levels of mindfulness.*

## **Cross Cultural Analysis**

As discussed previously, we intend to examine the theoretical framework (Figure 1) in two different cultures – Pakistan and NZ. We posit that the pathways that the resources of organisational identification and mindfulness takes to mitigates the effects of abusive supervision on work engagement and job burnout is the same for both cultures (i.e., mindfulness is the moderator and organisational identification is the mediator). However, the extent of the impact of the resources on the pathways may be different because of the difference in power distance values. Pakistan society, that have a significantly higher power distance culture, are more accepting of abuse (Carl et al. 2004), and employees tend to keep silent in the face of abuse (Imran et al. 2014; De Clercq et al. 2021). High power distance cultures are therefore more likely to accept abuse as part of organisational life, as opposed to low power distance cultures such as NZ. Such perception of abuse may alter the strengths of the pathways

that resources of organisational identification and mindfulness takes to mitigates the effects of abusive supervision on work engagement and job burnout. For this study, we do not offer any cross-cultural hypotheses, but let the results reveal the differential impact.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Sample and Procedures**

We conducted two similar studies in two different contexts, first in Pakistan then in NZ. We contacted employees using a mix of convenience and snowball sampling techniques. We used both paper-based and Qualtrics surveys to get maximum responses in both countries. In each country, the surveys were conducted in two waves with an interval of two weeks to minimise the common method bias (Podsakoff et al. 2003). A cover letter was provided with the survey to inform respondents about the context and scope of the study. We also assured respondents that their responses were anonymous and confidential, and that all data were stored as codes in the database. In the first wave, we asked respondents about their demographics, perceptions of abusive supervision, and organisational identification. In the second wave, distributed two weeks later, we asked respondents about their perception of power distance, mindfulness, work engagement and job burnout.

We collected data on employees from the service sector in Pakistan. At the end of the second wave, after screening out invalid and incomplete responses, we collected 329 valid responses (validity rate of 65.8%). The Pakistan sample consisted of 56.5% females, and 64.6% belonged to the age group of 25-34 years. Participants came from a variety of industries such as health, hospitality, and education. We then replicated the same study in NZ (Study 2). After screening out invalid and incomplete responses, we collected 222 valid responses (validity rate of 51.15%) at the end of the second wave. The NZ sample consisted of 52.25% females, and

60.81% belonged to the age group of 25-34 years. Participants came from a variety of industries such as hospitality, education, and financial services.

## **Measures**

All measures were done using a Likert scale from 1 to 5, with 1 = “strongly disagree” and 5 = “strongly agree.”

*Abusive Supervision* was measured using a 15-item scale designed by Tepper (2000). Sample items were “My boss invades my privacy” and “My boss blames me to save himself/herself embarrassment”. Respondents were asked to rate their perceptions about their boss/supervisor’s behaviours at work. Cronbach’s alpha is 0.95 for Pakistan and 0.96 for NZ.

*Organisational Identity* was measured using a 6-item scale designed by Mael and Ashforth (1992). Sample items were “When someone criticizes my organisation, it feels like a personal insult” and “My organisation’s successes are my successes”. Participants were asked to rate their level of identification with their organisation. Cronbach’s alpha is 0.82 for Pakistan and 0.91 for NZ.

*Employee Mindfulness* was measured using a 15-item scale designed by Brown and Ryan (2003). Sample items were “I find it difficult to stay focused on what’s happening in the present” and “I do jobs or tasks automatically, without being aware of what I’m doing”. Cronbach’s alpha is 0.92 for Pakistan and 0.92 for NZ.

*Power Distance* was measured using a 5-item scale designed by Yoo et al. (2011). Sample items were “Managers seldom ask for the opinions of employees” and “Managers do not delegate important tasks to employees”. Cronbach’s alpha is 0.71 for Pakistan and 0.89 for NZ.

*Work Engagement of Employees* was measured using a 9-item scale designed by Schaufeli et al. (2006). Sample items include “I get carried away when I am working” and “I am enthusiastic about my job”. Cronbach’s alpha is 0.87 for Pakistan and 0.85 for NZ.

*Job Burnout* was measured using a 7-item Copenhagen work-related burnout scale developed by Kristensen et al. (2005). Sample items included “I feel worn out at the end of the working day” and “I feel burnt out because of work”. Cronbach’s alpha is 0.79 for Pakistan and 0.77 for NZ.

*Positive and negative affectivity* were added as control variables for the study. Positive and negative affectivity were measured using the 8-item scale by Watson et al. (1988). Positive affectivity refers to the degree to which an individual is enthusiastic, excited, interested and determined, displaying high energy and determination. Negative affectivity refers to the degree to which an individual is upset, distressed, anxious, and scared. Individuals with high negative affectivity demonstrate a pronounced level of anxiety and stress, affecting perceptions of abusive supervision (Tepper et al. 2006) whereas individuals with high levels of positive affectivity reflect overall psychological well-being (Wu and Hu 2009). Cronbach’s alpha for Positive Affectivity scale is 0.70 for Pakistan and 0.72 for NZ. While Cronbach’s alpha for Negative Affectivity scale is 0.74 for Pakistan and 0.75 for NZ.

### **Cross Cultural Analysis**

Since we carried out our studies in Pakistan and NZ, we also collected power distance values. The descriptive statistics for power distance for the two samples are: Pakistan ( $\alpha=0.71$ ,  $M=3.28$ ,  $SD=.83$ ) and NZ ( $\alpha=0.89$ ,  $M=2.60$ ,  $SD=.98$ ). We carried out a t-test to see if there was a significant difference between the two power distance means. We found that the Study 1 sample from Pakistan has a significantly higher power distance from the Study 2 sample from NZ. This is in line with the indication from Hofstede Insights that Pakistan has a significantly higher power distance culture as compared to NZ (<https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/>).

## Analytical Strategy

We conducted the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in AMOS to investigate the discriminant validities of our variables, as presented in Table 1. Our model gave a good fit to the data. The fit indices used to assess the model fit were: CMIN/*df*, comparative fit index (CFI), root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) and standardised root-mean-square residual, as per the recommendations of Bryne (2010) and Kline (2015). Our baseline model had all the indices within an acceptable range. In contrast, all the alternative models were a poor fit<sup>1</sup>.

Table 1  
Model Fit Comparison-CFA

Measurement Model (CFA) Comparison		Study 1-Pakistan			Study 2-New Zealand		
		CMIN/ df	RMSEA	CFI	CMIN/ df	RMSEA	CFI
Model 1	5 factors: Abusive Supervision, Job Burnout, Work Engagement, Mindfulness and Organisational Identity	2.93	.07	.92	1.80	.06	.91
Model 2	4 factors: Abusive Supervision, Job Burnout, Work Engagement, Mindfulness + Organizational Identity	4.91	.11	.63	3.10	.09	.69
Model 3	3 factors: Abusive Supervision, Job Burnout, Work Engagement + Mindfulness + Organisational Identity	5.63	.12	.56	3.55	.11	.63
Model 4	2 factors: Abusive Supervision, Job Burnout + Work Engagement + Mindfulness + Organisational Identity	6.10	.12	.52	4.02	.12	.56
Model 5	1 factor: Abusive Supervision + Job Burnout + Work Engagement + Mindfulness + Organisational Identity	7.83	.14	.36	5.29	.14	.38

In order to minimise the chances of Common Method Variance (CMV), we conducted Harman's one-factor test for both samples (Podsakoff and Organ 1986). The single factor only came with 26% and 28.6% of the total variance for the Pakistan and NZ samples, respectively. These variances are well-below the 40% threshold, confirming that CMV did not affect our

<sup>1</sup> A reviewer requested that we combine both the studies together for analyses. However, multi-group analysis MGA (Hair et al. 2017) in AMOS shows that the two samples (i.e., Pakistan and NZ) are different, and the difference was statistically significant with a p-value of <0.01. Furthermore, when the two studies were combined and the CFA was done, none of the models showed sufficient fit, confirming our original intention of analysing the studies separately.

research. We then tested for moderation and mediation, as well as moderated mediation, in SPSS through PROCESS macro models (Hayes 2013, 2017). Moderated mediation happens when the direction and strength of mediation effects are dependent on another variable, i.e., the moderator. In our study, moderated mediation will occur when the indirect effects of abusive supervision on work engagement and burnout, mediated by employees' organisational identification, vary in strength across low and high levels of employee mindfulness.

## Results

### Study 1-Pakistan

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of the Study 1 sample, including the means (M), standard deviation (SD), Cronbach's alpha, and correlation matrix of our study variables.

Table 2  
Means (M), Standard Deviations (SD), Cronbach's  $\alpha$  and correlations between variables

	Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Abusive Supervision	2.68	1.05	(.95)						
2	Organisational Identification	3.84	.78	-.30**	(.82)					
3	Employee Mindfulness	3.22	.89	-.08	.39**	(.92)				
4	Work Engagement	3.21	.91	-.43**	.44**	.40**	(.87)			
5	Job Burnout	2.87	.83	.34**	-.05	.08	.13**	(.79)		
6	Positive Affect	3.15	.83	-.24**	.28**	.05	.32**	-.12**	(.70)	
7	Negative Affect	2.37	.90	.39**	-.24**	.13*	-.21**	.09	.13*	(.74)
Cronbach's $\alpha$ in parentheses; ** $p < 0.01$ , * $p < 0.05$ , $N = 329$										

Table 3 presents the results of the direct and mediation analyses using PROCESS macro (Hayes 2013). It shows that abusive supervision is negatively related to organisational identification ( $\beta = -.19$ ,  $t = -4.18$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), supporting H1. Next, we tested for the mediating role of organisational identification using PROCESS model 4 (Hayes 2017). We found that organisational identification significantly mediated the relationship between abusive supervision and work engagement of employees ( $\beta = .25$ ,  $t = 4.51$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), supporting H2a. Organisational identification had an insignificant mediation in the relationship between

abusive supervision and job burnout ( $\beta=.09$ ,  $t=-1.52$ ), disproving our mediation hypothesis H2b.

Table 3  
Direct and Mediation Analysis-Pakistan

Variables	<i>b</i>	SE	t	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	LL[95% CI]	UL[95% CI]
Direct and Total Effects					Indirect Effects	
<b>Step 1</b>						
Abusive Supervision→ Work Engagement	-.37**	.05	-7.75	.30		
Abusive Supervision →Job Burnout	.28**	.05	5.53	.11		
<b>Step 2</b>						
Abusive Supervision →Organisational Identification	-.19**	.05	-4.18	.19		
<b>Step 3</b>						
Abusive Supervision → Organisational Identification → Work Engagement	.25**	.05	4.51	.34	.14	.36
Abusive Supervision → Organisational Identification → Job Burnout	.09	.06	1.52	.11	-.03	.21
**p<0.01, *p<0.05, <i>b</i> =Unstandardized coefficients are reported, SE=Standard Error, LL= Lower Limit, UL= Upper limit,						

Next, we examined the interaction of abusive supervision and employee mindfulness to predict organisational identification using PROCESS model 1 (Hayes 2017). Table 4 shows that the interaction was significant ( $b=-.09$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) across high and low levels of employee mindfulness, supporting H3. This result suggests that high employee mindfulness buffers the negative effects of abusive supervision on organisational identification, as shown in Figure 2.

Table 4  
Moderating Role of Employee Mindfulness

Variables	Variables
	Organisational Identification
<i>Step 1: Controls</i>	
Positive Affectivity	.23**
Negative Affectivity	-.24**
<i>Step 2: Interaction Terms</i>	
Abusive Supervision × Employee Mindfulness	.09*
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.38
<i>F</i>	39.57
**p<0.01, *p<0.05	

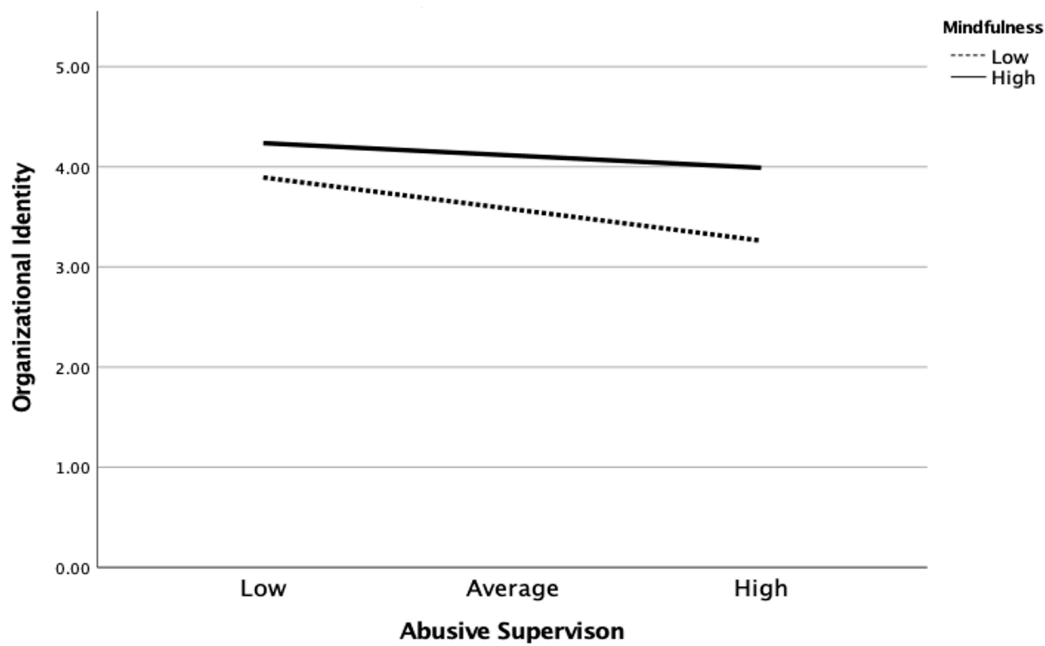


Figure 2 Moderating Role of Employee Mindfulness

Lastly, we checked for moderated mediation effects, presented in Table 5. The strength of the indirect effect of abusive supervision on work engagement and burnout of employees via employees' organisational identification varied between low and high levels of employee mindfulness. We used PROCESS macro model 7 (Hayes 2017) to assess the strength of these conditional indirect effects. The moderated mediation was found to be significant only for work engagement, accepting H4a.

Table 5

Moderated Mediation Results for abusive supervision

Moderator	Effect	SE	Bootstrap LLCI	Bootstrap LLCI	Moderator	Effect	SE	Bootst rap LLCI	Bootstrap LLCI
Employee Mindfulness					Employee Mindfulness				
	Dependent Variable= Work Engagement, Mediating Variable= Organisational Identity					Dependent Variable = Job Burnout, Mediating Variable = Organisational Identity			
-1 SD	-.04	0.02	-0.08	-0.01	-1 SD	-0.02	0.01	-0.05	0.00
Mean	-0.02	0.01	-0.05	-0.00	Mean	-0.01	0.01	-0.02	0.00
+1 SD	-0.01	0.01	-0.03	-0.00	+1 SD	-0.00	0.00	-0.01	0.01
Number of bootstrap samples = 5000, Level of confidence=95%, SE= Standard Error, LLCI= Lower level of confidence interval, ULCI= Upper level of confidence interval									

## Study 2- New Zealand

Table 6 presents the descriptive statistics of our New Zealand sample, including the means (M), standard deviation (SD), Cronbach's alpha, and correlation matrix of our study variables.

Table 6  
Means (M), Standard Deviations (SD), Cronbach's  $\alpha$  and correlations between variables

	Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Abusive Supervision	1.87	.80	(.96)						
2	Organisational Identification	3.38	.84	-.46**	(.91)					
3	Employee Mindfulness	3.04	.68	-.29**	.81**	(.92)				
4	Work Engagement	3.57	.64	-.51**	.45**	.23**	(.85)			
5	Job Burnout	3.07	.66	.19*	-.07	.04	-.29**	(.77)		
6	Positive Affectivity	3.10	.87	-.01	-.13	.03	-.10	.01	(.72)	
7	Negative Affectivity	2.34	.90	.01*	.04	.05	-.06	.11	.18	(.75)
Cronbach's $\alpha$ in parentheses; ** $p < 0.01$ , * $p < 0.05$ , $N = 222$										

Table 7 presents the results of the direct and mediation analyses using PROCESS macro (Hayes 2013). It shows that abusive supervision is negatively related to organisational identification ( $\beta = -.47$ ,  $t = -6.81$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), supporting H1. Next, we tested for the mediating role of organisational identification. We found that organisational identification significantly mediated the relationship between abusive supervision and work engagement of employees ( $\beta = .16$ ,  $t = 3.58$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), supporting H2a. Organisational identification had an insignificant mediation on the relationship between abusive supervision and job burnout ( $\beta = -.03$ ,  $t = .56$ ), disproving our mediation hypothesis H2b.

Table 7  
Direct and Mediation Analysis-NZ

Variables	<i>b</i>	SE	t	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	LL[95% CI]	UL[95% CI]
Direct and Total Effects					Indirect Effects	
<b>Step 1</b>						
Abusive Supervision→ Work Engagement	-.40**	.05	-8.76	.27		
Abusive Supervision →Job Burnout	.16**	.05	2.86	.05		
<b>Step 2</b>						
Abusive Supervision →Organisational Identification	-.47**	.07	-6.81	.19		
<b>Step 3</b>						
Abusive Supervision → Organisational Identification → Work Engagement	.16**	.04	3.58	.31	.07	.24
Abusive Supervision → Organisational Identification → Job Burnout	.03	.05	.56	.05	-.07	.13
**p<0.01, *p<0.05, <i>b</i> =Unstandardized coefficients are reported, SE=Standard Error, LL= Lower Limit, UL= Upper limit,						

Next, we examined the interaction of abusive supervision and employee mindfulness to predict organisational identification. The interaction was insignificant ( $b = -.04$ ,  $t = -.71$ ) as shown in Table 8, rejecting H3 for the NZ sample. Lastly, we checked for moderated mediation effects, with respect to whether the indirect effect of abusive supervision on work engagement and burnout of employees via employees' organisational identification differed across varying levels of employee mindfulness. We used PROCESS macro model 7 (Hayes 2017) to assess the strength of these conditional indirect effects. The moderated mediation was found to be insignificant for both work engagement and burnout, rejecting H4 as presented in Table 9.

Table 8  
Moderating Role of Employee Mindfulness

Variables	Variables
	Organisational Identification
<i>Step 1: Controls</i>	
Positive Affectivity	-.17**
Negative Affectivity	.03
<i>Step 2: Interaction Terms</i>	
Abusive Supervision × Employee Mindfulness	-.05
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.65
<i>F</i>	79.31
**p<0.01, *p<0.05	

Table 9

## Moderated Mediation Results for abusive supervision

Moderator	Effect	SE	Bootstrap LLCI	Bootstrap LLCI	Moderator	Effect	SE	Bootst rap LLCI	Bootstrap LLCI
Employee Mindfulne ss					Employee Mindfulne ss				
	Dependent Variable= Work Engagement, Mediating Variable= Organisational Identity					Dependent Variable = Job Burnout, Mediating Variable = Organisational Identity			
-1 SD	-.03	.01	-.06	-.01	-1 SD	-.01	.01	-.03	.02
Mean	-.04	.01	-.07	-.01	Mean	-.01	.01	-.04	.02
+1 SD	-.04	.02	-.09	-.01	+1 SD	-.01	.02	-.04	.03
Number of bootstrap samples = 5000, Level of confidence=95%, SE= Standard Error, LLCI= Lower level of confidence interval, ULCI= Upper level of confidence interval									

## Discussion and Conclusion

This study examined the coping mechanisms used by employees to mitigate the adverse effects of abusive supervision. Our analysis examined the mediating role of employees' organisational identification, as a social resource, in the relationship between abusive supervision and employee work engagement and burnout. We also examined how employee mindfulness, a psychological resource, functions as a buffering mechanism to offset the harmful effects of abusive supervision on employees' organisational identification and, ultimately, on employee work engagement and burnout.

We examined samples from two countries: Pakistan (Study 1) and NZ (Study 2) which have contrasting power distance indexes. The idea was to determine the different responses of employees from both countries and to see how abusive supervision affects employee job outcomes in these two cultures. How do employees from these two distinct cultural value orientations deal with abusive supervision?

We found that abusive supervision is negatively related to organisational identification of employees for both Pakistan and NZ samples. This result is in line with the assumptions of COR theory that employees' resources diminish when faced with a stressor such as abusive supervision. We know from the literature that an interpersonal stressor such as abusive

supervision can damage the four basic needs employees require to build organisational identification. However, although abusive supervision was lower in NZ (Study 2) as compared to Pakistan (Study 1) (note: mean for Pakistan = 2.68; mean for NZ = 1.87; the difference between the means,  $t(474) = 162, p < 0.001$ )<sup>2</sup>. We also found that there was a stronger negative effect of abusive supervision on employees' organisational identification in NZ (Study 2)<sup>3</sup>. This suggests that employees from a higher power distance country such as Pakistan are more likely to consider abusive supervision a normal part of a leader/supervisor's role. Abusive supervision appears to have a lesser psychological effect on Pakistani employees compared to employees in NZ where, culturally, everyone is expected to be more equal, irrespective of the position they hold in the organisation.

In both studies, we also found that organisational identification partially mediates the relationship between abusive supervision and work engagement. These results also support the arguments of COR theory that when employees face a workplace stressor such as abusive supervision, their resources will diminish, and they will try to conserve their remaining resources by putting in less effort at work. An interesting point to note in the results of both studies is the difference in mediation coefficients. Organisational identification was a stronger mediator for the Pakistan sample than for the NZ sample<sup>3</sup>. A possible reason for this is that Pakistani society places a greater emphasis on collectivism (<https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/Pakistan/>) and, therefore, social identification with an institution is more important for Pakistani employees than for New Zealand employees. There was no mediation for job burnout in both studies which shows that the harmful effects of

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<sup>2</sup> We used Welch's test to compare the abusive supervision between the two samples and found that there is a significant difference between abusive supervision in Pakistan and New Zealand.

<sup>3</sup> We performed multi-group analysis MGA (Hair et al. 2017) in AMOS and the results showed that the two samples (i.e., Pakistan and NZ) are different and statistically significant with a p-value of  $< 0.01$ , proving that in NZ sample abusive supervision has a stronger effect on employee's organisational identification with a path coefficient value of  $\beta = -0.47^{**}$  as compared to Pakistan sample with a  $\beta$  value of  $-0.19^{**}$ ; and organisational identification was a stronger mediator for work engagement for Pakistan sample ( $\beta$  value of  $0.25^{**}$ ) compared to NZ sample ( $\beta$  value of  $0.16^{**}$ ).

abusive supervision on employees' physical and emotional health are very strong.

We also found that moderation of employee mindfulness was only significant in the case of Pakistan (Study 1). That is, the mindfulness of employees in Pakistan can buffer the adverse effects of abusive supervision on their organisational identification and help them cope with it. Similarly, the moderated mediation was significant in the case of Pakistani employees' work engagement and not for their burnout. The most likely explanation for this is the cultural differences of both countries. In a higher power distance country like Pakistan, people are more accepting of an unequal distribution of power and inequality in their workplace. Abusive supervisory behaviours are more likely to be accepted by employees because there is a greater acceptance of hierarchy compared to more egalitarian countries like NZ (Vogel et al. 2015). Interestingly, mindfulness did not moderate the mediated relationship between abusive supervision, organisational identification and employee burnout and disengagement in the NZ sample. A possible explanation for this is that abusive supervision in any form is considered as unethical, and hence not acceptable in a lower power distance culture like NZ. Hence the practice of mindfulness is not effective in such a context.

### **Practical and Theoretical Implications**

Our findings have two important implications for theory. First, our study shows that the effectiveness of coping strategies such as mindfulness for abusive supervision is dependent on cultural influences. Therefore, mindfulness cannot be considered as an unconditional good -- rather, it is contextually dependent. It is important for future studies to factor in contextual differences, such as cultural orientations, when considering such coping strategies. Second, our study contributes to COR theory. It shows that mindfulness and organisational identifications are resources that act together as a resource caravan when individuals are faced with a stressor such as abusive supervision. It also shows that a contextually dependent condition, such as power distance, can either encourage (as in the case of Pakistan) or discourage (in the case of

NZ) such resource caravan. Our study shows the importance of giving due consideration to factors such as resource caravans, and the cultural contexts in which multiple resources work together, when examining employee responses to abusive supervision.

Our study also has some practical implications. First, it confirms that abusive supervision is detrimental to employees' organisational identification and work engagement. To mitigate its negative effects, organisations need to take action against abusive supervisors/leaders and train or coach them better. Second, we found that the destructive effects of abusive supervision on organisational identification were stronger for employees in NZ than for employees in Pakistan such that even employee mindfulness could not buffer this effect. This demonstrates that in a low power distance country like NZ, even low levels of abusive supervision can be detrimental to the organisational identification of employees. Abusive supervision can make employees feel undervalued and dissatisfied at the workplace. Our findings show that the detrimental effects of abusive supervision on employee engagement are greater in lower power distance cultures, underpinning the importance of dealing with these abusive behaviours and investing in positive leadership training in these cultures. Instead of spending resources on mindfulness training for employees to mitigate the effects of abusive supervision, resources would be better spent on training leaders to be less abusive in their behaviours. Comparatively, in higher power distance cultures where abusive supervision appears to be more widely tolerated, a combination of training involving both mindfulness for employees, as well as training positive leadership behaviours in leaders is appropriate.

As with all studies, our study has certain limitations. All data came from the same source which can cause common source bias. However, we mitigated this by collecting data in two waves with a two-week gap. We had also subjected our samples to the Harman one-factor test, and the results ruled out the existence of common method bias.

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## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSION**

This research has extended knowledge about the relationship between abusive supervision and employee outcomes, adopting a resource perspective. In synthesising existing literature and by conducting empirical studies, this research has extended the body of literature on the buffering mechanisms that come into play when employees experience abusive supervision. The empirical studies carried out in this research project reiterate the fact that employees' personal, social and organisational resources play a significant role in buffering the harmful effects of abusive supervision on employee outcomes. These resources also help employees to maintain their engagement and creativity at work. A particularly significant contribution of this research is the insights it offers with respect to how employees of different cultures cope with abusive supervision. The aforementioned aims of this research -- all related to the overarching question of how employees respond to abusive supervision -- have been deliberated through the three research papers comprising Chapter 2, Chapter 3 and Chapter 4.

A number of systematic and meta-analytic reviews have been carried out on abusive supervision, previously. However, prior to this thesis, no work had been undertaken to synthesise the literature on buffering mechanisms of the relationship between abusive supervision and employee outcomes in which the over-arching theoretical frameworks are simultaneously identified. Chapter 2 of this thesis fills this gap with a systematic literature review of coping mechanisms used by employees under abusive supervision. It synthesised empirical studies on buffering mechanisms of abusive supervision (from the period 2000-2020) using resource perspectives. The literature review found that there has been a recent rise in research on buffering mechanisms of abusive supervision, with the majority of studies focusing

on the buffering role of personal resources. The review also revealed that the majority of studies were conducted in a non-western context and that there was a dearth of cross-cultural studies. The review also discussed the centrality of the Conservation of Resources (COR) (Hobfoll, 2001) theory as a tool to analyse the buffering mechanisms of abusive supervision. The review revealed a number of directions for future research, some of which were explored for this thesis, covered in Chapters 3 and 4.

Chapter 3 is the first empirical study of this thesis. The theoretical framework for this paper was built on the findings of the literature review and tested with a multicultural sample in New Zealand. Drawing on COR (Hobfoll, 2001) theory, this paper discussed the comparative efficacy of personal (i.e., resilience) and social (i.e. workplace friendships) resources as moderators (i.e., as buffering mechanisms) in the relationship between abusive supervision and employee outcomes (work engagement, employee creativity and job burnout) which is mediated by the psychological (i.e. personal resource) and structural empowerment (environment resource) of employees. The study found that psychological empowerment partially mediated the relationship between abusive supervision and employee work engagement and creativity. It revealed that structural empowerment only partially mediated the relationship between abusive supervision and employee creativity. A significant finding of this study was that, regardless of how much resources employees utilised to buffer the harmful effects of abusive supervision, job burnout could not be circumvented and its effect was too strong for psychological and social resources to serve as significant counter-agents.

Chapter 4 is the second empirical study of the thesis. The theoretical framework for this paper was grounded in the future research directions identified in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. This paper examined a cross-cultural sample of Pakistan and New Zealand service industry employees to understand how these employees coped with abusive supervision. The study found that abusive

supervision was relatively low in New Zealand as compared to Pakistan but, the negative effect of abusive supervision on employees' organisational identification was stronger in the New Zealand sample than in the Pakistan sample. This reflects the different cultural value orientations of the workforce in both countries. The study also found that employee mindfulness (a personal resource) only buffered the negative effects of abusive supervision on employee work engagement in the Pakistan sample. Conversely, in the New Zealand sample, abusive supervision had such a profoundly negative impact on employee work engagement via low organisational identification that employee mindfulness failed to function as an effective coping mechanism to counter it. This study supported the findings of the previous study in Chapter 3 that resources of any kind, be they personal, social or psychological, are ineffective in buffering the harmful effects of abusive supervision on job burnout.

### **Theoretical Implications**

This research has made some significant contributions to the Conservation of Resources (COR) (Hobfoll, 2001) theory and to literature on buffering mechanisms of abusive supervision. The systematic synthesis of research on buffering mechanisms integrates the different resource types that have been examined as well as the various theoretical perspectives utilized. The review reveals how much work has been done in recent years to explore the mechanisms through which employees strive to buffer or cope with the harmful effects of abusive supervision. The review found that of the different resource types, personal resources have attracted the most research attention. Work in this area reveals a wide range of psychological, emotional and behavioural resources that are used by employees, including their implications on positive and negative work outcomes. Interestingly, more than half the studies on coping/buffering mechanisms of abusive supervision were conducted in Asian cultures such as China, Japan, Taiwan, etc. Taken together, these studies build up a picture of the types of

resources that appear to be particularly suitable in workplaces within these cultural contexts. The review also established the centrality of COR (Hobfoll, 1989) theory to research on abusive supervision as all the moderators that buffered the negative effects of abusive supervision were related to the broader resource perspective established in COR (Hobfoll, 1989) theory. The review demonstrated that understandings of buffering mechanisms in the relationship between abusive supervision and employee outcomes can be enhanced by employing a combination of theoretical perspectives wherein COR (Hobfoll, 1989) theory serves as an overarching framework.

The aforementioned theoretical implications lead the way for the two empirical studies conducted as part of this research project. These two empirical studies have made some important contributions to research on coping/buffering mechanisms used by employees in the face of abusive supervision. The first study (Chapter 3) explored the efficacy of employee resilience and workplace friendships on the mediating role of psychological and structural empowerment in the relationship between abusive supervision and work engagement, creativity, and job burnout. This study revealed that the psychological empowerment (Conger & Kanungo, 1988) of employees (a psychological resource and intrinsic motivator), which is related to employees' autonomy, self-efficacy, and feelings of meaningfulness, was more strongly affected by abusive behaviours by supervisors. In comparison, structural empowerment (Kanter, 1993) (an extrinsic motivator), which is related to an employee's ease of access to organisational power structures, information sources and organisational resources, was less affected by supervisory behaviours that are abusive in nature. A significant contribution of this study is its adoption of a resource caravans perspective by treating personal, social and environment/organisational resources as moderators (resilience and workplace friendships) and mediators (psychological empowerment and structural empowerment). The study offers insights into how one resource can help to maintain or sustain other resources. The

study showed that a social resource (workplace friendships) significantly buffers the effects of abusive supervision on employee creativity via an organisational resource (structural empowerment). However, employee creativity did not buffer the negative effects of abusive supervision on work engagement and employee creativity via psychological empowerment. This sheds light on the harmful effects of abusive supervisory behaviours on employees' psychological empowerment in those even high levels of employee resilience are insufficient to prevent a decline in work engagement and employee creativity. The study also added to the curvilinear literature on the relationship between abusive supervision and employee creativity, in showing support for the negative relationship between abusive supervision and employee creativity. Lastly, the paper found that none of the moderations, mediations or moderated mediations were significant in the relationship between abusive supervision and job burnout. Ultimately, this emphasises the severe damage caused by abusive supervisory behaviours to the health and well-being of employees.

The second empirical study focused more on the impact of abusive supervision on employee's wellbeing outcomes. It examined how work engagement and job burnout were affected by abusive supervision via employee organisational identification, moderated by employee mindfulness. The study was conducted in two different cultures - Pakistan and New Zealand. This study is one of the very few studies to examine buffering mechanisms of abusive supervision in a cross-cultural context. It showed that in a culture with lower power distance orientations (in our case, New Zealand), the effects of abusive supervision on the organisational identification of employees were more pronounced. Moreover, the effect of abusive supervision on the work engagement of employees via organisational identification was so strong for employees in New Zealand that mindfulness failed to buffer this effect. Comparatively, employees with higher individual power distance orientation (in our case, Pakistan) were better able to buffer the effects of abusive supervision. Pakistani employees

were able to use their personal/psychological resource of mindfulness to buffer the damaging effects of abusive supervision on their work engagement via the social resource of organisational identification). This finding supports the resource caravan perspective of COR (Hobfoll, 2001) theory discussed in the previous empirical paper. The study also contributed significantly to the cross-cultural literature on abusive supervision by demonstrating how employees with different cultural value orientations cope differently with abusive supervision through the use of their personal or social resources. The study also supported the findings of the previous paper on the relationship between abusive supervision and employee job burnout. That is, the direct effects of abusive supervision on employee job burnout are too strong to be mitigated by moderation, mediation, or moderated mediation resources. This is a particularly significant finding in the research area of buffering mechanisms in abusive supervision as none of the studies included in the review have tested the job burnout variable as an outcome.

## **Practical Implications**

The aforementioned theoretical implications of the three papers lead to significant recommendations for organisations. This section discusses these practical recommendations that have arisen from the three papers comprising Chapter 2, 3 and 4. Chapter 2, the systematic literature review, synthesised the range of buffering resources utilised by employees to deal with abusive supervision as reported in the reviewed literature. This review emphasised the harmful effects of abusive supervision on the work outcomes of employees and on their well-being. There is no doubt that abusive supervision is damaging not just for employees but also for organisations, due to a loss of productivity and employee turnover. However, if employees have resources to cope with these harmful effects, the damage may be less severe. The first empirical study, Chapter 3, called for organisations to focus on the mental health and well-being of employees by introducing programmes and practices within the organisational culture

to support them (Carlson et al., 2012; Wu & Hu, 2009). Organisations should look to develop the personal resources of employees by organising workshops on cognitive behavioural interventions to build up the psychological and emotional resources of employees. The study also found that workplace friendships is a useful resource that helps to buffer the harmful effects of abusive supervision. Organisations would do well to facilitate peer mentoring schemes to encourage a culture of learning and sharing. Employee buddy programs, orientations for new employees, or celebrating the success of employees, can also promote a positive culture within the organisation and encourage peer support between employees. Chapter 4, the second empirical study, took a cultural value orientation perspective and found that employees with a low individual power distance value orientation, such as in New Zealand, are more affected by abusive supervision as compared to employees with high individual power distance value orientations, such as in Pakistan. There is a need to train leaders in both cultures and to build up their positive leadership characteristics in ways that discourage abusive supervisory behaviours. Moreover, in high power distance cultures such as Pakistan, organisations should consider developing the personal psychological resources of employees such as mindfulness. The study showed that mindfulness can help Pakistani employees to cope with the effects of abusive supervision and to focus all their energies on their task by drawing on their organisational identity. In comparison, in a low power distance culture such as New Zealand, employees with high levels of mindfulness still struggled to cope with milder forms of abusive supervision, which had diminishing effects on their organisational identity and work engagement. The implication here is that organisations in New Zealand need to be stricter in their policies and practices to safeguard the mental health of their employees. As with Pakistani organisations, New Zealand organisations should also introduce training that is designed to help employees build up a wide range of psychological and social resources to draw on in the face of abusive supervision.

## **Limitations & Future Research Directions**

This research includes several limitations. Firstly, abusive supervision was measured only through a quantitative scale. Future studies may consider employing a mixed methods approach, including surveys and interviews, to obtain richer information from employees about their experiences of supervisory abuse. Secondly, although both empirical studies were time-lagged studies, future research can look into measuring abusive supervision multiple times during a study to see if employee perceptions change or remain fairly constant. This would help to mitigate biases that arise when employees assess the behaviours of their supervisors. Thirdly, the first empirical study tested the comparative efficacy of two different moderated mediation mechanisms, wherein psychological and social resources are combined to make a resource caravan. Future studies can look to investigating different combinations of resources, especially with respect to the effects of abusive supervision on job burnout. Fourth, most of the studies in the systematic literature review tested the buffering mechanism of personal and social resources. Only a handful examined environment or organisational resources, and, at present, studies have yet to investigate the buffering role of objects (e.g., assets, salary, car, etc.), which is the fourth type of resource (Hobfoll, 1989). It would be interesting to learn how different kinds of financial/monetary resources or assets can help employees to buffer the negative effects of abusive supervision or if such resources help employees to gain other valuable personal, social or organisational resources to cope with abusive supervision. As already mentioned, more than half the studies on coping/buffering mechanisms of abusive supervision were conducted in Asian cultures. This raises the question of whether these buffering resources are equally applicable in western or non-Asian cultural contexts. Finally, the findings of the cross-cultural study in Chapter 4 present future researchers with an opportunity to explore and test the coping mechanisms of abusive supervision across different cultural settings. It would be instructive to examine if the individual cultural value orientations

differ from the social or organisational cultural value orientations and to ascertain how these cultural value orientations affect employee responses to abusive supervision. Ultimately, this will add to a growing body of knowledge on the variety of buffering mechanisms employees use in different cultures to cope with abusive supervision.

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## **APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX 1: ETHICS APPROVAL

<b>WAIKATO MANAGEMENT SCHOOL</b> TE RAUPAPA		 THE UNIVERSITY OF <b>WAIKATO</b> <i>Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato</i>
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Ayesha Arshad  
5/16B Hogan Street  
Hamilton East  
Hamilton

12 November 2021

Dear Ayesha

*Ethical Application WMS 19/59*  
*Abusive Supervision and Employee Job outcomes: Coping Mechanism of Employees in an Intercultural Perspective*

The above research project, as outlined in your submitted application, has been granted Ethics Approval for Research by the Waikato Management School Human Research Ethics Committee.

Please note: should you make changes to the project outlined in the approved ethics application, you may need to reapply for ethics approval.

Best wishes for your research.

Kind regards,

Amanda Sircombe

Amanda Sircombe  
WMS Research and Postgraduate Manager

## APPENDIX 2: CHAPTER 3 QUESTIONNAIRE

### Questionnaire (Part 1)

Hi all,

This survey is part of my PhD research and is in two parts. This is the first part of the survey. The next part will be distributed in two weeks. The survey takes less than 10 minutes to complete. Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and your responses will be kept anonymous. All information collected will be treated as strictly confidential and only accessed by me. I will not share any of the survey information with your organization or colleagues. Once you submit your response, you are consenting to allow us to use this data for academic research purpose. Thanks again for participating!

**Are you currently working, or have you worked in the past?**

- 1- Yes
- 2- No

**If yes, then proceed to the next questions: -**

**Email ID** (to contact you for second part of the questionnaire) \_\_\_\_\_

**Gender**

- 1- Male
- 2- Female

**Age**

- 1- 18-24 years    2- 25-34 years    3- 35-44 years    4- 45-54 years    5- 55-64 years
- 6- 65+ years

**How many years have you been working with the same supervisor?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Which industrial sector do you work in? (Please Specify)**

- 1- Financial Services    2- Educational Services    3- Hospitality    4- Health Sector
- 5- Social Services    6- IT & Communications    7- Entertainment    8- Consultancy
- 9- Tourism    10- Professional Services    11- Any Other \_\_\_\_\_

**What is your Job Title?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Q1- Rate the behaviour of your supervisor or manager from your workplace.**

(Use the scale below)

- 1= I cannot remember him/her using this behaviour with me
- 2= Very seldom uses this behaviour with me
- 3= Occasionally uses this behaviour with me
- 4= Often uses this behaviour with me
- 5= Very often uses this behaviour with me

#	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	My boss ridicules me.					
2	My boss tells me my thoughts or feelings are stupid.					
3	My boss gives me silent treatment.					
4	My boss puts me down in front of others.					

5	My boss invades my privacy.					
6	My boss reminds me of my past mistakes and failures.					
7	My boss doesn't give me a lot of credit for jobs requiring a lot of effort.					
8	My boss blames me to save himself/herself embarrassment.					
9	My boss breaks promise he/she makes.					
10	My boss expresses anger at me when he/she is mad for another reason.					
11	My boss makes negative comments about me to others.					
12	My boss is rude to me.					
13	My boss doesn't allow me to interact with my coworkers.					
14	My boss tells me I'm incompetent.					
15	My boss lies to me.					

## 2- How are you feeling at work today?

(Use the scale below)

1- Not at all; 2-A little; 3-Moderately; 4-Quite a bit; 5-Extremely

#	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	Interested					
2	Distressed					
3	Excited					
4	Upset					
5	Scared					
6	Enthusiastic					
7	Determined					
8	Afraid					

## 3- Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with these statements.

(Use the scale below)

1-Strongly Disagree; 2-Somewhat Disagree; 3-Neutral; 4-Somewhat Agree; 5-Strongly Agree

#	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	I am confident about my ability to do my job.					
2	My job gives me opportunity to do some challenging work.					
3	The job I do is important to me.					
4	I perform tasks that give me the chance to use all my knowledge and skills.					
5	I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job.					
6	My job activities are personally meaningful to me.					

7	My impact on what happens in my department is large.					
8	My job gives me the chance to gain new knowledge and skills.					
9	I am well-informed about the current state of my organization.					
10	I have a great deal of control over what happens in my department.					
11	I am well-informed about the values of top-management.					
12	I can decide on my own how to go about doing my own work.					
13	My organization provides me support by informing me about things I am doing well.					
14	I am well-informed about the goals of top management.					
15	I have mastered the skills necessary for my job.					
16	My organization provides me support by informing me about things I could improve.					
17	My organization's successes are my successes.					
18	I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do my job.					
19	My organization allows me considerable time to complete the necessary paperwork.					
20	The work I do is meaningful to me.					
21	My organization gives me enough time to accomplish my job requirements.					
22	I have significant influence over what happens in my department.					
23	My organization provides me support by providing me with helpful hints or problem-solving advice.					
24	I can acquire temporary help when needed to complete my job.					
25	I am self-assured about my capabilities to perform my work activities.					

### Questionnaire (Part 2)

Hi all,

This survey is part of my PhD research and is in two parts. This is the second part of the survey. The survey takes less than 10 minutes to complete. Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and your responses will be kept anonymous. All information collected will be treated as strictly confidential and only accessed by me. I will not share any of the survey information with your organization or colleagues. Once you submit your response, you are consenting to allow us to use this data for academic research purpose. Thanks again for participating!

**Email ID** (to contact you for second part of questionnaire) \_\_\_\_\_

**Rate your level of agreement or disagreement with the given statements about your psychological and social resources.**

(Use the scale below)

1- Never; 2-Somewhat Infrequently; 3-Neutral; 4-Somewhat Frequently; 5- Almost Always

#	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	I have the opportunity to get to know my coworkers.					
2	I am able to work with my coworkers to collectively solve problems.					
3	I have formed strong friendships at work.					
4	I socialize with coworkers outside of workplace.					
5	I effectively collaborate with others to handle unexpected challenges at work.					
6	Communication among employees is encouraged by my organization.					
7	I can confide in people at work.					
8	I successfully manage a high workload for long periods of time.					
9	In my organization, I have the chance to talk informally and visit with others.					
10	I resolve crises competently at work.					
11	Being able to see my co-worker is one reason why I look forward to my job.					
12	I feel I can trust my coworkers a great deal.					
13	I learn from mistakes at work and improve the way I do my job.					

14	Informal talk is tolerated within my organization as long as the work is completed.					
15	I re-evaluate my performance and continually improve the way I do my work.					
16	I have the opportunity to develop close friendships at work.					
17	I do not feel that anyone I work with is a true friend.					
18	I effectively respond to feedback at work, even criticism.					
19	I seek assistance to work when I need specific resources.					
20	I approach managers when I need their support.					
21	I use change at work as an opportunity for growth.					

**Please indicate the extent to which you relate to these experiences at work.**

(Use the scale below)

1- Never; 2-Somewhat Infrequently; 3-Neutral; 4-Somewhat Frequently; 5- Almost Always

#	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	At my work, I feel myself bursting with energy.					
2	I try to be as creative as I can in my job.					
3	I feel worn out at the end of the working day.					
4	At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.					
5	I am enthusiastic about my job.					
6	I feel exhausted in the morning at the thought of another day at work.					
7	My job inspires me.					
8	I experiment with new approaches in performing my job.					
9	I feel every working hour is tiring for me.					
10	When I get up in the morning, I feel like going into work.					
11	When new trends develop, I am usually the first to get on board.					
12	After work, I have enough energy to spend some leisure time with friends and family.					

13	I feel happy when I am working intensely.					
14	I am proud of the work that I do.					
15	My work is emotionally exhausting.					
16	My boss feels that I am creative in performing my job.					
17	I am immersed in my work.					
18	My work frustrates me.					
19	I get carried away when I am working.					
20	On the job, I am inventive in overcoming barriers.					
21	I feel burnt out because of work.					

## **APPENDIX 3: COVER LETTER FOR ORGANIZATIONS FOR PAPER 3**

Date:

Name of Organization

Address

**Dear Sir/Madam,**

I am a PhD student at The University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand. I am conducting this survey as part of my research on the perceptions of employees regarding the behaviors of their leaders/supervisors, and the kind of social and psychological mechanism they use to cope up with these leader behaviors and how it effects their job attitudes and behaviors in the long run. The study is based on the organizations from Pakistan and New Zealand and your organization is a valuable part of this country. I hereby would like to request you to allow me to conduct survey in your organization.

The basic idea behind conducting this research is to find out how employees cope up with the abusive or hostile behaviors of their supervisors and leaders and the kind of social and psychological resources they use to remain satisfied and engaged with their job. The purpose is to find out how employees perceive the hostile or negative behaviors of their supervisors, how they remain attentive to the situation and do they stay mindful in the face of these abusive supervisory behaviors.

The respondents of the survey will be the middle-level managers and front-line employees as they have major role to play in an organization and have direct contact with the top management. It is to inform you that no information included in this survey questionnaire will be shared with any other organization or any other public or private entity; no identity will be disclosed, and privacy of the respondents and the organization will be fully ensured. The study will be carried out in two stages i.e., the respondents will be sent two different questionnaires with a gap of two weeks each. At first stage, they will be asked about their perceptions regarding the hostile behaviors of their leader/supervisor and their perceptions regarding their own social and psychological resources. At second stage, the questionnaire items will include items to measure the perceptions of respondents regarding their job burnout and work engagement.

The participation in the survey is completely voluntary for you and for the employees of your organization. I would be very grateful to you for helping me in my educational endeavours if you accept my request. Moreover, if you have any queries about the survey you can directly contact me. I will be more than happy to give you details of my project.

Sincerely,

**Ayesha Arshad**

Doctoral Candidate  
Waikato Management School  
University of Waikato

## APPENDIX 4: CHAPTER 4 QUESTIONNAIRE

### Questionnaire (Part 1)

Hi all,

This survey is part of my PhD research and is in two parts. This is the first part of the survey. The next part will be distributed in two weeks. The survey takes less than 10 minutes to complete. Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and your responses will be kept anonymous. All information collected will be treated as strictly confidential and only accessed by me. I will not share any of the survey information with your organization or colleagues. Once you submit your response, you are consenting to allow us to use this data for academic research purpose. Thanks again for participating!

**Are you currently working, or have you worked in the past?**

1- Yes

2- No

**If yes, then proceed to the next questions: -**

**Email ID** (to contact you for second part of the questionnaire) \_\_\_\_\_

**Gender**

1- Male

2- Female

**Age**

1- 18-24 years    2- 25-34 years    3- 35-44 years    4- 45-54 years    5- 55-64 years

6- 65+ years

**How many years have you been working with the same supervisor?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Which industrial sector do you work in? (Please Specify)**

1- Financial Services

2- Educational Services

3- Hospitality

4- Health Sector

5- Social Services

6- IT & Communications

7- Entertainment

8- Consultancy

9- Tourism

10- Professional Services

11- Any Other

**What is your Job Title?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Q1- Rate the behaviour of your supervisor or manager from your workplace.**

(Use the scale below)

1= I cannot remember him/her using this behaviour with me

2= Very seldom uses this behaviour with me

3= Occasionally uses this behaviour with me

4= Often uses this behaviour with me

5= Very often uses this behaviour with me

#	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	My boss ridicules me.					
2	My boss tells me my thoughts or feelings are stupid.					
3	My boss gives me silent treatment.					
4	My boss puts me down in front of others.					

5	My boss invades my privacy.					
6	My boss reminds me of my past mistakes and failures.					
7	My boss doesn't give me a lot of credit for jobs requiring a lot of effort.					
8	My boss blames me to save himself/herself embarrassment.					
9	My boss breaks promise he/she makes.					
10	My boss expresses anger at me when he/she is mad for another reason.					
11	My boss makes negative comments about me to others.					
12	My boss is rude to me.					
13	My boss doesn't allow me to interact with my coworkers.					
14	My boss tells me I'm incompetent.					
15	My boss lies to me.					

## 2- How are you feeling at work today?

(Use the scale below)

1- Not at all; 2-A little; 3-Moderately; 4-Quite a bit; 5-Extremely

#	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	Interested					
2	Distressed					
3	Excited					
4	Upset					
5	Scared					
6	Enthusiastic					
7	Determined					
8	Afraid					

## 3- Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with these statements.

(Use the scale below)

1-Strongly Disagree; 2-Somewhat Disagree; 3-Neutral; 4-Somewhat Agree; 5-Strongly Agree

#	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	When someone criticizes my organization, it feels like a personal insult.					
2	I am very interested in what others think about my organization.					
3	When I talk about my organization, I usually say "we" rather than "they."					
4	If a story in the media criticized my organization, I would feel embarrassed.					
5	My organization's successes are my successes.					
6	When someone praises my organization, it feels like a personal compliment.					

### Questionnaire (Part 2)

Hi all,

This survey is part of my PhD research and is in two parts. This is the second part of the survey. The survey takes less than 10 minutes to complete. Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and your responses will be kept anonymous. All information collected will be treated as strictly confidential and only accessed by me. I will not share any of the survey information with your organization or colleagues. Once you submit your response, you are consenting to allow us to use this data for academic research purpose. Thanks again for participating!

**Email ID** (to contact you for second part of questionnaire) \_\_\_\_\_

**How much do you agree or disagree with these cultural dimensions within your organization?**

(Use the scale below)

1-Strongly Disagree; 2- Somewhat Disagree; 3-Neutral; 4-Somewhat Agree; 5-Strongly Agree

#	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	Managers make most decisions without consulting subordinates.					
2	It is frequently necessary for a manager to use authority and power when dealing with subordinates.					
3	Managers seldom ask for the opinions of employees.					
4	Employees do not disagree with management decisions.					
5	Managers do not delegate important tasks to employees.					

**Rate your level of agreement or disagreement with the given statements about your psychological and social resources.**

(Use the scale below)

1- Never; 2-Somewhat Infrequently; 3-Neutral; 4-Somewhat Frequently; 5- Almost Always

#	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	I could be experiencing some emotion and not be conscious of it until sometime later.					
2	I break or spill things because of carelessness, not paying attention, or thinking of something else.					
3	I find it difficult to stay focused on what's happening in the present.					
4	I tend to walk quickly to get where I'm going without paying attention to what I experience along the way.					

5	I tend not to notice feelings of physical tension or discomfort until they really grab my attention.					
6	I forget a person's name almost as soon as I've been told it for the first time.					
7	It seems I am "running on automatic," without much awareness of what I'm doing.					
8	I rush through activities without being really attentive to them.					
9	I get so focused on the goal I want to achieve that I lose touch with what I'm doing right now to get there.					
10	I do jobs or tasks automatically, without being aware of what I'm doing.					
11	I find myself listening to someone with one ear, doing something else at the same time.					
12	I drive places on 'automatic pilot' and then wonder why I went there.					
13	I find myself preoccupied with the future or the past.					
14	I find myself doing things without paying attention.					
15	I snack without being aware that I'm eating.					


**Please indicate the extent to which you relate to these experiences at work.**

(Use the scale below)

1- Never; 2-Somewhat Infrequently; 3-Neutral; 4-Somewhat Frequently; 5- Almost Always

#	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	At my work, I feel myself bursting with energy.					
2	I feel worn out at the end of the working day.					
3	At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.					
4	I am enthusiastic about my job.					
5	I feel exhausted in the morning at the thought of another day at work.					
6	My job inspires me.					
7	I feel every working hour is tiring for me.					
8	When I get up in the morning, I feel like going into work.					
9	After work, I have enough energy to spend some leisure time with friends and family.					
10	I feel happy when I am working intensely.					
11	I am proud of the work that I do.					
12	My work is emotionally exhausting.					
13	I am immersed in my work.					
14	My work frustrates me.					
15	I get carried away when I am working.					
16	I feel burnt out because of work.					

## APPENDIX 5: CO-AUTHORSHIP FORMS

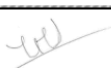

 THE UNIVERSITY OF <b>WAIKATO</b> <i>Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato</i>	<h3>Co-Authorship Form</h3>	Postgraduate Studies Office Student and Academic Services Division Wahanga Ratonga Matauranga Akonga The University of Waikato Private Bag 3105 Hamilton 3240, New Zealand Phone +64 7 838 4439 Website: <a href="http://www.waikato.ac.nz/sasd/postgraduate/">http://www.waikato.ac.nz/sasd/postgraduate/</a>
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This form is to accompany the submission of any PhD that contains research reported in published or unpublished co-authored work. **Please include one copy of this form for each co-authored work.** Completed forms should be included in your appendices for all the copies of your thesis submitted for examination and library deposit (including digital deposit).

Please indicate the chapter/section/pages of this thesis that are extracted from a co-authored work and give the title and publication details or details of submission of the co-authored work.  Chapter 2- Coping Mechanisms of Abusive Supervision-A Resource Perspective	
Nature of contribution by PhD candidate	I carried out the systematic literature review. I synthesized all the information and wrote the full first draft of the paper. The theoretical contributions in the paper are my own.
Extent of contribution by PhD candidate (%)	70%

CO-AUTHORS	
Name	Nature of Contribution
Peter Sun	Provided feedback on the theoretical aspects of the paper and editing.
Fabrice Desmarais	Provided feedback on the theoretical aspects of the paper and editing.

Certification by Co-Authors
The undersigned hereby certify that: ❖ the above statement correctly reflects the nature and extent of the PhD candidate's contribution to this work, and the nature of the contribution of each of the co-authors; and

Name	Signature	Date
Peter Sun		11-11-21
Fabrice Desmarais		11-11-21

 THE UNIVERSITY OF <b>WAIKATO</b> <i>Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato</i>	<h2>Co-Authorship Form</h2>	<b>Postgraduate Studies Office</b> Student and Academic Services Division Wahanga Ratonga Matauranga Akonga The University of Waikato Private Bag 3105 Hamilton 3240, New Zealand Phone +64 7 838 4439 Website: <a href="http://www.waikato.ac.nz/sasd/postgraduate/">http://www.waikato.ac.nz/sasd/postgraduate/</a>
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This form is to accompany the submission of any PhD that contains research reported in published or unpublished co-authored work. **Please include one copy of this form for each co-authored work.** Completed forms should be included in your appendices for all the copies of your thesis submitted for examination and library deposit (including digital deposit).

Please indicate the chapter/section/pages of this thesis that are extracted from a co-authored work and give the title and publication details or details of submission of the co-authored work.	
<b>Chapter 3- Abusive Supervision &amp; Employee Empowerment: The Moderating Role of Resilience and Workplace Friendship</b>	
Nature of contribution by PhD candidate	I developed the theoretical framework for the paper. I executed and carried out the data collection. I did the data entry, screening and analysis using SPSS. I wrote the full first draft of the paper. Theoretical contributions are my own
Extent of contribution by PhD candidate (%)	80%

### CO-AUTHORS


Name	Nature of Contribution
Peter Sun	Provided feedback on the theoretical aspects of the paper, quantitative analysis and editing.
Fabrice Desmarais	Provided feedback on the theoretical aspects of the paper, quantitative analysis and editing.

### Certification by Co-Authors

The undersigned hereby certify that:

- ❖ the above statement correctly reflects the nature and extent of the PhD candidate's contribution to this work, and the nature of the contribution of each of the co-authors; and

Name	Signature	Date
Peter Sun		 11-11-21
Fabrice Desmarais		 11-11-21
		
		
		

 THE UNIVERSITY OF <b>WAIKATO</b> <i>Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato</i>	<h2>Co-Authorship Form</h2>	Postgraduate Studies Office Student and Academic Services Division Wahanga Ratonga Matauranga Akonga The University of Waikato Private Bag 3105 Hamilton 3240, New Zealand Phone +64 7 838 4439 Website: <a href="http://www.waikato.ac.nz/sasd/postgraduate/">http://www.waikato.ac.nz/sasd/postgraduate/</a>
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Please indicate the chapter/section/pages of this thesis that are extracted from a co-authored work and give the title and publication details or details of submission of the co-authored work.  <b>Chapter 4-</b> Cross Cultural Comparison of the Impact of Abusive Supervision on Employee Engagement and Job Burnout via Organisational Identification: The Moderating Role of Mindfulness	
Nature of contribution by PhD candidate	I developed the theoretical framework for the paper. I executed and carried out the data collection. I did the data entry, screening and analysis using SPSS. I wrote the full first draft of the paper. Theoretical contributions are my own.
Extent of contribution by PhD candidate (%)	70%


### CO-AUTHORS

Name	Nature of Contribution
Peter Sun	Provided feedback on the theoretical aspects of the paper, quantitative analysis and editing.
Fabrice Desmarais	Provided feedback on the theoretical aspects of the paper, quantitative analysis and editing.

### Certification by Co-Authors

The undersigned hereby certify that:

- ❖ the above statement correctly reflects the nature and extent of the PhD candidate's contribution to this work, and the nature of the contribution of each of the co-authors; and

Name	Signature	Date
Peter Sun		11-11-21
Fabrice Desmarais		11-11-21