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Trapped Between Abuse and Fear: Navigating Turnover Intentions in the Garment Industry of Pakistan

Dr. Saiqa Sadiq[1], Dr. Yasir Tanveer[2], Usman Zafar[3] & Dr. Anum Tariq[4]

[1]*Government College Women University, Faisalabad, Email: saiqasadiq@gcwuf.edu.pk*
[2]*Government College University Faisalabad, Email: yasirtanveer@gcuf.edu.pk*
[3]*Government College University Faisalabad, Email: u.zafar@hotmail.com*
[4]*The University of Faisalabad, Email: anumtariq.nbs@tuf.edu.pk*

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Corresponding Author:
Dr. Anum Tariq
Email:
anumtariq.nbs@tuf.edu.pk

ABSTRACT

The research focuses on understanding how abusive supervision affects employee turnover intentions in the Pakistani garment industry. It investigates how alternate job search and fear of underemployment act as intermediate factors that affect the relationship between supervisory mistreatment employee retention and workforce stability. The research investigates abusive supervision's effect on turnover intentions using quantitative data from the garment industry. Out of the 320, 267 were considered completed and valid for analysis, which gave 243 as the final sample size. This research reveals that abusive supervision is the essential cause of increasing garment industry personnel's intentions toward job changes. Fear of underemployment and job insecurity influence employees to stay even when they face unfavourable workplace conditions. Research results indicate the essential importance of developing measures to reduce abusive supervision practices in the garment production sector. Implementing work policy and ethical management development courses may result in lower staff departures and stronger employee job contentment. The study expands previous research by evaluating abusive supervision-turnover relationships in the Pakistani garment industry using the interactive effects of alternate job search and fear of underemployment. It delivers practical implications and theoretical foundations that address ethical workplace conduct while promoting industry sustainability.

Introduction

The garment industry in Pakistan is one of the most powerful pillars of the country's economy, and it significantly impacts employment, export earnings, and economic development. The garment sector, Pakistan's largest manufacturing industry, provides employment opportunities for millions of people. Pakistan's labour-intensive and export-oriented sector is one of the world's ten largest textile and apparel producers (Mehar, 2022). Nonetheless, it encounters social and organizational challenges, with one particularly concerning issue being abusive supervision, adversely affecting employees and the industry. Many organizations have abusive supervision, but the Pakistani clothing sector has some unique elements (Abbas et al., 2020). Large numbers of workers in fragile employment situations can lead to abusive supervisory behaviours in some industry subsystems (Ampofo et al., 2022). In Pakistan, power dynamics, such as accepting a hierarchical structure and not asserting one's right to respect from a boss (Yousaf & Schmiede, 2016), contribute to abusive supervision; it is seen in the expectation for everyone to obediently follow the directives of the chief, as highlighted in the report "Garment Workers' Rights at Risk"(Human Rights Watch, 2019). Furthermore, when production constraints are significant and employees face pressure to meet demands driven by financial incentives, certain managers resort to abusive behaviour to achieve results (Bhattacharjee et al., 2024).

The consequences of abusive supervision in Pakistan's clothing sector are significant, leading to increased personnel instability and higher operating costs for firms (Asim et al., 2024; Fontana et al., 2021). However, abusive supervision makes workers fearful, agitated, and demotivated, which lowers worker and organization productivity (Hasan, 2021). Workers' complaints about abusive supervisor damage firms' image, resulting in low demand and probable foreign buyer strikes. Islam et al. (2019) argued that abusive supervision violates human rights and lowers workers' quality of life and worth. Research has established that abusive supervisors who engage in verbally and non-verbally aggressive behaviours increase employee turnover (Stein et al., 2020). High turnover implies high expenses for replacing and training employees, which poses a considerable challenge. However, it raises the question of how the various dimensions of abusive supervision are connected to explain the turnover intentions.

It is imperative to clutch the proper prevention measures to minimize abusive supervision throughout the workplace (Wang et al., 2021). Despite having established that abusive supervision negatively impacts turnover intentions, the mechanisms through which this inversely holds are relatively less revealed. One potential element that could lessen the link between abusive supervision and the intention to leave a job is the extent to which employees actively seek alternate opportunities (Oliveira et al., 2023). Notably, the phenomenon of abusive supervision can act as a trigger to search for other job opportunities, which, therefore, tends to raise turnover intentions. Further, perceived competition, which has been defined as the perception that one may not be hired at all or may be hired for a job that does not suit one's educational level and abilities, could also partly explain this process has been highlighted (Kurniawaty et al., 2019). Having suffered abusive supervision alongside fearing being underemployed, these employees are likely to engage in job searches and ultimately think of quitting their current organization.

In addition to alternate job searches, the effects of abusive supervision on turnover intentions may also be moderated by employees' fear of unemployment (Oliveira et al., 2023). It means one is employed, but one's job does not effectively tap into one's talent, knowledge, or experience. Those anticipating job insecurity may avoid quitting the organization despite abusive supervision due to the fear of underemployment and not securing another appropriate job as per their qualification and required job standards (Sheridan et al., 2019). It seems to be a threat that the fear of underemployment may reduce the positive relationship between abusive supervision and turnover

intentions; this is because employees who feel that they cannot quickly get another job may be inclined to stick to a job where they are treated poorly by their supervisor (Zafar et al., 2022).

These acts occur in the context of abusive supervision, where supervisors actively engage in the use of hostile verbal and nonverbal communication over an extended period (Ullah et al., 2020). Such behaviour results in negative consequences of low job satisfaction, low productivity, increased absenteeism, and increased intentions to leave. This research focuses on the relationship between abusive supervision within the Pakistani garment industry and turnover intentions. Although past research has documented the detrimental effects of abusive supervision in a broad range of organizational settings, this research will advance our understanding of how exactly abusive supervision affects turnover intentions in the Pakistan garment sector (Chaudhry et al., 2023). In particular, it focuses on the mediated moderation effect of alternate job search and fear of underemployment on the relationship between abusive supervision and turnover intentions.

Drawing from the conservation of resources theory, Courtright et al. (2016) outlined abusive supervision as hostile supervisor behaviours that employees deem depleting one's valuable resources like time, energy, and interpersonal relationships. This perceived loss results in employees acting in a manner that salvages what few resources are available to them and ensures they secure other employment to avoid being affiliated with the same company/employer (Halim et al., 2020). They might also look for other jobs at organizations that have a friendlier climate so that the victims can reclaim their lost valuables (Rabarijaona & Arifani, 2020; Rakhra, 2018). Therefore, a closer look is warranted at how abusive supervision influences employees, namely, their readiness to resign. This inquiry will help develop future interventions and further a greener and more objectively moral industry. Consequently, the outcomes of this study will shed light on possible directions of interventions and measures to prevent vital adverse consequences of abusive supervision and thus redesign work relations in the Pakistani garment sector positively for sustainable well-being in the long run.

Literature Review

COR Theory: Abusive Supervision and Turnover Intentions

Conservation of resources (COR) theory confirms the desire to acquire and maintain resources that are valued or viewed as helpful in achieving valuable objectives. Resources can also be in the form of objects or characteristics of the objects, conditions or states, and energies (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Theory prescribes that abusive supervision poses a risk to the valued employee resources; hence, other efforts in a job search are used to recover the critical resources. (Tews & Stafford, 2020). This challenges one’s self-concept, belief in their ability to secure employment, and perceived marketability to raise the employees’ need search level for other employment opportunities that satisfy their resource demands (Chen et al., 2023).

Thematically, based on the theory, fear of underemployment can moderate the relationship between the search for alternative jobs and turnover intentions (Singh, 2020). Concerns that due to a high turnover intention and active job search, the worker might end up underemployment, making the decision-making to move frozen (Hussain et al., 2020) even if the active job search is present. The idea of occupation where the skills, knowledge, and abilities are not fully utilized is repulsive and does not provoke any enthusiasm in a worker (Sheridan et al., 2019). Because they may perceive the kind of job that such a position offers as less challenging and as posing a threat to some of their highly valued resources (Li et al., 2020), this study synthesizes the empirical support for COR theory as the most suitable model for the analysis of the elaboration processes and the

sufficient and essential conditions for abusive supervision, alternate job search fear of underemployment and turnover intentions.

While a growing stream of literature has investigated how abusive supervision is related to employees' well-being, previous studies have explored how the former negatively influences employee outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions (Rahman, 2024; Zhang & Liao, 2015). Workplace bullying, which is the chronic use of incivility manifested through verbal and nonverbal communication by supervisors, has been positively associated with turnover intentions among employees, irrespective of the industry and culture. (Tews & Stafford, 2020). In 2017, Mackey et al. (2017) Studied the detrimental impact of abusive supervision on turnover intentions. They found that abusive supervision increases the employees' intentions for turnover, job search, and actual turnover.

Despite the attention given to AS and TI in the literature, the theoretical rationale that can explain the connection between the two factors has not been clearly outlined. Wang et al. (2021) Suggested that employees reciprocate abusive supervision with negative work attitudes and behaviours, such as turnover intentions, to restore a sense of fairness and balance in the employment relationship. COR Theory holds that abusive supervision consumes employees' resources like emotional energy and self-esteem, bringing about strain and withdrawal behaviour like turnover, as postulated by (Kim et al., 2020). AS can also affect turnover intentions through other indirect effects, such as the effects of employees' job search behaviours (Ampofo et al., 2022). Those who undergo abusive supervision are best suited for both active and passive job search behaviours. This implies that abusive supervision not only compels the employees to look for other jobs but also affects their current jobs, so they start looking for a job change (Khan et al., 2020). Understanding the connection between abusive supervision and turnover intentions would greatly benefit organizations. High turnover has financial implications affecting the organization's financial bottom line, productivity, and performance (Hussain et al., 2020). Based on the literature reviewed, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Abusive supervision will be positively related to subordinates' turnover intentions.

Alternative Job Search and turnover intentions

Literature has demonstrated that alternative job search is positively linked with high turnover intentions; employees seeking other job opportunities are likely to quit their organization voluntarily (Xiong et al., 2018). The Mobley model (1982) established the theoretical concept that employees' attempts at job dissatisfaction compel them to cognitively analyse their intention to leave their current jobs and the available job alternatives and subsequently act to leave these jobs. Sheridan et al. (2019) claimed that accessibility to other employment opportunities is one of the antecedents that can directly impact turnover intentions. Employees who think they have different job options are more likely to turn their turnover intentions into reality and opt out of their current firm (Ali, 2017). Mobley's model supported the idea that employees' job search activities, including resume submission, contacts, and interviews, positively relate to their instrumental attitudes about turnover intentions.

Several quantitative research studies have examined alternative job searches in terms of turnover intentions. For instance, the meta-analysis of Griffeth et al. (2000) Showed that job search behaviours were among the most important correlates of actual turnover. The same has been supported by a study investigated by Rubenstein et al. (2018), where authors established a positive correlation between job search activities and turnover intentions, passive and active. Employees

who believe there are other organizations they could join are more likely to leave this one. (Lin & Liu, 2017; Rubenstein et al., 2018). Thus, establishing the relationship between alternative jobs and turnover intentions can help organizations put specific approaches to reduce high turnover rates among valuable workers (Singh, 2020). A favourable response to abusive supervision may compel the employees to look for other jobs. It is believed that these related actions can help stabilize high levels of employee performance and lessen the negative impacts of turnover on the organization's population (Abdullah Al-Suraihi et al., 2021). This highlights the analysis of the relationship between alternative job search and turnover, as employees' job search activities can either enhance or detract from organizational turnover (Ak, 2018). The following hypotheses are proposed to validate the latent relationship.

H2: An alternate job search will positively affect subordinates' turnover intentions.

Mediating of Alternative Job Search in Abusive Supervision and Turnover Intentions

One of the coping mechanisms of abusive supervision targeting employees is an alternative job search, mediating the vicious cycle between abusive supervision and turnover intentions. Bullying at the workplace from managers is the actual use of words and actions from the supervisor, and it is argued to have significant impacts on employees' satisfaction and quality of their working life (Ampofo et al., 2022), resulting in prompting the employees to search for other positions. The outcomes of the victims of abusive supervision include job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and perceived organizational support (Hussain et al., 2020). These negative work attitudes and perceptions can compel employees to search for other jobs in different organizations to free themselves from the hostile working climate. Moreover, employees' self-esteem and perceived job security decrease with abusive supervision; therefore, they attempt to search for another job (Pradhan et al., 2020).

The concept can be conceptualized as a job search by employees to enter the sphere of 'other jobs' that might help them feel a sense of increased control over their intention to leave the organization (Jaharuddin & Zainol, 2019). It is the mediating effect of the alternative job search, which predicts turnover intentions. (Pradhan et al., 2020). It outlines how exactly abusive supervision affects turnover intentions. Thus, firms can help manage and reduce the sources of turnover relating to human resources through the identified processes that are practicable and measurable (Gao & Liu, 2022). These may involve developing and enforcing policies and measures that discourage supervisors from practising abusive behaviours, promoting a healthy work environment to reduce the likelihood of employees involving in counterproductive work behaviour, and implementing measures to provide employees with career advancement opportunities to prevent them from engaging in detrimental workplace conduct due to perceived job insecurity.

H3: The relationship between abusive supervision and turnover intentions will be mediated by alternative job searches.

Moderation of Fear of Underemployment between alternate job search and turnover intentions

Fear of underemployment is an individual's concern regarding being placed in a job that does not match his other education and training (Balz & Schuller, 2021). Employees with a great fear of underemployment may choose to stay in their current jobs instead of actively searching for other career opportunities (Jaharuddin & Zainol, 2019). The chances of embracing a job considered substandard to their current positions may not be appealing. They may demoralize the employees and continue working while they intend to resign (Sheridan et al., 2019). The literature reports that employees' job search and turnover intentions were less pronounced when terrified of being

underemployed. Weng & McElroy (2012) indicated that fear of underemployment moderated the relationship, and according to them, the indirect effect was higher for employees with a low level of fear of underemployment.

Analysing the fear of underemployment as a moderator allows a deeper understanding of the psychological element. It facilitates strategic planning to overcome this barrier and support employees during transition processes (Sarwar et al., 2023). While employees who have engaged in underemployment alternative job search are likely to leave their current job in anticipation of finding a better-paying job, those who are very sensitive to underemployment situations or faced with a significant risk of finding themselves in such positions are likely to stick to their current job and resist engagement in any underemployment job search activity even if such job search is labelled as an 'alternative'. The fear of being placed in a position that is less attractive than the current one can also be a factor that dissuades them from changing organizations, thus suffering abusive supervision. Therefore, the effect of fear of underemployment, on the other hand, can be a negative correlation because the employees with a low level of this factor may be ready to quit their job in search of a better option since they are not worried about becoming underemployed. This implies that the perceived risk of underemployment may be a median issue in the choice to follow through with the decision to turn over with an employee who has searched for work in less related positions.

Therefore, based on the current research literature, it is evident that supervisors targeting their subordinates, the processes of seeking a new job opportunity, the fear of accepting a relatively worse job, and the inclination to search for a new job are all intertwined. Analysing these factors, one can use different approaches that would affect employee turnover to keep essential employees within the company and minimize loss. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed.

H4: The indirect relationship between abusive supervision and turnover intentions through alternative job search will be moderated by fear of underemployment, such that the relationship will be weaker for employees with higher levels of fear of underemployment.

Research Methodology

Participants & Procedure

The study aims to investigate the mediation moderation of alternative job search and fear of underemployment between abusive supervision and employee turnover. The research is conducted in the garment industry of Pakistan, which is rapidly growing and contributes approximately 8 per cent to the Pakistani gross domestic product. It is one of the largest exporting industries, with revenue of around $20 billion in the year 2023; the primary customer markets for this industry are the USA and the EU (Akhtar et al., 2017). However, there are issues with the sector's infrastructure, including the following: a lack of standards, which diminishes both the quality and quantity of manufactured goods; competition from other producers who sell products at lower prices; and more. The government's efforts to broaden markets and enhance environmental stewardship are two alternative strategies for boosting production that could improve the country's competitiveness on the global stage. For this study, only organizations registered under the All-Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA), the regulatory authority of the textile sector in Pakistan, are preferred.

The research design was a cross-sectional survey whereby data were administered to a sample of employees in the garment industry. An online questionnaire collected responses that helped cover a

broader population and get diverse employees from various organizations within the country and the region. Data were analysed correctly to test the baseline pattern of the participants' perceptions and behaviours regarding the variables, given that participants completed the survey simultaneously. The survey was completed with a total of 320 completed questionnaires, of which the responding participants took about 20 minutes to fill the questionnaire. Out of the 320, 267 were considered completed and valid for analysis, which gave 243 as the final sample size. Regarding gender balance, the sample was very reasonable, with 131 male participants selected and 122 females. Out of the total 320 respondents, the data of the remaining 60 respondents could not be analysed because some had missing or invalid data.

Abusive supervision (5-item scale) (Tepper, 2000; Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007) Was used to assess AS. An example of the scale item is *"My supervisor puts me down in front of others."* Alternative job search (3-item scale) (Curry et al., 1986). An example of the scale item is *"If I quit my current job, the chances that I would be able to find another job which is as good as, or better than, my present one is low."* Fear of underemployment (5-item scale) inspired by the work of Feldman. An example of the scale item is "*I would rather stay in my current job, even if it's not perfect than risk being underemployed."* Turnover intentions by Saks & Ashforth (2002), A 3-item scale was used to measure turnover intention. A sample item of the scale is, *"I plan to look for a new job within the next 12 months"*. All items are recorded on a Likert Scale of 5 (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

Participants' age, gender, education level, and experience were also evaluated and accounted for since previous studies have shown that they impact career adaptability (Yang et al., 2015). Because individual attributes and working experiences might affect employee views and actions, controlling person-level factors allowed for more accurate findings on the relationships between the variables of interest (Zimmermann, 2018).

A single factor from Harman's single-factor test captured only 27.3% of the total variance thus confirming that common method bias is not a significant factor in this research (Podsakoff et al., 2003). A single-factor confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) validated this claim by generating unsatisfactory modelling indices (χ^2/df = 10.29, CFI = 0.23, TLI = 0.11, RMSEA = 0.13) thus confirming according to Podsakoff et al. (1990) that common method variance did not negatively affect the study's validity.

PROCESS version 4.0 and SPSS 25.0 were used to examine the suggested mediated moderation model (Hayes, 2012). The data were checked for skewness and kurtosis prior to model testing. Kurtosis and skewness coefficients were measured within the permissible range of | ± 2 |. According to multicollinearity tests, there was no significant multicollinearity problem among predictor variables, as no VIF (variance inflation factor) was reported more than 3 (Jr. et al., 2017). Additionally, Harman's single-factor test was used to test for common method bias. The results showed that common method bias was not a serious problem, accounting for 27.3% of the variance. To increase the conventional technique bias, a single-factor CFA was conducted (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The fit indices indicated that common method bias was negligible (χ2/pdf = 10.29, CFI = 0.23, TLI = 0.11, RMSEA = 0.13).

Indirect effects were analysed through path analysis methods (Preacher et al., 2007) and bootstrapping technique. The SPSS PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2012) model 14 was applied for mediation and moderated mediation analysis. Hence, while using fuzzy-set Boolean logic for the path analysis, the overall measure of the model was tested without any statistical hypothesis testing of all the executing components, as path analysis mainly concerns the testing of indirect effects

only. Moreover, the bootstrapping method was chosen because new social science research has suggested that it has better accuracy rates of calculating indirect effects than the other methods like Baron and Kenny's causal steps analysis.

Results

The descriptive & and correlation results

The constructs achieved satisfactory evidence of convergent validity with average variance extracted (AVE) values exceeding 0.50 according to Fornell & Larcker (1981). The measurement model demonstrated favorable internal consistency because all Cronbach's alpha coefficients achieved the accepted standard of 0.70 (Nunnally 1978). Confirmed construct validity emerged through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) because factor loadings demonstrated statistical significance from 0.55 to 0.88 ($p < 0.05$) which validated the measurement model.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics

		Cronbach alpha	AVE	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	ABS	0.79	0.59	3.0179	0.3491	1							
2	AJS	0.78	0.61	3.2714	1.0903	*0.29**	1						
3	FOU	0.81	0.54	2.6877	0.9145	0.05	*-0.19**	1					
4	TIN	0.83	0.63	3.2714	0.4192	*-0.17*	*0.34*	-0.08*	1				
5	Gender					-0.05	-0.02	-0.16	0.08	1			
6	Age					-0.16	-0.03	0.01	-0.10	-0.12	1		
7	Education					0.10	0.11	0.39	0.04	0.07	0.33	1	
8	Experience					*0.15*	0.03	0.02	0.07	0.08	-0.03	0.01	1
9	Department					0.03	-0.05	-0.04	-0.06	-0.02	0.15	0.09	-0.05

Notes: N = 243, ABS = Abusive Supervision, AJS = Alternate Job Search, FOU =Fear of Unemployment, TIN = Turnover Intentions, Italic Number: $p < 0.005$, * Italic Number: $p < 0.001$

Discriminant validity tests were conducted by applying the Fornell–Larcker criterion (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) to validate that each construct's AVE square root value surpassed its most significant correlation with different constructs thereby confirming discriminant validity. The study findings demonstrated positive correlations between abusive leadership and alternative job search behaviour ($r = 0.36$, $p < 0.01$) together with abusive leadership and fear of unemployment ($r = 0.20$, $p < 0.01$). Statistical analysis revealed a negative significant relationship between alternative job search and turnover intentions with a correlation value of -0.19 at $p < 0.01$. The research found that employee fear of unemployment related to negative turnover intentions at a weak but statistically significant level ($r = -0.08$, $p < 0.01$). Researchers have gathered the data in Table 2's summary.

The mediation of alternate job search

Hierarchical regression analysis showed a positive and significant link between abusive supervision and intentions to leave the company ($\beta = 0.23$, $p < .05$), even after accounting for demographic and occupational factors such as gender, age, education, work experience, and department. Moreover, abusive supervision exhibited a moderate but statistically significant correlation with work engagement ($\beta = 0.36$, $p < .05$). Additionally, alternative job search behaviour was identified as having a positive and substantial correlation with turnover intentions ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < .05$). There was also evidence of a positive though the small indirect effect of abusive supervision on turnover intentions, which was statistically significant ($\beta = 0.07$, 95% CI =

[0.039, 0.141]). The analysis results implied that alternate job search is a mediator, showing that abusive supervision and an individual's intention to leave are positively related. This negotiates hypothesis H3, which was advanced in this study. Additionally, it has to be noted that the current research measures the R-squared value at 0.23, which means that the model explaining the turnover intentions describes 23% of this variable.

The mediated moderation model

This study also found support for the Hayes model 14. Fear of unemployment has a negative interaction effect in predicting turnover intentions (β = -0.11, SE = 0.04, p < 0.05). The association between alternate job search and turnover intentions depends on one's fear of unemployment. That is, the results of a slope analysis revealed that the moderation effect of fear of unemployment was significant when the slope was calculated at 1 SD above the mean (low fear of unemployment) the link between alternate job search and turnover intentions (β = -0.16, t = 2.861, p < 0.05), while it was least significant when the slope was calculated at 1 SD below the mean. Moreover, the bootstrap analysis (5000 times) showed that the mediating effect was conditional upon the spotlight on fear of unemployment.

As predicted, the findings revealed that for participants with a high level of fear of unemployment, alternate job search more extensively moderated the relationship between abusive supervision and turnover intentions (β = -0.489, 95% CI [-0.061, -0.121]) compared to those with a low level of fear of unemployment (β = -0.0153, 95% CI [-0.001, -0.02]) supporting H4.

Table 2: Mediation and mediated moderation model

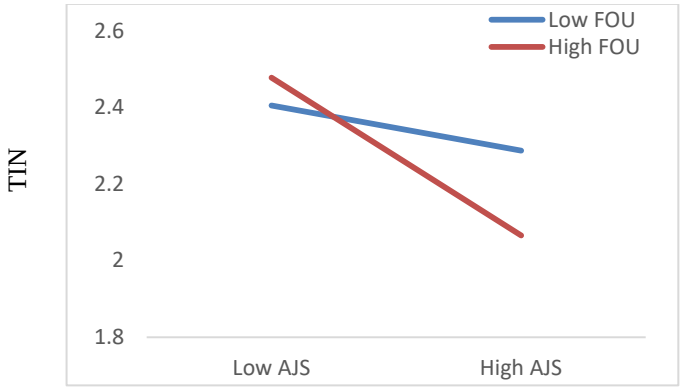
Process		**Model 4**			**Model 14**		
	Variables	***β***	**SE**	***t***	***β***	**SE**	***t***
1. Mediator variable model (AJS)	Constant	1.7539	0.2969	5.909**	-1.9109	0.2969	-6.5220
	ABS	0.3617	0.0068	2.350**	0.3617	0.0567	6.324**
	Gender	0.1317	0.0780	0.2148	0.1317	0.0557	2.350*
	Age	0.1621	0.0537	-1.6120	0.0162	0.0770	0.2148
	Education	-0.0132	0.0193	-1.0862	-0.0304	0.0182	-1.6120
	Experience	0.1317	0.0476	2.9950	0.1317	0.0790	-0.1743
	Department	-0.0304	0.0314	4.4389	-0.1520	0.0446	2.969*
2. Mediator variable model (TIN)	Constant	1.6039	0.2736	5.859*	2.7701	0.2776	9.987**
	ABS	0.2259	0.0527	4.258*	0.2168	0.0527	3.998*
	AJS	0.2634	0.0486	0.5542	0.2249	0.0486	4.370*
	Gender	0.0253	0.0162	0.5542	0.0527	0.0659	1.0851
	Age	-0.0456	0.0790	-0.7032	-0.0800	0.0162	-1.3385
	Education	-0.0051	0.0436	-0.3161	-0.0101	0.0679	-0.6596
	Experience	-0.0476	0.0405	-0.7092	-0.0699	0.0405	1.0456
	Department	0.1267	0.0588	3.2879	0.0861	0.0456	2.1702

FOU	0.141	0.041	3.612*
AJS*FOU	-0.113	0.049	2.371*
R^2 = 0.25, F(df) = 16.0(243)	R^2 = 0.28, F(df) = 14.7(243)		

Process	Variables	Effect	Boot SE	Boot 95% CI
3. Indirect effects of ABS on TIN according to AJS	Mediator, AJS low	-0.0153	-0.0719	[-0.001, -0.02]
	Mediator, AJS High	-0.0489	0.2307	[-0.061, 0.121]

Notes: N = 243, ABS = Abusive Supervision, AJS = Alternate Job Search, FOU =Fear of Unemployment, TIN = Turnover Intentions, **Significance at p < 0.001, *Significance at p < 0.05

Further, the overall model explained a significance level of 27% of the turnover intentions, leaving subsistence. The conclusion was that the examined variables had a considerable impact on the turnover and retention behaviour of the employees.



Discussion

Abusive supervision creates a positive relationship with turnover intentions; existing literature on abusive supervision has witnessed adverse effects on various essential organizational work outcomes, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions (Ampofo et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2021). ABS plays an essential role in conceptualizing a set of behaviours, including using verbal and nonverbal communication that is hostile and aggressive and negatively impacts the perceived sense of the employees' psychology and their satisfaction with their jobs. This, in turn, can help the best employees search for other options to escape a hostile workplace. In the same vein, the studies by (Gip et al., 2024; Mahmood et al., 2024) suggested that abusive supervision leads to a dwindling in perceived organizational support and organizational trust, which in turn enhances the intention to turnover. Additional evidence supporting the test hypothesis comes from cross-sectional research examining abusive supervision's impact on turnover intentions across different cultures. The positive association between abusive supervision and turnover intentions was found in studies conducted in Korea by Hwang & Ramadoss (2017) and in China by Lam et al. (2019)and Xu et al. (2012), lending credence to the cross-cultural findings of this phenomenon. These results provide substantial study evidence supporting the idea that employees' intentions to depart from their firms are justified owing to abusive supervision by

their bosses (Jogi et al., 2024). Recognizing and intervening to prevent abusive supervision are critical objectives for firms aiming to enhance employee retention and maintain a robust, well-functioning, and healthy workforce (Rahman, 2024).

The influence of an alternative job search on subordinates' turnover intentions strengthens established ideas. Consequently, the study revealed that employees' pursuit of alternative career opportunities heightens their intention to leave the organization. Pursuing alternative career options reflects a greater inclination and readiness for change, as individuals seek superior job prospects than their current positions. The study acknowledges the significance of job search activity in the turnover process, demonstrating that it completely mediates the indirect association between abusive supervision and turnover intentions. Abusive supervision is strongly correlated with pursuing alternative employment, positively associated with employee turnover intentions.

Furthermore, the fact that fear of underemployment moderates the association between new employees' procedural voice and turnover intention suggests that individual psychological traits also play a role in turnover decisions. The study posits that employees with a heightened fear of underemployment will avoid consulting job search activities, even in the face of harsh monitoring, due to the risk of job loss and the potential for securing a less favourable position. This research supports the idea that situational factors (abusive supervision) and personality differences (fear of underemployment) have a reciprocal connection in influencing employee turnover intentions. This finding highlighted the impact of distinct psychological traits, such as fear of underemployment, on employees' turnover decisions. The self-identity construct of vulnerable workers persists, as these employees, who are apprehensive about the risk of being assigned to positions that do not leverage their education, skills, and training, may exhibit diminished motivation to pursue alternative employment opportunities, irrespective of an abusive supervisory relationship. The perceived risk of transitioning to a less appealing position overshadows the inclination to leave the firm, as these employees are reluctant to engage in job hopping. It should be kept in mind, nevertheless, that the possibility of underemployment does not necessarily deter turnover. Some employees may choose a seemingly inferior position if it offers more significant future potential than their current role or if they believe they can acquire new skills or develop within the organization. Furthermore, the impact of underemployment anxiety may be more pronounced in specific sectors or labour markets, although quality employment opportunities remain limited. In such instances, underemployment may not be the predominant reason influencing an employee's decision to leave an abusive employer (Peyrat-Guillard et al., 2024).

Pursuing alternative employment opportunities inherently fosters a heightened inclination towards turnover, as the employee seeks positions that may offer superior remuneration, improved working conditions, enhanced advancement prospects, or a more suitable alignment of skills and career aspirations with job requirements compared to their current role. The engagement in active job searching indicates that these employees are already perceiving and experiencing their organizational responsibilities differently, which may prompt them to act on their unfavourable inclination to leave the organization (Kaur & Mittal, 2024). This proactive job search behaviour is a crucial phase in the turnover process, as it transforms a broad, general attitude into concrete activities that may logically culminate in the choice to quit the employer's organization. This subsequently heightens their propensity to willingly resign from the firm, rendering abusive supervision a significant issue for employee retention. The mediated moderation analysis indicated a substantial association between abusive supervision and turnover intentions via AJS, supporting the accepted hypothesis H4. The study findings specifically reveal that the relationship between abusive supervision and turnover intentions via alternative job search is diminished for employees with elevated degrees of fear of underemployment.

Theoretical implications

This research yields various substantial theoretical contributions and foundations. The findings enhance the existing knowledge of the origins and consequences of abusive supervision in three significant ways. Accordingly, this work builds upon prior research by offering novel and essential insights into how abusive supervision influences critical employee outcomes. It demonstrates that turnover intentions are forecasted by employee engagement in alternative job searches. This scholarly contribution enhances the comprehension of the various psychological and behavioural impacts of abusive supervision, which is recognized for its detrimental organizational implications.

Following that, the research augments the field's awareness of the role of unemployment anxiety in employee turnover decisions. This research provides fresh insights into the inhibiting effect of fear of unemployment, building on previous literature identifying significant antecedents such as job insecurity, perceived employability, and turnover intention. The findings suggest that this psychological aspect may serve as a valid negative obstacle, perhaps assisting certain people in evading optimal conditions for functioning inside an abusive work environment while seeking more viable employment opportunities. This elucidates how organization-specific elements influencing employee turnover can be derived from individual-level occurrences, encompassing attitudes and concerns.

The study advances prior research on the factors influencing job search and turnover by conceptualizing and empirically assessing the moderating effects of fear of unemployment on the relationships between antecedents and turnover intentions. This highlights the necessity of considering psychological elements to comprehend better the dynamics influencing turnover decisions. The amalgamation of such perspectives can provide a more apparent synthesis of this significant organizational issue.

Practical Implications

The implications of this study can be examined from the perspectives of organizations and managers. The findings underscore organizations' need to prioritize preventing and managing abusive supervision. This is a critical concern, as abusive supervision has been strongly correlated with many adverse employee reactions, including increased turnover intentions. Organizations can foster a healthy work environment that enhances organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and employee retention by effectively addressing aggressiveness, organizational dysfunction, and abusive managerial practices.

Secondly, the research underscores the importance of evaluating the traits of specific employees and potential circumstances that may impede or encourage their turnover, such as the apprehension of unemployment. Organizations are told to use the assessment of these psychological characteristics in personnel management and retention strategies. By comprehending employees' attitudes and expectations concerning future employment opportunities, an organization can implement various support, training, and communication initiatives to mitigate these factors and maintain workforce stability, even in adverse working conditions.

When an individual is engaged in employment that does not necessitate the application of their education, skills, and training, which they have acquired, the perceived risk of unemployment in finding a new post may hinder individuals from intensifying their turnover intentions, particularly in the context of an abusive supervisor-employee relationship (Aftab & Waheed, 2022). The reluctance to find oneself jobless relative to one's current employment appears to outweigh the urge to leave the organization since these individuals may believe that quitting their jobs will

jeopardize their career advancement. This highlights the psychological aspect of fear of unemployment, which can be utilized to analyze employees' turnover intentions.

Nonetheless, it should be acknowledged that this apprehension of unemployment is not invariably counterproductive. Some personnel may have forfeited their positions and might be inclined to accept a role they perceive as inferior to their previous one due to more favorable vital circumstances. Moreover, unemployment may be more prevalent in some occupational fields due to a scarcity of appropriate job openings. Under such situations, the potential for joblessness may not significantly influence employees' decisions, leading them to depart from unpleasant work environments.

This study's findings underscore that employee turnover decision-making is a multifaceted issue. Managers and organizations must address the connection between abusive supervision and employee turnover and the subsequent impact that alternate job search and fear of unemployment may induce. These characteristics can be mitigated or managed to offer improved solutions for firms seeking to retain high-performing individuals in a hostile environment.

Conclusion

The findings indicate that the connections between abusive supervision, fear of unemployment, and turnover intentions are unique. This study aims to elucidate the psychological mechanisms and individual traits that may drive an employee to leave a detrimental work environment. This research enhances existing knowledge of turnover enthusiasm by dismantling the inhibiting effect of unemployment fear among employees, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the causes affecting turnover. The study's outcomes imply several practical ramifications for firms and managers seeking to comprehend and address staff turnover and retention concerns. By addressing the factors contributing to abusive supervision and enhancing employee awareness, organizations can develop more effective strategies to retain their top talent, even in challenging circumstances. Assessing how variables such as fear of unemployment compel an employee to reject alternative job opportunities despite suffering an abusive work environment is essential for developing targeted retention measures.

Future research must further examine the various connections among environmental, relational, and personal characteristics to ascertain the rates of employee turnover beliefs and actions. Increased efforts are necessary to comprehend the intricate interactions among these aspects to formulate more effective strategies for enhancing employees' physical, mental, and organizational well-being and productivity. By examining the factors that prevent individuals from leaving toxic jobs, firms can improve the work environment, encouraging employees to remain willingly and voluntarily.

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