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Employee Silence an Outcome of Offensive Supervision: An investigation of Mediating Role of Justice Perception

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Abstract
An expanding consideration towards unfair supervision hones has seen in current management literature. This investigation is an effort to explain the proposed phenomenon of abusive supervisory conduct and employee's silence at work place. Additionally, we propose and examine intervening impact of justice perception to ponder the relationship of abusive supervision and staff silence. This examination is led with regards to banks situated in Cairo. This examination bolsters the assumption that negative supervisory behavior prompts employees silence whereas perception of justice plays an intervening role in this relationship. Management needs to comprehend the predecessors and outcomes of the abusive supervision and make, their managers to understand the disappointing results due to negative behavior.

Keywords: Abusive supervision; Employee silence; Justice perception; Distributive justice; Interactional justice; Procedural justice; Banks.

1. Introduction
In recent times, negative aspect of leadership got attention of researchers because of potential harmful outcomes for organizations. The effects of abusive supervision is also getting attention because of public interest (Whitman *et al.*, 2014) . The destructive psychological effects of abusive supervision are regarded as unvoiced cause of stress at workplace (Zhang and Liao, 2015; Zhang and Bednall, 2016). As defined by Tepper (2000) "subordinates' perceptions of the extent to which their supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and non-verbal behaviors, excluding physical contact" is known as abusive supervision. This definition regarding abusive behavior of supervisor unfolds many aspects. The abusive supervision is a purposeful act to give an expression of strictness to employees (for example mistakes will not be tolerated or to pressurize employees to achieve objectives). Abusive supervision is anger, rudeness stealing others credit, publically disrespect and flare-up (Tepper, 2000).

Aryee *et al.* (2008) Studied the impact of abusive supervision on employee dissatisfaction leads to lower performance hence it a significant element for organization (Tepper *et al.,* 2006). The perception about injustice also increased due to abusive supervision (Tepper *et al.,* 2004). Previous studies focused on characteristics and personality of supervisor while explaining abusive supervision. The individual characteristics of effete and contextual situation have been ignored (Martinko *et al.,* 2009). In addition abusive supervision can cause many behavioral changes like increase in negative behavior and decrease in positive behavior (Irfan *et al.*, 2016; Shabbir *et al.*, 2018). Recently a new phenomenon of employee silence at work place caused by abusive supervision has been explored (Brinsfield *et al.,* 2009). The employee silence is defined as the reluctance of employee to share new idea, opinion and information regarding workplace (Morrison and Milliken, 2000).

In this study, we will explore the association among abusive supervision and silence of employee and the role of justice perception in this relationship. This study will help to understand the relationship of organizational behavior and its underlying psychological effects on human behavior (Cropanzano *et al.,* 2017).

Employees adopt passive coping strategy to avoid extreme situation due to many internal and external factors. It is worth to study such a situation where employee does not end the relationship but distant himself/herself from supervisor by using administrative tactics. In this way employee withheld its participation in exchange ideas, information, questions and opinion for the betterment of organization. Moreover, the performance of affected employee may suffer because of psychological pressure. The flow and exchange of important information is necessary to take corrective measures. This study is an effort to enhance the existing knowledge on abusive supervision and its role in employee silence as the existing knowledge on this phenomenon is limited (Morrison and Rothman, 2009). In addition we propose mediation of justice perception in the framework of abusive supervision and employee silence (Tepper *et al.*, 2006; Xu *et al.*, 2015). This study focuses to explore the proposed phenomenon in the context of Egyptian banks. Therefore, this study will help the management of the banks to encourage interpersonal communication so that employees can discuss the important ideas, concerns and information with their supervisors timely. To the best extent of author's understanding existing literature be short of knowledge in this area especially in Islamic banking context.

2. Theoretical Background
Tepper coined the concept of abusive supervision as "subordinates' perceptions of the extent to which their supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and non-verbal behaviors, excluding physical contact"

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(p,178). The deleterious effect of abusive supervision on employee behavior got effect after the great work of Tepper (2000). Where in the result of such negative leadership is found in the form of decrease in the performance of employees (Priesemuth et al., 2014). Researches indicated that counterproductive work behaviors, poor employee attitude towards job and organization, work family conflict and psychological distress and less helping attitude arises due to abusive supervision at workplace (Hoobler and Brass, 2006; Lian et al., 2012; Peng et al., 2014; Rafferty and Restubog, 2011; Tepper, 2000; Xu et al., 2015; Zellars et al., 2002). Tepper (2007) identified that abusive supervision causes certain cost to organization. He further explained that nearly 14% of workers in USA experience abusive supervisors which cost approximately 24 billion USD in term of excessive day off, health-care costs and lost in productivity.

Since psychologically depleted employees often exhibit counterproductive work behaviors and their organizational citizenship behavior is reduced (Martinko et al., 2009). Employee silence is a counterproductive work behavior resulting from abused subordinates as they decide to keep on silence mode instead of sharing important information and ideas they may have (Pinder and Harlos, 2001; Tangirala and Ramanujam, 2008). Intentional decision of non-communication is logical, natural and safe way of abused subordinates for the sake of conservation of remaining resources (Shabbir et al., 2016). Therefore, abused and stressed subordinates withhold the critical information and concerns so that they may not be deprived of professional development opportunities hence it is safely assumed that:

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

3. Organizational Justice Perception

Justice plays an important role in the effectiveness of an organization (Colquitt et al., 2001). An act is defined as fair if majority of individual consider it as fair (Cropanzano and Greenberg, 1997). It is an individual's subjective sense of fairness (Di et al., 2012). Justice Theory is all about the one's judgment of the degree of fairness in the organization. The extent to which individual perceive that the way they are treated within the organization is fair, in line and acceptable as per the ethical standards (Cropanzano et al., 2007). Meta analysis of studies and reviews indicate that fairness in the organization is function of three dimensions of justice i.e. Distributive justice, Procedural justice and Interactional justice. It is evident from the theories of distributive justice that individuals expect fairness in judgment while they compare their inputs and outputs with their referent Adams and Freedman (1976). Research proved that abusive supervision causes emotional exhaustion which is a symptom of stress (Salman et al., 2011; Xu et al., 2015). Individuals who perceive injustice in daily routine further feel that they have less or scare resources to sustain or solve their problems. We can further extend our argument that employee working under abusive supervision have two choices; leaving the organization while the other is, silence. Procedural justice is about the fairness regarding ways and the processes how organization distributes its resources and decide to allocate outcome. It also includes how management makes decision for resource allocation and distribution amongst employees. Procedural justice is a predictor of organization related outcomes including commitment, perceived organizational support and silence (Sweeney and McFarlin, 1993). Employees who perceive more procedural justice in their organization they take themselves more respectable and have the sense of being valued member of the organization (Cropanzano et al., 2001).

Interactional Justice depicts the quality of treatment employees receive within a workplace (2005). Scholars have noticed the there is a critical role of leaders in managing justice within workplace particularly interactional justice (Scott et al., 2014).Supervisors are mainly responsible for provision of safe and ethical environment in an organization Shin(2012). It is evident by the definition of abusive supervision that it violates normative rules of justice Tepper (2000). Individuals intend to seek the party accountable for their perceived injustice and cognitively search the harmdoer. Firstly, employees may relate their victimization of injustice with the immediate supervisor (Aryee et al., 2008; Burton and Hoobler, 2011), Tepper (2000).

Employee silence is a reaction against perceived injustice in the organization which could affect employee's decisions to speak up or remain silent on some critical issues. Extending the line of research it is therefore assumed that abusive supervision and perceived interactional injustice will cause employees to withhold important ideas, suggestions or issues of important nature. Extent literatures on justice perception compel this study to hypothesize that;

H2: Distributive Justice, Procedural Justice and Interactional Justice mediate the relationship of silence of employee and supervisor abuse.

4. Conceptual Model

This study is aimed to develop the relationship of abusive supervision with employee silence with mediating mechanism of justice perceptions. Figure 1 depicts the graphical relationship between independent, dependent and mediation variables

Figure-1. Conceptual Model
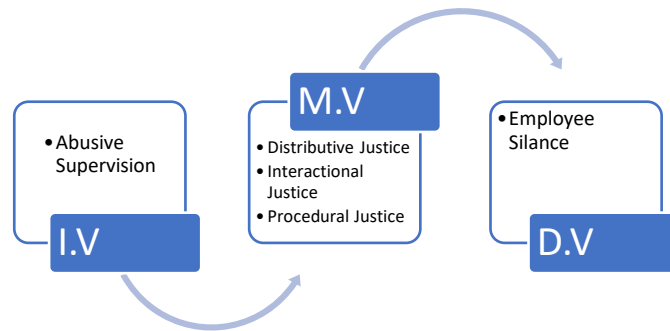
5. Methodology

This is a hypothesis testing study, targeted to gauge the impact of abusive supervision on employee silence through the mediating mechanism of organizational justice. The data was collected through major Islamic Banks located in Cairo. The data were collected at one time only therefore the study is cross sectional in its tendency. The bank employees are the unit of analysis. The questionnaire is consisting of three sections; the first part of questionnaire contains the questions about abusive supervision. Second part is concerned about Justice Perception and third part is related to employee silence. The responses are collected on a five anchor based likert scale.

The technique for data collection employed in this study was survey method. For data collection survey questionnaires were distributed among staff employed in different Islamic banks located in Cairo. In total 305 questionnaires were distributed among the employees of Islamic banks located in Cairo. 254 questionnaires were returned from these branches. Out of 254 questionnaires, 214 questionnaires were found complete in all respect. The overall response rate remains 70 percent.

6. Data Analysis and Discussion

The collected data then analyzed through SPSS 2.0 software. In the first step reliability analysis is carried out to check the reliability of scale used to measure the construct. The internal consistency of construct has been calculated by Cronbach's alph whereas all the values met the requirement of standard level (0.7) (Nunnally, 1978). Regression analysis was used to examine the dependency amongst the variables. Baron and Kenny (1986) method was used to test for mediation.

Table-1. Regression Analysis

	B	R²	ΔR		B	R²	ΔR
Abusive Supervision	.35***	.23	.21	Abusive Supervision			
DV: Distributive Justice				without controlling mediator)	.35***	.23	.21
Abusive Supervision	-.16**	.09	.07	After controlling mediator distributive justice	.31***	.21	.20
DV: Employee Silence				without controlling mediator	.35***	.23	.21
Distributive Justice	-.22**	.08	.07	After controlling mediator procedural justice	.33***	.23	.22
DV: Procedural Justice				without controlling mediator	.35***	.23	.21
Abusive Supervision	-.27***	.15	.14	after controlling mediator interactional justice	.34***	.23	.22
Procedural Justice	-.23**	.10	.09	without controlling mediator)	.35***	.23	.21
DV: Interactional Justice				After controlling mediator distributive justice	.31***	.21	.20
Abusive Supervision	-.19***	.13	.12	without controlling mediator	.35***	.23	.21

*** P < 0.001, ** P < 0.01, * P < 0.05 n = 214; control variables were Age & Experience

Table 1 reflects that abusive supervision is positively and significantly related with employee silence (B = .35, t = 6.830, p < .001. Abusive supervision is negatively and significantly related with distributive justice (B = -.16, t = -2.584, p < .05. The distributive justices negatively and significantly related with employee (B = -.22, t = -3.424, p < .01. The abusive supervision is negatively and significantly related with procedural justice (B = -.271, t = -5.158, p < .001). The procedural justice is negatively and significantly related with employee silence (B = -.23, t = -3.396, p < .01), accepting this hypothesis. The abusive supervision is negatively and significantly related with interactional justice (B = -.19, t = -4.372, p < .001. The interactional justice is negatively and significantly related with employee silence (B = -.23, t = -2.788, p < .01), accepting this hypothesis.

To check the mediation effect of Distributive justice we found that the value of Beta is decreased from .35 to .31 in the absence of mediator (Distributive Justice). It means that the impact of mediating variable is partial. Similarly effect of procedural justice we found a slight decrease from .35 to .33 in the value of beta while controlling the effect of procedural justice. Therefore it is said that procedural justice mediates the relationship of abusive supervision and employee silence. The results shows that the $\beta = .35$ shows the association between Abusive Supervision and employee silence in presence of mediator (interactional Justice. Whereas in the absence of mediator (Interactional Justice) this value decreases as $\beta = .12$. The results depicts that the mediation impact of interactional justice is strong when introduced with abusive supervision and employee silence. Consistent with the recent study by Xu *et al.* (2015), Result shows that Abusive Supervision has a significant impact on employee silence. Applicably, our findings exhibits that employees working in abusive environment are more likely to demonstrate silence at work.

Other than apparent retaliations against abusive supervision, employees also involve in passive copying behavior as they feel threatened about their limited resources which leads them to create intentional distance from source of stress to avoid future resource loss and depletion. Organizations must take into account the evaluation of leadership style for the individuals being screened for managerial positions. Managers should be briefed and trained about how to identify and how to rationally intervene and respond to such behaviors.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

Leadership plays a pivotal role for the success of organization. It is evident that the impact of leadership style on followers' reactions and behaviors in the workplace is crucial. The conservation of resource theory is used in present study in order to check the dark side of leadership behavior i.e Abusive supervision. It can be defined as the feelings of unfairness and injustice provoked by the negative treatment of supervisor and the subsequent response of employee silence. This research claims that the perception of justice is an important mediator in the relationship of abusive supervision and employee silence. These findings would further arouse the avenues for the leadership research i.e. how leadership can influence dynamically and broadly while considering the leader–follower relationship quality. It is a common notion that finance is the life blood for an economy. In this modern era, economic development is almost impossible without the development and growth of banking sector. Therefore, there is a need that special attention is to be paid in forming strategies and procedures for alleviation of the poor leadership practices in Islamic banking sector of Egypt. After consideration of the cost associated with Abusive Supervision and its worse consequences, banks should make strategies to actively getting involved with employees and address their concerns. Leaders mindset should be changed in such a way that they should try to hear silence of the employees in daily routine and try to dig out the things that may be pop up after a light push by the supervisor (Haskins and Freeman, 2015). This requires detailed concentration of the supervisor towards employees.

In doing so organization has to understand the antecedents and consequences of the Abusive supervision and make, their managers realize the worse consequences of this dark side of leadership. Management should take initiatives regarding elimination of such behaviors and arrange special trainings and seminars for awareness purpose. In addition, particular policies should be introduced including penalties to the abusive managers or supervisors.

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