

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In the modern dynamic organizational context, the need to achieve higher employee and overall organizational performance is of great importance. Employees are considered the backbone of any organization whose performance can make or break the organizational fate. Along with several factors that impact the performance & behaviors of employees in any organization, supervision or leadership has been considered as pivotal. Several styles of leadership or supervision endeavors lead to varying results of the employee behaviors and performance consequently. Similarly, certain employee behaviors are considered as beneficial for the organizational performance whereas various employee or workplace behaviors result in the deteriorating organizational and employee performance.

Typically, in an organizational context, “feedback” is of extreme importance for improved organizational and employee performance. Providing constructive and helpful feedback to the subordinates is a part of manager’s job description. The purpose is to guide employees to overcome any lack in the performance. Although in reality, feedback is not always constructive or helpful and nor is it always welcomed by the employees. Many a times, supervisors or managers fail to give constructive feedback for the fear of providing non-constructive feedback or due to lack of tolerance for below par performance. Likewise, employees at times also avoid feedback for the fear of appearing incompetent or for preservation of self-image. This results in Feedback gap which ultimately affects the employee and organizational performance (Moss, Sherry & Sanchez, 2004).

Feedback avoiding behavior (FAB) is defined as such a management strategy where employees intentionally and proactively engage in certain behaviors in order to avoid feedback from the supervisor by absenteeism, withdrawing oneself from the situation, concealing the poor performance, etc. (Moss, Sanchez, Brumbaugh & Borkowski, 2009). Supervisory behavior plays a crucial role in affecting the feedback avoidance among employees. Employees' perception of the supervisory behavior is of critical importance in determining its impact on the negative employee behaviors such as feedback avoiding behavior. If an employee perceives his supervisor to be supportive and considerate towards his needs and performance, there are less chances of the feedback avoidance from employee leading to the decreased chances of the decline in performance in return. But the negative perception of the supervision along with varying adverse effects leads to the employee indulging in the feedback avoiding behavior. The foundation of learning in any organization is to detect and correct the problems and issues regarding the performance. When employees identify the problem they turn to their supervisor for feedback and help. Due to the negative perception of the employee regarding the supervision, not only does it result in employee indulging in avoiding feedback from supervisor, for the fear of appearing incompetent, but it also creates further performance issues causing long term problems in an organization. Failure of supervisor and subordinate to engage in meaningful exchange, results in poor employee performance (Moss, Sherry & Sanchez, 2004).

When it comes to the supervision, abusive supervision has said to have many negative effects on the employee as well organizational performance. Abusive supervision can be defined as *“An employee's perception of the degree to which the supervisor exhibits aggressive behavior towards the employees, verbally or non-verbally, excluding the physical contact”* (Tepper, 2000). Abusive supervision along with hostile behavior may also include behaviors such as indifference towards

employees and their needs, ridiculing the subordinate, criticizing in public and giving silent treatment (Yagi, 2008). Research has shown that continuous perceived abusive supervision causes emotional distress to the employees (Tepper, Moss, Lockhart & Carr, 2007). In the face of adverse or hostile environment, employee may feel discomfort and stress leading to burnout or emotional exhaustion. When an employee feels like being mistreated by the supervisor, he/she puts in psychological efforts to handle the situation thus leading to the exhaustion of psychological resources, resulting in burnout, as per Conservation of Resource theory (Hobfoll, 1989) as well. Therefore, it can be established that Abusive Supervision tends to lead to the burnout of the employee (Yu Wu & Hu, 2009). Tepper (2000) has proposed the many negative consequences of the abusive supervision, such as increased job dissatisfaction, increased turnover rate, work family conflict and finally, psychological stress leading to emotional exhaustion, a constituent of burnout.

Feedback avoiding behavior has turned into one of the major issues faced by organizations especially in today's cut throat, dynamic and fast paced organizational settings. Presence of several alternatives has made it extremely important as well as difficult for organizations to provide nothing but best. In order for the organization to satisfy customers, to meet the demands of the business, and high performance, all of these things can only be done when there are no stones unturned when it comes to employees and their performance. In situation like this, proper or constructive feedback and its implications play a vital role in improving the performance over all. Apart from the changes in industries and organizational needs, in a high power distance country like Pakistan, feedback avoiding behavior can be quite alarming for performance.

Supervision being one of the major determinants of the performance in an organization has noteworthy effect on the behavior of employees such as feedback avoidance. Thus, the need to explore the relationship and to determine its impact on the employee behavior, leads to the

endeavor of exploring these relationships. Employee responses to the certain adverse situations at workplace had been studied in the past but the fact that different people react differently to the same situation, cannot be completely ignored either. For the same purpose, personality plays a pivotal role in determination of an employee's reaction towards certain workplace environment. Personality is an important indicator to foresee or predict the responses of the employees to the unfair treatment (Folger & Sharlicki, 1998). Thus using Big Five Personality Dimensions as the moderator between abusive supervision and burnout may help better determine the impact of the relationship between these two variables. Big five are considered the basic trait dimension of the personality, as well as the traits are empirically proven to be genetically based, stable and cross cultural generalizable (Digman, 1990, Goldberg, 1990; McCrea & Costa, 1992). The five dimensions of personality are as follows:

1. Extraversion
2. Neuroticism
3. Agreeableness
4. Conscientiousness
5. Openness to experience

The most commonly studied trait in the past literature has been conscientiousness. Having these personality traits therefore change employee responses, as per their innate nature. People who score high on Extraversion, usually tend to be outgoing and talkative, whereas neuroticism has six facets, i.e. Impulsiveness, vulnerability, self-consciousness, depression & hostility (Costa & McCrea, 1992). Similarly, people who score high on openness to experience are original and creative, and agreeable people are helpful and pleasant (Leohlin, McCrea, Costa & John, 1998). Thus it is almost difficult that employees with different personality types would react in a similar manner to the abusive supervision.

Previous studies have used the personality dimensions as moderator to study the impact of abusive supervision, but so far, there are very limited studies focusing on all five dimensions of the personality. Duffy, Shaw & Tepper (2001) in their paper "*Personality Moderator of the relationship between abusive supervision & subordinates' resistance*" used only two personality dimensions, i.e. agreeableness and conscientiousness, as moderators to study their moderating effect on abusive supervision & employees' resistance in result. The outcomes of their research showed that employees with high agreeableness do not respond to the abusive supervision with resistance, as such people avoid confrontations and are conforming. Likewise, people who scored less on agreeableness do indulge in constructive resistance (Tepper, Duffy & Shaw, 2001). Researchers over the years have explored the relationship between all five personality dimensions and employee burnout. Of all the traits, only neuroticism has said to be positively related to the burnout and emotional exhaustion of the employees (Zellars, Perrewe & Hochwater, 2000), as neurotic individuals tend to be low on self-esteem, self-conscious and are vulnerable & impulsive. Similarly, studies showed a negative relationship between extraversion and burnout (e.g. Pidemont, 1993; Eastburg, Williamson, Gorsuch & Ridley, 1994; Francis, Loudon & Rutledge, 2004; Croon, De Vries & Van Heck, 2004; Michielsen, Willemsen). As Extraversions tend to have positive attitudes, which use problem solving strategies when faced with an issue, they seek social support and thus there is a negative correlation with the emotional exhaustion (e.g. Deary et al., 1996; Bakker, Van Der Zee, Dollard, Lewig &, 2006). Likewise, Lepine, Lepine and Jackson (2004) established that a negative relationship exists between conscientiousness and emotional exhaustion (a facet of burnout). Most studies indicated that people with high scores on neuroticism experience heightened emotional exhaustion or burnout (e.g. Hills and Norvell, 1991; Deary et al., 1996; Zellars et al., 2000; Lingard, 2003; Lepine et al., 2004).

1.2.Problem Statement

Researchers have identified many factors that affect and cause the Feedback avoiding behavior (FAB) among employees along with the consequences. Among these factors, supervisory behavior and supervisor-subordinate relationship have been considered one of the pivotal areas to help understand the construct better. Hence, the problem statement of this research is:

How does supervisory behavior affect the Feedback avoiding behavior (FAB)

In Pakistan, Power Distribution sector is one of those industries which are believed to still have traditional, bureaucratic organizational structure. Strict hierarchical structure and long working hours might make this industry more susceptible to not only employees' physical but emotional and psychological exhaustion too, leading to the adverse effects on performance. Traditionally a bureaucratic organizational form is most likely to make the role of supervision behavior of extreme importance for the employee performance. Under such work conditions, employees are likely to be over-burdened and over worked. For many years, HR department in DISCOs had been treated as any other physical assets but with the changing times, many companies have come to realize that HRM is quite different from managing the physical assets (Khattak, Khan, Haq, Arif & Minhas, 2011). Power Distribution sector in Pakistan is not unaware of the fact either. Not only there has been limited research in Power Distribution sector, there has been almost negligible previous researches done on the impact of supervisory behavior and its consequences on the employee behaviors, in Power Distribution sector. The lack of empirical testing calls for the need to focus on the Power Distribution sector and its human resources.

1.3. Research Questions

Basing on the statement of the problem, following are the research questions of the study:

1. What is the inter relationship between abusive supervision, Big five personality dimension, employee burnout, and feedback avoiding behavior?
2. Does burnout mediate the relationship between Abusive Supervision, and feedback avoiding behavior (FAB)?
3. Do Big-Five Personality Dimensions mediate the relationship between Abusive Supervision & Burnout?

1.4. Research Objectives

This objective of this research is to recognize the impact supervisory behavior would have on the feedback avoidance behavior. These objectives are broken down as:

- To explore the influence of abusive supervision on the burnout of the employees
- To investigate the effects of abusive supervision on employee burnout, moderated by big five personality dimensions
- To investigate the impact of the employee burnout on the feedback avoidance among employees in sector of Pakistan
- To identify the impact of abusive supervision on the feedback avoiding behavior of the employees
- To inspect the impact of abusive supervision on employee feedback avoiding behavior, mediated by burnout

1.5. Significance of current study

Importance of the study is to determine to what extent the Feedback avoidance behavior is affected by the supervisory behavior among employees in Pakistan. Pakistan being a less researched country in management (Ayman, et al 2000) leads to the pressing need to fulfill the theoretical gap

presented in the literature due to the cultural differences. Being an altogether different country with varied organizational culture and industrial needs, there is a paramount need to conduct a research that is aligned with the Power Distribution sector of the country. The presence of higher power distance culture in organizations further validates the need to study the supervisor and subordinate dynamics in the light of feedback avoidance behavior.

1.5.1. Power Distribution Sector in Pakistan

The focus of research is the Power Distribution sector of Pakistan, thus a brief overview is imperative. Power Distribution industry in Pakistan is comprised of ten distribution & supply companies called DISCOs. Each DISCO is also called a region. These DISCOs include IESCO, LESCO, FESCO, PESCO & MEPCO etc. These are independent entities with their own board of directors, appointed CEOs with a dotted line reporting to the Water & Power Development Authority & Ministry of Water & Power. Just like any other public institution, DISCOs are also known for their bureaucratic organizational structures. DISCOs on average employ 12,000 to 18,000 employees and are divided into pay scales. Majority of workforce is male however USAID has taken several initiatives to increase the number of female employees in all DISCOs.

Each DISCO/ Region is divided into several Circles, which is further divided into Divisions which have further Sub-Divisions under them. The DISCO studied for this research has 5 circles, 19 Divisions & 108 Sub Divisions. Each Circle is headed by its Superintending Engineer (SE), Division by its Executive Engineer (XEN) & Sub Division by Sub divisional Officer (SDO).

As the focus of the research is limited to the employees of Power Distribution sector of Pakistan, this further enhances the significance of thi study, as the work done on the Power Distribution sector of Pakistan is limited. There has been limited to no evidences of the research in this

particular sector, focusing on the feedback avoidance behavior among employees. Presence of strict bureaucratic structures, long working hours and evidences of employees being over-worked in the industry, all these factors lead to the need to study adverse employee behaviors such as feedback avoidance and some of its causes. The integrated model holds significance as it will help fill a research gap in our part of the world. Along with an endeavor of filling the gap, the theoretical model can be quite helpful and implacable for top management, in order to meet the organizational challenges by focusing on the betterment of leadership in order to enhance the employee performance.

1.6.Theories Supporting Research

1.6.1. LMX Theory

An underpinning theory, as suggested by literature, that affect the supervisory behavior and its effect on employee behaviors, specifically feedback avoidance is Leader Member Exchange Theory (LMX) Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995. LMX theory is based on the operationalization of the relationship based leadership approach. The central idea of the theory deals with the view that an effective leadership is the result of positive and mature leader member relationship, which results in benefits to both leader as well as member i.e. employee. Higher quality of LMX relationship have been said to have a positive impact on the performance of the employees (members) and overall organization. Ample evidences in existing literature suggest that poor leader member exchange results in employee proactively engaging in the feedback avoiding behavior and slump in the performance (Moss, Sanchez, Brumbaugh & Borkowski, 2009). On the contrary, employees involved in higher quality leader member relationship tend to be more perceptive towards feedback and not only accept it easily rather seek it (Tuytens & Devos, 2010).

1.6.2. Conservation of Resource Theory

In order to justify how employee burnout leads to the feedback avoidance, Conservation of Resource theory provides support. According to Hobfoll's Conservation of Resource Theory (1989) an individual tries to conserve his resources such as social support, especially under unfavorable work situation. When these resources are lost or jeopardized, causing stress and burnout, an individual may opt to withdraw from the situation. In essence, when an employee experiences burnout due to lack of supervisory support, he may choose to cope with the adverse situation by proactively involving in feedback avoidance behavior.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Abusive Supervision

Abusive supervision can be defined as an employee's perception of their supervisor's continuous aggressive behavior, verbal or non-verbal, excluding bodily abuse (Tepper, 2000). Two most common elements of the construct as operationalized by Tepper (2000) is that abusive supervision is professed (by an employee) and is continuous and prolonged rather than occasional or episodic. Abusive supervision is psychological or emotional treatment of the employees by their supervisor, over the extended period of time (Harvey, Stoner, Hochwarter & Kacmar, 2007). It is deemed as subjective and depends upon the perception of the employee. One behavior may be considered abusive by one employee and the same behavior might not be considered abusive by the other employee, hence the perception of nature of supervisor-subordinate relationship in the eyes of the subordinate plays a vital role. Abusive supervision is considered costly for the employer, employee and overall organization, due to the many adverse consequences (Tepper, Duffy, Henle, Lambert, & Giacalone, 2008). Tepper (2000) in his paper *Consequences of Abusive Supervision* has identified some adversarial effects of abusive supervision in an organization. The study showed that employees who consider themselves to be the victims of being supervised abusively are more likely to leave the job. Apart from increase in turnover rate, abusive supervision results in the decreased job satisfaction and affective commitment to work, higher continuous commitment and increase in psychological distress among employees. Other studies also concurred to the Tepper's finding, indicating that abusive supervision has negative impacts on both the employee and the overall organization, leading to plummeting job satisfaction, wellbeing, commitment and increased absenteeism leading to the turnover (Einarsen & Mikkelsen, 2003; Parzefall & Salin,

2010; Hoel et al., 2003). If the employee does not leave the job, it may result in increased workplace deviant behavior, in order to deal with the adverse situation (Tepper, Carr, Breaux, Geider, Hu, & Hua, 2009). Similarly, abusive supervision decreases employees' perception of the organizational justice, which may result in workplace deviant behavior that can cause damage to the organization (Lian, Ferris & Brown, 2012). Abusive supervision has a negative relationship to the OCB, i.e. employees who experience abusive supervision, tend to report lower on the organizational commitment behavior, such as helping their colleagues, not complaining about issues faced at workplace, being polite to the colleagues and speaking highly of the organization (Zellars & Tepper, 2002; Zellars, Tepper & Duffy, 2002). Another study indicates that employees rather avoid arguing at a workplace with the abusive supervisor thus this phenomenon leading to the increased workplace deviant behavior, if quitting the job is not the option for the employee (Fakhar, 2014).

Among many adverse effects and consequences of abusive supervision, several studies found empirical evidences of a positive relationship between abusive supervision & emotional exhaustion, psychological distress which leads to burnout (Tepper, Moss, Lockhart, & Carr, 2007). Tusung Yu-Wu (2009) in the paper "*Abusive Supervision and Employee Emotional Exhaustion, Dispositional Antecedents and Boundaries*" concluded that those employees who deem themselves to be mistreated by their supervisor are subject to the psychological distress and in order to cope with the abusive behavior, they use up the psychological resources which eventually leads to the emotional exhaustion and burnout. Tepper being one of the gurus of abusive supervision in his studies indicated that abusive supervision is positively and significantly related to the emotional exhaustion, but this relationship may be affected by some contextual or individual factors, such as job mobility, opportunities and personality type (Tepper, 2000, 2007). Similarly,

Yu-Wu and Hu (2009) in the study established a strong positive relationship between abusive supervision and emotional exhaustion; but they also proposed that this relationship is affected by the perceived support of the coworkers and subordinates' propensity to emotional contagion. Most commonly, subordinates do not retaliate by engaging in the aggressive or abusive behavior towards the supervisor in case of being mistreated by their supervisor, as doing so may further cause aggressive behavior by the supervisor (Tepper, Duffy & Shaw, 2001), therefore, such a situation leads to the employees' psychological distress and burnout.

Upward maintenance behavior is such behavior that is used to maintain a relationship with the supervisor, which includes regulative tactics, i.e. maintaining a relationship with the abusive supervisor by avoiding contact and concealing messages and avoiding the feedback and asking for directions. People use avoidance tactics in order to deal with the unwanted relationships, by distancing themselves (Hess, 2000). When people face discomfort at the work setting or by the supervisor, they try to deal and cope with it by using avoidance behavior (Sharlicki, Folger, & Tesluk, 1999). The use of avoidance behavior in order to deal with the abusive supervision is justified by using the temporal motivation theory, which suggests that the short term consequences are more effective motivators for the employees, rather than long term consequences (Steel & Koenig, 2006). When employees perceive to be abused by their supervisor they tend to get more involved in the avoidance behavior, and similarly, using such tactics, i.e. avoidance behavior aggravates the +ive relationship b/w abusive supervision & emotional exhaustion (Tepper, Moss, Lockhart, & Carr, 2007). When supervisory roles exhibit negative behavior towards employee regarding their performance, employees grow wary of seeking feedback and try to avoid performance feedback in future (Lu, Pan, & Cheng, 2011).

Based on above reviewing of the literature the hypotheses have been developed:

H1: There exists a positive relationship between abusive supervision & burnout

H2: There exists a positive relationship between abusive supervision & feedback avoidance behavior

2.2. Burnout

The construct burnout at workplace is used to define the psychological distress and exhaustion resulting from various work related stresses and conditions (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). The construct has been divided into three dimensions, i.e. *Emotional Exhaustion*, which is most commonly reported and manifested. *Cynicism* or depersonalization is known as being indifferent or distancing oneself from the stressful situation and finally *Professional Inefficacy* or reduced personal accomplishment, feeling professionally incompetent (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). The concept of burnout was first introduced in the 70s when the research was rather exploratory. The empirical evidences for the construct started appearing in the 80s using questionnaires and surveys to study the construct. Although the emotional exhaustion dimension of burnout is most commonly evident and reported, taking this dimension singularly in order to study the whole construct is not enough. Maslach and Jackson (1986) developed a survey questionnaire, Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) which covers all three dimensions of the burnout. Initially the survey was used to study burnout among human service employees only, but later and till date the concept has been studied in all spheres of work environment, using an updated version of the MBI called MBI-General. Extant previous research identified several antecedents and consequences of burnout. Literature suggests one of the most common causes of burnout among employees is job related stressors. Janssen, Jong and Bakker (1999) posited, workload & limited social support are key prognosticators of burnout among employees. Employees who perceive lack of social support from their colleagues and work under stressful work settings and

face work overload are more susceptible to experiencing emotional exhaustion, ultimately leading to the turnover intention. Similarly, tough job requirements and insufficient resources are also common predictors of burnout among employees leading to turnover and health problems (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). When employees are faced by job stress or work burden, their inability to manage their emotions regarding their job leads to burnout joined by emotional exhaustion, which causes adverse employee behaviors (Zapf, Seifert, Schmutte, Mertini & Holz, 2007).

There is an extensive literature with empirical evidences available that has used burnout as the mediator. Burnout caused by workplace stress leads to the several adverse consequences, such as increase in absenteeism and turnover rate, lower job satisfaction and productivity, decline in the job effectiveness, as well as work-family conflict (Finney, Stergiopoulos, Hensel, Bonato & Dewa, 2013). Commonly studied outcomes of burnout in previous literature happen to be lower job satisfaction and increased intention to quit or turnover intention (e.g. LeCompte & Dworkin, 1991; Harrington et al., 2001; Huang, Chuang & Lin, 2003; Goddard & Goddard, 2006; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007, 2009, 2010; Federici & Skaalvik, 2012). Yip, Rowlinson and Siu (2008) studied the moderating impact of different coping strategies on the relationship between work load and burnout. Coping strategies include resigned distancing, rational problem solving, seeking support and passive wishful thinking. The results indicated that the resigned distancing and seeking support from colleagues have said to moderate the relationship between work overload and emotional exhaustion and cynicism dimensions of burnout only. Numerous researchers have established and empirically proven the role of burnout mediating the relationship between work load, job stress and abusive supervision leading to low job satisfaction, organizational commitment, decline in

performance and turnover intention (Babakus, Cravens, Johnston & Moncrief, 1999; Tepper, Moss, Lockhart & Carr, 2007; Leiter & Maslach, 2009).

There is limited amount of literature exploring the relationship between burnout leading to feedback avoidance behavior; although some studies have been conducted along the lines. Tepper, Moss, Lockhart and Carr (2007) explored the area to an extent by studying the use of upward maintenance communication in order to deal with psychological distress and abusive supervision. The study indicated that when employees experience psychological distress or emotional exhaustion due to perceived abusive supervision, they try and cope with it by using regulative tactics, i.e. avoiding the situation and supervisor by evading any further contact and distancing themselves. Similarly, Hobfoll's Conservation of Resource Theory (1989) is previously used to justify the use of avoidance tactics in order to deal with the adverse situations at workplace or when employees experience emotional exhaustion or burnout. Whitman, Halbesleben, and Holmes IV (2014) in their paper "*Abusive Supervision and Feedback Avoidance: The Mediating role of Emotional Exhaustion*" explored the relationship. The result of the study indicated that abusive supervision is positively related to the emotional exhaustion which in turn leads to the feedback avoiding behavior by the employees. They established that subordinates cannot retaliate to the perceived supervisory abuse in the same manner, as they are dependent upon the supervisor for the resource, and retaliating to the perceived abuse in the same manner may further worsen the abuse, thus employees engage in avoidance behavior, in order to cope with the abuse and psychological distress (Tepper et al., 2007).

2.3.Feedback Avoiding Behavior

Feedback avoiding behavior (FAB) is defined as certain management strategies proactively used by the employees, to avoid their supervisor, in order to avoid getting a negative feedback from the

supervisor against the poor performance (Moss & Sanchez, 2004). Feedback avoiding behavior (FAB) is such a management strategy where employees intentionally and proactively engage in certain behaviors in order to avoid feedback from the supervisor by absenteeism, withdrawing oneself from the situation, concealing the poor performance, etc. (Moss, Sanchez, Brumbaugh & Borkowski, 2009). Previous research indicates that employees who perform poorly are most likely to engage in feedback avoiding behavior. Not only do they fail to seek the feedback but rather actively try to avoid the feedback in order avoid bearing the brunt of their poor performance (Moss, Sanchez, Brumbaugh & Borkowski, 2009). Although, poor performance may not be the sole reason driving the employees to use such managerial strategies in order to cope in the work setting. Ample literature is available that suggests that the feedback avoiding behavior among employees is significantly affected by the supervisory behavior; employees are more likely to seek feedback from a supportive supervisor in comparison to the supervisor who exhibits non supportive behavior (Miller and Levy, 1997). Unpleasant or unwanted attitudes and behavior of the supervisor towards their employees' behaviors or their work also leads to employees' active engagement in feedback avoiding behavior. Employees indulge in FAB with the fear of losing face or appearing incompetent to their supervisor (Lu, Pan, & Cheng, 2011).

Managers or supervisor are generally considered the determinants of the FAB. Moss, Sherry and Schanez (2004) in their paper identified three types of managers that contribute to the FAB by employees: Zero tolerant managers: Such managers have low tolerance for mistakes or poor performance and thus react severely and negatively when asked for the feedback. They believe employees' attitudes to be the reason for poor performance thus leading the employees to indulge in FAB in order to maintain a relationship. Micro-managers are always on the lookout for the mistakes of their subordinates. They closely watch and scrutinize the job done and thus criticize

for even minute mistakes. Such managers fail to build a relationship of trust and mutual understanding with their subordinates thus driving the employees to take rescue in the feedback avoiding behavior. Finally, Conflict avoiders are the managers who try to avoid conflict at every cost, resulting in their failure to provide useful feedback to the employees in the face of failure. This creates job conflict among employees causing failures and having them engage in FAB in order to avoid appearing incompetent to the supervisor. These types of supervisors lead to a poor communication or exchange between the employee and supervisor, leading to the feedback avoiding behavior by the employees. A supervisor-subordinate relationship is deemed to be of utmost importance in determining and affecting the employee performance. Similarly, this two way relationship has great impact on employees' behaviors, i.e. feedback avoiding behavior. Employees, who positively perceive their relationship with their supervisor, trust them, perceive them to be empathetic and concerned, and believe that the feedback from their supervisor is crucial and helpful for their performance improvement not only perform well but engage in active feedback seeking behavior as well (Choi, Moon, & Nae, 2014). Thus, employees with high perceived quality LMX accept feedback easily and better than perceived low quality LMX (Tuytens & Devos, 2012). And conversely, perceived poor leader member exchange members are more likely to engage in the feedback avoiding behavior, as FAB is proven to fully mediate the relationship between LMX and employee performance (Moss, Sanchez, Brumbaugh, & Borkowski, 2009).

MacDonald, Sulsky, Spence and Brown (2013) in their paper tried highlighting the impact of cultural differences on feedback avoiding behavior. They suggested that in higher power distance culture, employee may indulge in feedback avoiding behavior due to the fear of appearing incompetent and "losing face". Apart from the poor performance or the supervisor-subordinate

relationship, another reason for employees to practice FAB may be the cost of seeking the feedback. Employees who do cost benefit analysis and see if the new piece of information is going to be useful or not, whether it will align with their existing set of values and beliefs or not? Therefore, if employee fears that any new piece of information might have negative consequence or challenge the status quo, they rather avoid seeking that information and similarly, avoiding such feedback that may cause such consequences (Sweeny & Miller, 2011). Along with the supervisor's behavior and nature of supervision, subordinate-supervisor relationship has also been empirically proven to have an impact on FAB. Employees are more likely to indulge in the feedback avoiding behavior if the perceived dissimilarity between supervisor and subordinate is higher, which leads to task and relationship conflict that consequently increases the probability of the feedback avoiding behavior among employees (Peng & Chiu, 2010; Song, Moss & Gok, 2013).

Literature suggests that feedback is a two way process and thus affects both the supervisor and subordinate. Unfavorable supervisory behavior ultimately leads to the feedback avoiding behavior by the employees, making the supervisory behavior a paramount and a key predictor of the FAB among employees. Moss et al. (2003, 2009) established that when a supervisor reacts negatively, harshly and in a penalizing manner to their subordinates, their subordinates are most likely to avoid any future feedback seeking and thus engage in FAB, in order to deal with the situation causing emotional exhaustion. Abused employees experience emotional and psychological distress and in order to cope with such adverse situation, they indulge in FAB; thus indicating that when faced by unfavorable behavior by the supervisor and in the face of stressful situation, employees indulge in FAB in order to cope with the situation (Whitman, Halbesleben, & Holmes IV, 2014). Although, used to temporarily help employees cope with the adverse impact of certain supervisory behaviors,

FAB also leads to lag in performance due to role ambiguity, decreased task learning and ultimately leading employees to further feel emotionally exhausted (Rebb & Connolly, 2009).

On the basis of above reviewed literature the following hypotheses have been developed:

H3: There exists a positive relationship between burnout and feedback avoiding behavior

H4: Burnout plays a mediating role in the relationship between abusive supervision and feedback avoiding behavior

2.4. Big Five Personality Dimensions

The Big 5 Personality dimensions, also called Five Factor Model are believed to be the core dimensions of the personality (Goldberg, 1990). Goldberg posited that these five dimensions of FFM cover all sorts of personality traits, making it rather easier to conduct study on human behavior regarding personality. The research on FFM over the years has established that these traits are stable, genetically proven, inherited and generalizable across different cultures (e.g. Goldberg, 1990; Digman, 1990; McCrae & Costa, 1992, 1997). The FFM model has five dimensions known as Conscientiousness, Neuroticism (opposite: emotional stability), Agreeableness, Extraversion and Openness to Experience.

2.4.1. Neuroticism

Neuroticism has six facets, self-consciousness, vulnerability, anxiety, hostility, depression and impulsiveness (Costa & McCrae, 1992). It is the opposite of emotional stability and neurotic people are considered unhappy, worried, experience more negative emotions than people who score low on neuroticism (Magnus, Diener, Fujita & Pavot (1993). Neurotic people in a work setting tend to get more stressed about the situation and thus which eventually leads to their lower

job satisfaction (Judge, Heller & Mount, 2002). According to Costa and McCrae (1991) this personality dimension studies the emotional stability and the adjustment of the person. People who score high on the dimension are more likely to stress out under stressful conditions and experience tension, worry, guilt, anger, sadness, embarrassment and other negative emotions. On the other hand, people who score high on emotional stability or low on neuroticism tend to be more emotionally stable and handle stressful situation in a better way and without breaking much of a sweat, as such individuals are calm, rational, relaxed and emotionally stable (Bruck & Allen, 2003).

Due to the instable emotional state, having irrational ideas, inability to deal with work related stress; neuroticism is considered one of the important predictors of job performance, when it comes to personality dimensions. Employees who are neurotic perform poorly and are considered less creative at work than those who are emotionally stable or score low on neuroticism (Rothmann & Coetzer, 2003). Literature provides empirical evidences of having a negative relationship between neuroticism and job performance and career success (Judge, Higgins, Thoresen, & Barrick, 1999). Likewise, empirical evidences show that people who score high of neuroticism are more likely to experience emotional exhaustion, thus making this dimension one of the key predictor of burnout among employees (e.g. Hills, & Norvell, 1991; Deary et al., 1996; Zellars et al., 2000; LePine et al., 2004; Bakker, Zee, Lewig, & Dollard, 2006).

On the basis of the above literature the following hypothesis have been developed:

H5: Neuroticism moderates the relationship between abusive supervision and burnout

2.4.2. Extraversion

Extraversion deals with dominance and sociability. People who score high on extraversion are outgoing and talkative (Loehlin, McCrae, Costa, & John, 1998). Extraverts are generally positive people and experience positive emotions (Costa, & McCrae, 1992). Such people are energetic, assertive, cheerful and optimistic, in comparison to those who score low on extraversion, also called introverts who are reserved and quiet (Costa, & McCrae, 1991). As Extraverts being optimist people, who experience positive emotions, are tend to be more satisfied with their job than people who generally score on extraversion (Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002). Due to the positive impact, Extraversion has been considered an important predictor of job satisfaction. A lot of previous studies over the years established a positive relationship between Extraversion and job satisfaction (Barrick, & Mount, 1991; Lowery, & Krilowicz, 1994; Vinchur et al., 1998; Bing, & Lounsbury, 2000).

Experiencing positive emotions, optimism and the assertiveness nature of extraverts helps them cope with the adverse work related situation in a better way. Researchers over the years have empirically proven and established a negative relationship between Extraversion and emotional exhaustion, a key element of burnout (e.g. Piedmont, De Vries, & Van Heck, 2004). Bakker, Zee, Lewig and Dollard in their paper established that there is a negative relationship between Extraversion and burnout whereas it is positively related to personal accomplishment.

***H6:** Extraversion moderates the relationship between abusive supervision and burnout*

2.4.3. Agreeableness

Agreeableness refers to a person being pleasant & helpful (Costa, & McCrae, 1992). There are six facets of Agreeableness, i.e. compliance, straightforwardness, trust, modesty and tender mindedness (Tepper, Duffy, & Shaw, 2001). People who score high on agreeableness are

compliant, try to accommodate others and the situations by adjusting their own behavior and are good at maintaining social relations in their work setting and otherwise (Graziano, & Eisenberg, 1997; Campbell, & Graziano, 2001; Kalshoven, Hartog, & Hoogh, 2010). Agreeable people are not only pleasant and helpful, they are generally more sympathetic to others and their needs, good natured, sanguine and soft hearted, rather than being competitive, egoistic and skeptical (Bruck, & Allen, 2003).

Agreeable people are more motivated than people who score low on agreeableness, which if considered at a work setting, highly agreeable people are highly motivated which leads to the elevated job satisfaction, due to an employee's ability to maintain pleasant relationships and getting along with others (Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002). Like Neuroticism and Extraversion, Agreeableness is also considered one of the key predictors of the job performance. Due to their compliant and helpful nature, agreeable people work better in teams and group, thus leading to the better performance and high job satisfaction (Salgado, 1997; Judge et al., 1999). Literature provides evidences of an established negative correlation between Agreeableness and emotional exhaustion or burnout. Piedmont (1993) posited that there is a negative relationship between Agreeableness and emotional exhaustion, one of the three facets of burnout. Similarly, negative relationship between burnout and agreeableness and agreeableness and depersonalization has been established over the years (Deary et al., 1996; Zellars et al., 2000). Tepper, Duffy and Shaw (2001) in their paper established that employees who score high on agreeableness are least likely to respond aggressively or resist the abusive supervision, due to their complaint nature and knack for confrontation avoidance. On the other hand, their results indicated that employees who score low on agreeableness tend to indulge in constructive resistance in reaction to the abusive supervision.

H7: Agreeableness moderates the relationship between abusive supervision and burnout

2.4.4. Conscientiousness

Conscientiousness refers to the personality traits such as being responsible and efficient. Conscientiousness has six facets, which are order, dutifulness, competence, achievement striving, self-discipline and deliberation (Tepper, Duffy, & Shaw, 2001). Conscientious people are considered responsible, careful, dutiful, hardworking, persistent, who follow policies, protocols and adhere to the rules and regulations in their dealings at a workplace (Costa et al., 2001; Costa, & McCrae, 1992; Moon, 2001). People who score high on conscientiousness tend to be responsible and precise while planning and carrying out tasks. Such individuals are determined, punctual, organized, focused and steadfast. Conscientious individuals are not only organized but have self-control and precision to carry out tasks meticulously as well (Barrick, & Mount, 1993). On the other hand, highly conscientious people may come across as compulsive and workaholics, whereas individuals who score low on conscientiousness may lack moral principles and be careless in terms of applying these principles (Rothmann, & Coetzer, 2003).

Extant literature on Conscientiousness indicates that it has a significant relationship with the job performance, i.e. employees who score high on conscientiousness are tend to perform better at their job and have high life as well as job satisfaction (Barrick, & Mount, 1991; Salgado, 1997; DeNeve, & Cooper, 1998), along with an established positive relationship with career success (Judge, Higgins, Thoresen, & Barrick, 1999). Likewise, conscientiousness is positively related to the creativity and task performance (Rothmann, & Coetzer, 2003). By the virtue of the fact that highly conscientious individuals are responsible, organized and tend to be meticulous planners in order to avoid any setbacks, the studies indicate that there is a negative relationship between conscientiousness and emotional exhaustion (Zellars, Perrewe, & Hochwater, 2000; Lepine, Lepine, & Jackson, 2004). Bruck and Allen (2003) studied the moderating effect of

conscientiousness on role ambiguity and well-being of an employee. The results indicated that highly conscientious people are less affected by the role ambiguity when it comes to employee well-being. Likewise, Tepper, Duffy and Shaw (2001) studied the moderating impact of conscientiousness on abusive supervision and employee resistance and posited that highly conscientious people are responsible, dutiful and organized and thus will not resist in the face of abusive supervision. On the other hand, individuals scoring low on conscientiousness tend to be impulsive and aggressive, may resist abusive supervision and use different tactics to deal with the situation.

H8: Conscientiousness moderates the relationship between abusive supervision and burnout

2.4.5. Openness to Experience

Openness to Experience refers to the personality traits such as being original, imaginative and sophisticated in task and performance (Loehlin, McCrae, Costa, & John, 1998). Openness to Experience is manifested through several traits such as individuals who are imaginative, aesthetically sensitive, intellectually curious, independent in their judgment (Costa, & McCrae, 1991). Individuals, who score high on Openness to Experience, tend to have a general curiosity about things, within and outside the realms of their work settings. Such individuals are not only imaginative and expressive but open to new ideas. Conversely, individuals who score low on the dimension are conventional, conservative and prefer to stick to the original ideas and stay in their comfort zone (Bruck, & Allen, 2003). Literature suggests that Openness to Experience is associated with the job performance and career success, training, task performance and creativity (Vinchur et al., 1998; Rothmann, & Coetzer, 2003). Although there have been studies indicating that Openness to Experience is associated with the job performance, some studies also reported

that Openness to Experience is not a compelling predictor of job performance and satisfaction (Tett et al., 1991; Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002).

H9: Openness to Experience moderates the relationship between abusive supervision and burnout

Although, there have been evidences of using the Big Five Personality Dimensions as moderators, very few studies have covered all five dimensions to provide precedence for the study. Tepper, Duffy and Shaw (2001) in their paper studied the moderating impact of Conscientiousness and Agreeableness on the abusive supervision and employee resistance. Their results indicated that agreeableness as such didn't moderate the relationship but for conscientiousness, the moderation existed for people who scored high on agreeableness as well. For future directions, they suggested that all five personality dimensions must be studied to check their moderating effect on abusive supervision and employee resistance. Therefore the study is a endeavor to find out the overall moderating impact of personality dimensions on the relationship between Abusive Supervision and Burnout.

CHAPTER 3

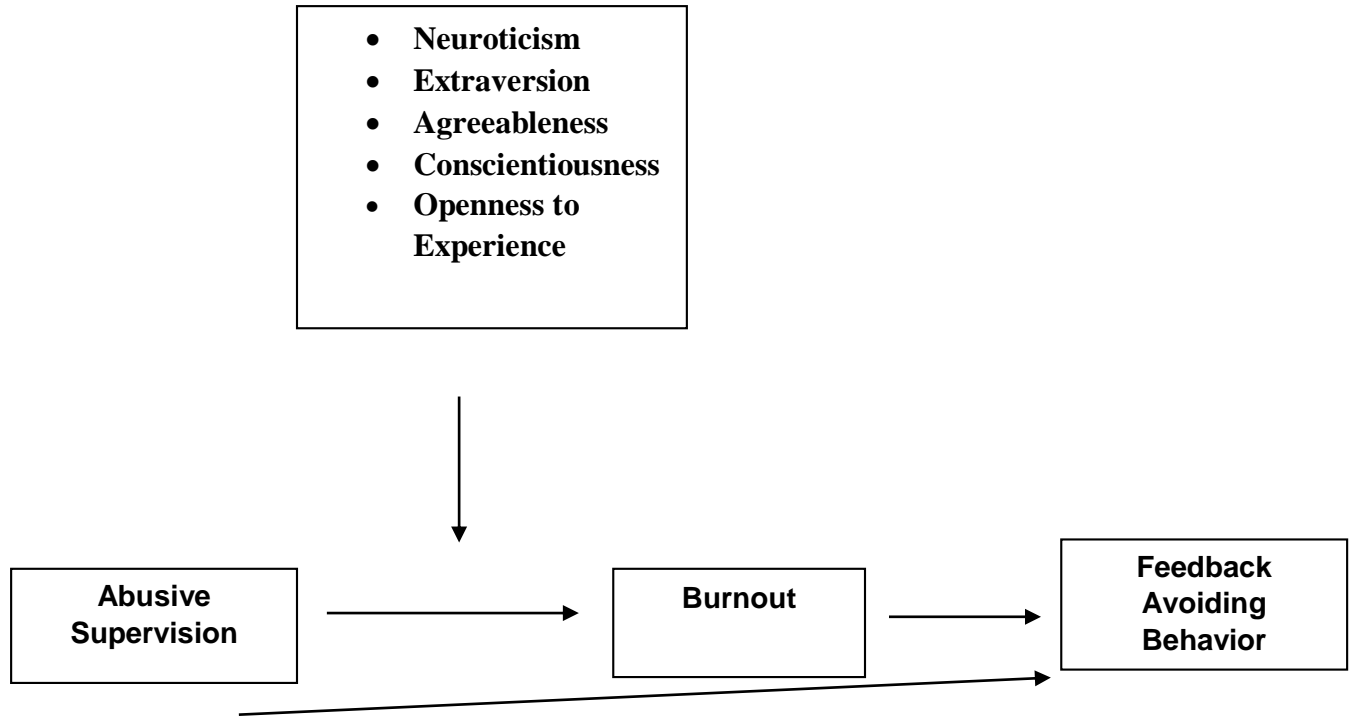
METHODOLOGY

3.1. Methodology

The study examined the impact of supervision on the feedback avoiding behavior among the employees in Power Distribution sector in Pakistan. The data was collected through questionnaires, which were distributed to the Circle, Divisional & Sub-divisional Officers in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Jhelum & Attock.

3.2. Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework includes an independent variable abusive supervision that leads to burnout (emotional exhaustion, cynicism and professional inefficacy) which is a mediator, resulting in feedback avoiding behavior by employees - a dependent variable. Big Five Personality Dimensions, i.e. Neuroticism (self-consciousness, vulnerability, anxiety, hostility, depression and impulsiveness), Extraversion (dominance and sociability), Agreeableness (compliance, straightforwardness, trust, modesty and tender mindedness), Conscientiousness (dutifulness, competence, achievement striving, self-discipline and deliberation) and Openness to Experience (original, imaginative and sophisticated in task and performance) are used as moderators between abusive supervision and burnout.



3.3. Research Design

The purpose of the research is to examine the impact of abusive supervision on the feedback avoiding behavior, mediated by burnout, by incorporating the Big-five personality dimensions as the moderators. This study is the hypotheses testing. There are multiple factors that effect and result in the feedback avoiding behavior thus it is a correlation study. The extent of interference in this research was minimal as all information came from respondents in the form of questionnaires.

The data was collected in just over a few weeks' time, hence it makes the research a cross-sectional study. Unit of sampling for analysis is individuals working in the Power Distribution sector Pakistan.

3.4. Population and Sampling

The focus of the study is the employees working in Power Distribution Sector. Sample was selected from the various offices currently operating in Attock, Jhelum, Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Data

was collected through distributing questionnaires to the employees of these selected offices. Data collection also included some online questionnaire filling.

Each questionnaire contained a cover letter along with it. The cover letter indicated that the study is conducted for the academic purposes and the respondents were assured of the confidentiality of the data. Respondents were asked to fill the questionnaires anonymously in order to assure them of the confidentiality and to maintain minimum bias as well.

3.4.1. Sampling Technique

The data was gathered using convenient sampling technique.

3.4.2. Sample Size

A total of 250 questionnaires were distributed but only 225 responses were received. The remaining copies of questionnaire were either not filled properly or were not returned.

3.5. Variables and Measures

Table 3.1: Variables

Variables	Variables name
Dependent variable	Feedback Avoiding Behavior
Independent variable	Abusive Supervision
Mediator	Burnout
Moderator 1	Neuroticism
Moderator 2	Extraversion
Moderator 3	Agreeableness
Moderator 4	Conscientiousness

3.6. Research Instrument

Survey was done using questionnaires only. The instruments used for the present research were already developed questionnaires for each variable, based on Likert scale.

3.6.1. Feedback Avoiding Behavior

Feedback avoiding behavior was measured using six items scale by Moss et al. (2003). Respondents were asked to use 5 point scale in order to answer the questions such as “I tried to schedule outside appointments to avoid my supervisor” and “I went the other way when I saw my supervisor coming.” The 5 point Likert scale included response choices from 1 to 5 where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

3.6.2. Abusive Supervision

Scale used for the measurement of Abusive Supervision was Tepper’s (2000) Abusive Supervision scale. 15 item scale based on the 5 likert point is used to answer questions such as: My supervisor “Ridicules me”, “Gives me silent treatment” and “invades my privacy” etc. The 5 point Likert scale included response choices from 1 to 5 where 1 = cannot remember, 2 = seldom, 3 = occasionally, 4 = moderately, 5 = very often.

3.6.3. Burnout

In order to measure the burnout instrument developed by Pines and Aronson (1988) was adopted. 20 items scale with questions such as: How often do you experience “Being tired”, “emotionally

exhausted” and “physically exhausted” etc? The 5 point scale is from 1 to 5 where 1 = Never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = always.

3.6.4. Big Five Personality Dimension

In order to measure the Big five dimensions, the Big Five Inventory (BFI) developed by Rammstedt, B. & John, O. P. (2007). The 10 item scale measures all five personality dimensions with questions such as “I see myself as someone who is lazy” and “I see myself as someone who is imaginative” on a 5 point scale. The 5 point Likert scale included response choices from 1 to 5 where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

3.7. Data Analysis Technique

Data was analyzed using SPSS and hypotheses were tested using correlation & regression analysis.

3.8. Ethical Requirements

Respondents name, personal details, company details were kept confidential and used only for this research.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Given below are the results of the research analysis which include frequency, correlation and the regression analysis done in order to test the hypotheses.

4.1. Demographics

The frequency tables are used to get a clear picture of the demographics of the sample. The demographic information included the age, education, experience and the gender of the respondents.

Table 4.1.: Frequency table

Description	Range	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	103	45.8%
	Male	122	54.2%
Age	20 – 30	103	45.8%
	31 – 40	73	32.4%
	41 – 50	49	21.8%
	>50	-	-
Experience	<1	53	23.6%
	1 – 3	89	39.6%
	4 – 6	64	28.4%
	>6	19	8.4%
Education	Bachelor	59	26.2%
	Masters	92	40.9%
	MS	65	28.9%
	PhD	4	1.8%
	Any other	5	2.2%

As per the frequency table of the demographics, 54% of the respondents were male (n = 122) whereas 103 (45%) of the total 225 responses recorded as female. The age groups were divided into three categories. The table indicates that most respondents lie between the ages 20 – 30, which constitute 45% (n = 103) of the total sample; closely followed by age windows of 31 – 40 (32%) and 41 – 50 (21%). The percentage indicates that most of the workforce employed in DISCOs is younger. It helps validate the results and the analysis as the focus of the study is mainly the subordinates working, providing a better picture of the supervision in the Power Distribution sector.

Similarly, concurring with the age demographic of the respondents, experience shows the similar picture. According to the frequency table, 39% (n = 89) of the respondents have 1 – 3 years' experience working in the Power Distribution sector. Whereas, 8% (n = 19) of the respondents have more than 6 years' experience.

As per the education level is concerned, majority of the respondents have Master's Degree with 40.9% (n = 92) laying in this category. 28.9% and 26.2% of the respondents have MS and Bachelor's degrees respectively, whereas only 4 of the 225 (1.8%) respondents held PhD degrees.

Descriptive statistics table shows the mean and standard deviation of the variables, indicating a clear pattern among the responses.

Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Means	S.D.
Abusive Supervision	2.2924	.57572
Burnout	2.5507	.45893
Feedback Avoiding Behavior	2.3015	.45354
Extraversion	3.2000	.89268
Agreeableness	3.1178	.79234
Conscientiousness	2.9889	.79401
Neuroticism	2.8778	.83155
Openness to experience	3.0800	.81848

4.2. Correlation Matrix

Correlation explains the relationship between two variables. It indicates two things: the strength and the degree of association between two variables and secondly it indicates the direction as well, i.e. whether the relationship between certain variables is positive or negative. The value of correlation lies between +1 and -1. Greater correlation value indicates stronger correlation between two variables. Negative correlation means the negative relationship among the variables, i.e. increase in one variable causes the decrease in the other variable, similarly, positive correlation manifests that the increase or decrease in one variable causes the similar increase or decrease in the other one.

Table 4.3: Correlation Matrix

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 Abusive Supervision	1							
2 Burnout	.329*	1						
3 Feedback Avoiding Behavior	.245**	.246**	1					
4 Extraversion	-.182**	-.044	-.186**	1				
5 Agreeableness	-.195**	-.086	.021	.047	1			
6 Conscientiousness	-.157	.054	-.178	.117	.167	1		
7 Neuroticism	.132*	.160	.081	.047	-.061	-.198*	1	
8 Openness to experience	-.165	-.045	-.135	.484**	.114	.213**	.011	1

N=211; alpha reliabilities are given in Parentheses. For correlation greater than or equal to .316 $p < .05^*$; for correlations greater than or equal to .183; $p < 0.01^{**}$

According to the correlation matrix there is a positive and significant correlation between Abusive Supervision and Burnout (.329*), as well as between Abusive Supervision and Feedback Avoiding Behavior (.245**). Correlation between Feedback Avoiding Behavior and Burnout is also positively significant (.246**). Extraversion is negatively significant with Abusive Supervision and Feedback Avoiding Behavior with -.182** and -.186** respectively. On the other hand the correlation between Extraversion and Burnout is negative but insignificant (-.044). Agreeableness is only significantly correlated with the Abusive Supervision at -.195**, while it doesn't hold significant correlation with the rest of the variables. Conscientiousness does not hold any significant correlation with any of the variables. Neuroticism is significantly correlated with the Conscientiousness only at -.198*, whereas Openness to experience is positively correlated with the Extraversion and Conscientiousness at .484** and .213** respectively.

4.3. Regression Analysis

Regression analysis helps understand the changes brought into the dependent variable with any significant change occurred to the independent variable. Regression analysis is used to test the particular hypotheses. In the regression, demographics i.e. gender, age, education and experience were entered as controlled variables in the first step. Regression Mediation Analysis was used to test the mediating role of Burnout between Abusive Supervision and Feedback Avoiding Behavior. Similarly, Regression Moderation Analysis was used to test the moderating role of Five Factor Model (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness to experience) between Abusive Supervision and Burnout.

Table 4.4: Regression Mediation Analysis

Variable paths	Beta	SE	T	P
Path a: IV to M	0.2620	0.0504	5.1960	0.0000
Path b: M to DV	0.1837	0.0670	2.7435	0.0066
Path c: IV to DV	0.1446	0.0534	2.7081	0.0073
Path c`	0.0481	0.0234	2.7081	0.0000

All demographic variables (age, gender, experience, education) were controlled initially

M (mediating variable is used i.e. Burnout)

Path c` shows total effect

Level of confidence for all the confidence intervals in output: 95.00

The regression mediation table shows the findings of regression analysis for mediation. First of model fitness is checked via the value of F- stat. The value of F-stat is 26.9989, which indicates the model fitness as it is greater than 4 and significant ($p = 0.000$). Standard Errors of regression for each variable are less than their respective means. The value of R^2 is 0.1080. R^2 signifies the variance brought into the dependent variable caused by independent variable, i.e. Abusive

Supervision causes 10.80% variance in Feedback Avoiding Behavior. In order to test the hypotheses, the significance value of p and t – stat are considered. The p value for all three paths is significant, i.e. $p < 0.05$, which indicates there exists a positive and a significant relationship as per hypothesized. The value of t – stat is greater than 2, indicating the condition being met for hypotheses acceptance.

Table 4.5: Regression Moderation Analysis

Predictors	Burnout		
	B	R ²	Δ R ²
Moderator Analysis			
Step 1			
Abusive Supervision	0.4795		
Neuroticism	0.1883		
Extraversion	0.1764		
Agreeableness	0.1873		
Conscientiousness	-0.0452		
Openness to experience	-0.1769		
Step 2			
Abusive Supervision × Neuroticism	-0.0536	0.1243	0.0023
Abusive Supervision × Extraversion	-0.0711	0.1169	0.0086
Abusive Supervision × Agreeableness	-0.0919	0.1156	0.0071
Abusive Supervision × Conscientiousness	0.0483	0.1211	0.0017
Abusive Supervision × Openness to experience	0.0788	0.1132	0.0052

*** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.10 level (2-tailed).

The regression moderation table above shows the regression results for the moderation as performed by Preacher and Hayes (2008) method. Model 4 was used in order to run the moderation tests. Each table shows the impact of each moderator (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Openness to experience) on burnout as well as direct impact.

4.4. Findings for Hypotheses

4.4.1. Findings for Hypothesis 1:

Hypothesis one signified that there is a positive and a significant relationship between Abusive Supervision and Burnout. In the regression table above Path a shows the regression results of hypothesis one. $P = 0.0000$ and $T - \text{stat}$ is 5.1960 which indicates the relationship is significantly positively leading to the acceptance of hypothesis one.

4.4.2. Findings for Hypothesis 2:

Path c on regression table shows that p for hypothesis two is less than 0.05 ($p = 0.0073$) with $t - \text{stat}$ at 2.7081, indicating a positive and a significant relationship between Abusive Supervision and Feedback Avoiding Behavior. Hence hypothesis two is also accepted.

4.4.3. Findings for Hypothesis 3:

Hypothesis three was established to test that there is a positive relationship between Burnout and Feedback Avoiding Behavior. The regression table specifies a significant relation between the two variables at the significance value of $p = 0.0066$ (path b), and value of $t - \text{stat}$ at 2.7435, therefore, leading to the acceptance of hypothesis three.

4.4.4. Findings for Hypothesis 4:

Hypothesis four tests the mediation for the research. It indicates that Burnout mediates the relationship between Abusive Supervision and Feedback Avoiding Behavior. Path c' in regression table present the mediation results. With p value being highly significant, i.e. 0.000 and $t - \text{stat} > 2$, the mediation hypothesis is being accepted. Although the direct relationship between Abusive Supervision and Feedback Avoiding Behavior is also significant but after incorporating the mediator (burnout), the significance increases from 0.0073 to 0.000, indicating the partial mediation and therefore, hypothesis four is also accepted.

4.4.5. Findings for Hypothesis 5:

Hypothesis five tests whether Neuroticism moderates the relationship between Abusive Supervision and Burnout or not. The regression moderation results for Neuroticism indicates that the values of R^2 and $F - \text{stat}$ decrease significantly after incorporating the moderator ($R^2 = 0.0023$, $F = 0.5905$). Alongside, $p = 0.4430$ which is far greater than 0.05 hence no significant. Therefore with the rejection of hypothesis establishes that Neuroticism does not moderate the relationship between Abusive Supervision and Burnout.

4.4.6. Findings for Hypothesis 6:

Hypothesis six is to study the moderating impact of Extraversion between Abusive Supervision and Burnout. Table 4.5 shows the moderation does not exist as the values of $R - \text{square}$ and $F - \text{stat}$ decrease along with the value of p at 0.1429 leading to the rejection of hypothesis six as well.

4.4.7. Findings for Hypothesis 7:

In order to examine the moderating effect of Agreeableness on Abusive Supervision and Burnout, hypothesis seven was developed. Table for Regression Moderation Analysis provides the test results. As per the regression results, Agreeableness does not moderate the relationship between

Abusive Supervision and Burnout. The value of R – square decreases from 0.1156 to 0.0071, whereas F – stat also declines from 9.6260 to 1.7688. The significance value of p is greater than 0.05 at $p = 0.1849$, therefore leading to the rejection of hypothesis seven.

4.4.8. Findings of Hypothesis 8:

Table 4.5 presents the results for hypothesis eight. On the basis of these results, hypothesis eight has been rejected indicating that Conscientiousness does not moderate the relationship between Abusive Supervision and Burnout. The values of R- square as well as F- stat (0.0017 and 0.4360 respectively) support the rejection of hypothesis with the value of p at 0.5097.

4.4.9. Findings of Hypothesis 9:

Hypothesis nine tests whether or not Openness to experience moderates the relationship between Abusive Supervision and Burnout. The regression moderation analysis test results for Openness to experience are shown in Regression Moderation table. The hypothesis is rejected on the basis of p being greater than 0.05 and non-significant ($p = 0.2584$). Therefore, as per the results, Openness to experience does not moderate the relationship between Abusive Supervision and Burnout.

4.5. Discussion

As per the regression analysis, the mediation hypothesis had been accepted providing empirical proves that Burnout mediates the relationship between Abusive Supervision and Feedback Avoiding Behavior. Abusive Supervision has been empirically proven time and again, to lead to Burnout. The analysis results support the previous literature claim and provide further evidences of a positive and a significant relationship between Abusive Supervision and Burnout. When employee works under an abusive supervisor, due to the increased pressure of performance and strict supervisory behavior employees are known to experience several negative emotions, majorly

emotional exhaustion and Burnout. As per the results, the correlation indicates that all the variables are positively and significantly correlated as predicted and backed by literature. Similarly, the relationship between Abusive Supervision and Burnout is significant and positive as predicted by extensive and previous literature. This particular research studied the mediating effect of the Burnout between Abusive Supervision and Feedback Avoiding Behavior. The acceptance of mediation hypothesis solidifies the claim that Abusive Supervision ultimately leads to the employees indulging in the Feedback Avoiding Behavior at workplace, mediated by Burnout. The results are supported by the literature and previous researches. The findings can further be backed by incorporating Hofstede's Cultural Dimension in Management and Planning study (1984). According to Hofstede, Pakistan being a power distance culture, when employees face any predicaments relating to the supervision, they are more likely to deal with them in a rather docile manner than manifesting outrageous negative emotions. Employees when find themselves being the victim of Abusive Supervision, tend to be emotionally exhausted and burnt-out. In order to deal with such difficult workplace settings, the employees maintain resonance by avoiding their supervisor by actively participating in Feedback Avoiding Behavior. It is rather easier to avoid any feedback from the supervisor which may further escalate the abusive behavior, than confronting the supervisor or ultimately, quitting the job.

The study incorporated the Five Factor Model, in order to further study the consequences of Abusive Supervision, i.e. Burnout. The purpose was to see whether different personality types have any impact on the otherwise positive relationship between Abusive Supervision and Burnout. As per the regression results mentioned above, Five Factor Model, i.e. Neuroticism, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Openness to experience, does not moderate the relationship

between Abusive Supervision and Burnout, i.e. it neither strengthens nor weakens the relationship between the two.

Although there are ample empirical proves that all five personality traits have an impact on emotional exhaustion and burnout, positive or negative. Studies suggest that people who score higher on Neuroticism, are more likely to resist the abusive supervision hence may strengthen the positive relationship between Abusive Supervision and Burnout. On the other hand, individuals who score high on Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Openness to experience are least likely to experience strong negative emotions or show resistance in the face of Abusive Supervision, therefore, these traits might have weakened the positive relationship among Abusive Supervision and Burnout.

The rejection of the moderation hypotheses can be explained by playing on the contextual difference of this study with the previously conducted researches. According to the National Cultural Dimensions study of Hofstede, Pakistan's culture mainly is higher on power distance (55%), collectivism (86%), uncertainty avoidance (70%) and long term orientated (50%) (Hofstede, 2010). Certain personality traits may have some meager impact on individual's perceptions of the supervisory support or lack of it, but it certainly does not ultimately have significant impact on the Abusive Supervision and its consequences, such as Burnout. Being an uncertainty avoider, employees in the face of the Abusive Supervision, deal with it internally rather than lash out or manifest in any other manner explicitly, thus leading to the Burnout. Power distance and long term orientation can also be used to justify the lack of any moderating effect of different personality types on the relationship between employee's Burnout and Abusive Supervision.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

This research studies Feedback Avoiding Behavior and factors leading up to such workplace behavior. The study focuses on empirically studying the impact of Abusive Supervision on the Feedback Avoiding Behavior, with the mediating role of Burnout and using personality traits as moderators to get a clearer picture. The data was collected through questionnaires from employees of a leading DISCO. Total sample size was 225 with data collected from Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Jhelum & Attock region. The results of the study indicate that as suggested by ample and sufficient previous literature on the subject Abusive Supervision in fact does lead to the Burnout among employees, as backed by statistical results pointing to the positive and significant relation between the two variables. Similarly, the results of the study posit that Abusive Supervision resulting in Burnout ultimately leads to the employees indulging in the Feedback Avoiding Behavior at workplace, in order to deal with the Abusive Supervision and its impacts. The results indicated the existence of the partial mediation as per predicted and supported by extensive literature.

The Five Factor Model of the personality traits was incorporated as the moderator between Abusive Supervision and Burnout. The regression test for moderation resulted in the rejection of moderation hypotheses, leading to conclude that different personality traits do not necessarily moderate the above mentioned relationship. Pakistan has quite a varying cultural as well as organizational environment as compared to the cultures that had been the focus of study in the previous studies in the same area. Although, many organizational changes have been brought into the workplace environment in a last decade or so in other industries especially IT, Power

Distribution sector still functions in the same dimension and realm as it used to decade ago. A national culture pretty much helps define the organizational culture as well. A higher power distance society, with the knack for uncertainty avoidance and higher collectivism may not render varying personality traits to lead employees to react any differently in similar situations, i.e. Abusive Supervision leading to the Burnout of employees. Thus this helps explains the lack of moderating effect of Five Factor Model on the above mentioned relationship of Abusive Supervision and Burnout.

5.2. Limitations

No study is without certain limitations and there is always some room for further refinement. This research is no different. There are always so many factors that can be considered while conducting a research on a certain subject. The options are generally limited in order to make the research manageable. One of the limitations of the study is the inclusion of only one independent variable (Abusive Supervision) in order to study the Feedback Avoiding Behavior. There are certain other antecedents of Feedback Avoiding Behavior which could have been incorporated in the research.

The sample size for the study was 225 which are although sufficient, but a much larger sample size would further help solidify the study results. The larger the sample size of any research study, more it increases the validity and implications of the study. On the similar lines, the data was majorly collected from Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Attock & Jhelum region only. Expanding the research horizon by not only focusing other major or metropolitan cities but small towns may help get a better or even different results and a picture.

5.3. Recommendations and Implications

This study has certain implications in the Power Distribution sector. As Pakistan being primarily an under researched country, there are very limited studies being conducted in Power Distribution sector. The study focuses on the adversities of the Abusive Supervision and its adverse and undesirable effects on the employees and overall organizations. The results may help the organizations to better understand and tap into the Supervisory styles and its consequences lest it leads to the unwanted results. This not only helps get a clearer picture of how employees are most likely to act under certain circumstances and supervision, also it provides policy makers with a starting point on how to deal with these consequences.

5.4. Directions for Future Research

This research is merely a starting point into the subject area. There are several different directions in which future researchers can go from here. By incorporating more relevant variables can really help elevate the already developed grounds for the research in this specific area. Adding more antecedents of the Feedback Avoiding Behavior such as peer support, workplace environment, etc. can provide more definite and enticing results.

Likewise, adding more moderators to the framework, not only between Abusive Supervision and Burnout but also among Burnout and Feedback Avoiding Behavior will help further understand the path and the effect of each variable on the other. Organizational commitment, motivation and other behavioral variables may provide a more comprehensive picture of factors leading up to the Feedback Avoiding Behavior.

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APPENDIX

Annexure 1: Questionnaire used for data collection

Dear Respondent,

I am Ahsan Ghazanfar and I am an MBA student from NUST Business School, Islamabad. I am collecting data for my thesis on “*Impact of Supervision on the Feedback avoiding behavior (FAB) – The case of Power Distribution sector in Pakistan*”. The term Feedback avoiding Behavior (FAB) is defined as such a management strategy where employees intentionally and proactively engage in certain behaviors in order to avoid feedback from the supervisor by absenteeism, withdrawing oneself from the situation, concealing the poor performance. For this purpose I need some of your valued time to answer the questions. Please feel free to share precise information as its optimal confidentiality will be ensured. You are requested to not to mention your name or the name of your organization anywhere on the questionnaire.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. After performing poorly, I would try to schedule outside appointments to avoid my supervisor.					
2. After performing poorly, I would go the other way when I saw my supervisor coming.					
3. After performing poorly, I would pretend to be sick and stay home in order to avoid negative feedback from my boss.					
4. I would hide from my supervisor if I had performed poorly or had failed to complete an assignment on time.					
5. After performing poorly, I would take one or more of my vacation days in order to avoid my interaction with my supervisor.					
6. After performing poorly, I would try to avoid eye contact with my supervisor so that he/she didn't start the conversation with me about my performance.					
7. I see myself as someone who is reserved					
8. I see myself as someone who is generally trusting					
9. I see myself as someone who tends to be lazy					
10. I see myself as someone who is relaxed, handles stress well					
11. I see myself as someone who has few artistic interests					

12. I see myself as someone who is outgoing, sociable					
13. I see myself as someone who tends to find fault with others					
14. I see myself as someone who does a thorough job					
15. I see myself as someone who gets nervous easily					
16. I see myself as someone who has an active imagination					

	Cannot remember	Seldom	Occasionally	Moderately	Very often
17. My boss always ridicules me					
18. My boss always tells me my thoughts or feelings are stupid					
19. My boss always gives me the silent treatment					
20. My boss always puts me down in front of others					
21. My boss always invades my privacy					
22. My boss always reminds me of my past mistakes and failures					
23. My boss doesn't give me credit for job requiring a lot of effort					
24. My boss always blames me to save himself/herself the embarrassment					
25. My boss always breaks promises he/she makes					
26. My boss always expresses anger at me when he/she is mad for another reason					
27. My boss always makes negative comments about me to others					
28. My boss is always rude to me					
29. My boss does not allow me to interact with my workers					
30. My boss always tells me I'm incompetent					
31. My boss always lies to me					

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	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
32. I often experience being tired					
33. I often experience feeling depressed					
34. I often experience having a good day					
35. I often experience being physically exhausted					
36. I often experience being emotionally exhausted					
37. I often experience being happy					
38. I often experience being drained/Worn out					
39. I often feel like "I Can't take it anymore"					
40. I often experience being unhappy					
41. I often experience feeling fatigued					
42. I often experience feeling trapped					
43. I often experience feeling worthless					
44. I often experience being troubled					
45. I often experience feeling bitter and hateful					
46. I often experience being weak and sensitive to illness					
47. I often experience feeling hopeless					
48. I often experience feeling rejected					
49. I often experience feeling optimistic					
50. I often experience feeling energetic					
51. I often experience feeling anxious					

Gender

1	2
Female	Male

Age

1	2	3	4
20-30	31-40	41-50	>50

Experience

1	2	3	4
<1	1-3	4-6	>6

Education

1	2	3	4	5
Bachelor	Masters	MS	PhD	Any other