

Abusive Leadership As Predictor Of Employee Voice Behavior Among School Teachers: Role Of Employee Power Distance

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Abstract

The present research proposed to study abusive leadership, employee voice behavior and employee power distance among school teachers of Sargodha, Pakistan. For data collection, the purposive sampling technique was used. The Abusive Supervision Scale (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007), Voice Behavior Scale (Liang et al., 2012) and Power Distance Scale (Dorfman & Howell, 1988), were used to quantify the variables of the research. Correlation analysis found a negative link of abusive leadership with voice behavior. Contrarily, teachers who have had confronted with abuse by their leaders in the workplace are bound to lower their voices, withholding the information, opinions and feelings. Linear regression findings revealed abusive leadership as a significant predictor of voice behavior. Moderation analysis showed the significant moderating role of power distance in the relationship of abusive leadership with voice behavior. The proposed study has some suggestions and conclusions for the researchers in the future will be curious to explore abuse faced by the teachers in a high-power-distance culture and act as a restriction to raise their voices.

Keywords: Abusive Leadership, Employee Voice Behavior, Employee Power Distance, School Teachers.

Introduction

The idea of abusive leadership undergoes the concept of negative leadership. It also includes outrage, rude behavior, deception, intrusions of privacy, credit stealing and hostility towards employees. In 2002 the notion of abusive leadership was developed by Tepper. He portrayed abusive leadership as subordinates' views, the point to which their heads are occupied with a delayed presentation of non-verbal and verbal behaviors, barring physiological contact. Abusive leaders conform to an established system if it fulfils their concerns. Such leaders have a feeling that what they are doing is the correct thing to do. Abusive leaders practice the ability to

deliver their advantage by ruling and authoritative approaches to accomplish what is needed. They are good at controlling others to acquire the desired motives. These leaders need to succeed at any expense. Even though they know to portray their faithful side and are working for the interest of the organization, they are engrossed to be number one. Abusive behavior is conduct that is destructive to other people (Murari & Gupta, 2012).

Voice is characterized as an additional job of employees in addition to their commitments (Liang et al., 2012). Voice can happen directly or by indirect means. Indirect voice applies an impact through the employee

representatives, like non-unions and unions agent voice (Bryson, 2004), while direct voice portrays how much an employee straightforwardly impacts the management (Kim et al., 2010).

According to the viewpoint of COR, speaking up fundamentally is typically expensive and hazardous (Bolino & Turnley, 2005). It also requires additional work, energy, and time because subordinates need thoughts cleansing, waiting for the ideal opportunity and afterwards articulate in a suitable way (Ng & Feldman, 2012). People raising their voices are in threat of being set apart as trouble-makers or complainers, and they may lose professional opportunities and personal resources (Detert & Treviño, 2010).

Voice behavior of employees is a basic driver of execution at all levels (organizational, individual, and group). Whereas past investigations recognized abusive leadership as a hindrance to voice behaviors (Morrison, 2014). Existing literature, analyzing the connection between abusive leadership and voice behaviors, noticed a negative connection between the two variables.

Organizations progressively need individuals who transparently express their insights and make important ideas for change to proactively react to the challenges of a changing business climate. But the power distance culture act as a hindrance between the organization and employee. Simply, power distance develops a layer between the two which imposes the employees not to disclose their opinions and ideas which could be beneficial for the organization as a whole.

In lower power distance organizations, imbalances among individuals will quite often be limited, decentralization of ventures is more probable, subordinates hope to be consulted by leaders, and status symbols and advantages are less apparent. Those low in power distance favor

discussion and consultation and view subordinate conflict with and analysis of experts as suitable and alluring. Conversely, in higher power distance organizations, disparities among individuals are considered attractive, there is more prominent dependence by the one with less power on the people who hold power, centralization is the standard, and subordinates are probably going to be isolated from the leaders by wide differentials in status symbols and advantages.

Literature Review

Contemporarily, school teachers face many significant problems like high power distance and abusive leadership. These are also said to be the primary cause of low voice behavior. Employees will prefer to withhold important information that could be useful for the organization.

Abusive Leadership

The vast majority of the existing works on abusive leadership think about the adverse behaviors and related results. Research by Einarsen et al. (2007) on leadership that is abusive or destructive stress both negative and positive parts of abusive leadership. Indeed, Kellerman (2004) likewise tracks down that abusive leadership could be stiff in certain regards. Abusive leadership is the tedious behavior of a leader that invades the workplace interest. Abusive leadership can accept behaviors pointed toward subordinates' efficacy and goals of an organization (Einarsen et al., 2007).

The expanding literature on abusive leadership's antecedents, urged by a need to lessen abusive leadership, has upgraded the understanding of the reasons; leaders abuse their adherents (Yam et al., 2016). A study also demonstrates that leaders are destined to offend their representatives in threatening surroundings, or when they have certain potentials like

significant degrees of Machiavellianism (Kiewetz et al., 2012) and weak emotional intelligence (Xiaqi et al., 2012).

Moreover, one study has recommended that the effect of abusive leadership is more grounded inside organizations with mechanistic structures; more centralized structures with top-down communication, than in organic structures; collective and less centralized (Aryee et al., 2008). Enterprises like the military and medical care have all the earmarks of being especially powerless to oppressive practices because of the way portrayed by high work requests, pressing factors, hazards, and significant expenses related to the failure. Such associations may drive individuals to participate in forceful practices like abusive leadership (Tepper, 2007).

Morrison (2012) stated that staying silent inside the work environment is a safe approach to saving one's excess resources when feeling genuinely exhausted. It is less resource and time consuming than raising a voice. Besides, withholding critical information could likewise limit conceivable resource loss that may be brought about by addressing current work circumstances. leader abuse undermines and exhausts employees' social and personal resources.

Voice behavior of employees is a basic driver of execution at all levels (organizational, individual, and group). Whereas past investigations recognized abusive leadership as a hindrance to voice behaviors (Morrison, 2014). Existing literature, analyzing the connection between abusive leadership and voice behaviors, noticed a negative connection between the two variables.

Researches like Rafferty and Restubog (2011) and Burris et al. (2008), acquiring from a social exchange theory, noticed subordinates seeing an exchange relationship of bad quality

with abusive leaders and consequently reacting with diminished voice. From fairness theory, it was inferred that subordinates viewed leader abuse as shamefulness and low voice behaviors to adjust to this inequality (Wang & Jiang, 2015). The normal subject across these studies was the voice used as a useful reaction by subordinates towards abusive leader behaviors; a limited conceptualization of voice is known as a multidimensional variable comprising different sub-types (Burris, 2012).

Employee Voice Behavior

Voice behavior of an employee alludes to expressive thoughts, concerns, or expressions regarding issues of employees that are related to work (Detert & Treviño, 2010). Voice behavior is proactive as organizational citizenship behavior and silence, it is optional and can't be commanded by associations (Van Dyne et al., 2003). Moving on to the literature of an organizational citizenship behavior, leaders' behaviors assume a significant part in deciding employees' optional behaviors (Podsakoff et al., 2000). Contrasted and different types of organizational citizenship behavior, silence is more probable in a moral environment (Wang & Hsieh, 2013), and choices of representatives to raise their voice entails boldness and mental security. The formation of a protective and authentic environment depends on the leaders and their suitable conduct.

Subsequently, such kind of leadership is considered to apply an undesirable effect on silence and the prosocial voice of employees. In addition, social exchange theory (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) recommends that subordinates' behavior depends on the activities of their leaders, and the groups involved rely on recognizing certain principles of exchange. On receiving proper treatment, employees will be encouraged to participate in ongoing attitudes that are beneficial for supervisors and associations. However, when negative

correspondence standards are presented by threatening attitudes by leaders, workers focus on returning losses.

Within the organization, the balance of power between subordinates and superiors and dependence on authority is capable of affecting or forcing the affected to work (Emerson, 1976). Because of some of the negative consequences of not engaging in voluntary behavior, the cost of lowering the social voice is cheaper and safer than reaching out directly to leaders.

Employee Power Distance

Organizations progressively need individuals who transparently express their insights and make important ideas for change to proactively react to the challenges of a changing business climate. But the power distance culture act as a hindrance between the organization and employee. Simply, power distance develops a layer between the two which imposes the employees not to disclose their opinions and ideas which could not be beneficial for the organization as a whole.

Following Atwater et al. (2009) in such a culture representatives feel that duplicating a superior's conduct isn't acceptable and they don't request any information from their superiors. Subsequently, representatives belonging to high power distance societies don't speak with their leaders and subsequently avoid their

administrators (Farh et al., 2007). Reversely, representatives belonging to low power distance societies are equalitarian (preferring social value) and don't acknowledge authority that much (Lam et al. 2002). Subordinates see that their superiors as far as occupation obligations and work experience ought to be nearer to them. Kirkman et al. (2009) expressed that in such cases timely and open communication is preferred and expected by subordinates from superiors. Power distance is a vital component of culture as it impacts the conduct of representatives, structure and process of an organization.

Further, in such a culture, in case there is abusive leadership, subordinates will usually overlook such conduct and it won't influence their work fulfilment, because the respect element comes between leaders and subordinates. This is due to great power contrasts between them. Thus, subordinates generally recognize their leaders and if they are offended, don't take it adversely rather, they disregard such behavior.

Hypotheses

1. Abusive leadership would be a significant negative predictor of employee voice behavior.
2. Employee power distance would have a significant moderating role in the relationship between abusive leadership and employee voice behavior.

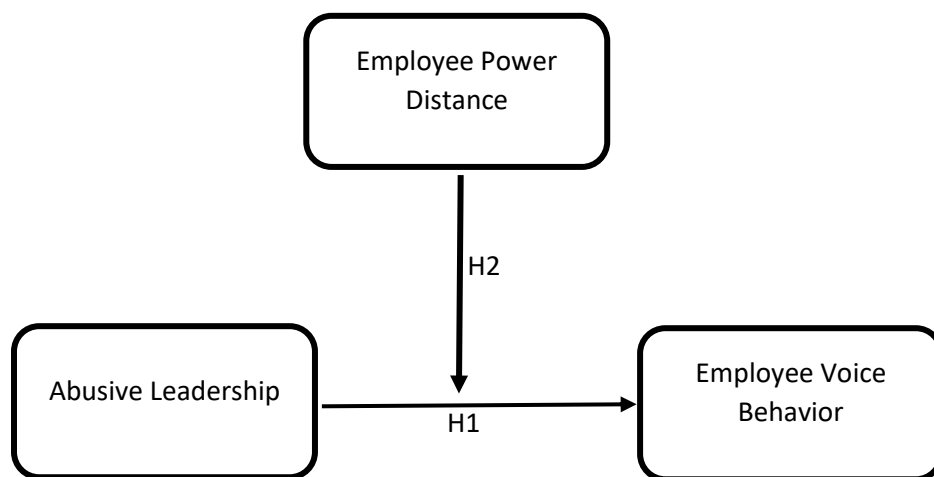


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Method

Research Sample & Design

A purposive sampling technique was used for this study. The sample comprised of 400 teachers; males ($n = 200$) and females ($n = 200$) from schools of Sargodha District. The age range of teachers was from 24 to 60 years. Inclusive criteria were set as only those teachers who had completed experience of a minimum of 2 years were part of the study. Both private and government schools; English and Urdu medium schools were included in the sample. Exclusive criteria were that those teachers who were doing the job for less than 2 years, or less than or over than 24-60 years of age were not part of the sample.

Instruments

Demographic data form. This form was created to obtain demographic information of school teachers including age, gender, qualification, experience, salary, marital status and sector.

Abusive Supervision Scale. It was developed by Mitchell & Ambrose (2007) and was used to measure abusive leadership faced by the school

teachers. It consists of 5 items. It has a five-point Likert type response format ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The reliability coefficient for the current study was .58.

Voice Behavior Scale. In current study ten 10-items voice behavior scale is used to measure the voice behavior (promotive and prohibitive) of school teachers (five items for each). The adopted scale, which was developed by Liang et al. (2012). Its response format includes 5-point Likert type scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree; 5= strongly agree. The alpha coefficient for this scale was .90.

Power Distance Scale. In the current study power distance of the employees was accessed using the scale of Dorfman & Howell (1988). It has six items. Their alpha reliability was .63. Many authors have used this scale to conduct studies (Nicholson, 1991; Fernandez et al., 1997; Wu, 2006). The 5-point Likert-type response format ranging from 1 to 5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree) was used to rate the responses. The alpha reliability for this research was .74.

Procedure

The research sample was school teachers from schools in the Sargodha District. All the respondents were accessed personally. Some participants were accessed in the form of groups and were briefed about the purpose of the research. All teachers were accessed after taking authorization from the organization. Respondents were given a briefing about the idea of the review. They were informed that they reserve the option to pull out from the research whenever. They were guaranteed that information will be simply utilized for purpose of research. Respondents were clarified about the upkeep of their confidentiality. Subsequently, informed consent was taken from everyone and a booklet

comprising of demographic form, Abusive Supervision Scale, Silence Scale, and Power Distance Scale was given to the respondents. All the guidelines were provided to finish up all the questionnaires in the booklet. The survey required around 10 minutes to finish. All the respondents were appreciated for their valuable time and full participation.

Results

The sample (N=400) was analyzed by using SPSS 22nd version. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, linear regression and moderation analysis were performed to test hypotheses.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis of The Study Constructs (N=400)

	Variables	a	M	SD	1	2	3
1	Abusive Leadership	.58	8.98	1.80	-		
2	Voice Behavior	.90	33.80	9.36	-.13**	-	
3	Power Distance	.74	20.03	5.12	.27**	-.58**	-

**p < .01.

The table 1 depicts alpha reliability, mean, standard deviation, and correlation among study constructs. Cronbach's alpha for all study constructs is from .58 to .90 showing fair internal consistency. Moreover, the result reveals that abusive leadership is significantly negatively linked to voice behavior ($r = -.13$, $p < .01$).

Hence, there is a negative relationship between abusive leadership and employee voice behavior. Results also showed significant positive relationship between power distance and abusive leadership ($r = .27$, $p < .01$) and significant negative relationship between power distance and voice behavior ($r = -.58$, $p < .01$).

Table 2 Regression Coefficients of Abusive Leadership on Employee Voice Behavior (N = 400)

Predictor	B	R ²	F(Model)
Abusive Leadership	-.67**	.02	6.76

**p < .01.

Table 2 shows that abusive leadership is a predictor of employee voice behavior. The value of R² (.02) revealed that 2% of variance can be accounted, through the predictor [$F(1,398) =$

6.76]. The result reveals that abusive leadership is a significant predictor for employee voice behavior.

Table 3 Moderation of Power Distance Between Abusive Leadership and Employee Voice Behavior (N = 400)

Predictors	B	SE	p	95% CI	
				LL	UL
Constant	30.23	7.84	.000	14.82	45.63
Abusive leadership	2.81	0.88	.001	1.08	4.52
Power distance	0.25	0.43	.557	-0.58	1.08
Abusive leadership \times Power distance	-0.15	0.05	.001	-0.23	-0.05

*** $p < .001$.

Table 3 depicts the moderating role of power distance between abusive leadership and voice behavior among school teachers. The R^2 value of .02 disclosed that predictor explained 2% variance in the outcome with $F(2, 396) = 70.54$, $p < .001$. Results revealed that abusive leadership ($B = 2.81$, $p < .001$) has significant effect on voice

behavior while power distance ($B = 0.25$, $p > .05$) has non-significant effect on voice behavior. Abusive leadership \times power distance negatively predicted voice behavior ($B = -0.15$, $p < .001$). Findings showed that the relationship between abusive leadership and voice behavior is moderated by the power distance.

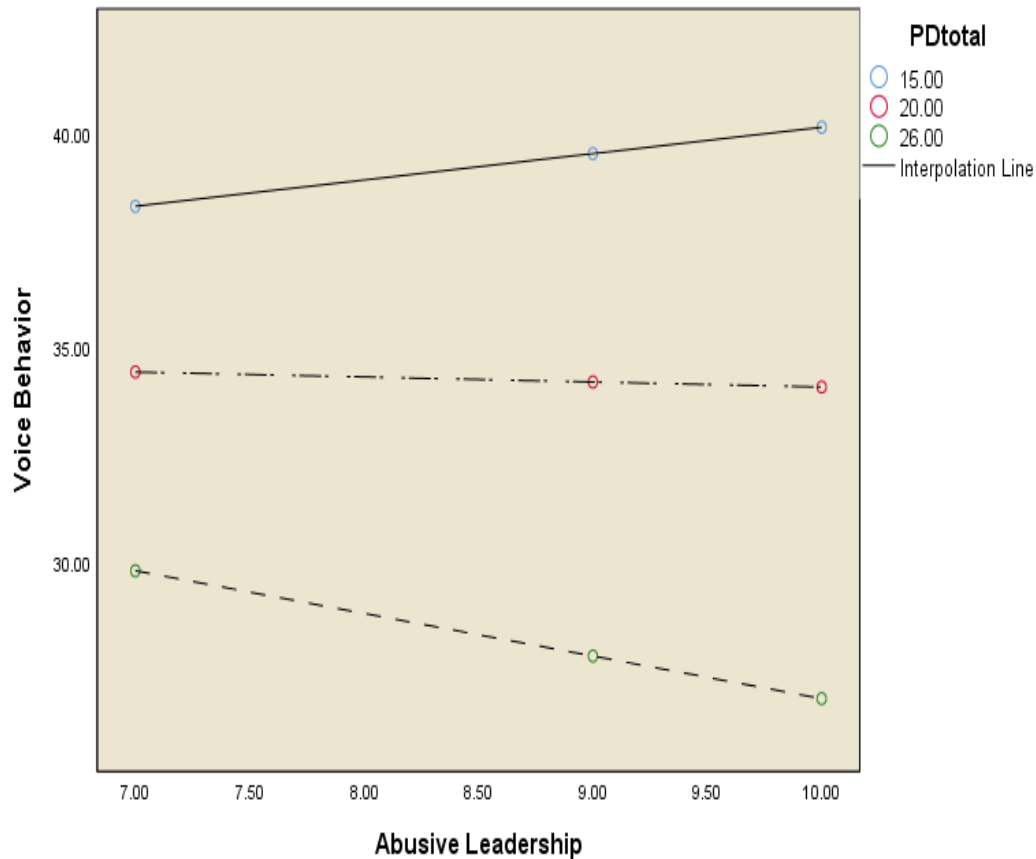


Figure 2. Mod-Graph with Moderating Effect of Employee Power Distance Between Abusive Leadership and Employee Voice Behavior

Figure 2 shows the moderating effect of three levels of power distance between abusive leadership and voice behavior. Mod Graph shows that low level of power distance reversed the relationship between abusive leadership and voice behavior whereas moderate level shows no relationship between the two. The negative relationship between abusive leadership and voice behavior is strengthened by the high level of power distance.

Discussion

The proposed research investigated the relationship between abusive leadership and voice behavior among school teachers. Additionally, another objective was to explore the role of power distance as a moderator between abusive leadership and voice behavior. The study hypothesized that abusive leadership would be the negative predictor of the teacher's voice behavior within the school. It was accepted as significant, results showed that abusive leadership is a significant negative predictor of voice behavior among school teachers. The current hypothesis is succeeding the previous study by Chiu et al. (2016), which proposed that employees' perceived abusive leadership is negatively associated with voice behavior through the lens of social exchange theory, conservative of resource theory and equity theory. Wu et al. (2012) explored abusive leadership's impact on voice behavior and tracked down that abusive leadership impacted employee voice behavior by attacking employee's view of mental wellbeing.

The research also hypothesized that power distance significantly would moderate the relationship of abusive leadership with employee voice behavior such that a high level of power

distance will strengthen the negative relationship between the variables. This implies that when an organization owns a high-power distance culture the employees are more reluctant to speak or raise their voices before the leader because of the dread of being scorned or abused. While low power distance employees go ahead and speak more loudly and express their feelings in front of their leaders. The findings are predictable with the past studies and empirical evidence, as per LMX theory, characteristics of individuals (traits) affect behavior just when they are hypothetically applicable to explicit results that are being considered.

In line with the LMX theory, research exhibits that individual differences like personality or traits like the cultural value of power distance are remarkable in certain circumstances and not striking in different circumstances (Tett & Burnett, 2003). For instance, Premeaux and Bedein (2003) showed that top administration transparency was emphatically identified with supporting employees lower in self-observing and adversely identified with supporting employees higher in self-checking. Trait activation theory terms that openness to top management activates the self-monitoring trait and made it notable with dramatic influences on speaking up.

Conclusion

The current research concluded abusive leadership is a negative predictor of voice behavior among school teachers. This research also concluded that there was a moderating role of employee power distance between the relationship of abusive leadership and employee voice behavior among school teachers.

Limitations and Suggestions

The proposed study has its limitations. The basic constraint was a disproportionate factor in

sampling which may be due to the application of the objective sample. Therefore, random sampling techniques are preferred for keeping oblique data. Another restriction was to collect data from a single city in Pakistan, which limited the validity of the results to the general population of Pakistan. Therefore, in the future, researchers should consider different cities in Pakistan to collect data. Additionally, data collection from designated workplaces and the use of self-explanatory questionnaires can be presented as a limitation as it can lead to fake good feedback and restrict them from answering freely. Therefore, it is suggested that future researchers may choose qualification measures to gain a top-down understanding of this phenomenon and gather information other than their work environment to guarantee a real response.

Implications

This research could be valuable for the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) administration in focusing on power gaps within organizations. Develop some policies and strategies to deal with the high-power distance culture in educational institutions to protect subordinates from abusive leadership, and increase the level of voice behavior among teachers. Furthermore, research findings can be useful for human resource management, industrial/organizational psychology, organizational development and social psychology.

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